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DIANA'S CONFESSION: PRECARIOUS RHETORIC IN POST-NAFTA MEXICO

by

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ABSTRACT

In August of 2013, Roberto Flores and Alfredo Zárate, two Ciudad Juárez bus drivers, were killed while working. The murderer, according to eyewitnesses, was a woman between 30 and 50 years old. She purportedly wore a blonde wig and a baseball cap to conceal her identity. Eyewitnesses also told investigators that the murderer made remarks before killing the bus drivers, such as "you think you're so bad?" Ciudad Juárez was once considered the murder capital of the world, so the news of two more murders was hardly "news." Thus, this dissertation presents a case that demonstrates the normalization of quotidian violence—a process achieved through everyday cultural acts.

Days after the murders, local news media received a confession. The author, who called herself Diana la Cazadora de Choferes (Diana, the hunter of bus drivers), claimed that she had vengefully murdered the bus drivers in response to the raped and murdered female maquiladora workers of Ciudad Juárez. This confession brought together a variety of discourses about maquiladora labor in Mexico, feminicidios (the unsolved murders of women in Ciudad Juárez), organized crime, and governmental impunity. From a rhetorical perspective, this confession also hinted at discourses of rhetorical agency, social movements, the rhetorical construction of truth and credulity, and the role of mythology within modernity.

Throughout this dissertation, I take a variety of critical, cultural, and rhetorical approaches as I construct and contextualize "Diana," following McGee's (1990) fragmentation theory. McGee argues that "rhetors *make* discourses from scraps and

pieces of evidence. Critical rhetoric [as opposed to rhetorical criticism] does not *begin* with a finished text in need of interpretation; rather, texts are understood to be larger than the apparently finished discourse that presents itself as transparent" (p. 279). Thus, in this dissertation I examine several scraps of discourse that together, point toward one rhetorical construction of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes—not a complete or finished construction, but one that is put forth toward a specific *telos*: the illustration of what I term *retórica moribunda*, precarious rhetorics of life and death in contemporary Mexico.

Dedicated to Ciudad Juárez-El Paso

“la muerte nos venga de la vida”

Octavio Paz, 1950, *El laberinto de la soledad*

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT……………………………………………………………………………...iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS…………………………………………………………...ix

Chapters

1. INTRODUCTION…….…………………………………………………...…......1

1.1 About the Dissertation……………………………………………………16
1.2 Chapter Breakdown………………………………………………………24

2. MEXICO'S POSTDEVELOPMENTALIST RHETORICAL CRISES: QUOTIDIAN LIFE AND DEATH……………………………………………………………………...34

2.1 Locating NAFTA's "Freedom"…………………………………………...34
2.2 Maquiladoras and *Gendered* Labor………………………………………47
2.3 Mexico-US Trade Relations Since 1960………………………………..51
2.4 Border Industrialization Program…………………………………………55
2.5 NAFTA and *Post-NAFTA*………………….…………………………...62
2.6 Feminicidio and Public Women……………...……………………………69
2.7 Conclusion and Rhetorical Inquiry………………………………………..76

3. *METAMORFOSIS MODERNA*: THE CONFESSION AS INVENTION …..………..81

3.1 *Yo Confieso* / I Confess……………………………………………………82
3.2 *Yo Troléo* / I Troll………………………………………………………………91
3.3 Diana Steps Into the Bus………………………………………………..94
3.4 Diana's Aporiē……………………………………………………………98
3.5 Diana's Ephemeral Subalternity…………………………………………102
3.6 Instrumentalizing Death…………………………………………………106
3.7 Conclusion………………………………………………………………111

4. *THE HAUNT OF CREDULITY*: ANALYZING THE FEMINICIDE NEWS STORY…………………………………………………...………..…..………..114

4.1 Hauntology and Structural History………………………………………118
4.2 NAFTA and Global Circuits of Capital……………………………………120
4.3 Rumor and *the Haunt of Credulity*…………………………………………122
4.4 News Media and the Creation of Diana…………………………………129
4.5 Journalist 1: Gloria Castrillón………...……..………………………...137
4.5.1 Feminicidio in Context……………...…………………………137

4.5.2 Unanswered Questions……………………………………………140
4.5.3 More Alone Than Ever…………………………….……….143
4.6. Journalist 2: Juan Lázaro…...……………………………………...144
4.6.1 Unfinished Labor………………………………………………144
4.6.2 *Muy Malos*……………………………………………………..146
4.6.3 The Perfect Setting……………………………………………..147
4.7 Journalist 3: Luis Chaparro…..……………………………………..151
4.7.1 Inexistence……………………………………………………..151
4.7.2 Existence………………………………………………………155
4.8 Conclusion……………………………………………………………158

5. Y AHORA, ¿QUIEN PODRA DEFENDERNOS?: YO, *DIANA LA CAZADORA DE CHOFERES*………………………………………………………………………160

5.1 Femme Fatales and Mexican Modernity……………………………………161
5.2 Rape Culture and Film…………………………...………………169
5.3 *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes*…………………………………………171
5.4 Diana as Femme Fatale……………………………………………..177
5.5 Quotidian Life and Rape Culture………………………………...179
5.6 Silencing Diana……………………………………………………..181
5.7 *Desgraciados*…………………………………………………………184
5.8 *Entre Tacos y Tortas*…………………………………………………..187
5.9 Nightlife in Ciudad Juárez…………………………………………188
5.10 Rape as Transformative……………………………………………...190
5.11 "Let's get not caught… Let's keep going"……………………………..193
5.12 Conclusion…………………………………………………………...200

6. *RETORICA MORIBUNDA*: LOCATING LIFE AND DEATH IN CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN DISCOURSE…………………………………..……………………...202

6.1 Suggestions for Future Research……………………………………...211
6.2 Research Beyond Dissertation………...……………………………213
6.3 Future Project…………………………………………………………….214

FILM TRANSCRIPTS……………………………………………………………....218

REFERENCES………………………..……………………………………...……224

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the last quarter century, news about the many murders of "disappeared" people in Mexico has circulated the globe. Indeed, death has become and continues to be a quotidian part of life in Mexico. Mexico currently has the third highest rate of civilian murders of any country, exceeded only by Iraq and Syria (*La Jornada*, 2015). The year 2011 was one of Mexico's deadliest, when murders during the summer months of May, June, July, and August exceeded 2,000 per month (*Animal Político*, 2017). More recently, March 2017 was Mexico's deadliest month since 2011, and the deadliest month during the Peña Nieto administration (*Grupo SIPSE*, 2017). According to William Brownfield, former US Ambassador to Colombia, Ciudad Juárez, by itself and of particular interest to this work, experienced more assassinations in 2009 than the entire country of Afghanistan during that same year[1] (Hernández, 2012).

But, unlike Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, deaths in Mexico are not the result of an international, vengeful war on terror, but rather a domestic, moral war on drugs. When former president Felipe Calderón, Supreme Commander of the Mexican Armed Forces, declared a war on drug trafficking in December of 2006, he was not simply referring to an increase in military surveillance of known drug kingpins and an aggressive antidrug media campaign. Rather, he was referring to the literal deployment of troops into urban

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[1] Ciudad Juárez metropolitan population is approximately 2.5 million   Afghanistan's total population is approximately 33.3 million.

locations where the escalation of violence, in his view, *required* military force. The deployment of troops, however, did not end the deaths or, arguably, even attenuate drug commerce. Instead, and perhaps counter-intuitively, the deployment of troops helped make visible the high levels of state and federal government corruption, making clear to Mexican citizens just how intertwined those in control of government, and thus the military, are with Mexican drug cartels.

Almost 10 years after the declaration of the war on drugs and subsequent deployment of troops, Emilio Álvarez Icaza, Executive Director of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH), declared that Mexico is entering what he calls an "authoritarian regression," adding that, within a regional Latin American context, neither Perú under Alberto Fujimori[2] nor Venezuela under Hugo Chávez[3] come close to the abuse of power and lack for social responsibility seen in contemporary Mexico (*Sin Embargo*, 2016, par. 1-2). Álvarez Icaza's critique of Mexico's brand of authoritarianism comes after a lengthy delay in the government's investigation into the kidnapping case of 43 Ayotzinapa college students in September, 2014—colloquially known as "the 43."

The case of the 43 disappeared students from Ayotzinapa is but one example of a series of mass executions that have taken place in Mexico since 1994, coincidentally

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[2] Alberto Fujimori was Peru's president from 1990 to 2000. *Transparency International* claims that Fujimori illegally acquired $600 million while in office. Fujimori was arrested in Chile in 2005 and extradited to Peru in 2009. He is currently serving two sentences. The first is a 25-year sentence for using the military to assassinate 15 persons wrongfully identified as members of *Sendero Luminoso*, Peru's communist party, and for kidnapping and "disappearing" (or assassinating) nine university students and one professor. The second is a 7-year sentence for embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds. Currently, various groups are attempting to gain a state apology for thousands of cases of forced sterilization of indigenous women in Fujimori's Peru.

[3] Chávez is a more known figure than Fujimori, I imagine. While detractors remember Chávez, a former military commander, as a populist dictator, others remember his administration as democratic and progressive.

when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed by leaders of three countries—the United States, Mexico, and Canada. The story of the 43 indigenous students was reported to audiences throughout the globe and made Mexico's everyday violence and state of corruption publicly visible. While for some, this case appeared to point to something new—some new form of violence—for others, this case was but one example of the type of mundane violence that minorities in Mexico endure on a daily basis.

While violence, a rather abstract word, has been present throughout Mexico's history, a postmodern turn—a shift from Mexican modernity to Mexican postmodernity—is marked by *surreal* everyday violence: violence that does not appear to have a reason, an origin, or an ethical sense of responsibility. Thus, the early 1990s were a pivotal moment for modern Mexico. Not only was NAFTA passed on January 1, 1994, but also debates about this continental trade policy (themselves important to Mexico's reality) began years before. Within months of NAFTA's passing, television audiences throughout Mexico became witness to a modern *magnicidio*, the killing of a head of state (or, in this case, a potential head of state). Presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio was murdered while campaigning in Tijuana, Baja California. His assassination was televised, making this event crucial to understanding this new era of Mexican culture, society, and its politics from a communication standpoint. This highly iconic moving image of the murder of a soon-to-be head of state not only documents an historic moment, but also announces, if not inaugurates, a new cultural norm of state violence, a norm that still exists today. To underline this new violent norm, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation declared war on the Mexican federal government on the day NAFTA

went into effect, and the media attention given to the Zapatistas made Mexicans everywhere conscious of the role the government plays in civilian life. Specifically, the Zapatista's critique of NAFTA was grounded in revolutionary ideals—ideals that would be revisited in 1994 and again during Mexico's Bicentennial celebrations, in 2010.

As a final example of the shifting cultural milieu which began in Mexico in 1994, by the end of 1994, Mexico would enter a lengthy and devastating economic depression. In the years following that fateful year, many Mexicans would lose their jobs and migrate to the United States or join the growing economic, social, and political power sector in Mexico—the drug trafficking cartels, which include paramilitary, security, and execution personnel known as *sicarios*. One might refer to this drug trafficking infrastructure colloquially as Mexico's drug industrial complex. Throughout the following 2 decades, violence in Mexican cities and towns increased dramatically. In part, the growth of violence was due to fights over the control over the major drug trafficking corridors. In part, the growth of violence was also due to corruption in the Mexican military and local law enforcement agencies. What developed throughout Mexico—both outside of government, in a cartelistic system—and within government as a syndicated, enabling dimension of government— then is what I call a "narco-state." The narco-state is not just the state that is fueled or funded by narcotics production and distribution. The narco-state pretends or, (in the words of Octavio Paz) *dissimulates*, not to be involved in the business of narcotics.[4]

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[4] While Anglophone rhetoricians might be more familiar with Jean Baudrillard's (1981) *Simulations,* I choose to use Paz's (1950) earlier notion of simulation and dissimulation because Paz refers to the Mexican context, specifically, and because Baudrillard's is mostly a theory of perpetual representation that does not allow for the type of cultural intervention (again, in the Mexico-US context) that Paz constantly references.

For Octavio Paz (1950), simulation is a rhetorical process of invention: "[dissimulation] demands an active inventiveness and must reshape itself from one moment to another. We tell lies for the mere pleasure of it, like all imaginative peoples, but we also tell lies to hide ourselves and to protect ourselves from intruders" (trans. Kemp ac., 1985, p. 40). Contrasting simulation and dissimulation, Paz (1950) writes that to "simulate is to invent, or rather, to counterfeit, and thus to evade our condition. Dissimulation requires greater subtlety: the person who dissimulates is not counterfeiting but attempting to become invisible, to pass unnoticed without renouncing his individuality" (trans. 1985, p. 42).

That is, the narco-state pretends not to be involved in narcotics but, in reality, is deeply intertwined in it. As part of this dissimulation, military and law enforcement personnel, who are supposed to be identifiable (i.e., wear name badges and show their faces), began concealing their faces with masks, a tactic borrowed from the *sicarios*, in order to protect their identities. This in turn allowed the military to operate as a criminal organization, functioning under the aegis and guise of the state. Again, the end or goal of dissimulation is not to be thought of as someone other than oneself (this is merely a part of the process), but to blend into the landscape to the point of becoming invisible. Dissimulation—and the dissimulation of murder and violence—is the moment when murder and violence becomes mundane; the moment when citizens pretend life is worthless and death is ordinary. For Paz, lying, and particularly lying to oneself, is a crucial component of Mexican culture. Paz explains that in postmodern Mexico, if "we can arrive at authenticity by means of lies, an excess of sincerity can bring us to refined forms of lying" through exaggeration (p. 41). Paz uses the example of the lover, who in

order to convince others he is in love, must make elaborate and exaggerated displays of affection. I turn to the stories and images of violence in contemporary Mexico—images and stories that both simulate and dissimulate—that attempt to erase, disappear, or make invisible the evidence of death; and at the same time (or, when faced with the impossibility of the task), fall back on the most macabre and graphic evidence, forcing audiences to question the veracity of such barbaric contemporary violence—to the point where the very evidentiary nature of evidence is too raw, too graphic to be functionally credible.

What results is a society in which one cannot tell good from evil—the criminal from the police officer—crime from law. Thus, everyone becomes protective of their own life and of the lives of those closest to them. A certain kind of quotidian protectionism sets in. Conversely, the deaths of unknown others lose meaning—amending the Cartesian cogito: for the average citizen, if it is not my own death, it is not relevant. Everyone becomes a potential villain in the eyes of everyday people, and no one is to be trusted.

It is in this environment that I study one of the most visible and powerful forms of violence that has emerged in Mexico during this time period, *feminicidio*. *Feminicidio*, the killing of women because they are women, a mortally misogynist practice most often targeting factory workers (who are often immigrants) and sex workers of Ciudad Juárez, has plagued Mexico for 2 decades. That is, the vast majority of the disappeared, those who were murdered in the wake of the emergence of Mexico as a narco-state, are immigrant women factory workers or sex workers. Feminicidio is narco-state violence, and targets some of the poorest and most vulnerable denizens of society on whom to exact its violence. A variety of investigations of high profile murders have taken place,

yet the killings continue. Women became a group targeted for the exaction of specific forms of public death and violence, and the discourses surrounding the deaths of women are of particular interest in this dissertation.

This dissertation takes one of these cases of feminicidal violence and uses it as case study in order to unravel contemporary discourses and rhetorics of life and death in Mexico. On the morning of August 28, 2013, a woman boarded a city bus in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico and opened fire on a bus driver, killing him. Ciudad Juárez is located at the Mexico-US border and has a metropolitan population of approximately 2.5 million people. Together with El Paso, Texas (its sister city), the international metropolitan population exceeds three million. The news of the murder made international headlines when, on the following morning, a second bus driver was also killed driving the very same bus route. Both bus drivers are said to have been murdered by the same woman, as eyewitnesses told police authorities in both cases that the assassin was a woman in her 30s, wearing a blonde wig and a baseball cap. Within days, local media[5] received an email message confession to both murders. The email message explained that the murders were vengeful response to the myriad female victims of sexual violence in Juarez (Lázaro, 2013). The author of the confession ended the email with the signature "Dianalacazadoradechoferes," *Diana the huntress of bus drivers* (Coria, 2013).

Audiences in Ciudad Juárez, El Paso, and beyond met the news with

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[5] Juan Levid Lázaro (2013) of *Informador* states that the email was sent to Ricardo Chávez Carabajal, director of Radio Net in Ciudad Juárez (par. 11). Luis Chaparro (2013), on the other hand, claims that although many news reports state that the email was sent to various news organizations, journalists from Ciudad Juárez's *El Diario* as well as Arturo Sandoval, spokesperson for Chihuahua's Attorney General, argue that it was only sent to one: *LaPolaka.com,* a newsblog that Chaparro considers a "portal sin credibilidad," an unreliable source (par. 35).

demonstrable curiosity and even enthusiasm. Within days Laura Bozzo[6] (known colloquially as *Señorita Laura*), the Peruvian talk show host of Mexico's *Laura en América*, announced she would travel to Ciudad Juárez, find Diana, and represent Diana as her legal counsel in a court of law (Chaparro, 2013). Although Bozzo never found Diana, she did travel to Juárez to ride the buses along the route the dead bus drivers took on the morning before they were killed. Along the way, Bozzo interviewed commuters who use public transportation on a regular basis and aired those interviews to show the rest of the world what a day in the life of Diana might have been like.

Diana's impact on the daily cultural life of Mexico went beyond the original confession and news stories about the vengeful murders (both topics making up chapters of this dissertation). What followed these events was the production of a low-budget, made for TV film that fictionalized Diana's story, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* (2013), and is the subject of the third chapter of this dissertation. Though highly dramatic, the film, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* (2013), presents Diana (played by América Ramírez) as a sexualized femme fatale. The film depicts Diana as a woman willing to commit violence against men for morally right reasons, and she sees her punishment and incarceration as a necessary part of the sacrifice she makes on behalf of women who cannot defend themselves. It is important to note that this film is framed as a conversation between two men—a male detective, Agente Rodríguez, who narrates the story, and Comisario Belmont, the Chief of Police. Their conversation takes place after Rodríguez has successfully apprehended Diana. In other words, in the film, Diana does not speak for herself, but is spoken for, re-presented or re-represented.

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[6] Bozzo also holds degrees in law and political science.

In reality, investigators never found the killer, let alone brought her to justice. The primary reason the story of Diana, the superhero avenger, became so popular is that Ciudad Juárez is the infamous site of approximately 400 murders of working-class and migrant women since 1993.[7] Reactions to Diana's confession reveal the collective sentiment of citizens who feel unsafe in public spaces and serves as an example of Mexico's *ethos* of death. The rhetorical texts and discourses surrounding this case reveal more than the reality that death is a quotidian event in Mexico. These texts reveal the ways in which death functions as a social, cultural, and even political force—as a living thing.

The confession suggests that authorities have failed to provide protection to working-class women of Ciudad Juárez's maquiladora industry. Furthermore, this particular *feminicidio* news story was disseminated quickly and internationally, suggesting there was, in addition to a local audience, a much broader audience, beyond a Mexican one, an audience quite possibly aware of the rampant feminicidal violence within the city. Because this confession surfaces in a borderland space—and because the confession itself does not abide by the logic of borders, crossing the international line at various points in a variety of ways—there is no monolithic, homogenous "audience." Rather, the confession is read and interpreted—and reinvented—by various audiences.

The confession—the act of confessing—as represented in Mexican news stories like these—demonstrates a willingness to believe that the email confession *was* connected to the murders of the bus drivers. That is, within the streets of this metropolis,

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[7] Though not all of the women killed in Ciudad Juárez since 1993 fit this description, Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Georgina Guzman (2010) explain that "most were Mexican, impoverished, and young" (p. 1).

scrutiny or no scrutiny, no one, it seems, bothered to check to find out whether there was an actual connection between the murderer and the confession. Was a connection even necessary in order for people to believe that this was a vengeful response and that a dark, mysterious female avenger *existed*? Is "truth" necessary when the public accepts—with few exceptional, dissenting voices (as will be shown)—that Diana, the author of the confession, is also the author of the murders?

As it turns out, the murders were never solved, and Diana lives on as an image in cyberspace. She has a Facebook page dedicated to her, and "fans" often use this page to post stories about gender violence in the border metropolis. Though no one knows who killed the bus drivers or who authored the confession, Diana's portrait circles through several online news articles, demonstrating the crucial role of the citizen journalism in the digital age—a moment in time when, in the words of comedian Hasan Minhaj, "we're living in this strange time when trust is more important than truth" (White House Correspondents' dinner, 2017). From a cultural studies perspective, what I find most impactful about the case before us is that the lack of justice that protects the alleged gang of serial rapists, in this case bus drivers, now protects Diana, who, if we believe the dominant narrative, got away with *homicide*—as in, the killing of men because they are men. And, from a communication perspective, I find it is crucial to understanding the way this story participates in the creation of a reality for the citizens of Ciudad Juárez. The case of Diana includes relevant topics of everyday discourse, such as contemporary violence, militarization, feminicide, and international politics. Moreover, rhetoric specifically helps me explain how audiences come to accept and reject competing narratives regarding violence in contemporary Mexico. Rhetoric is crucial in

understanding the construction of truth and reality, notions of community—and particularly in borderscapes such as Juárez, discourses of oppression, power, and resistance, as well as what it means to be alive in the presence of death, and whether death itself is a possibility in world of communicated and dynamic memories. In the rest of this introduction, I will bring together several rhetorical, communication, and cultural studies concepts in order to theorize the concept of *retórica moribunda*, which is a haunting theory of rhetoric and life and death in contemporary Mexico.

My interest in analyzing the rhetoric of Mexican violence, as well as the cultural context of that rhetoric, arises from finding in rhetoric the "ability to create a sense of community, and thus the possibility of social and political life as we know it" (Lucaites & Condit, 1999, p. 1). The role of rhetoric in creating cultural context has been understated in the field of rhetoric. Most have focused on the rhetoric of texts, rather than contexts. In fact, the relationship between text and context was one of the principal foci of the Leff (1990, 1992) and McGee (1990) debates of the early 1990s and it continues to be relevant today. Ono and Sloop's (1992, 1995, 2002) work contributes to efforts to draw attention to the important contextual—specifically cultural—work rhetoric does. And in that vein, I seek to study the way the rhetorics of death and life in Mexico are haunted by quotidian murder, specifically feminicidio. With this view of rhetoric then, context saturates the possibilities for rhetoric. What is most important to say about context is not what Bitzer (1973) said about situations: that situations create rhetoric; nor Vatz's (1973) retort that rhetoric creates situations (no matter how true both positions appear), but rather that cultural conditions exist that fundamentally sature rhetorics, and rather than only looking at the text of rhetorics, the aesthetics of rhetorics, or even the critical discursive elements

of rhetorics, fully understanding the cultural conditions most impinging upon everyday rhetorics is fundamental to the intellectual enterprise we call rhetoric.

As part of the study of rhetorical context, within Mexico, community has been associated with fighting against such oppression. As examples, we can turn to feminist social movements in Ciudad Juárez like *Ni Una Más* / *Ni Una Menos* or to the rise of vigilantism in the state of Michoacán and see community members who are organizing together to solve shared problems. The concept of community assumes a plethora of components: a people, a public, or an audience (McGee, 1975); groups that are people but who are not identified as people (Black, 1970; Cloud, 1999; Hariman, 1986; Shome, 1996; Wander, 1984), an axiological center or a normative location of public morality (Condit, 1987), but most importantly, a fragmented social reality that requires interpretation (McGee, 1990) and the willingness to be more than a passive rhetorical critic (a commentator of rhetoric) and to become a critical rhetorician—an agent who acknowledges one's subjective position within a context and works constructively, albeit not as an all-knowing, all intentional, agentic subject, but one aware of the fundamental social and cultural constructedness of subjective life and nevertheless works to change in whatever way possible the status quo (Ono & Sloop, 1992). Culture, context, and community are not synonymous, but constitutive, dependent, and reliant on each other.

In this sense, communication and rhetoric are intertwined and codependent. Communication creates reality; rhetoric, as a process of advancing ideas, of persuading or moving others, and (through discourse) of controlling populations, maintains and alters reality itself. One cannot exist without the other. I have coined the term, *retórica moribunda*, a concept in Spanish most closely defined in English as: rhetorics of life and

death. *Retórica moribunda* is more than just rhetoric about death, rhetoric that arises when people die, or morbid rhetoric. Rather, *Retórica moribunda* arises from a liminal space. *Retórica moribunda* hovers around the imaginary line between life and death. *Retórica moribunda* is a living rhetoric—but a rhetoric implicated in a specific temporality—a rhetoric that arises in moments when death is present and one recognizes death as always an option. More specifically, *retórica moribunda* emerges when one cannot behave as if death were not—when one cannot ignore, feign, or dissimulate that death is unreal. That is, certain populations in Mexico live in a context of constant death, indeed, in a context in which death, itself, plays a vital rhetorical role.

Retórica moribunda is profoundly informed by Judith Butler's (2004) *Precarious Life*. Precarious life defines life in post-9/11 America, a moment when injuries (bodily and otherwise), vulnerabilities, retributions, and even deaths take center stage in political life (p. xii). Specifically, Butler's work points toward several observations that inform this dissertation. First, "each of us is constituted politically in part by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies—as a site of desire and physical vulnerability, as a site of publicity at once assertive and exposed" (p. 20). The body, for Butler, is the central site of control, but also the central site of agency. Additionally, Butler's theorization regarding grief and mourning is useful in the context of Ciudad Juárez feminicides. Butler argues that mourning "has to do with agreeing to undergo a transformation (perhaps one should say *submitting* to a transformation) the full result of which one cannot know in advance. There is losing, as we know, but there is also the transformative effect of loss" (p. 21). Transformations, indeed metamorphoses, are a central theme of this dissertation. Moreover, to think about mythical metamorphoses in a postmodern

context allows me to theorize about life, death, and the effects of vulnerability and violence in contemporary Mexico. Here, I want to pause and ponder: what does it mean to mourn in a city that is constantly experiencing death? Put another way, if mourning is a transformative process, the end (goal, or *telos*) of which is unknown, critical rhetoric appears as the most plausible way to analyze death in this context, because the text (if such a thing indeed exists) is constantly transforming, disallowing the critic to ever pin it down.

Finally, Butler's *Precarious Life* asks cultural critics to engage in academic projects that "create a sense of public in which oppositional voices are not feared, degraded or dismissed, but valued for the instigation to a sensate democracy" (p. 151). Butler's call resonates today, when much of American democracy appears to be at a crossroads. *Retórica moribunda*, thus, is the way I enter contemporary conversations about rhetoric in the American academy. I find that rhetoric, beginning with public address, has been mostly a project about criticism of Anglophone speakers. And, while much has changed, as rhetoric and public address both resisted and incorporated postmodern and poststructural theories and criticism, still, at least one very crucial aspect has been overlooked: Mexican rhetoric. Here, I do not mean Chicanx rhetoric as has been theorized following the works of Karma Chávez (2013) or Michelle Holling and Bernadette Calafell (2011). Chicanx rhetoric focuses primarily on contributions of Mexican Americans to an American canon—something that is highly valuable but not what I am talking about. Nor do I mean Latin American rhetoric (Wanzer-Serrano, 2015), which until now has also focused on impacts related to the United States, broadly speaking. I also do not intend to call for rhetorical criticism of Mexican presidential

speeches (de los Santos, 2008; 2015). Mexican public address is a significant lacuna in the pantheon of rhetorical letters, but my own approach is to study everyday, quotidian, vernacular rhetoric—and today, one of the most impactful social and cultural phenomena is the presence of death among the living in Mexico.

Diana, the collection of unorganized fragments, is herself *moribunda*. In a most basic way…she is dying, but also and more importantly, she remains alive. *Mori*- indicates death, *muerte*; *morir* means "to die." To be dead, or, to be death, *mori*- would be accompanied by an end; a "-t": *mort*, *muerte*, *muerto*, *muerta*. But in *mori-bunda*, death itself is given life—death is allowed to play a role in the affairs of the living, not simply as a ghost figure—invisible to the living, living alongside the living, haunted by elements of their former lives, and discoverable only when becoming visible to or sensed by the living. After all, death is part of life and in ways defines life. Furthermore, it obviates a conception of life as having an end point. Death occupies bodies and preoccupies minds. Death makes people worry, and these worries manifest themselves in specific acts and texts. Death is present when people make everyday decisions: what time to leave their house, what to wear in public, whether to walk alone, and whether or not to greet a stranger. Death's presence is so powerful that, in Mexico, where death is pervasive, even expected and predictable death itself becomes mundane: the tally of dead bodies, the constantly-changing statistics on the headlines, and the gruesome images on the covers of newspapers all have the effect of of producing *worry*, and worries become a part of the *lived* environment.

Ultimately, death is so common in many parts of Mexico that only spectacular forms of death jar the senses. Awaking a zombified community from the dull, low-pitch,

monotonous murmur of exhumation requires spectacular forms of death, even pleasurable ones. The case of Diana is one such spectacular and iconic[8] case of death that disrupts the pall of daily life, the life of routine death. The fact that hundreds of women have been found dead in the desert no longer startles, whereas the fact that two bus drivers were murdered—and the investigation into their murders—becomes the spectacle. Two ideas take the stage specifically because they are what remains unknown and what audiences most desire to uncover: the fact of a murderer (or, in other words, whether Diana is a superhero, a ghost, a deity, a real woman, or anything at all) and ontological matters in the age of fake news—specifically, journalists' role as creators of reality, until that very reality is shattered by a new one. Here, audiences *trusted* journalists to provide them with something like *truth*—to tell them the facts, and leave speculation aside. But this story drew a line between credibility and credulity, and asked for responsibility to be taken, not by journalists, but by readers of digital news—readers of news reported in flashy, catchy, and glittery new ways. In this context, death can be examined without assuming a knowledge of death—what death is, what death feels like, or whether anything can knowingly be said of death.

1.1 About the Dissertation

In the following dissertation, I examine the case of Diana, the huntress of bus drivers. I also provide crucial context for understanding Diana. These bits of context include my approach to mythology and a review of Mexican modernist aesthetics (as they

[8] Although iconic photography is not centered in this dissertation, the work of Robert Hariman and John Lucaites on iconic images (most notably *No Caption Needed*, 2007, as well as its critique by Marouf Hasian, 2008, in Review of Communication), inform the way I think of the Mexico City statue.

pertain to the myth of Diana).

Diana is not, by any definition, a single, solid artifact. Rather, she is composed of fragments (McGee). We cannot know her as an essence. The idea of finding a consummate whole of *what she is* is impossible. There is not one confirmable, trustworthy source who can tell, definitively, who Diana is, so we are left, as McGee has shown, to piece her together as a text. McGee argued that in postmodernity there is no longer a solid text, as such (if, indeed, such a thing ever existed). Instead, there are fragments of texts made out of context, out of which discourses can be constructed. In an attempt to radicalize McGee's fragmentation thesis, Darrel Wanzer-Serrano (2012) suggested that McGee's thesis assumes a world defined by, among many powers, a colonial logic and suggests that academics seeking to challenge such structures engage in epistemic disobedience. Thus, I begin by thinking of Diana as something in part nonexistent, and in part constructed by me—even while I am not the only "one" to construct her. Furthermore, Diana is a collection of contexts that exist both temporally and spatially, and in this case, in multiple languages and codes, and that I assemble in order to engage in criticism as a rhetorical practice of lived politics.

Diana is constituted by many fragments or contexts—I choose here to focus on the following: Diana's confession, three specific news articles about Diana, and a film about Diana. Additionally, I am informed by myths. First, I am informed by "The Myth of Actaeon"—a title poem in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In that poem, which is a classic and helped the classical world know of and make sense of Diana, Diana is the goddess who punished Actaeon by transforming him into a deer. Thus, in *Metamorphoses*, Actaeon is a myth of a hunter who becomes the hunted and Diana is the active character, the goddess

of the hunt. Additionally, I am informed by new, contemporary, and modern iterations of the myth of Diana in Mexico, such as 1940s architecture and film.

To begin, Diana is a myth. Myths are passed on through generations. Myths, in their most basic form, belong to the oral tradition, and writing (as a technology) and later literacy (as a skill shared among more and more members of society) severely affected what a myth "was," but also, mythology itself—the interpretation, use, and *rehashing* of myths. Walter Ong (1954, 1966), for example, has shown the ways in which certain myths, archetypes, and poetic forms resurface in a variety of ways, including to explain Darwin's theory of evolution.

One particular myth is absolutely central to an understanding of the myth of Diana the Huntress of bus drivers. Moreover, a discussion of the myth of Diana is needed in this particular situation because Diana is a myth known conventionally not only as part of Western letters, but also within Mexican culture and society, specifically. In Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, the myth of Actaeon, a hunter wanders the woods and comes upon Diana, bathing in a spring. Viewing her there, he lingers and watches her, hidden as a voyeur, until Diana sees him. When she recognizes he has been ogling her bathing, Diana transforms the hunter into a deer. Consequently, Actaeon's own hunting hounds attack him, seeing a deer instead of their master, and kill him—tearing through his flesh with their teeth. The myth of Actaeon tells of the hunter who becomes the hunted and the huntress who protects herself from gendered and sexualized victimage. Moreover, Diana, the goddess of the hunt, the moon, and femininity becomes, in this myth, a most agentic character even though it is Actaeon's myth—a story that warns young men to respect women's privacy, or else. At the same time, the myth provides a justification for men,

through the hero Actaeon, who, as Ovid's narrator argues, was not at fault. This justification explains that men should not place themselves in these situations because, in the end, whether or not they are guilty may, ultimately, be irrelevant in the eyes of a powerful woman.

Diana la Cazadora de Choferes did not emerge as if from nothingness. Instead, it is important to understand that the first half of the 20th century was a time when Mexican intellectuals were deeply committed to creating a new, postrevolutionary identity. Many looked to Mexico's pre-Columbian, indigenous past and attempted to rescue this heritage as a way, ironically, of decolonizing Mexican society. Popular examples of this aesthetic include the works of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, whose works combined modernist topics with indigenous imagery. At the same time, others emphasizing Mexico's modernizing, globalizing rhetorical exigence, attempted to define Mexico's postrevolutionary identity as something wholly new.

As a result, a particular school of thought emerged, known as *el ateneo de la juventud,* also as *el ateneo de México* (*Youth's Atheneum*, or *Mexican Atheneum*). *El ateneo de la juventud* can be summarized in three characteristics. First, *el ateneo de la juventud* rejected positivism and was influenced by continental, existential philosophy—particularly Nietzsche, Bergson, and Ortega y Gasset. Second, *el ateneo de la juventud* was interested in European antiquity and the classics—from mythology to rhetoric (hence, *ateneo*). Third, *el ateneo de la juventud* wrote about contemporary Mexico (which today, we refer to as postrevolutionary).

One of the most celebrated figures of *el ateneo de la juventud* is José Vasconcelos, whose modernist writings often alluded to the Western, classical canon

while discussing issues pertinent to revolutionary and postrevolutionary Mexico.[9] Vasconcelos became the one of the most prolific intellectuals of, during, and after Mexico's revolution, and as such, a key figure in the development of a Mexican identity. Although Vasconcelos did not write about Diana in particular, the influence of *el ateneo de la juventud*—a movement interested in European classics as well as existential philosophy—can be seen in the architecture of Mexico's post-revolutionary era.

Perhaps the most vociferous critics of *ateneo* aesthetics were known as *estridentistas*—stridentists. Led by Manuel Maples Arce and Germán List Arzubide, estridentismo is defined as Mexico's "only revolutionary-literary-social movement" (List Azurbide, 1926).[10] Estridentismo's is born from a series of manifestos.[11] Crucial to this dissertation, the first tenet of the first manifesto is a rejection of objective truth: "My madness is not for sale. Truth does not happen outside of us."[12] Estridentismo can be understood, temporally, as a parallel (though not equivalent) movement to postmodernism: a rejection of positivism and other traditions inherited from the Western canon. Here, truth is something internal—a matter of individual perception and

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[9] Vasconcelos wrote *La Raza Cósmica* (1925), where he discusses the role of Mexican mestizos in the international context. Vasconcelos also wrote *Pitágoras* (1916) and *Ulises Criollo* (1935). In *Pitágoras*, Vasconcelos discusses the role of rhythm within phenomenology. In *Ulises Criollo*, Vasconcelos describes a return from central Mexico to Mexico's northern border, by comparing it to Homer's Odyssey.

[10] List Arzubide's actual words in *El Movimiento Estridentista* (1926): "el relato del único movimiento revolucionario-literario-social de México"

[11] The first and second manifestos were glued (*pegado*) to murals in Puebla, in 1921 and 1923, respectively. The third manifesto was published in Zacatecas, in 1925. The fourth manifesto was published in Ciudad Victoria, in 1926. Luis Mario Schneider (1985) reproduced all manifestos in *El Estridentismo* (UNAM).

[12] Original: "I. Mi locura no está en los presupuestos. La verdad, no acontece ni sucede nunca fuera de nosotros." Other possible interpretations include: "My madness is not assumed." Here, *presupuesto* is translated as *presupposed*, instead of *budget*. To say, "my madness is not within the budget," indicates that the artist's madness (and the artwork itself) ought not be commodified, hence, my translation: "My madness is not for sale."

experience, and not something external to the self. Similarly, the ninth tenet of the first manifesto asks: “And sincerity? Who’s asking?” This question is then followed by the juxtaposition of powers given by authority by perceived sincerity.

Estridentismo also asked for the rejection of aesthetic traditions—including the classics that the ateneo constantly relied on. For example, the third tenet of the first manifesto claims that an automobile in movement is more beautiful than the Winged Victory of Samothrace—a Greek statue, today housed in the Louvre. Similarly, the fifth tenet claims: “Chopin to the electric chair!” By this, estridentismo meant to throw aside aesthetics that had already been appropriated by dominant culture, and therefore were no longer radical tools.

Despite estridentismo’s rejection of classical aesthetics, in 1938, following the Mexican revolution, the first Diana fountain was sculpted and displayed in Mexico City’s Paseo de la Reforma. Originally named *Flechadora de la Estrella del Norte*, Mexico’s *Fuente de la Diana Cazadora* was designed by Vicente Mendiola Quezada, an architect, and crafted by Juan Fernando Olaguíbel, a sculptor. *La Diana Cazadora* was part of a larger beautification project funded by Manuel Ávila Camacho’s administration that aimed to modernize Mexico City. With time, the fountain became a reference point within the city’s geography. Soon, the statue would become an icon of Mexican feminine beauty, and several cities would create replicas of Mendiola and Olaguíbel’s *Diana*.

Almost 2 decades later, Tito Davison would release a film, *La Diana Cazadora* (1957), in which audiences where introduced to the mystery regarding the identity of the woman, the model, behind the statue. This question would linger until1992, when Helvia Martínez Verdayes authored *El Secreto de la Diana Cazadora* (1992), an

autobiographical, confessional account in which Martínez explains that she was the model—the muse—behind the famous, iconic sculpture. Martínez explains that she was 16 years old when she posed nude for the two men, and she also explains that she could not confess this in the 1930s and 1940s, because she feared that, if it got out that she posed nude for a statue at age 16, she would lose the job she held.

Martínez's publication also brought to light photographs of the artists and the model, circulating and recreating the myth of Diana in an entirely new, visual context. What unfolds in Mexico over the decades discussed is what Walter Benjamin (1935) refers to as the reproduction of artworks and the simultaneous shattering of traditions:

> The technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced. These two processes lead to a tremendous shattering of tradition which is the obverse of the contemporary crisis and renewal of mankind. Both processes are intimately connected with the mass contemporary movements. Their most powerful agent is the film. (p. 1236)

The myth of Diana, as can be seen, has a life and existence in contemporary Mexico—an existence that can be traced to movements that aimed to redefine Mexico after a bloody revolutionary war. When Diana la Cazadora de Choferes enters the Mexican imagination, there is a context known to Mexicans, and perhaps unknown to foreigners—and it is crucial to remember this because Diana's story was heard, seen, and read across many borders and in multiple languages. This dissertation, then, takes on the project of describing context: Ciudad Juárez in August of 2013. But it appears that the simple intersection of time and space does not suffice—context also includes things like feelings, thoughts, ideologies, histories, and memories. One of the questions, then,

becomes: what forces or influences act, not necessarily on Diana—the agent—but on citizens of Ciudad Juárez? What drives one to resort to violence?

In order to answer this, I turn to several textual fragments. The first is Diana's own confession. The confession is a crucial textual fragment because there, audiences are addressed, creating the sense that their lives are invested in the murders. Moreover, the message and sentiment in the confession resonates with the experiences of many Juarenses. Apart from the original affective response, there are also those who read Diana's confession with scrutiny, describing all the possible reasons why Diana might be a farce, and exploring a variety of unpopular possibilities.

The second set of textual fragments is comprised of news articles. Specifically, I focus on three news articles that address different audiences and that point to the complexities and dangers of reading Diana, the huntress of bus drivers, uncritically. Moreover, audiences in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and beyond learned about Diana through news reports, and thus, the way in which this story is told is crucial in understanding Diana.

The last textual fragment is a low-budget film, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* (2013), directed by Ramón Barba Loza. This film further informs and memorializes the murders of the bus drivers, as well as the emailed confession in the borderland that set police authorities on the hunt for an alleged avenger of victimized women.

One crucial piece of context is a history of trade relations between the United States and Mexico. This history pertains to feminicidio, the murder of women, in Ciudad Juárez, and particularly, the murder of women who work in maquiladoras, factories where a variety of commodities are assembled for US consumption. The history of

maquiladoras reveals much about the everyday lives of working class women in Mexico, and at the same time, about the embeddedness of Mexican politics and American quotidian consumption.

1.2 Chapter Breakdown

Now that we have established Diana's mythical role in contemporary Mexico, I will talk about the fragments that I compile and analyze. First, I dedicate a chapter to a history of trade relations between the United States and Mexico, because the maquiladora industry is central to Diana's confession. Maquiladoras are export-assembly plants along the US-Mexico border that employ thousands of women in Ciudad Juárez. Maquiladora employees have been among those victims of feminicide in Ciudad Juárez. The maquiladora is a product of trade relations and, as such, I find it necessary to provide a historical context for Diana that includes maquiladora labor. Thus, this chapter provides a historical, cultural, social, and economic context through which audiences who are unfamiliar with contemporary Mexican civic life might understand the importance of Diana.

I discuss the changes that have taken place in Mexico in the 20th century, focusing primarily on Mexican modernity (1930-1940), the gradual privatization of public sectors (1950-1970), and the maquiladora industry (1960-present) because these three moments shape the contemporary ways in which Diana was interpreted by various audiences. Maquiladoras, assembly-export plants throughout Mexico's northern border, have supplied US consumers a variety of commodities. US consumers do not necessarily have to think about the process behind shopping for basic commodities at larger stores,

like Wal-Mart or Target. They know that there is an entire process behind the production, manufacturing, and movement of goods, but often this process itself is nebulous and reduced to terms that *dehumanize* the process itself. In Mexico, on the other hand, maquiladoras were first conceived of as the epitome, the model, or Mexico's path to development, but eventually, maquiladoras became associated with corruption, abuse, and feminicide, and hence, Diana la Cazadora de Choferes. Around the 1960s, Mexican heads of state argued that relations between the United States and Mexico could be strengthened through trade, and that with mutual economic prosperity, many of the woes of their troublesome history would become no more than that: history. In this chapter, I argue that the North American Free Trade Agreement brought about a variety of unintended changes to Ciudad Juárez, and Mexico broadly. These changes include urbanization, migration, and changes in labor demographics. Thus, the context through which Diana la Cazadora de Choferes is to be understood includes a history of trade between the United States and Mexico. Specifically, the ways in which such polices affect populations in their quotidian, everyday lives.

This history culminates with the passing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). By the time that NAFTA passes, the maquiladora sector has boomed throughout Mexico, and many cities throughout Mexico's northern border are experiencing rapid growth. Maquiladora jobs attracted people from small towns, but also migrations from the Caribbean and Central and South America. NAFTA accelerated growth in the maquiladora sector, and consequently, changes in urban life. Sectors of the population were now vulnerable to specific forms of violence and abuse, from working conditions for maquiladora workers, to misogyny resulting from a crisis in masculinity.

NAFTA's maquiladora jobs were considered feminine. Women joined the workforce and, in many cases, became the primary breadwinner of the family. At the same time, NAFTA coincided with an economic crisis in Mexico that resulted in the loss of jobs for several men and women—both, white-collar and blue-collar jobs—meaning that many men who lost their jobs would find ways to cope, potentially, with feelings of emasculation. Today, many young men find jobs in the narcotics trade sector to be more worthwhile, and even *immediate*, ventures than any other low wage job (if a job is even an option). Specifically, these jobs allow young men not only to recuperate their masculinity through labor, but also to do so in a most violent manner. Thus, in this chapter I theorize the idea of a post-NAFTA Mexico—a concept that others have begun to study, but that I find needs to be expanded in meaningful ways. Dresser (1998) and Wise (1998) defined post-NAFTA Mexico around three major characteristics: the decline of presidential authority, the empowerment of the private sector in otherwise state-owned enterprises, and the alignment of US-interests and Mexican policies (p. 222). I expand their definition of post-NAFTA by including two new characteristics of Mexican contemporary culture: the rhetorical presence of death in everyday civic life (which includes the disposability of populations), and the maximization of dissimulation—meaning—the pretending *not to be* in order to symbolically disappear—a radically suicidal, death drive that seems like a last resort of certain people in Mexico. Disappearances of people are commonplace in Mexico, and if one can feign their unbeing—if one can meet disappearance head on—one might succeed in being unseen.

The second chapter analyzes the specific text of Diana's confession. The connection between the murders and the alleged murderer—Diana—begins with a

confession that was emailed to several news agencies in Ciudad Juárez, including *RadioNet* and *LaPolaka*. No one knows with certainty *who* the author of the confession is. For some, this alone would be confusing. For me, this is an intersection that allows me to study mythology and rhetoric within the context of contemporary Mexico. Myths can be recorded, and while we might grant authorship to Ovid in the Roman Empire and James Cameron in the American Empire, we know that myths themselves are explanatory frameworks—narratives told and passed down, changing and becoming new stories. Rhetoric, traditionally conceived, is concerned with the persuasive appeals made by an individual rhetoric—usually a speaker or a writer. Postmodern and poststructural approaches to rhetoric have moved the field of rhetorical studies away from a primarily speaker and speech approach to the study of rhetoric, and toward other forms of persuasion—from digital images and films, to vernacular texts like tabloids, comic books, and newspapers. Diana's confession comes in the form of an email message. This email message was delivered to news media organizations in Ciudad Juárez. Ciudad Juárez police traced the email to an IP address in El Paso, Texas, though this does not necessarily mean that the email was sent from El Paso. The confession's audience broadened when newspapers decided to publish fragments of the confession. Soon, Ciudad Juárez, El Paso, and audiences globally heard the news of a feminist, vigilante killer of men.

I approach the confession by focusing on Gayatri Spivak's notion of subaltern speech. Spivak argues that the most oppressed women in the colonized world cannot speak and be heard by Westerners (1988). Rather than presenting themselves, these women are often *represented*. Diana's confession appeared to break this understanding of

global oppression. It appeared that a working class woman from one of Ciudad Juárez's *colonias* was speaking and being heard across national borders. On one hand, if we take Spivak at her word that the subaltern cannot—in any case—speak, then Diana's case becomes a matter of figuring out where the break in logic lies—if the subaltern is not speaking, but only appearing to speak, who is representing the subaltern? On the other hand, it could be that the logic itself that guarantees that the subaltern cannot speak was being undone—that liberation was unraveling before the eyes of "'people' and 'subaltern classes'" (p. 79). Here, the desire for liberation pinned itself onto Diana, but this desire alone was not enough to bring about liberation.

The third chapter studies journalists' reports of the two murders of bus drivers and Diana's confession. I focus on these reports because, as I have stated, journalists' role rhetorically is to *represent* and even interpret the events for a variety of audiences. I chose three journalists based on the following criteria: The journalists were not merely parroting the news, but complicating the dominant narrative; the journalists provided a context for their audience, either by describing feminicide in Ciudad Juárez, describing US-Mexico trade, or discussing narcoviolence in the Mexican context; the journalists all wrote to Spanish-speaking audiences, but their respective audiences varied both geographically and demographically.

One journalist, Gloria Castrillón, wrote an article that appeared in a Colombian women's lifestyle magazine, *Cromos*. Castrillón provides her readers a history of feminist activism against feminicide in Ciudad Juárez. The second journalist, Juan Lázaro, writes for Guadalajara's *El Informador*. In his article, Lázaro describes a trip on a bus from Ciudad Juárez's *colonias* to the maquiladoras. In doing so, he explains that is

not difficult to imagine that a bus driver, or a group of bus drivers, might get away with raping women. Finally, Luis Chaparro wrote two articles, one for *Vice México* and one for Ciudad Juárez's *Nuestra Aparente Rendición*.

The rhetoric of these three figures provides a wholesome narrative about Diana, Ciudad Juárez, and about the narratives that audiences were presented. Moreover, all of three of these writers approached the story with a great deal of scrutiny, and were careful to research context regarding violence in Ciudad Juárez, before jumping to conclusions about the case. The last of the three journalists, Chaparro, is concerned that Diana may not be real, and his concern opens up a series of avenues for rhetorical exploration. He explains that Diana cannot be real—that she is a myth in the most pejorative sense—that she is a lie, a fib, a fabrication intended to fool the public. Chaparro interviews several important people in Ciudad Juárez, including the Director of Transportation and the Spokesperson for the Police Department. By the end, Chaparro explains that Diana is real, after all, in the sense that the effect she had on people is more real than the persona behind the confession. Ultimately, Chaparro's style of writing has a certain know-it-all arrogance that ends up painting Mexico and its people as backward, primitive, and gullible—a critique that Chaparro confines to places like Ciudad Juárez, but that can be expanded beyond Ciudad Juárez—and even beyond Mexico.

The fourth chapter examines the rhetoric of Diana by looking specifically at Ramón Barba Loza's film, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* (2013). This made-for-TV film was released in November of 2013, only months after the murders took place. Barba Loza's production company, Max One, specializes in low-budget, made-for-TV films. Specifically, Max One makes films that fit within three genres: acción drama (action),

drama erótico (erotica), and sexy comedia (sexy comedy). These films tend to be "B-rated" films—films that might embarrass those with elite sensibilities—not necessarily because of the taboos of sexuality, but because of the trashy, kitschy aspect behind these films. Still, in my attempt to understand the rhetoric of Diana's confession and the discourse surrounding it, I find this film to be particularly useful.

First, Barba Loza plays a particular and critical role in the everyday, vernacular culture of contemporary Mexico. His films are not blockbuster movies, but they nevertheless speak to concerns that Hollywood does not, and do so critically. Secondly, Barba Loza, unintentionally or not, documents the way in which civic life in Mexico is altered by the militarization of cities. *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* was filmed in Guadalajara, Jalisco and Naucalpan, near Mexico City. Max One is headquartered in Guadalajara, the same city where Juan Lázaro's article is published. There, citizens are presented the mundane, everyday places of violence: news stands, taco stands, maquiladoras, bus terminals, and police stations. I do not mean that these are necessarily the exact places where violence occurs, rather, that these are not film studio sets, but the *real* streets—where audiences are invited to imagine that violence takes place. Moreover, the film documents the extent to which cities are indeed militarized. Audiences follow military police vehicles into the colonias where Diana is found and arrested. Then, audiences see how Diana is taken into custody, surrounded by men in SWAT gear. During another scene, two bus drivers are arrested and held in custody—not in a studio set designed to look like a prison, but in an actual prison. Barba Loza had the help of three precincts (including 14 police officers from zones 18, 13, and 26 of Naucalpan's Municipal Police) in the making of this film. So, unintentionally, viewers are presented a

fictionalized account of a *real* story, in a set that is not a set at all, but a series of urban locations.

My criticism of the rhetoric of the film focuses on two observations. First, the film is narrated from the point of view of a male detective, Agente Rodríguez. This frame effectively disallows Diana—even a fictional, *represented* Diana—from telling her own narrative, and, instead, audiences are told that Rodríguez's interpretation of Diana is the best, most appropriate way to memorialize Diana. Thinking through Spivak's notion of subaltern speech, it is evident that Diana is not narrating her own liberation, but, instead, has been appropriated by violent, masculine discourse that *depoliticizes* her story and experience. Thus, Diana's story, unlike the story of vengeance that circulated in newspapers, loses its political, more radical edge, and instead is rearticulated as a reification of the status quo.

My second observation has to do with the specific representation of Diana herself. In film criticism, *femme fatale* archetypes appear across cultures and times. Femme fatales are murderous or deadly women—female characters who lure men, usually through sexual appeal, and ultimately kill, consume, or symbolically destroy male characters. Mary Anne Doane (1991) explains that the femme fatale is the illegible, unpredictable, and ambivalent figure whose deadliness and threat to others is an overrepresentation of her body. Doane writes that "if the femme fatale overrepresents that body it is because she is attributed with a body which is itself given agency independently of consciousness. In a sense, she has power *despite herself*" (p. 2). Symbolically, as Constance Penley shows, the femme fatale can be associated with the *vagina dentata*—the archetypal fear of castration or emasculation posed by a woman

engaging in traditionally masculine activities. These archetypes should not be used as essentialist explanatory tools that serve to place women within patriarchy, but rather, to call attention to the ways in which patriarchal ideologies are existent, active, and powerful in everyday life. In Mexico specifically, femme fatales have been associated with historical crises in masculinity since Mexico's Golden Age of cinema, because women come to be portrayed and understood as dangerous to patriarchal social order. Patricia Torres San Martín (2011), for example, has analyzed Mexican films of the 1940s and argued that femme fatales, in this context, have served to reinforce traditional, masculine values (p. 19). Moreover, women who join the workforce, for example, have to become like men in the sense that they are expected to succeed. Success often comes with competition, and a woman who defeats a man comes to be understood—not as a male counterpart who is an equal but as both a symbolic and, indeed, real threat. In an immediate sense, such a woman dispossesses a man of a specific form of power—employment. In another sense, this woman becomes symbolic of the contemporary issues of modern society.

My final critique of the film is that death is treated as an uneven, unequal thing. That is, the death of one person is not the same as the death of another person—and conversely, the life of one person, which can be terminated, is not valued equally to the life of another. The film focuses on the deaths of the two bus drivers Diana murdered. The film pays very little attention to the deaths of hundreds of women Diana, the confessor, claims to have avenged. The film ends with a reconciliation between the state and Diana: Belmont resigns as Chief of Police, Rodríguez personally frees Diana from prison, and Diana, surprised, thanks and embraces Rodríguez (and this is the final scene).

The deaths of women—even hundreds of women—do not garner the same attention in the film as the deaths of two bus drivers. The dead women of Juárez, thus, are an after thought.

Finally, in this dissertation I will argue that Diana was a glimmer of hope—that people's hopes clung on to the idea of a heroic and just avenger. Moreover, this desire for justice did not go unexamined, as soon, people had to come face to face with the reality of righteous violence. For audiences outside of the border metropolis, Diana serves as a particular moment in time—an event—that rhetorical scholars can investigate in order to learn more about Mexican civic, rhetorical life. Thus, this dissertation will contribute to rhetorical criticism by theorizing new concepts about life, death, and myth in Mexico, while at the same time, presenting audiences a canon or tradition that may be unfamiliar. These contributions are invaluable in the context of globalization—a moment when everyday people are required to know more about, and be sensitive to, otherness and difference.

CHAPTER 2

MEXICO'S POSTDEVELOPMENTALIST RHETORICAL CRISES: QUOTIDIAN LIFE AND DEATH

2.1 Locating NAFTA's "Freedom"

By the late 2010s, the degree of economic interdependence and interpenetration throughout the world was undeniably high. Multinational corporations, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), enjoyed freedom of mobility across international borders, as the gradual "liberalization" of global markets facilitated international trade by reducing or eliminating trade tariffs and taxes, among other barriers. Since 2002, the European Union has become both, a model and an experiment in economic policy. Across the Atlantic, the United States has individual Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Australia, Bahrain, Chile, Colombia, Israel, Jordan, Korea, Morocco, Oman, Panama, Peru, and Singapore (US Department of Commerce). Additionally, the United States is a member of two free trade zones, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement; which includes Mexico and Canada) and DR-CAFTA (Central American Free Trade Agreement, which includes Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua). Additionally, the United States was expected to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) under the Obama administration, and engage in free trade with nations like Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam. The United States pulled out of TPP in

January of 2017, and President Trump seems unlikely to support this trade partnership, which would theoretically create the largest free-trade zone in the world (Granville, 2017).

Despite the free movement of goods and capital, the movement of people is not exactly *free*. Kent A. Ono (2012), for example, has argued that communication scholars engaging immigration research should attend to “the larger, geopolitical, economic, and social contexts existing today” (p. 134). Furthermore, Ono explains that in the current state of modernity, it is sometimes difficult to recall that human migration is a fundamental freedom—a right that now appears to pertain mostly to the mobility of corporate interests (p. 138-139). The paradox of corporate mobility across borders, and restricted mobility of persons “is definitive of neoliberalism—the unfettered flexibility of corporations and nation-states to move freely in and outside of hemispheres, while working ceaselessly to control or gain control of the flow of people, laborers, and goods, in and outside of sovereign nation-states” (p. 139).

Thus, it is also noteworthy that the United States is currently negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the European Union. Mexico is not involved in this negotiation, and, simultaneously, Mexico’s involvement in NAFTA limits their involvement in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a proposed FTA among Asian nations that is expected to substitute for TTP, which no longer includes American nations (US Department of Commerce). Two things are evident: 1) the United States enjoys, if not more trade mobility outside of NAFTA than Mexico, then certainly mobility within specific markets like the European Union, and 2) the United States, or now, the Trump administration, privileges TTIP over TPP,

whereas the Obama administration considered the two to be companion FTAs that aimed to place the United States at the center of global trade.

FTAs create interdependency for all parties involved: individual workers, businesses, and national economies. Despite having multiple FTAs throughout the world, the United States has a particular, and I argue exceptional, relationship with Mexico through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).[13] According to the Department of Commerce, 43% of US exports for 2012 (worth approximately $599.5 billion) went to Mexico and Canada. In 2012, the United States reported a $20.9 billion trade surplus. Most importantly, between 1994 (the year that NAFTA began) and 2012, Mexico's investment in the United States has increased by 819%, compared to 448% investment growth by non-NAFTA countries (US Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, 2013). This means that the US benefits from trade with Mexico—and that if this trade were abandoned without a serious trade partner to supplement Mexico, the United States might suffer economically.

The dominant cultural narrative in the United States is that Mexico *depends* or *relies* on the United States, economically. Discourses on immigration tend to reinforce this narrative—a narrative that focuses on how the United States is affected by Mexico's perceived poverty, and not on the actual economic, material conditions in Mexico. What this narrative fails to account for is the dependency of the US economy on Mexican labor (both migrant labor, but also other forms of labor, such as maquiladora labor and even the labor of black markets like narcotics trade) in addition to Mexican investments. NAFTA

[13] Julie Hirschfield Davis and Alan Rappeport (2017) explain that the campaign promise to repeal NAFTA may be delayed, if not completely abandoned: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/30/business/nafta-trade-deal-trump.html

was a common theme throughout the 2016 American presidential election campaign rhetoric, and despite the Department of Commerce's own report on NAFTA's condition, candidates either referred to NAFTA as a "failure" or a "disaster," or had to address NAFTA as such. Donald Trump, for example, tweeted that NAFTA would either be renegotiated or torn apart, something that researchers argue would result in the loss, not creation, of American jobs (Walker, 2017).

Donald Trump's attitude toward FTAs has little to do with the actual condition of the economy (the United States economy, despite what Trump says, is one of the best in the world—one that is already "great"), and more to do with unintended consequences of uneven global development, such as human migrations and consequent, populist xenophobias. For example, the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, known as "Brexit," is perhaps the first European attempt at *independence* from global markets since the celebrated European Union (of course, the United Kingdom never dropped its currency in favor of the Euro). The vote to exit failed to take into account the way in which the United Kingdom's own economic prosperity rests on European trade. Such an attitude, I argue, would have been considered antiprogressive only decades ago, when the economies considered "backward" were those socialist economies, experimental in their own way, that refused to "tear down" their walls and participate in global economic trade.

Today, populist movements are on the rise, again, not only in the United States with the election of Donald Trump, who scapegoated Mexicans and Muslims, but also in movements like the United Kingdom's Brexit. Brexit was led by a conservative movement focused on scapegoating migrants to the United Kingdom, particularly

Muslims and Middle Eastern migrants. Thus, both US and UK populism relied heavily on the scapegoating of racialized migrant groups. Both US and UK populism aimed at isolationism from the rest of the world. Trump also talked arrogantly about the US pulling out of NATO, while Brexit's rhetoric also promised autonomy from foreign, global economic control—something that appears to be impossible without either *imperial* domination of other nations, or complete isolation from the world, as was the case with Cuba, Venezuela (momentarily, and exceptionally), and North Korea. The *free trade* once celebrated in NAFTA is at a crossroads, as the rhetoric of populist isolationism and national independence appears in the United States becomes a voice that can no longer be ignored. In what follows, I aim to provide a context for some of the unintended, unexpected, and problematic consequences of international trade in our own neighborhood—in our own backyard: the Mexico-United States border—in order to then, in the remainder of this dissertation, describe the rhetorical importance of Diana the hunter of bus drivers.

Immediately after NAFTA, the United States experienced economic prosperity, marked by the surplus at the end of the Clinton administration—a surplus that is often dissociated from FTAs. Of course, I do not want to suggest a causal link between NAFTA and economic prosperity. Instead, I want to discuss the rhetorical, persuasive role of events occurring in temporal sequence—I want to suggest that, in terms of memory, it is difficult to dissociate highs and lows from the politics we *live*. Most importantly, the promise of development for countries such as Mexico actually turned out to be devastating. Far from claiming that NAFTA caused a variety of troubles that I will discuss, I argue that the post-NAFTA era in Mexico (1994-present) is marked by five

characteristics: an ongoing economic crisis, the decline of presidential authority (culminating in Peña Nieto and even Trump, thinking transnationally), the memory of the 1917 Constitution in light of NAFTA (which, if ignored during the Zapatista uprising of the 1990s, resurged during the Bicentennial celebrations), and the disposability of populations (immigrants, intellectuals, prisoners and criminals, and laborers—in particular female maquiladora employees who tend to also be immigrants, and who tend to be discursively conflated with sex workers), and a suicidal death drive—a desire to dissimulate—a desire to disappear. The first three characteristics of this post-NAFTA era are credited to Dresser (1998) and Wise (1998). However, I find that they were unable to foresee that this era would also be remembered as one of the most violent times in Mexican history. Thus, I include the latter two characteristics and use the case of Diana the of bus drivers in order to unravel some of the complexities therein.

In what follows, I will recount a rhetorical history of NAFTA, paying close attention to the ways in which NAFTA influenced public, civic life—including NAFTA's role in the maquiladora sector. Additionally, I will show some of the concerns that were discussed leading up to NAFTA (both in Mexico and in the United States), paying attention to the ways in which they resonate in the present—and in particular, in reference to the case of Diana in Ciudad Juárez.[14] The maquiladora sector is of particular importance because Diana claimed to avenge women who were maquiladora employees, and because this type of labor boomed following the inception of NAFTA.

NAFTA has been subject to controversy since it was first proposed in the early 1990s. Generally, US Democrats and some liberals supported the agreement because free

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[14] While Canada is undoubtedly an important member of NAFTA, I will concern myself primarily with the interactions across the Mexico-United States border.

trade implied that the United States could help Mexico develop into modern a democracy. Republicans, on the other hand, argued that Mexico was not a modern democracy (in the early 1990s) and that the United States should not engage in *free* trade with an *unfree* nation (Mazza, 2001). Today, NAFTA is not held with the high regard of the 1990s, as is most evident in campaign rhetoric. For example, Hillary Clinton, once a supporter of NAFTA, received a lot of criticism for her role in passing the agreement (see Margolis, 2016). Another example of NAFTA as an alleged failed policy is Mexico's economic crisis. Mexico experienced a historic and devastating economic crisis following the inception of NAFTA—a crisis from which Mexico has never recovered and which has worsened in the last years. Of course, this is not to say that NAFTA is necessarily a cause. For example, Manuel Pastor, Jr. (2002) describes that Mexico as "the Latin American reformer once celebrated as the prime example of neoliberal success," and further argues that Mexico's crisis is due to what he calls "'control sovereignty'—the unforgiving discipline of an international market punished Mexico" (p. 210). Pastor explains that NAFTA was "more about investments than markets, more about capital than trade," and explains that apart from NAFTA, a series of other events aligned in order to create chaos and confusion in Mexico.[15]

[15] Pastor (2002) writes: "[…] the foreign direct investment (FDI) that Mexico sought was less eager to make a long term commitment and the bulk of incoming capital during the run-up to NAFTA's adoption consisted of highly mobile portfolio investments. While foreign direct investment in actual production facilities increased a healthy 57.6 per cent from 1989 to 1993, the more mobile portfolio investment rose by more than 8,000 per cent. By 1993, portfolio investments accounted for 86.8 per cent of total foreign direct investment in Mexico, compared to just 11.3 per cent in 1989 […] Essentially, the authorities had surrendered control in order to gain credibility, by becoming so open to volatile portfolio investment […] the flow of external finance began to dry up in 1994, partly as a result of high interest rates in the US. Equally influential were the political crises associated with the Chiapas uprising […], the assassination of PRI presidential

Support for NAFTA in Mexico came primarily from the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party), Mexico's predominant conservative, *neoliberal* party (for a detailed discussion of neoliberalism in Mexico, see Dresser & Wise, 1998; Mazza, 2001; Pazos, 1976; and Roett, 1996). NAFTA's implementation was mostly backed by the idea that Mexico could become economically and materially *developed*—like the United States. Specifically, that through the privatization of nationalized sectors of the country (such as petroleum, banking, and telecommunications) Mexico would enter the global, free market and become a competitive economic force.[16] The PRI leaders, known as "neoliberales," or "nuevos liberals," *neoliberals* and/or "tecnócratas," *technocrats*, were those heads of state, like Carlos Salinas de Gortari, who held office in Mexico during the latter half of the 20th century and whose education in elite universities provided the party an ethos of modernity and progress.[17]

Opposition to NAFTA came from several places. Most notably, Comandanta Ramona and Subcomandante Marcos—the leaders of the Zapatista Army of National

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candidate Luis Colosio in March 1994, and the uncertainties associated with the national elections held in August of the same year" (p. 213).

[16] Pertróleos Mexicanos, Pemex, continues to be a state-owned petroleum company. Banking and communications, on the other hand, have been both nationalized and privatized. In 1982, the Portillo administration nationalized all private banking. Ten years later, in 1992, the Salinas de Gortari administration decided to reprivatize this sector. Telefonos Mexico, Telmex, was a government monopoly from 1972 to 1990, when it was taken over by Carlos Slim, France Télécom, and Southwestern Bell.

[17] Luis Echeverría, Mexican president from 1970-1976, joined Mexico's National Autonomous University's (UNAM) faculty in 1947, where he taught political theory. José López Portillo (in office 1976-1982) held a law degree, also from UNAM. Miguel de la Madrid (in office 1982-1988) and Carlos Salinas de Gortari (in office 1988-1994) studied in Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Miguel de la Madrid holds a master's degree in Public Administration, and Carlos Salinas de Gortari holds a degree in Economics from UNAM (1970). Salinas then acquired two masters' degrees from Harvard University, one in Public Administration (1973) and one in Political Economy (1976). Salinas then earned a PhD from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government in 1978.

Liberation (EZLN). EZLN, also known as the Zapatistas, are a leftist, paramilitary organization based in the state of Chiapas. EZLN declared war on the Mexican federal government on the day that NAFTA came into effect—January 1, 1994. EZLN interpreted NAFTA as a violation of Mexico's 1917 Constitution. Specifically, the 1917 Constitution, which was ratified after Mexico's Revolutionary War, protected Mexico's indigenous and agricultural lands from *haciendados*—wealthy landowners—and sought to redistribute lands among citizens. NAFTA, in the eyes of EZLN, widened the gap between Mexico's rich and poor, and facilitated foreign extraction of Mexico's natural resources.

Thus, opposition to NAFTA also came from environmentalist groups who may not have been directly concerned with the proper or improper ways of bringing about economic development. These groups were instead concerned with pointing out some of the potential environmental problems that NAFTA might bring about. Environmentalists, for example, highlighted the problem in allowing the free movement of manufactured goods, but not the free movement of people—which could potentially lead to large numbers of undocumented laborers drawn to farther developed places.

All of these groups made important arguments. On one hand, Mexico generally desires to become a developed nation—on par with its northern neighbor, the United States. And even while many Mexicans embrace and celebrate a traditional notion of a free, independent, decolonized, indigenous Mexico, many other Mexicans desire to become like the rest of the developed world (not that these two are necessarily opposites). On the other hand, Mexico's economy is not independent or self-sufficient—and this is a point that Diana la Cazadora de Choferes makes—this is something that Diana la

Cazadora de Choferes demonstrates. Mexico's economy, as is the case with many countries, is *interdependent* on the economies of other countries (if not on the world economy itself). Acknowledging this requires that issues like immigration, narcotics trade, militarization, security, surveillance, feminicide, and *developmentalism* itself be treated not as national problems, but as global problems.

In the United States, conservative critics of NAFTA also made crucial arguments. At the time of NAFTA's implementation, the same party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (or PRI), had occupied Mexico's presidency for 65 years.[18] But this was not the only reason that Republicans considered Mexico a weak democracy or an *unfree* nation. The election of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (who held office from 1988-1994) was highly controversial. Enrique Krauze (1998), a Mexican historian, recalls that, not only was this the closest election since 1917 (Salinas won with 50.7% of the vote), but there was a "system failure," a crisis, where the vote-counting computers crashed during the live, televised election, creating mass confusion and collective distrust in the political system.[19]

Much of the discourse surrounding NAFTA in Mexico appealed to the rhetorical notion of crisis or apocalypse. After all, NAFTA signaled the end of an era and the simultaneous discomfort and uncertainty felt when entering a new, unknown era. Many of the signs were seen and felt immediately. The immediate signs, for example, included

[18] The PRI won national presidential elections from 1929 to 2000, holding the office uninterruptedly for 71 years, until the election of Vicente Fox. Although the PRI is a member of the Socialist International, they are a center-right party. PRI candidates often align with traditional, conservative, Catholic values.
[19] Following the election, congress voted to destroy the ballots, creating distrust among voters. Furthermore, in 2005, Miguel de la Madrid, president during the 1988 election, admitted that the PRI lost the election—a comment which he later retracted and which the PRI attributed to his old age.

the controversial election of Salinas in 1988. The implementation of NAFTA in January of 1994 would also mark the subsequent declaration of war on behalf of EZLN. Not long after Salinas came to power, Mexican publics witnessed the televised assassination of PRI candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio on March 23, 1994.[20] Most importantly, Mexico would enter an economic crisis within a year NAFTA, known as the Peso Crisis and the December Mistake of 1994.

Even though Mexican citizens were exposed to the political discourses (PRI, NAFTA, Colosio, Zapatistas), the economic discourses could be verified by their everyday experience in acquiring, or not acquiring, something as basic as groceries—*material* sustenance. In other words, while the political crisis and the economic crisis may be the same thing, the *persuasion*, the appeals to populism separated the political crisis from the economic crisis. The economic crisis transcended political rhetoric in at least one important way: regardless of what politicians said, the cost of living was rising and *mathematics* became its own quotidian, economic rhetoric. The exchange rate between Mexican pesos (MXN) and US dollars (USD) was known to most, if not all, living in Mexico and day after day, Mexicans awoke to a new exchange rate and a new cost of living. Leading up to the 2016 election in the United States, for example, Dulce Olvera warns Mexicans to forget about 1994 and pay attention to a then-potential Trump victory, which she claims, would be more devastating. Citing Pablo Cotler Ávalos, Chair

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[20] Colosio was assassinated in Lomas Taurinas, a poor neighborhood in Tijuana, Baja California Norte, Mexico—on the border with California. Mario Aburto Martínez, the gunman, was arrested and claims to have acted alone, but suspicion regarding a cover up arose when Aburto was shown to the media: the police cut his hair, shaved, and bathed him—altering his appearance and, thus, calling into question whether Aburto was the same person seen firing on Colosio. Carlos Bolado's film, *Colosio: El Asesinato* (2012), chronicles the mystery surrounding the investigation.

of the Economics Department in Mexico's Universidad Iberoamericana, she explains that in December 1994, one US dollar equaled 3.90 pesos, and in September 2016, the number is 19.82. Furthermore, Cotler Ávalos claims that a Trump victory could raise the dollar to 22-23 pesos, which would mean a rise in the cost of living, a rise in interest rates, an increase in Mexico's foreign debt, and a decrease in consumer spending.

The gradual signs, on the other hand, would not be recognized immediately. In order to recognize the gradual signs that signaled a new era, I move from thinking about crisis discourse as asking for immediate action toward thinking about crisis as yet another abstraction that has become institutionalized at the national level. The PRI, for example, institutionalized the notion of revolution in the hope of staying true to the post-revolutionary and constitutional ideals of early 20th-century Mexico. But revolution stops being revolution when it is institutionalized—it becomes a new, unrecognizable thing—a political party that in a spectacular fashion appears to assassinate its own candidates, to ignore the populist demands, and that finally loses elections after nearly a century of control. The institutionalization of revolution eventually became the opposite of the postrevolutionary tenets, and NAFTA became a way for indigenous lands to be sacrificed in the name of development and modernity. Within this context, Diana la Cazadora de Choferes temporarily fills a gap, and at the same time, points people's attention to ways in which they are oppressed in real, but subtle ways. Specifically, she points to the ways in which certain forms of oppression have been accepted and even normalized.

In seeking to understand the new era, *post-NAFTA developmentalism*, I move from reading along the grain of both discourses—*priista* discourses of development and

Zapatista discourses of liberation—in order to ask how laborers, the unspoken subject of capitalist development (who are also citizens and consumers), accept and reject the intended and unintended manifestations of modern development. I am particularly interested in violence as an unintended manifestation of development that modernity's discourses struggle to account for. Violence has dramatically increased in Mexico since 1993. Moreover, violence and visuality go hand-in-hand in Mexican modernity—from Colosio's televised assassination to the iconic images of clandestine graves (including human skeletons) in Raul Salinas's ranch. Diana la Cazadora de Choferes, I argue, cannot be completely understood without taking into account this specific context because she emerges from this context—from violence, oppression, and mediated spectacle.

Within the context of violence in modern Mexico, violence against women has to be accounted for as a particular phenomenon (see Monárrez). First, domestic violence moves from the private sphere to the public sphere, and as a result, discourses about women's lives, death, and safety emerge throughout Mexico, resulting first in the denial of feminicide, but ultimately in the creation of legal categories that aim to identify murders of women as specific forms of homicide. Violence against women increases at a time when Mexico's northern border experiences urbanization, migration, and changing labor demographics (men experience unemployment, and women become the family breadwinner by working in maquiladoras). NAFTA plays an important role, then, in the urbanization of Mexico's northern border, as well as in changing the sociocultural labor dynamics in Ciudad Juárez. Additionally, feminicidio in Ciudad Juárez, 1993, coincides with NAFTA, 1994 (see Fregoso). NAFTA, feminicidio, and urbanization are the setting for a rhetorical analysis of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes, a text (or, rather, a version of

a fragmented text) that I, as critic, have assembled from cultural fragments. Following Lloyd Bitzer's (1973) rhetorical situation, I find it crucial to emphasize that contexts, discourses, and situations—together—compose what I call Diana la Cazadora de Choferes. Diana is composed of an event and its report (news discourse), a variety of myths, a confession, popular culture fragments like a film about Diana and a talk show's interest in this case, and finally my own role as a cultural critic using the rhetorical field methods within the border metropolis itself—Ciudad Juárez-El Paso.

2.2 Maquiladoras and *Gendered* Labor

While I do not argue that NAFTA is the cause of violence (and, conversely, violence the effect or result of NAFTA), I do argue that violence increased in this sector in the decades after NAFTA and that the maquiladora sector employed groups of people who, traditionally, did not leave their homes to work, namely women. Secondly, the boom in manufacturing and assembly, particularly in the maquiladora sector, created the incentive for people from different parts of Mexico (as well as the Caribbean, Central and South America) to migrate to the border regions of northern Mexico—resulting in rapid urbanization. Lastly, while crime certainly existed before NAFTA, the rise of violent crime (specifically, the rise of murders committed in tandem with extreme sexual violence) in these new urban centers grew at a rate that the local government could not competently address. In other words, the state was ill equipped to respond and deter organized crime, which in turn allowed narcotics cartels and organized crime syndicates greater power, as they took this opportunity to expand their operations and enterprises.

Maquiladora labor has supplied the United States with a vast number of

commodities. The maquiladora industry, an industry that is not pure *production*, but assembly and export, has been linked to a wave of gender violence and feminicidio from its origin. Feminicidio, the killing of women because they are women, has become synonymous with the rhetorics of economic development in Ciudad Juárez. Femicide (and not feminicide) is a term that has been used by US scholars like Diana Russell, Roberta Harmes, and Jill Radford and usually refers to a phenomenon of "the Third World."[21] Julia Monárrez Fragoso (2002) and Diana Washington Valdez (2002) have also used the term femicide, though their context is Mexico—specifically. Feminicide and feminicidio are terms used by scholars like Michelle Holling, Rosa Linda Fregoso, Melissa Wright, and Marcela Lagarde. A major difference between the two terms, femicide and feminicide, is mainly a difference of legal context. Russell, Harmes, and Radford refer to femicide as the killing of a woman because she is a woman, whereas, for Fregoso, Wright, and Lagarde, feminicide is a legal category or crime, a type of homicide that specifies the gender of the victim, but not that the victim is killed because she is a woman.

Michelle Holling studies *feminicidio testimonios* as rhetorical events in which publics are transformed into witnesses of violence. She studies the ways in which collective memories around these misogynist deaths in Mexico have impacted the identifications of women in Ciudad Juárez with violence itself. Others like Kathleen Staudt, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, and Sergio González use the term femicide while acknowledging that they refer to, essentially, the same phenomenon. Staudt prefers the

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[21] Apart from the absence of feminicide in the Mexican context, this collection also divides the world using what Shohat and Stam (1994) have referred to as “the myth of the West,” which complicates the idea of the so-called “Third World” by critiquing “the triumphalist discourse of Plato-to-NATO Eurocentrism” (p. 14).

term *female homicide*, because the term femicide insinuates a culture different from *our own*. Femicide, in creating a voyeur, also obscures our own woman-hating practices. Staudt (2008) writes: “with the world’s eyes on Juárez, the ordinariness of women-killing is obfuscated. And with all the focus on the rape and mutilation of murder victims, a third of the total presumably murdered at the hands of strangers, people miss the other two-thirds” (p. 2). This point should not be taken lightly. Femincidio, as real as it is, is also a spectacle, and the neon lights that draw the bored adventurer into the alleys of the once murder capital of the world can blind us to the ordinariness of gender violence that results in death—not just in Mexico.

Following their steps, I will use the term *feminicide* because I find that it refers specifically to a Mexican and Latin American phenomenon that I attempt to place within larger violent contexts—*retórica moribunda*. As a critical rhetorician, I cannot treat the death of women because they are women as another form of death. It is a sexist, misogynist, patriarchal form of death. And while it is easy to type these words and point fingers, it is far more difficult to see the ways in which one is implicated in sexism, misogyny, and patriarchy.

Still, I will alternate between the terms depending on the topics I am discussing—some of which are legal discourses and some of which are sociological or anthropological discourses—but what they have in common is that they attempt to describe the specific killing of women as a social problem that government authorities struggle to deter. Feminicide is a phenomenon that has become inextricably associated with the US-Mexico border, with transnational and intranational migrations, with the free trade of late-modernity, and with the interdependence of the US and Mexican economies—

particularly since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was passed. Therefore, I place feminicide into two crucial contexts and discourses: the "neoliberal turn" in Mexican politics that NAFTA represents (Mazza, 2001; Roett, 1996) and the subsequent maquiladora industry as the simultaneous material and mythic site of feminicide. The ways in which feminicide is implicated in the maquiladora sector has caught the attention of many scholars, even before NAFTA's policies institutionalized the border as a corridor of transborder foreign trade (Salzinger, 2003). Therefore, before I will discuss the violence in contemporary, modern and late-modern Mexico, it is crucial to explain what Mexico and US-Mexico relations were like before NAFTA by analyzing the changes that led to the contemporary state of trade politics in Ciudad Juárez. I will not use an historical approach, but, instead, will employ a critical genealogical approach that intercultural, rhetorical scholars Hasian and McFarlane (2013) use. They use this approach because it "does not try to provide readers with some single, linear, accurate description of things or events, but instead tries to explain why certain descriptions gained resonance in persuasive elite and public circles" (p. 32). A genealogical approach responds to epistemological critiques presented by Friedrich Nietzsche's (1887) *On the Genealogy of Morals* and Michel Foucault's (1977) "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." Nietzsche, for example, refers to psychologists as "historians of morality," meaning to call attention to the way in which purely historical methods cannot capture some of the more spiritual aspects of culture and everyday life (p. 461). Nietzsche's subtitled "polemic" is intended to poke fun at the attempt to historicize morality. Foucault (1977), following this vein, advocates for an approach that disjoints criticism from morality, while also calling attention to the relations of power, and the ways in which power

operates in specific times. Of genealogy, he writes:

> Genealogy does not oppose itself to history as the lofty and profound gaze of the philosopher might compare to the molelike perspective of the scholar; on the contrary, it rejects the metahistorical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies. It opposes itself to the search for "origins." (p. 140)

2.3 Mexico-US Trade Relations Since 1960

One of the best ways to *imagine* Mexico-US relations is by observing the economies and crises of both countries (Pazos, 1976). It seems that if the US and Mexico are experiencing positive economies, their relationships appear to blossom (Roett, 1996). It also appears that when both countries experience a crisis, not only economic but spiritual, both countries ache (Pazos, 1976). Choosing a moment to begin this genealogy is itself a challenge. Thus, I want to think about the relationship between the United States and Mexico in terms of modernity. Additionally, the area where Diana la Cazadora de Choferes emerges has been the site of much exchange between the United States and Mexico. Indeed, many only refer to this metropolis as a place of transition—as a place to pass through, and not as a destination in and of itself. Therefore, I like to think of this metropolis as a unit—a unit that several dominant discourses aim to divide, but that is ultimately unified by the importance of US-Mexico relations. Therefore, I will spend some time explaining the way in which these cities, which were once a single city, have been central to the formation of national identities for both Mexico and the United States, culminating in Diana la Cazadora de Choferes.

For one thing, modernity, despite having distinct characteristics in different national and cultural contexts, is a phenomenon that, for better or worse, connects the

economies, cultures, workers, and societies of various nations. Mexico and the United States can be considered nations under the modern concept of *sovereignty*.[22] For Mexico, this more-or-less began in the late 1920s with the end of the Mexican Revolution. However, the 1920s and the 1930s were also periods of material and spiritual reconstruction for Mexico. Meanwhile, more than 500,000 Mexicans were voluntarily and forcibly "repatriated" to Mexico from the United States, accounting for approximately one third of the Mexicans living in the United States at the time (Balderrama & Rodríguez, 2006, p. 13; Ngai, 2004).

Only a decade later, Mexican president Manuel Ávila Camacho and United States president Franklin D. Roosevelt would discuss Mexico's role as part of the Allies in World War II alongside discussions about the Bracero Program. In other words, while Mexico's role in World War II was not as large (or remembered) as the role of the United States, its involvement in the infrastructure of the United States tends to be overlooked. From 1942 to 1964, the Bracero Program invited Mexicans into the United States labor force. The Bracero Program contracted men, exclusively, and this will be crucial to remember because, as the Bracero Program was dismantled and Mexican men working in the United States had to return to Mexico, many attempted to create maquiladora jobs for men returning to Mexico. Women, however, took up the jobs. This was in part because some men considered maquiladora labor feminine, and in part because maquiladoras preferred to employ women—as I will explain.

During the Bracero years, US General Attorney Herbert Brownell and the

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[22] Benedict Anderson's (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* helped me think through the concept of nation as it pertains to modernity.

Director of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service, Joseph Swing, started Operation Wetback (Lytle Hernández, 2006, pp. 421-2). By 1954, Operation Wetback was implemented as a method of stopping illegal immigration from Mexico to the United States. However, one of the problems that arose with Operation Wetback is that those enforcing it found it difficult to differentiate between *legal braceros* and those who would become known as *wetbacks*. The term *wetback* became a pejorative term used to describe, initially, undocumented immigrants, but then later other Mexicans. Furthermore, Operation Wetback came under criticism for abrogating the civil rights of undocumented Mexicans, as well as for deporting migrants to strange or unfamiliar parts of Mexico, often far from where the migrants first came.

In 1961, Mexico introduced Programa Nacional Fronterizo (PRONAF) (Wilson, 1992, p. 36). This program was headed by Ciudad Juárez businessman Antonio Bermúdez and had the support of Mexican president Adolfo López Mateos. PRONAF's goal was to revitalize Mexico's northern border through the introduction of *proto*-maquiladoras, not simply as assembly-export plants, but as industrial parks that would be the center of modern, industrial life. Bermúdez's vision of Ciudad Juárez was for a city that contained industrial parks that would produce domestic goods for domestic consumption (i.e., not export). In fact, the maquiladora, which would later become the icon of Mexican prosperity and development, did not begin to be seen as such until the years that would follow. Bermúdez organized a team of architects from Mexico City to design the industrial parks and the surrounding neighborhoods where the workforce lived.

This program failed for a few reasons. First, as Patricia Wilson (1992) argues, the "industrial parks that Bermúdez envisioned filled with Mexican factories producing"

goods for the border region never actually materialized as only a fraction of these products would remain in Mexico (p. 36). A second reason for PRONAF's failure has to do with American policies. In 1964, the United States ended the Bracero Program, which had been instrumental in supplying the United States with manual labor for 22 years, from 1942 to 1964. It is calculated that the Bracero Program allowed for the migration of more than 4 million Mexican guest workers (Villafañe, 2004). The end of the Bracero Program meant that many Mexican laborers would either return to Mexico and seek employment there or that Mexican laborers would have to risk remaining in the United States as undocumented immigrants, *illegal aliens,* or *wetbacks*. During the Bracero years, many Mexicans attained permanent residence, but the number of undocumented Mexicans significantly increased in the years following the end of the Program.

Although PRONAF failed to establish the material infrastructure for laborers that Bermúdez envisioned, the maquiladoras continued operating. One of the major cultural issues that that existed in maquiladora labor since its beginnings in the 1960s is a gendered division of labor. The braceros who worked in the United States and sent remittances—a portion of their income—to their families in Mexico were predominantly male. This labor often involved being outdoors for extended periods of time under extreme weather conditions. This is not to say that women could not or did not engage in this type of extreme physical labor. It is to say that the Bracero Program contracted men exclusively, leading women and children sometimes to migrate alongside the male braceros—a common practice that contributed to the logics that supported Operation Wetback (De la Cruz, 2014). Upon returning to Mexico, many of these new maquiladora jobs were taken by women. This meant, as we will see, that managers could also pay

women lower wages—a practice that was as common in northern Mexico as it is throughout the United States, where equal pay for equal work is continues to be a far off fantasy.

2.4 Border Industrialization Program

One response to the end of the Bracero Program was Mexico's Border Industrialization Program (BIP). This program was introduced in 1965 and aimed to sustain Mexico's economy. Northern Mexico began participating in and depending on foreign economies more than before, as the BIP gave preference to border cities. Initial economic success and employment also meant that many would flock toward the border. At the same time, the participation of Northern Mexico in Central Mexico's economy decreased, further separating the three regions. Victor López Villafañe (2004), for example, argues that Mexico's BIP marks an important moment in Mexican history, because the border region separated itself from the economic dynamics of the rest of the country "with the purpose of attending to the unemployment created by the ending of the Bracero Program and the growing influx of Mexicans who migrated to the U.S." (p. 676). Between 1967 and 1976, the number of maquiladoras in Northern Mexico grew from 57 to 552, and by 1981 over 600 maquiladoras had been established in Mexico—90% of them along the border region (Seligson & Williams, 1981, p. 1). Furthermore, the demographics inside these maquiladoras generated social and cultural changes that affected the everyday functions of Mexican society in unpredictable and unprecedented ways.

Seligson and Williams conducted crucial ethnographic fieldwork in Mexican

border region maquiladoras during the BIP years. This ethnography reveals something that a simple survey cannot reveal—the everyday misogynist practices that Mexican working class women have to endure. Most importantly, and thinking about Diana as their alleged avenger, this ethnography allows readers to see that these practices are patterns of ritualistic behaviors and ideologies. Their research encompasses six border cities and two interior cities. They surveyed and interviewed 939 people between 1978 and 1979. Their research reveals what most government reports of the time did and that is that women outnumbered men in the maquiladora industry. For example, Mexico's Ministry of Programming and Budget asserted that women make up 78% of the workforce, while an investigation commissioned by Mexico's National Institute of Labor Studies reported that approximately 80 to 90% of maquiladora employees are women (p. 23). There are several explanations for the high number of women working in the maquiladora industry. First, managers attempted to explain that maquiladora labor was suitable for women because of the manual dexterity, though later, it was suggested that it was socially acceptable to pay women lower wages (p. 24). Seligson and Williams explain that, in the first days of the maquiladora sector, discriminatory practices were systematically accomplished by "assigning females to lower paid positions, even though they have qualifications invariably equal to or greater than those of men" (p. 25).

The second crucial finding from their research had to do with age, or to be specific, youth. Mexico's National Institute for Labor Studies emphasizes that a crucial criterion for employment is for workers to be between 16 and 25 years old (p. 29). More than 84% of the employees surveyed are younger than 30 years old, whereas, the surveyed cities' average age is just above 48. Sex and age together form a singular

category. Among the cities surveyed, Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua and Mexicali, Baja California demonstrate a trend toward a larger percentage of young women and girls in the work force.

Third, Seligson and Williams (1981) explain that during the first boom in border employment along Mexico's northern border it was common for managers to seek out single women and avoid hiring married women: "It has been proposed that informal hiring standards dictate that new workers ought to be single. The elite interviews of this study certainly lend credence to that proposition, and some sources admitted to practicing that informal policy" (p. 34). While most research has accepted that seeking to employ single women was a practice meant to increase productivity (the sexist logic suggested that married women have, aside from their duties at the factory, the duties of a housewife—their time and their loyalty to the corporation could become an issue among married female employees), few researchers acknowledged that employees could hide their marital status in order not only to attain employment, but once employed, to secure a position in the maquiladora. In other words, while surveyed, employees (subjects of ethnographic research) were aware that they ran the risk of *outing* themselves as being married. Having one's married status made known to employers could have severe repercussions, including married women being fired or denied a promotion.

It is during the BIP years that some of the characteristics that linger into the present can be observed. First, the 1960s changed the demographics of the working class in Ciudad Juárez, resulting in a working class composed primarily of young women. Second, the 1960s saw the emergence of a section of lower-middle class men who struggled economically in Mexico's late modernity—a symptom of a new crisis in

Mexican masculinity that recurred (or continued) in the 1990s. Third, during the 1960s Mexico produced a domestic labor force that assembled and exported goods to the United States. This labor force is located very close to the United States. Ironically, the closer the labor force is to the United States, the further that same labor force appears to be alienated from the means of production, that is from the very products that their labor produces: electronic gadgets, clothing, and automobiles, for example.

BIP also introduced additional new grounds for US industries. Until the 1960s, US corporations (or any multinational corporation) that wanted to have their assembly plants in northern Mexico would likely do so in order to take advantage of the low wages paid to local workers. However, BIP took advantage of existing US tariff laws, most importantly Item 807.00 of the US Tariff Schedule, which allows parts fabricated in the United States to be assembled abroad and then reimported duty-free. Although this item of law exists independent of Mexico's BIP, it was not until 1976 that the United States created tax breaks for corporations that utilized Mexico's maquiladoras as assembly centers. The United States, along with several other countries, joined the Generalized System Preferences program—a program designed by industrialized nations in the 1960s as a "temporary measure to give developing countries preferential tariff treatment of their manufactured exports until they became fully competitive with developed nations" (Wilson, 1992, p. 38). It was at this moment that the maquiladora industry in Mexico experienced its initial boom—a boom that worked to establish the industry. It did not take long for the maquiladora to become both a site and an icon of Mexican progress and modernity, on one hand, and corruption, impunity, and violence, on the other.

In order to combat images of exploited laborers, Mexican president Luis

Echeverría passed a federal labor law in 1970 that gave several blue-collar workers (including maquiladora workers) “mandatory paid vacations and Christmas bonuses; mandatory training and recreation programs; death, termination, and retirement benefits to be paid by the employer; employer-provided housing assistance; and a guarantee of the minimum wage for apprenticeships abolished” (p. 39). Conservatives in Mexico typically remember Echeverría’s economic plan as disastrous (though well-intentioned), because his administration experienced an economic crisis. While some have considered this federal labor law as instrumental to producing the crisis, others have focused on the influence of foreign direct investment in Mexico (or lack thereof). In the national sphere, the peso was first overvalued and eventually devalued. In the United States, a recession struck national markets in 1973 and 1974. The Mexican maquiladoras were no longer competitive when compared to assembly plants in Southeast Asia—and many multinational corporations moved parts of their operations from Mexico to Asia.

Mexico’s government-affiliated labor union (Confederación de Trabajadores de México, CTM) worked alongside Mexican president José López Portillo, who unlike Echeverría, was tough on labor issues. To begin, it was the López Portillo administration that devalued the peso as a way to level Mexico’s position in international markets. Secondly, López Portillo introduced a new program to the Mexican people—Alianza para la Producción (Alliance for Production, APP). Alianza para la Producción, a rather Orwellian term, effectively did away with many of the progressive laws that were passed during the former administration. In order to keep the maquiladoras (and the national economy) running, López Portillo granted the maquiladoras and other corporations more liberties regarding workers. As Wilson (1992) explains, this new program created the

following conditions: “Inefficient workers could be fired without severance pay; the thirty day probationary period at below minimum wage was extended to ninety days; and employer contributions to the social security fund were reduced” (p. 39). López Portillo’s policy facilitated many of the policies that led to the establishment and institutionalization of “free trade” under NAFTA for Mexican voters because his response to the economic crisis was to open up the Mexican economy using the model of the border maquiladora as an example.

Up until the 1970s, the maquiladora industry had been mostly a regional, border zone development program that experienced the intrusion or influence of the Mexican federal government from time to time. However, in 1982 president Miguel de la Madrid turned the maquiladora into a pillar of the government’s export-oriented development strategy (p. 40). De la Madrid ran on a platform that included joining the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as a method of reducing tariffs and increasing and facilitating the flow of foreign investment in Mexico (p. 40). This platform also included cutting public spending, reducing wages, controlling inflation, and the privatization of state enterprises. According to Wilson, “De la Madrid continued to devalue the peso, and real wages declined 40 percent in his term of office” (p. 40). Jacqueline Mazza (2001) considers de la Madrid’s administration crucial in guaranteeing a position for Mexico in the configuration of the world as “neo-liberal” (defined here, as late-capitalist, late-modernist—not specifically proprivatization) (p. 18). Mexico’s so-called “new liberals,” saw the openness of the maquiladora—its willingness to work alongside foreign and corporate interests, instead of isolated, centralized, or domestic interests—as a potential solution to Mexico’s economic crises. According to Mazza, de la

Madrid was from the new technocratic class schooled in US-style management and economics. De la Madrid did not conceive of the maquiladora as inextricably of the border zones, and thought that maquiladoras ought to be expanded to other parts of Mexico. In order to promote the integration of the maquiladora industry, maquiladoras could now be located anywhere in Mexico, except Mexico City (the Federal District). The administration encouraged new maquiladoras to set up in rural, less developed areas. As a result, the maquiladora industry experienced a second boom during de la Madrid's administration, becoming the largest source of foreign exchange after petroleum.

In 1985, de la Madrid passed two programs that promoted the growth of maquiladoras beyond Mexico's border regions: PITEX (Programa para la Importación Temporal para Exportación; Program for Temporary Imports for Export—what we might refer to as "assembly") and ALTEX (Programa para las Industrias Altamente Exportadoras; Program for High-Export Industries). Corporations with over $5 million in annual sales could qualify for PITEX if they exported 10% of gross sales and small corporations could not qualify for ALTEX if they exported at least 50% of their output (Wilson, 1992, p. 41). In other words, the economic gap that existed between the laborer and the profits that large corporations could make was further expanding, as more goods fabricated or assembled in Mexico did not remain in Mexico. All of these changes meant that populations would, even if momentarily, be drawn toward different parts of the country—to the places where jobs were located.

Carlos Salinas de Gortari continued many of the policies mentioned, and continued to open up or liberalize much of the Mexican economy. Most importantly, in 1989, Salinas de Gortari granted certain benefits to foreign-owned maquiladoras through

Foreign Investment Regulation (FIR). Again, this is also an Orwellian term, because rather than a regulation, FIR offered a lack of regulation. Effectively, foreign companies that were not registered as maquiladoras now enjoyed some of the benefits that until now were exclusively reserved for maquiladoras: unrestricted foreign ownership of export manufacturing outside the maquiladora industry. Furthermore, eligibility for the PITEX and ALTEX programs expanded to include companies with greater than 50% foreign ownership. Additionally, Wilson explains that the "1989 regulation also made it easier for foreign maquiladoras to own real property along the coastal and border zones" (p. 41). Lastly, before the inception of NAFTA, Salinas de Gortari further facilitated business operations for the maquiladora industry by authorizing a "one-stop permitting procedure for maquiladoras at the regional offices of the Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development (SECOFI) […] Duty-free status is extended to service companies supplying maquiladoras and to subcontractors of maquiladoras. Mexican suppliers of maquiladoras are authorized a 100 percent exemption from the value-added tax" (p. 42). But by far, Salinas de Gortari's most important contribution to the material conditions that would make the maquiladora a site of dark memory was kindling the fire for a series of negotiations with the George H. W. Bush administration and the Bill Clinton administration that culminated in NAFTA.

2.5 NAFTA and *Post-NAFTA*

In June of 1990, the Salinas administration began discussions with the G. H. W. Bush administration over the possibility of creating a zone of free trade and by August of the same year the Bush administration made the announcement of their interest in a free

trade agreement with Mexico (Mazza, 2001, p. 70).[23] Initial opposition to NAFTA existed and is represented in the form of a letter written by Friends of Earth, a US-based environmental organization. This letter was written to the International Trade Commission and argued that a free trade zone with Mexico would have negative environmental consequences on Mexico (p. 71). This is but one example of the type of challenges that were noticed in the days leading up to NAFTA.

The following year, the Salinas de Gortari administration began a campaign that aimed to improve Mexico's image in the United States with the hopes of securing the FTA. The Salinas administration spent $6 million of government funds on public relations and media firms leading up to NAFTA negotiations, with the intention of making US citizens feel more friendly toward Mexico (p. 85). Opposition to NAFTA in the United States, however, was not systematically organized until the Clinton administration. A coalition of NAFTA opponents made up of environmental groups, labor unions, and human rights activists agreed on one issue: The Mexican political system is "fundamentally undemocratic" and it abuses labor and human rights (p. 94). According to Mazza, in the Spring and Summer of 1993, it did not appear that NAFTA would pass because these three major interest groups opposed NAFTA so publicly and vociferously. However, by November of 1993 many of the issues discussed by these interest groups lost momentum. Mazza explains:

Although 60 percent of House Democrats voted against the pact,

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[23] Though I do not desire to find "the origin" of NAFTA, it is important to point out that several people have taken credit for initiating the talks that led to NAFTA. For example, Michael Wilson (1993), director of the Heritage Foundation, claims that congress's approval of NAFTA is a "victory" and that despite Clinton's signature, "Ronald Reagan first proposed the free trade agreement between the U.S. and Mexico in his 1980 presidential campaign" (para. 4).

> Republican votes were enough to give the administration a 234 to 200 victory in the House and an easier victory in the Senate. When it came down to the wire, democracy and human rights played a subordinate role in the arguments of both supporters and opponents. Even some liberal Democrats who had raised the democracy issue in the lead-up to NAFTA, such as Representative Torricelli, ended up supporting the agreement in the end. (p. 98)

One of the apparent issues from the oppositional voices is that Mexico, under the leadership of the PRI (and Salinas de Gortari specifically), was not considered a modern democracy by US standards. Oddly, one of the most effective arguments for passing NAFTA in the United States was that NAFTA was not the *problem*, but the *solution* to Mexico's lack of democracy and development. In effect, NAFTA, from the US perspective, was a way of *liberating* Mexicans through *liberalization*, from poverty and *undemocracy*. In other words, the argument presented was that, if Americans are concerned for Mexico's freedom and democracy, they should support NAFTA as a means of welcoming Mexico into the developed, democratic world. Republicans were aware of the controversial elections that landed Salinas de Gortari in office and used this as the primary reason not to negotiate with this specific administration. Still, NAFTA became discursively constructed as a tool of freedom and democracy that only the United States could deliver.

This is particularly problematic when we consider that NAFTA may be a tool for one type of freedom, but not all types of freedom. Most obviously, NAFTA facilitated the free flow of goods from Mexico to the United States. However, when yet another economic crisis struck Mexico in 1994 and people began another wave of migration northward, it became clear that freedom did not easily equate to *the freedom of mobility*: the freedom to enter, work, and live in the United States (see Ono, 2011). Secondly, for

those Mexicans who remained in Mexico and did not immigrate during this Peso Crisis, the notion of freedom would become a dream to hold on to and nothing more. The next 2 decades would be known for the rampant poverty, narcoviolence, corruption, extortion, kidnapping, and feminicide affecting Mexican people. After all, NAFTA's aim is not to democratize, but to *liberalize*, *liberate*, or otherwise free the movement of goods, materials, and capital.

Additionally, two assumptions underlie this genealogy: that Mexico is undemocratic and that the United States is the epitome of democracy. Both of these assumptions require further analysis, as Mazza explains, "The 'NAFTA-as-a democratizing-instrument' was sweeping and unequivocal. It was not that NAFTA might not have such effects; it was the certainty with which this was depicted" (p. 100). As NAFTA gained momentum in American political discourse, both the Bush and the Clinton administrations began to utilize Mexican democracy, or its perceived absence, as one of the methods of selling NAFTA to the American public. As this was done, the social and political issues that would arise in Mexico and were directly linked to NAFTA would be perceived by the United States as issues pertaining to Mexican politics, and not as issues pertaining to US policy itself—a policy that exists as the result of debates and votes that took place in an American congress. Later, the lack of understanding of interdependence created the notion that narcoviolence and feminicide are Mexico's problem, and the United States is only tangentially involved in these matters.

Just as Seligsson and Williams's (1981) work provided a crucial and exceptional insight into the maquiladora industry during the days of the Border Industrialization Program, Leslie Salzinger (2003) engaged in ethnographic fieldwork in Mexican

maquiladoras at a crucial moment in history. Salzinger's work expands a decade—roughly. It begins in 1991 and ends in 2001. As a result, it is a window into the maquiladoras in three important moments: the discussions leading up to NAFTA (1991-1994), the first years of NAFTA and the Peso Crisis (1994 and ongoing), and the years that I refer to as *post-NAFTA* (beginning with the new millennium, which in Mexico coincided with the first time that the PRI did not win elections since 1929 and Mexico's *Bicentenario*—200 years of independence and 100 years since the Mexican Revolution) (Dresser, 1998). It is also important to note that due to the content of her ethnographic work, many of the names of persons and corporations are fictionalized, resulting in a type of Bolañoesque, surrealist ethnography.

From the very beginning, Salzinger explains that the maquiladora is a place of feminine production. This is a play on words. Salzinger is referring to the present act of production. In the process of production, female laborers are also producing themselves as producers—a rhetorical process of feminization of labor. In other words, their actions constitute who they are perceived to be, and at the same time, laborers come to understand who they are by the actions that they perceive constitutes them. Salzinger explains:

> Maquila jobs are indeed "feminized," but this does not mean they are occupied solely by women. To the contrary, feminization here emerges as a discursive process which operates on both female and male bodies, producing a pool of "maquila-grade" labor. Inside the plants, a more diverse set of gendered meaning structures generate productive (or resistant) local subjectivities. (p. 11)

Furthermore, the division of labor along gender lines that existed in the Border Industrialization Era persisted even after NAFTA was in place. Looking specifically at the case of Ciudad Juárez, it becomes clear that the gendered division of labor was not

only a matter of cheap labor, but also of hyperexploitation. Indeed, gender itself, in this case, had the attribute of exploitability. By specifically hiring women, the maquiladora industry opened the door to other possible forms of exploitation. For example, in the early 1980s the US economy went into a "downward spiral," and many US corporations with maquiladoras in Mexico began to feel the economic pressure. Many began to lay workers off or reduce their pay, and as a result several labor unions emerged like the Centro de Orientación de la Mujer Obrera (Center for the Orientation of Women Workers). Maquiladora owners threatened to leave town and/or to create blacklists of activist workers and then instruct private security officers to keep these people away from the factories.

The tactics strikers employed were portrayed as controversial, particularly by local newspapers, and as a characteristic of the NAFTA and post-NAFTA age, many members of the public did not believe these acts to be *real*. Indeed, in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, the ontology of the quotidian life of death and mortality becomes a very real, and unreal, concern—adding to what I will later refer to as Bolañoesque—a specific form of surrealism that resonates with Roberto Bolaños' narratives (*2666*, in particular). For example, local news media narrated labor strikes through a *gendered* lens that was imbued with sexual innuendos and mockery. Salzinger explains:

> At the end of the Andromex conflict, one [news] paper reported that weird unfeminine hairstyles and a hysterical woman worker running nude through the plant were "the last straw" for workers after a bad year. Six months later, a cartoon of the women at Fashionmex showed them busty and mini-skirted, ooing and ahing over their union boss, and the day a recount went in their favor, a local paper buried the victory—reporting it inside an edition whose red, inch-and-a-half front-page headlines screamed "PROSTITUTION IN THE MAQUILADORAS." (p. 41)

Here, Salzinger takes snippets of news, and provides her own feminist critique in

order to demonstrate the ways in which activists were unjustly portrayed, but most importantly, the way in which their message is often ignored. In perhaps one of the most eerie and disturbing chapters, Salzinger describes the operations of a maquiladora she calls "Panoptimex." Panoptimex is a real maquiladora, but Salzinger does not use the name of the actual maquiladora. As might be assumed, Panoptimex is a play on the idea of the panopticon, or Bentham's blueprint of a prison that allows for maximum efficiency of surveillance by the guard, and has the additional quality of instilling in inmates the need to self-surveil and self-monitor, even if a guard is not actually present. Panoptimex hires mostly, if not only, women. Panoptimex is an electronics corporation where products like television and video cameras are assembled. The maquiladora is designed so that the managers can look down on the shop floor, reminiscent of Bentham's panopticon. When managers are asked why they hire women they reply that electronics “always hires women—whatever country they’re in” (p. 58). Consistent with the findings from the Border Industrialization maquiladoras, workers must be "female and young and …slim and [have] thin hands and short nails. The criteria also include not being pregnant, using birth control, and being childless, or, if absolutely necessary, having credible childcare arrangements” (p. 58). Salzinger demonstrated that the practices of bodily control (hiring young, single, childless women) that began in the BIP years have become the norm in maquiladoras like Panoptimex.

Lastly, Salzinger captures the discussion of sex work in an early stage. She begins by presenting a news article from 1971 in which the maquiladora is presented as an alternative to prostitution. Salzinger explains that this had two effects. On the one hand, local women felt empowered because they were presented the opportunity to work and

earn a living in a *decent* manner, but on the other hand, the underlying assumption was that women in Ciudad Juárez could only work in the sex industry—a stereotype demeaning of women (p. 38). In these early days, the association of a working class woman with sex work gained momentum, and when the murders of women became everyday, common events, the victim-blaming state logic argued that women who were murdered must have had a double life as sex workers, a life deemed unworthy of living (see Wright, 2011). Sex work is treated as an occupation of the unredeemable—not only meaning employees, but also people. I find the root of misogynist culture at this precise juncture. On one hand, sex work is *legal* in several places in Mexico, and particularly in urban border regions like Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez. On the other hand, there is a patriarchal, hypocritical, and moralistic culture of deniability. Surely, and in sync with the state logic, supply would not exist without demand.

2.6 Feminicidio and Public Women

To this point, I have provided a genealogy of maquiladora labor, focusing primarily in Ciudad Juárez, from Mexico's postrevolutionary period (1920s-1930s) to NAFTA (1994). This genealogy emphasizes the shift in ownership of land, from "the people" assumed in the 1917 Constitution to a variety of foreign, domestic, and multinational enterprises. This serves as part of the context that will allow readers to best understand Diana la Cazadora de Choferes: why she emerged, why she resonated with so many people's everyday experiences, and why she captured the imagination of so many people—in Ciudad Juárez and beyond. In what follows, I aim to discuss violence against women in Juárez during the post-NAFTA years (1994-present), thinking about the role of

violence as we move to a more detailed discussion of the rhetoric of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes.

By 1994 there were 300 maquiladoras in Ciudad Juárez, 75% of them are US-owned and 60% of the employees are women (Grupo Ocho de Marzo). In 1999, "Los Choferes," a gang of bus drivers en route to the maquiladoras, is arrested for the first time (Gaspar de Alba, 2010). Even though *los choferes* were an organization in 1999, there is no reason to discard the notion of several groups of criminal *choferes* operating in Ciudad Juárez simultaneously *and* at different moments in the last 20 years because reports of abuse on Ciudad Juárez buses are not uncommon. In 2001 eight bodies are found outside of AMAC (Asociación Maquiladora) in a place known as Campo Algodonero (Gaspar de Alba, 2010). Instituto Chihuahuense de la Mujer (Chihuahua Women's Institute) estimates the number of unsolved feminicides in Ciudad Juárez between 1993 and 2003 to be 231.

Early discussions of feminicide did not describe the macabre practice as a consequence of global economic policies and practices. For example, Jill Radford and Diana Russell's *Femicide: The Politics of Woman Killing* covers several aspects of femicide, ranging from historical moments when femicides occurred, to the Western origins of femicide, and to racialized instances of femicide in the United States and abroad. One of their major claims equates femicide to patriarchy: "Femicide is not a recognized legal category, so no official statistics are available from past to present. Our aim […] is to demonstrate that while the concept of femicide is new, the phenomenon it describes is patriarchy itself" (p. 25). Although this collection covers femicide broadly, it predates studies of border femicide, and therefore, the phenomenon of border feminicide

itself. Radford states that: "Femicide, the misogynous killing of women by men, is a form of sexual violence" (p. 2). Furthermore, Radford states that "the term *sexual violence* focuses on the man's desire for power, dominance, and control. This definition enables sexual aggression by men to be seen in the context of the overall oppression of women in a patriarchal society" (p. 3).

Diana Russell and Roberta Harmes released a second collection in 2001, *Femicide in Global Perspective*. Though they refrain from setting a singular definition of femicide, an entire chapter is dedicated to the uses of the word *femicide*, beginning in 1801. The aim of this second collection is to present femicide as a global problem without excluding the US. Three chapters are dedicated to femicide within the US, four to femicide in Africa, and six to femicide in other nations. None of these chapters address femicide as it pertains to Mexico or to the Mexico-US borderlands specifically. The criteria used to select topics for this collection specify that works from non-North American countries would be given preference. Though this may appear to be an adequate way of framing a global collection for a North American audience, the failure to include border femicide—particularly in 2001—is telling.

Femicide in Global Perspective was translated into Spanish and published in Mexico in 2006. The introduction to the book was written by by Marcela Lagarde, a feminist scholar and former member of congress for Mexico's Party for the Democratic Revolution (PRD). In the Spanish-language edition, Lagarde explains that Radford and Russell were invited to attend the Special Commission on Femicide of the Chamber of Deputies in September of 2004, which was held in Mexico. Lagarde served as president of this commission. Lagarde's intervention includes the term *feminicidio* and not

femicidio because femicide translates to the homicide of a woman: “a concept that specifies the sex of victims” (p. 12). By choosing feminicide, Lagarde signals that her concern is not the sole description of homicidal crimes against women and girls, “but the social construction of hate crimes, the culmination of gendered violence against women, as well as the impunity that configures the two” (p. 12). She states that “in this manner, feminicide is a crime of the state, as it is not capable of guaranteeing the life and security of women in general, who live diverse forms and levels of daily violence throughout our lives” (p. 12). By charging the state with a crime, Lagarde complicates several understandings of femicide/feminicide. First, the term *homicide* is shown to be problematic because women are often treated as inferior bodies, inferior lives, and ultimately inferior deaths than those of men. Second, by making femicide a legal category, Lagarde demonstrates that the state aims to go after criminals who are assumed to be among the population—the killers of women. Instead, Lagarde wants to subvert this notion of criminality and rethink the assumption of who (or, more appropriately, what type of body) a criminal is assumed to be. For Lagarde, catching and incarcerating criminals does not end gender violence. Instead, this process guarantees that prisons remain full, and at the same time, that women continue to be killed off. Thus, it becomes the role of the state to provide security for all citizens—including women. Failure to do so places the state in the chair of the accused, and the state has to answer to matters of impunity.

Thinking along a similar vein, Rosa Linda Fregoso makes an uncanny connection between femicide and NAFTA when she writes: “what is now understood as various forms of feminicide started in 1993, a year after the signing of NAFTA” (p. 130). While

Fregoso calculates that, by 2002, 282 women were victims of femicide (and 450 were "disappeared"), between 1985 and 1993 (before NAFTA) 37 women were killed in Ciudad Juárez. In other words, the killing of women in specific regions where NAFTA accelerated trade and demanded more and cheaper labor increased in unpredictable ways.

Sergio González Rodríguez, a Mexican author, essayist, and contemporary of Roberto Bolaño, expands on what he calls the state's racist and sexist functions by making connections between femicide and NAFTA: "The 1991 announcement of [NAFTA] between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada would accelerate the city-machine's functioning and its recharged iteration: the femicide machine" (p. 9). González goes on to discuss the structure of this "femicide machine." He says it is "inscribed within a particular structure of the neo-Fordist economy […] it is a parasite of this structure, just as the structure itself was encrusted upon the Mexican border" (p. 9). González is referring to the combination of a variety of economic and material conditions, including international economic regulations, assembly line production, information technology, specialized labor, energy exploitations, and military installations. In his view, the femicide machine "maintains differentiated links and exchanges with other machines, real and virtual: the war machine, the police machine, the criminal machine, or the machine of apolitical conformity" (pp. 10-11). Thus, for González, the deaths of women and girls are a direct result of global economic conditions. To explain further, he writes that "of the 400 women and girls killed for various reasons from 1993 to the present [2012], at least 100 murders were committed in tandem with extreme sexual violence. The lack of reliable information from the authorities is part of the problem" (p. 71). Furthermore, he suggests dead bodies have been found tossed in the garbage or

abandoned on the streets or in urban zones and in the suburban outskirts.

Lastly, the link that has been made between maquiladora labor and sex labor needs to be addressed. For González, this link is historical. The Mexican Revolution drew many American voyeurs to Ciudad Juárez (see Dorado's *Ringside Seat to a Revolution*). During the first half of the 20th century, González explains that Ciudad Juárez grew as a sex tourist location, becoming a city "where the U.S. tourist could dream of having a Mexican prostitute and, by symbolic displacement, all of Mexico for a moment" (p. 17). The National Border Program and the Border Industrialization Program helped Ciudad Juárez grow, in fact, the population of Ciudad Juárez "tripled between 1970 and 2000, and 40 percent of this population lived in extreme poverty" (p. 18). I do not want to argue that no maquiladora employee was a sex worker. I simply cannot know that. I do want to emphasize the power of elitist morality—the way in which the murder of a sex worker can be justified as though the entirety of a sex worker's life is a life unworthy of living.

Melissa Wright connects the history and existence of who she refers to as "public women" (in theory, any woman found outside of the domestic sphere becomes a public woman; Wright pays particular attention to sex workers and maquiladora laborers) and the introduction and aftermath of NAFTA to a new ideology and project of *public cleansing*: governing elites that "argue that the violence devastating Ciudad Juárez is a positive outcome of the government's war against organized crime" (p. 709). Wright expands the notion of public cleansing, explaining that when taken to its logical extreme, the government's public discourse about women tends to regard the death of women by saying that "while unfortunate, the deaths of public women represent a kind of *public cleansing*, as the removal of troublesome women restores the moral and political balance

of society” (p. 709). This public rhetoric about "troublesome women" is, itself, misogynist, but beyond that it helps to normalize the violence in Ciudad Juárez and uses the victims’ bodies as a way to affirm and normalize the politics of patriarchal authority. As Wright states:

> If a public woman is the source of violence, then her murder provides a means for ending it. Her removal performs a kind of *urban cleansing*. The public woman discourse, in short, was a key tool for positioning the dead women and girls in the political order; it was a pillar of necropolitics demonstrating that the publicness of the victims, as evidenced by the corpses’ location in public places and the mutilations of their raped bodies, caused the violence that was disrupting the social and political peace of northern Mexico. (pp. 713-5)

Public women discourses demonstrate the ease with which women are reduced to their bare life—their bare sex, by state power. Similarly, Wright explains that although women were blamed for their public presence in seemingly dangerous situations, “activists flipped the sexist discourse of public women on its head by declaring that the victims were in public space for private reasons: they were augmenting their family income by working outside of the home” (p. 715). What we see occurring along the Mexican border would spread throughout the rest of the nation. As Olivera explains, although femicide is usually regarded as a regional occurrence within Mexico, the pathology is being noticed in the rest of the nation. More than 5,000 cases from around the country were reported by 2002. Most importantly, Diana la Cazadora de Choferes appears to have embraced her publicness, and acted in a way most subversive—by killing alleged rapists.

2.7 Conclusion and Rhetorical Inquiry

Julia Estela Monárrez Fragoso, a Mexican feminicide scholar, approaches the idea of collective memory by centralizing suffering or pain (*dolor y dolorismo*) as an ideology. Monárrez advocates for the recognition of the suffering of others as their own personal suffering. Borrowing from Tzvetan Todorov, she argues that *dolorismo* assumes an "I" and an "other" (*yo y otro;* an ego and an alter) (p. 87). Still, for me, I see the international implications of her research as far more compelling—what does it mean for US audiences to become aware of the unintended violent consequences of trade policies that secure everyday commodities for US citizens at low prices? How can I, in the United States, see the suffering of others—others that I do not know—and recognize my own pain?

For Monárrez, taking action is far more important than not taking action. In other words, while critique of social movements is crucial for reflexivity, this critique should not keep privileged groups from participating in emancipatory practices because to not take action means to push aside reflexive, critical consciousness and the possibility of avoiding a variety of corrupt practices: illusions, self-delusions, betrayals, and ambiguities. This is also resonant of critical rhetoric, and of communication studies broadly. For me, taking action means interjecting as a rhetorical critic familiar with rhetoric, on one hand, and Mexican quotidian life, Mexican history, and Mexican culture, broadly, on the other hand. Thus, the term *post-NAFTA* not only refers to the politics that follow NAFTA. It also refers to the collective feeling of disillusionment with the progressive promises of NAFTA—modernity, development, democracy, and above all, the elusive concept of freedom—a concept that cultural scholars and critical rhetoricians

ought to continue investigating because such concepts often carry and conceal a plethora of powerful discourses. Moreover, post-NAFTA implies a movement beyond the assumption that free trade, coupled with limited or *qualified* human mobility, can equate with a vision of separate-but-equal prosperity—meaning, Mexico may prosper, but never more than the United States—a disturbing logic.

The rhetorical interjection into post-NAFTA Mexico indicates: the decline of presidential authority, the decreased decentralization of power to other regions (including organized crime, foreign corporations and interests, and foreign governments), the growing importance of extra-institutional players (such as narco-politicians; or the *institutionalization* of the political system as the ultimate system for laundering narco-capital), and the alignment of US interests and Mexican policies, foreign and domestic (Dresser, 1998). Rhetorical criticism adds: a critique of the discursive and visual processes that create ontologies during this age, a critique of implied (rarely explicit) racist and sexist hierarchic understandings of Mexico and Mexican labor, and a discussion of avenues of resistance and creativity that contribute to building a better world. The case that I will analyze, Diana la Cazadora de Choferes, aims to unravel the way in which power is created and contested in post-NAFTA Mexico.

Several NGOs have responded to feminicide, narcoviolence, and governmental impunity in Ciudad Juárez, including Casa Amiga, La Mujer Obrera, Grupo Ocho de Marzo, and Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa. In order to contrast the rhetorics of NGOs with the rhetorics of the state, I have decided to use a report from Chihuahua's state government called *Comparativo de Estadisticas* (Comparison of Statistics) in order to demonstrate the difference in the representation of gender violence when reported by the

state, versus when reported by NGOs. Here, the State Attorney's General Office (Fiscalía General del Estado) attempts to compare crime rates in Chihuahua between 2010 and 2014. Overwhelmingly, the images and numbers used attempt to convey the message that the state of Chihuahua is not only a much safer place, but that the government is actively making the state a safer place. While the results are interesting and perhaps even comforting, it is important to note that readers are provided a rather small time frame to compare (5 years). Furthermore, the crimes analyzed are intentional homicides, kidnappings, thefts, and extortion cases. Unlike labor, crime is not segregated by gender in these statistics. In other words, the specific category of feminicide as a crime is not reported, even while these numbers exist and even while this legal category exists.[24]

Silvia Luz Rodríguez Cuadra, under a grant from Mexico's Secretary of Social Development (SEDESOL), sought to investigate the causes of gendered violence and feminicide in Mexico. The results were not surprising, perhaps because they are consistent with what most NGOs and academics argue: The *structural cause* of feminicide is the existence of a culture of gender inequality, a limited institutional capacity on behalf of the authorities to confront the issue of gender violence, which results in the high incidence of violence against women (Rodríguez Cuadra, 2009). This study may have generated new information for government officials. However, the information, as I have demonstrated, resonates with the findings of NGOs and academics—the very people whom state officials have purposefully ignored.

Finally, Ana Isabel Garita Vílchez, funded by the United Nations, reminds readers that feminicide is not a Ciudad Juárez-specific issue, but an issue that is occurring

[24] Similarly, see Crenshaw.

throughout Latin America. Jean Franco's *Cruel Modernity* has also presented the argument that feminicide has particular characteristics in Latin America. However, where Franco presented this argument by focusing on the literary works of several Latin American nations, Garita Vílchez has collected a variety of laws that exists throughout Latin America that deal specifically with violence against women. It is interesting to note that a United Nations report points out that violence against women has a variety of manifestations, depending on different contexts, but the most conventional forms of violence takes place in the domestic sphere (*intrafamiliar*) or during military conflict—as Kathleen Staudt reminds her readers. I find this crucial to understanding maquiladora regions, in part because these areas tend to be highly militarized, and scholars like Sylvanna Falcón have studied cases of rape involving military and law enforcement officials along the US-Mexico border. However, because Mexico is not officially in a state of war (or rather, because the enemy in Mexico's war is a domestic enemy), but rather in a surreal, omnipresent state of crisis, it is easy to ignore or overlook altogether the role that military logics play in Mexico's gender violence discourse.

NGOs are no closer to a solution than academics, the business sector, and politicians. However, the research that I have done in historicizing border femicide in conjunction with maquiladora labor leads me to see possibilities for change. First, if the United States sees in Mexico the problems that are already beginning to happen in the United States, then better opportunities for coalitional work might follow. Coalitional work, following Karma Chávez (2013), is not hoped or imagined, but acted: it is "a present vision and practice that is oriented toward others and a shared commitment to social and political change" (p. 7). Of course, Chávez is concerned with grassroots

organizing, and I am concerned with the reality, if not necessity, of international relations. Still, NAFTA is premised upon a relationship of interdependence, and not on dependence. NAFTA may not be premised upon a relationship among equals, but its goal is an inevitable future—one whose prosperity can be the result of shared efforts.

Second, policies like NAFTA (NAFTA, but also the series of policies that preceded NAFTA, like BIP and PRONAF), have distinct, even if unidentified, rhetorical influences and impulses on the everyday lives of Ciudad Juárez citizens. Specifically, Diana la Cazadora de Choferes is rhetorically crafted—rhetorically invented—in order to respond to a specific need, a specific circumstance, and a specific moment.

CHAPTER 3

METAMORFOSIS MODERNA: THE CONFESSION AS INVENTION

The protagonist of this chapter is the confession as a rhetorical-modernist unit of truth. Rather than present cases that help to strengthen established notions that Foucault's ideas about confession and criminality are idiosyncratic pieces of brilliance, I present a confession of a different type—a confession that marks the fault and fallacy, gullibility and naiveté, of modern democratic systems of communication about international crime. The confession under analysis in this chapter reverses the relationship between citizen and state so that the truth is not extracted from a tortured, singular body, but from a confused, collective, social and political body: state and citizenry. Unlike prior inquiries into confession, Dianalacazadoradechoferes, and her confession in particular, demonstrate that the author is an agentic, powerful rhetor, rather than a coerced, vulnerable detainee or a citizen whose intrapersonal sense of self, or identity, is a source of anxiety and frustration. However, *who* the author of the confession is will remain a mystery, questioning the power of a confession without a proper, embodied confessor.

Using the Internet, the author of this confession did not necessarily aim to move masses toward liberation, in the way that members of Anonymous or the Arab Spring might be conceptualized. Instead, the author of the confession is a sort of "troll" to state power and *demos*, the people evoked and assumed by democracy. Diana, as a rhetor-troll,

demonstrates a level of knowledge and particular attention to detail at the moment of confessing to the murders of two bus drivers that should not be ignored. Apart from demonstrating knowledge of social and political context, audience reception, and memoria of gender violence in the Ciudad Juárez-El Paso metropolis, Diana's confession has several crucial functions that I aim to analyze as a communication and rhetorical critic. First, the confession, as stated, is unlike other confessions. Second, the confession informs a terrorized audience that a line must be crossed—that women cannot remain silent about gender and sexual violence, and that breaking this silence means taking a step toward violence. This moment in the confession is treated first as new type of aporiē, one which points to academic debates over presentation and representation (Spivak, 1988) whether the subaltern can speak and whether counter violence is, can be, or ever should be justified (Butler, 2009; Fanon, 1961; Mbembe, 2003). Diana the hunter of bus drivers appeared to embody both emancipatory concepts: the moment of the subaltern speaking, as well as justified counter violence. However, in this surreal account, things are not exactly what they appear to be and deconstructing Diana's confession is the first step toward understanding quotidian life, death, and violence in contemporary Mexico.

3.1 *Yo Confieso* / I Confess

In *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1977), Michel Foucault locates a historical shift, or transformation, in the methods and procedures of punishment in the West. In the shift from Enlightenment thought to early modernity, marked by Foucault as the shift from public execution to incarceration (1757-1837), Foucault argues that it is no longer the body of the criminal that is punished, but instead, it is the soul or spirit of the criminal

that the state aims to punish. The public torture of bodies once facilitated what was considered the movement from earthly existence into the eternal, bodily torture that criminals should expect in the afterlife. At the same time, the publicness of these tortures served to discipline the masses—executions were public examples of how the state dealt with dissenters of various types. By the middle of the 19th century, the state shifts its moral position on criminals and criminality and seeks to, on one hand, punish the *souls* of criminals for the crimes they have committed (instead of their bodies), and on the other, rehabilitate their souls through punishment, optimistically and progressively, under the assumption that all humans have universal qualities that are ultimately *good*. Foucault asks: "from what point can such a history of the modern soul on trial be written?" (p. 23). His answer: "try to study the *metamorphosis* of punitive methods on the basis of *a political technology* of the body on which might be read a common history of power relations and object relations" (my emphasis, p. 24). Here, I emphasize two concepts. The first is metamorphosis, which will be of interest to this chapter and to the dissertation as a whole. The second, is the notion of the body as a technology, which coupled with Mbembe's *Necropolitics* (2003), a critique of Foucault's biopolitics and biopower, points toward race and racism as a tool of segregation, of choosing who gets to live (and the types of lives allowed to classes and races of people) and who must die without public concern or attention.

Foucault did not have Mexico in mind as he wrote *Discipline and Punish*. In fact, Mbembe points to Foucault's Eurocentrism as a place where scholars are encouraged to contribute. Following this line of critique, Mbembe argues that Foucault's notion of modernity assumes that all members of society are equal men and women, who are

treated equally before the law. The law and sovereign power, Agamben (1995/1998) argues, is necessarily exclusionary, creating what he calls *homo sacer*, people who may be killed with impunity because they are outside of the law—and the law has no responsibility toward their lives and deaths. For Mbembe, any action that oppressed peoples take against the state is an engagement with the life-death binary: "Becoming subject therefore supposes upholding the work of death" (p. 14). While Mbembe tells us that sovereignty is the ability to choose who may live and who must die, he also argues that sovereignty can move away from the state and toward those who are outside of the law precisely because they inhabit a space that is unknown and dangerous to the rest of society and to the state itself—sovereignty is ultimately "the refusal to accept the limits that the fear of death would have the subject respect" (p. 16). Citing Georges Bataille, Mbembe argues that the sovereign is "he who is, as if death were not," meaning that because the oppressed are often already outside of the law (terrorists, immigrants), they are already enacting sovereignty: the power to violate prohibitions, particularly killing, a power typically reserved exclusively for the state (p. 16).

More than 40 years have passed since the publishing of *Discipline and Punish* and several hundred critiques, academic articles, books, and films have been produced in relation to or as a response to this work (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003; Benozzo, 2013; Cacho, 2012; Dent, 2008; Devas, 2004; Diamond, 2011; Duff, 2010; Gunn, 2006; Hall, 2016; Melrose, 2005; Streit, 2004; Tell, 2008, 2010; Templeton, 1998). And this should not come as a surprise. Documentary films like *Making a Murderer* (2015) and *13th* (2016) have demonstrated the power behind preconceived notions of criminality, the prison-industrial complex, and the public's role in accepting or rejecting a society of racial and

ethnic injustice. In all of these works, the criminal's confession is necessary for ascertaining that the criminal deserves punishment. Furthermore, the confession is crucial in establishing the relationship between and individual's alleged criminal acts and society's call, not for justice, but for punishment. More importantly, the confession is treated as a unit of truth, and in order for the confession to function within this crime-discipline-punish system, *truth* must be all-encompassing, eternal, unquestionable, and assumed. Truth itself must never be questioned if the system is to function.

In *Making a Murderer*, audiences are shown the interrogation techniques used by police on Brendan Dassey, a White, low-income, underage male with alleged learning disabilities as they extract information to be used as a confession to a crime that he did not commit—a confession that will become the central piece of evidence to incarcerate him. In *13th*, audiences are momentarily shown two examples. First, audiences are reminded of the so-called Central Park Five: four African American teenagers and a Hispanic teenager who confessed to raping a 28-year-old female jogger. Their confession would come into question when DNA evidence would exonerate them after they spent between 6 and 13 years in prison. Second, audiences are shown snippets of interviews with Kalief Browder, a teenager who served 3 years on Rikers Island awaiting trial (that is, before even being found guilty of a crime) only to be released without a trial. In the interviews, Browder explains that he simply refused to confess to a crime he did not commit. Browder, 22, hanged himself.

As a reminder, Foucault inquires about the standpoint from which "a history of the modern soul on trial" can be written and concludes that we should "study the *metamorphosis* of punitive methods on the basis of a political technology of the body"

(my emphasis, pp. 23-24). The Central Park Five and Kalief Browder demonstrate that, on one hand, racism itself is, in the words of Achille Mbembe (2003), “above all, a technology aimed at permitting the exercise of biopower, ‘that old sovereign right of death.’ In the economy of biopower, the function of racism is to regulate the distribution of death and to make possible the murderous functions of the state” (p. 17). Mbembe refers to life and death as they pertain to international borders—to life and death as different experiences in different geopolitical locations. Life, death, and violence cannot assume a modernist universality. As a case, Diana the hunter of bus drivers demonstrates that the confession of a crime is considered an optimal truth without truly considering something so simple and basic: all other things being equal, we all have the capacity to lie and we all have multiple, complex reasons for lying. Thinking through Judith Butler’s notion of precarious life (2004/2009), apart from bodily vulnerability, it appears that all humans are susceptible to the rhetorical effects of not only truths, but also lies. More importantly, Diana demonstrates that the modern state is not at all concerned with the line between truth and deception, but with the statement that others will read as truth when such a statement equates to the imprisonment of bodies, the containers of souls in this modern model. In other words, a confession is only as good as the conditions of racial, ethnic, and sexual equality in society.

In contrast to Judith Butler, Lisa Marie Cacho’s *Social Death* (2012) takes up the question of injustice in criminal justice by backtracking and explaining that the humanist notion of universality is simply untrue. For example, we might say that life is worth living all while ignoring that only certain lives are worthy of life. The particular case of Kim Ho Ma, a Cambodian refugee who was imprisoned in the 1990s after allegedly

participating in the murder of Oun Roo Chhay, points toward the contemporary place and condition of truth in society. Ma would be released from prison into INS custody. INS would be unable to repatriate him due to the absence of a repatriation agreement with Cambodia, turning him into a "lifer": someone who is simultaneously "inadmissible" into the United States and "unremovable" from the United States, and would spend an undetermined amount of time in custody (p. 62). Cacho explains that at some point in Ma's proceedings, the state used the logic of psychiatry in order to bypass the possibility that refusing to confess might be a more accurate representation of the "truth" than confessing for confession's sake.

> Part of Judge Ho's decision to deny Ma bond was premised on psychologist Carla van Dam's report, which concluded that Ma was dangerous. Ho summarized the report by highlighting all the moments when Ma's responses did not correlate with the reality they already knew—all the moments when it seemed he lied. (p. 67)

Here, Cacho, following Foucault's notion of "psy-function," argues that if Ma, the alleged criminal, accepted Ho's and van Dam's interpretations of his actions, he would also validate "both the knowledge that had the power to convict him in the criminal justice system and the premise for his indefinite detention by the INS" (p. 68). Most importantly, even though Ma neither confirms nor denies his culpability or guilt, his "commitment to illegibility does not convey the complexity of his situation nor of his personhood. He reads simply as merely someone who lies" (p. 68). Ultimately, the court sides with Lewis Yablonsky, a criminologist and social psychologist, whose role is merely to assert that Ma is a sociopath because he cannot confess to the guilt of his *being*.

Criminality is not the only trajectory that the confession as a rhetorical form has followed since Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. In addition to confessing crimes, the

confession is a form or genre that allows the confessor, typically a bearer of a painful secret, to come clean by telling or revealing the truth, and in the act, free themselves of the chains of guilt, lies, and deceit. Carolina Acosta-Alzuru (2003), for example, analyzed a US-based, Spanish-language talk show through a Foucauldian, confessional approach. She mentions a variety of Spanish-language talk shows, including *Laura en América*. Like Foucault, Acosta-Alzuru connects the confession to larger traditions of Catholicism in Latin America because the host of *Cambia tu Vida*, the show under analysis, is an actual Catholic priest—an intermediary between humans and God, between the earthly and the heavenly. Acosta-Alzuru argues that most talk shows use confessions as a performance, bringing into question any notion of truth—ultimately pointing to the truth in a confession as another aspect of the performance of confessing.

Also following a Foucauldian approach, Angelo Benozzo (2013) analyzed Italian newspaper and tabloid reports of the *coming out* of an Italian celebrity. Here, *Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica* are analyzed because they printed part of Tiziano Ferro's letter, which is treated as a confession of homosexuality, as if homosexuality were a sin or crime to confess. Among the findings, Benozzo highlights the discourse of freedom to be homosexual—a freedom that can only be enjoyed postconfession, according to this reading. Furthermore, this freedom was attained through the help of Ferro's father, who counseled him to come out. This moment is critiqued as a "merciful father" discourse, because the father figure reappears throughout the confession and serves as an intermediary between the person in need of confession and society.

As can be seen from these two examples, the type of confessions analyzed do not necessarily need to speak directly about the relationship between citizens as potential

criminals and the state, through the power of the law, as perceiving citizens as potential criminals. Here, the confessor is compelled to confess—a process that appears intrapersonal in origin, but is in fact embedded in discourses of taboo behaviors. On one hand, the priest is the proper intermediary between a sinful person and God, and on the other, the news media provide the confessor with a space through which one might make amends with society for *lying* to them about this sexuality. An underlying assumption behind the critiques of Acosta-Alzuru and Benozzo is that lying to oneself is necessarily bad, wrong, or hurtful. Furthermore, lying to oneself presupposes that one already knows the truth, even the truth of one's own identity, and the *perversion* that needs to be confessed is the concealing of one's identity. Identity, in other words, is treated as static, even *intrapersonally*, rather than dynamic and constantly changing.

Along a similar vein, in the edited collection *Compelling Confessions* (2011), Suzanne Diamond presents the confession as parallel, if not synonymous to, personal disclosure, particularly of one's identity. Using writing studies pedagogy as an example, Diamond explains that confessional writing often brings up the debate about whether students' personal writing is beneficial to the development of their voice, or whether disclosure is "tangential—if not downright irrelevant" (p. 24). Under this paradigm, the subject carries an identity, or a series of identities, that is formed by communicative relationships to society and by internal mental processes. Here, the subject learns that certain aspects about "identity" are taboo and must not be openly shared, so writing becomes a confessional vehicle, in the poetic, generic sense of the word. This paradigm assumes that a person can know, with certainty or with limits, that one is what one claims to be. Far from being a comment on identity politics or politically correct culture, the true

question here should be whether identity is something that can even be confessed. Two assumptions of "truth" go unquestioned: whether or how a confession equates to truth and whether or how my personal concept of who I am is the same thing as the subject that I craft for others to know (and not know), in the presence of *and* in the absence of a confession. In other words, regardless of confessions about my identity, no one can truly know what I think of myself (and at times even myself), and it is in this moment that, following Lisa Cacho (2012), the state moves from seeking a psychiatric confession to diagnosing sociopathology for an unwillingness to confess a guilt that I do not, or cannot, feel.

It appears that today, to tell the truth we know amounts to sociopathic behavior. "Do you really want to know what I think?", "What do I have to gain and lose in telling you what I really think?" and "Do you really want to know what happened or are you after something more sinister?" are confession's questions, and yet, the questions that the state is less interested in asking when engaging in interrogation of criminals. At the same time, to contribute to false confessions in the name of social, political order—even at the cost of one's own demise or for the protections of one's own privileges—marks one as sane and one's actions as admirable. At minimum, the criminal who confesses becomes capable of being rehabilitated or recuperated, even if this is through lifelong prison sentences. In the worst cases, the criminal becomes something other than human, occupying a strange space between the animalistic, the ghostly and spectral, the heavenly and sacred, and the wicked.

3.2 *Yo Troléo* / I Troll

I refer to Diana, the potential[25] troll, as *Dianalacazadoradechoferes*, because this is the name she used on her confession as well as the name on the email address that news outlets received. This name is similar to other trolls' names, like *DontEvenReply*, *SkankHunt42*, *DildoSchwaggins*, or *PhD_in_Everything*. Diana simply appeared, trolled, and disappeared, leaving few traces and a lot of confusion behind. Diana trolled three authorities of modern society: the police, the media, in order to arrive at a troll of the public (or, of several publics: locally, nationally, and internationally). Bluntly, Diana's troll reveals how uncritical *we* truly are.

A troll is an agent, most comparable to a person. A troll is also the message sent by a troll. A troll trolls using trolls: A troll (agent) trolls (act) using trolls (messages). Additionally, a troll is also the typically humorous success of the message, which intends to, for the lack of better phrasing, "stir the pot" and get reactions from people who have been upset or offended by the troll's comments. Trolls typically troll politically-correct culture simply because the public reaction is thought to be humorous. While computer-mediated communication has attended to trolling (see Phillips, 2015), trolling has received little attention by rhetorical critics. Here, I do not intend to treat Diana *only* as a troll, but rather, in seeing her as a troll, I can come to further understand her existence: like Internet trolls, she is the creation of a real person who is motivated, if not by entertainment and humor, by a desire to stir the pot. Like Internet trolls, Diana enjoys

[25] The narrative that Diana is likely an Internet troll surfaced when Ciudad Juárez police traced the confession to an IP address in El Paso, Texas. However, it has not been proven that Diana is in fact an Internet troll. Rather, this became the dominant explanation behind the confession, following the inability to find and capture Diana, the alleged killer.

anonymity, which allows her to stir the pot without reprimand or responsibility for the consequences of her messages. Like trolls, Diana belongs to the seemingly incompatible worlds of mythology (Scandinavian bridge trolls) and postmodernity (Internet trolls), engaging in actions that speak to both, the traditional or folkloric and the postmodern. Because a troll's message is also a troll, Diana becomes her confession, transforming into a trinity: 1) the real but unknown anonymous author behind the computer, troll, cannot exist without 2) the mythical understanding of Diana as the avenger and protector of vulnerable women, 3) and this is communicated to international audiences through the crafting of a confession—a confession that has less to do with the truth of a matter and more to do with the performance of truth and the collective acceptance that what is seen is understood as reality and not semblance. Troll, myth, and confession are one thing. When we see the troll, the myth and the confession operate behind the face of the troll. When we see the myth, the troll and the confession operate behind the face of the myth. When we see the confession, the troll and the myth operate behind the face of the confession.

Marta Dynel (2016) describes Internet trolling as "a prevalent intercultural communicative phenomenon" that "necessarily relies on deception performed in multi-party interactions, which is conductive to humorous entertainment of self and/or other participants, at the expense of the deceived target" (p. 353). If trolling relies on deception, trolling is very different from confession. But both exist within Dianalacazadoradechoferes. For Dynel, it is important to differentiate trolling from other abusive, aggressive, and/or antisocial behaviors such as cyberbullying, flaming, e-bile, and heckling. Therefore, Dynel acknowledges that while new forms of trolling need to be

acknowledged, trolling should nonetheless be given limits or parameters (p. 354). The term *trolling* alludes to: “Scandinavian mythology, according to which trolls would lurk under bridges and let people pass only when the latter had provided correct answers to tricky questions” (p. 355). This is best exemplified in the television series *South Park*, season 20, where a group of Internet trolls meets under a bridge in South Park, Colorado after the Danish government threatens to reveal everyone’s Internet history, exposing the identities of Internet trolls who have been pestering society (circumventing a confession that trolls would like to avoid). This exposure is undesired by many trolls, particularly those whose inflammatory comments would force them to face consequences in their personal lives. It is clear in this season of *South Park* that while some trolls are driven by “righteous” social and political causes, others, like Gerald Broflovski (aka *Skankhunt42*) are driven by pure entertainment at the expense of politically-correct culture, making him an embodiment of the problems with contemporary social and political nihilism and its refusal to take responsibility or to commit to a cause or politics.

In reference to email, which is the form of communication pertinent to Dianalacazadoradechoferes, Dynel argues that even though traditional email may not be the typical venue for trolling, “a troll intends to deceive many individuals, not being able to predict who the fooled targets will actually be […] Email is so ripe for trolling and it is the most consensual form of communication, with interactants communicating in private, and the trolling strategies being personalized” (p. 365). The largest partition between Diana and trolling is that if Diana’s actions are meant to be humorous, then the sense of humor assumed is *dark*, to say the least. It is despite this singular difference, and due to the complexity seen not only in the debate regarding traditional and new forms of trolling

(see Dynel) and the dramatic difference between the *South Park* characters DildoSchwaggins (whose name the audience never learns) and Gerald Broflovski, that I choose to place Diana within the realm of Internet trolling. Diana is a rhetorical troll. Rhetorical trolling acknowledges that trolling defined as *necessarily humorous* is being put aside in order to argue that trolls (messages) have a rhetorical echo that move populations to act in observable, yet unpredictable ways. Moreover, the troll's confession not only "stirred the pot," but engaged in what rhetoricians refer to as invention—and fabricated not only a hero for a particular moment, but gave her a body and even blew breath in her lungs. For a moment, audiences believed in the real existence of a feminicide avenger. For a moment, Diana la Cazadora de Choferes was alive—more than symbolically.

Thinking about the relationship of rhetorical invention and trolling, it is easy to see that humor, in other words, can lead to more than just laughter. For this reason, Diana's email confession should be taken as a specific type of troll: one that places a mirror to United States and Mexican societies and forces them to look, seeing a face, a collective identity and even a shared cruel reality that we might dislike.

3.3 Diana Steps Into the Bus

Diana's confession did not appear in news media in its entirety. Instead, audiences were shown fragments of the confession. This is most likely an editorial choice—a response to the style of the confession. The confession reads as a run-on sentence with several grammatical errors. While most journalists choose not to include the actual confession, other sources like *Juárez Noticias,* published the confession in its original

form. For some members of the public, the style itself was proof of the author's real existence (as in, the style seems to belong to a real person, and not to a hoax), and therefore, the intention to avenge must also be *real*. For others, the style was simply part of the elaborate fabrication of an avenger that never existed—a troll. On August 31, 2013, the crime section of local online news portal, *Juárez Noticias: Periodismo Interactivo*, published the following the confession:

> They think that because we are women we are weak, and maybe that's true but only to a certain point, because even though we do not rely on someone to defend us, we have the necessity to work late into the night in order to support our families. We can no longer remain silent about these acts that fill us with rage. My partners and I have suffered in silence, but we can no longer remain silent. We were victims of sexual violence at the hands of bus drivers that worked the night shift near the maquilas here in Juárez and even though many people know that we suffer, no one defends us and no one protects us. Therefore, I am an instrument that will avenge several women that to society appear weak, but are not weak in reality. We are brave and if we are not respected we will take matters into our own hands. The women of Juárez are strong.[26]

Foucault's concern with the confession is tied to an understanding of *confession attained by means of physical, bodily torture*. Particularly, Foucault discusses the confession as modernity's truth-text. He explains that a confession is:

[26] Diana la Cazadora de Choferes in *Juárez Noticias*, para. 6. My own translation: "Creen que porque somos mujeres somos débiles y puede ser que si solo hasta cierto punto pues aunque no contamos con quien nos pueda defender y tenemos la necesidad de trabajar hasta altas horas de la noche para mantener a nuestras familias ya no podemos callar estos actos que nos llenan de rabia, mis compañeras y yo sufrimos en silencio pero ya no podemos callar más, fuimos víctimas de violencia sexual por choferes que cubrían el turno de noche de las maquilas aquí en Juárez y aunque mucha gente sabe lo que sufrimos nadie nos defiende ni hacen nada por protegernos por eso yo soy un instrumento que vengara a varias mujeres que al parecer somos débiles para la sociedad pero no lo somos en realidad somos valientes y si no nos respetan nos daremos a respetar por nuestra propia mano, las mujeres juarenses somos fuertes." Please note that any grammatical errors are attributed to the author of the confession (allegedly Diana), and not the journalist or scholar writing about Diana. The grammar of the confession was not *corrected*; rather, the confession is presented as it was found.

> Written, secret, subjected, in order to construct its proofs, to rigorous rules, the penal investigation was a machine that might produce the truth in the absence of the accused. And by this very fact, though the law strictly speaking did not require it, this procedure was to tend necessarily to the confession. And for two reasons: first, because the confession constituted so strong a proof that there was scarcely any need to add others, or to enter the difficult and dubious combinatory of clues; the confession, provided it was obtained in the correct manner, almost discharged the prosecution of the obligation to provide further evidence. Secondly, […] the only way in which the truth might exert all its power, was for the criminal to accept responsibility for his own crime and himself sign what had been skilfully and obscurely constructed by the preliminary investigation […] Within the crime reconstituted by writing, the criminal who confessed came to play the role of living truth. (p. 38)

Following Foucault, Diana's confession reveals that a "truth" was produced "in the absence of the accused." Diana's physical absence, from beginning to end, endows her with a power that no one else can claim. She can be blamed, she can even blame herself, but she will not have to respond to anyone—unless she is found. Furthermore, Diana's violent actions, including her confession, do not spring from nothingness, nor are they simply a violent response to violence. Rather, Diana's confession is the ultimate result of the metropolis-machine's treatment of working-class women: "this procedure was to tend necessarily" to a violent response that was accompanied a confession—a challenge to state power. In early modernity, Foucault argues that the confession of a criminal "discharged the prosecution of the obligation to provide further evidence." Here, the confession discharges the state of an additional duty: to deter the murder of citizens. Under Foucault's understanding of the confession, the criminal signed a confession that probably was not the criminal's confession at all. Here, the criminal (whose criminality should always remain under question), signs the confession, not as submission, but as a challenge to authority—a challenge that ruptures the notion that the ultimate power lies with the forces of the state.

As can be seen in this case, Diana's confession "came to play the role of living truth." This is not an exaggeration or an understatement. It is common for communication scholars to talk about communication as the very thing that constructs, maintains, and alters reality. What we have before us is a discursive fabrication of images, words, collective concerns, and known myths that before this fabrication appeared to be disjointed, and that are now put forward toward some unknown end, becoming living truth in the process. And, as the old tent of postmodernism says, because truth itself is a construction, we will later see that Diana goes from being fabricated, to being real, to being deconstructed as a troll who gave life and power to a spectral goddess through a collective acceptance that justice needs to be served.

Following Foucault, the state uses the confession to argue the truth about a criminal. Here, the people use the confession to demonstrate the state's inability to deter crime and to shift the sovereign power from the hands of the state to the hands of those who, using Mbembe's words, are no longer limited by a fear of death. The confession itself, apart from Foucault's background on criminal confessions, merits further analysis because it provides powerful insight. The author of the confession assumes an imbalanced society. For her, the question of whether women are being or are not being harassed, abused, and raped in buses that go to and from the maquiladoras is irrelevant because her own experience trumps any and all other reasonable, logical rebuttals. To present Diana the argument that women live in a safe and balanced society is to deny the existence of Diana (which might seem acceptable) and to ignore the matter of the murders (if Diana did not murder the bus drivers, who murdered them?). There are three crucial findings in the confession that require further analysis. First, the point beyond

which women are no longer perceived as weak in modern, capitalist society. Second, the role of voice in transforming passive female laborers into active avengers of sexual crimes; or more accurately, the debate regarding the justification of violence and the impossibility of nonviolence. Lastly, the matter of understanding the body as instrument in the urban, metropolitan relationship between Mexico and the United States.

3.4 Diana's Aporiē

We can call "the point beyond which women are no longer perceived as weak in modern capitalist society," an aporiē (sometimes spelled "aporia"). An aporiē, following Jacques Derrida, is a rhetorical or philosophical impossibility. This is not to say that society cannot think of women as something other than weak. It means that in order to see women differently, the entirety of society would have to radically change, transform, so much that it may not recognize earlier iterations of itself. Of course, I encourage such a transformation and do not consider it an impossibility. Rather, the "impossible" matter is to know—from the present—the fact of such a future—it is impossible to know exactly and completely what will result from social transformations. The notion of transformation is complicated by temporality, but also by subalternity—which I will discuss in more detail at the end of this chapter.

Traditionally, the notion of the temporal present (as opposed to the past and the future) is an aporiē—a concept whose meaning we all have to assume in order to communicate, even though we cannot ever speak of the present, as such. In other words, the present is a fleeting moment whose only condition is that it continuously fails to exist, perpetually becoming the past or the idea of an impending future that cannot be avoided.

For Derrida, an aporiē is a metaphysical place where one is forced to face a limit, end, or border. Questions that center life and death are always enveloped in what Derrida calls a rhetoric of borders: "this discourse on death also contains, among so many other things, a *rhetoric of borders*, a lesson in wisdom concerning the lines that delimit the right of absolute property, the right of property to our own life, the proper of our existence […] What about borders with respect to death? About borders of truth and borders of property?" (p. 3). Tracing the term aporiē, Derrida asks: "What, then, is it to cross the ultimate border? What is it to pass the terms of one's life?" (p. 8). Derrida deconstructs the aporiē concept by analyzing what he considers the ultimate end—death. For Derrida, we cannot know death in death's terms—all we know is life, and life is always lived toward the inevitability of death. The aporiē is "the difficult or the impracticable, here the impossible, passage, the refused, denied, or prohibited passage, indeed the nonpassage, which can in fact be something else, the event of a coming or of a future advent, which no longer has the form of the movement that consists in passing, traversing, or transiting" (p. 8). At least two Mexican refrains sum up this aporia: "why fear death? We cannot exist while death exists and death cannot exist while we exist" and "Death is so sure to catch us that she gives us an entire life's advantage."[27]

In thinking of death as an aporiē, Derrida adds that the aporiē of death, the place that must be impossibly crossed into, is social responsibility. When we act responsibly in the face of international politics, Derrida argues, we take on a duty or responsibility that is entirely new, idiosyncratic, and without comparison or antecedent. We have to forget

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[27]"¿por qué temer la muerte? Si mientras existimos, ella no existe y cuando existe la muerte, entonces, ya no existimos nosotros" and "la muerte está tan segura de alcanzarnos que nos da toda una vida de ventaja."

everything that we have learned. We act responsibly when we put our knowledge to practice, but we are being far more responsible when we realize that the decisions we make shape social reality. To make decisions based on the knowledge that led us to a stagnant place, a place of nonpassage, is to rebuild the same world over again—to not alter or radicalize reality.[28]

Diana's confession crossed several conceptual borders, but the most important of these borders is the border between the United States and Mexico. As I will discuss in Chapter 3, the confession was traced to an IP address in the United States, indicating that the troll could simply have caught news of the murders of bus drivers and *invented* a murderer through a confession. This confession was then emailed to a local radio station, not a police station, in hopes of public dissemination, not secrecy. This indicates that the confession to murders had the physical capability to cross the uncrossable. Here, however, readers are presented another aporiē, another impossibility—what Gayatri Spivak refers to as subaltern voice and agency. As discussed, Diana tells the readers of her confession, an audience who is intentionally public, that women are considered weak, "but only to a certain point." This point is the aporiē, the limit beyond life and into an unknown realm. For Diana, specifically, the point that needs to be broken is silence. To break silence means to alter the way in which deadly power is configured—to take on the deadly power and deadly functions that appear to belong exclusively to the state and to criminality and claim them as one's own property.

The aporiē, is not an impossibility in the absolute sense. Rather, an aporiē is the

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[28] Although Derrida's writing is rather abstract, he speaks about a responsibility to *real* geopolitical, social, and cultural borders, in his own terms. Furthermore, Derrida also critiques Eurocentric knowledge as falling into "the very logic of exemplarism," calling for academic responsibility toward borders *despite* what we already know (p. 17).

limit of what we can know—the limit of *truth*. Therefore, we treat the unknown as impossible because what we know is possibility. With this in mind, I turn to the aporiē as the moment where transformation takes place. Transformation, metamorphosis, is a death of sorts. One of the troubling contradictions of Western thought is the idea of violence and nonviolence. To behave violently is to be savage, criminal, or inhumane—not human. It is as though humanity were inherently antiviolent or nonviolent. Yet Western thought would not exist, as postcolonial criticism argues, without the violence of empire. The aporiē, the certain point, and the *pas,* the step that needs to be taken in order to cross the aporiē that Diana refers to, is the moment in which nonviolence is no longer a viable option. There is honor, as Judith Butler (2009) explains, in fighting certain fights: "there are forms of violence that are meant to counter or to stop other violence: the tactics of self-defense, but also the violence enacted in the name of combating atrocity or famine or other humanitarian crises, or in revolutionary efforts to institute a democratic politics" (p. 166). The problem here, however, is that fighting the violence against rapists does not do away with the matter of rape and gender violence—nor does it do away with the very material conditions of colonial and market oppression. Furthermore, is democracy here used in a rather uncritical way? What about democracy justifies death and violence? What value says that democracy is something worth fighting for?

The aporiē to be broken is that of nonviolence. And the step in the direction of nonviolence is voice. If this voice is heard the aporiē is broken, and society goes through a transformation—a metamorphosis—one that includes an amnesia of the transformative event.

3.5 Diana's Ephemeral Subalternity

The role of voice in transforming passive female laborers into active avengers of sexual crimes; or more accurately, the debate regarding the justification of violence and the impossibility of nonviolence, has everything to do with the lives and deaths that we see and know, the lives and deaths that we can imagine and attempt to ignore, and the lives and deaths that we cannot know—the lives and deaths that exist beyond the limit of truth. In defining subalternity in the Indian colonial context, Spivak explains that two dominant groups are elites: dominant foreign groups and dominant indigenous groups across India (p. 79). Furthermore, there are also dominant regional groups of nonelites. Last are the subaltern classes. The subaltern, Spivak argues, cannot speak (*and be heard*).

From an academic perspective, one of the most fascinating discoveries within this case is a moment when Gayatri Spivak's own aporiē —the impossibility of the subaltern to speak and be heard—appears to be broken. A woman from the colonized world (though not India), from a background of deep market oppression, is speaking to the masses—her voice is heard because it has been paired to the murders of two men. But this rupture is itself only a semblance because, as we are forced to learn, the myth of the avenger was no more than the perfect lie—the lie that the masses desired to hear. It appears as though the speaker was not who she claimed to be.

Following a Marxist inquiry into power, Spivak places the idea of a subaltern class and a subaltern consciousness as the margins of society—a place from which revolutionary change takes place. For Spivak, "the phased development of the subaltern is complicated by the imperialist project," meaning that subalternity exists beyond the nation-state; or more accurately, there are levels of empowerment and disempowerment

so that the true subaltern—the least empowered, most marginal global classes and groups—never speak for themselves, but are instead *represented* by various social and interest groups. Furthermore, the subaltern woman in particular is never heard: “The subaltern as female cannot be heard or read […] the subaltern cannot speak” (p. 104). Representation fissures the desires of the subaltern (thought of not only as a socioeconomic group and its consciousness, but also as an ethnic consciousness and a gender consciousness) and the desires of global classes and groups, and the subaltern becomes a tool or instrument of the more-empowered groups. Diana’s confession, then, is a *representation* of oppressed working class women (indigenous, Mexican, Caribbean, Central and South American, migrant women). As such, Diana’s confession is a prosthesis—an extension of emancipatory aims—but who is being emancipated from what?

In discussing the subaltern, Spivak critiques Western poststructuralist thought, particularly Foucault and Deleuze. In doing so, she calls for Derridian and Nietzschean approaches in order to avoid essentialist views of the subaltern, and foreign cultures in general. Spivak argues, for example, that “a nostalgia for lost origins can be detrimental to the exploration of social realities within the critique of imperialism,” and that Derrida refers to the ethnocentrism of the European writing as “a symptom of the general crisis of the European consciousness” (pp. 87-89).

What does it mean, following Derrida and Spivak, to behave responsibly about the lives and death of others, specifically, others who are located across crucial international borders? It is easy to think that our actions are not embedded in the lives and deaths of others, but as postcolonial critic Aime Césaire reminds us, the actors of

colonization include "the adventurer and the pirate, the wholesale grocer and the ship-owner, the gold-digger and the merchant, appetite and force" (p. 75). In other words, in order to behave responsibly we have to either accept the unknown as what it may not be—new knowledge, following Derrida—or a slip into the problematic space of re-presentation.

Gayatri Spivak argues that in Western thought, representation tends to imply two things: "representation as 'speaking for', as in politics, and representation as 're-presentation', as in art or philosophy" (p. 79). Representation is central to modern, representative democracies. Representation is also central to how we *visually* conceptualize of cultural "others." Most importantly, Spivak argues that those subjects who struggle against colonial forces are often muted, and the only version of struggle that Westerners, including academics, get to know is a representation. Diana's confession is both, art and politics, craft and agency. The problem lies in that Diana's confession is not precisely what Foucault describes as a confession. There is not a real body, a body of a criminal, or a body of someone relaying their taboo identity. Diana's confession is a confession without a confessor's body to punish or judge. Therefore, the author of the confession, in crafting a confession, also crafted a body to first present (I am the killer of men) and to then represent (with signature, which Foucault argues, is central to the confession). For Spivak, representation within modernity needs to be further deconstructed in order to understand the value and power of figures like Diana. Spivak writes:

> The relationship between global capitalism (exploitation in economics) and nation-state alliances (domination in geopolitics) is so macrological that it cannot account for the micrological texture of power. To move toward such an accounting one must move toward theories of ideology—

> of subject formations that micrologically and often erratically operate the interests that congeal the macrologies. Such theories cannot afford to overlook the category of representation in these two senses. They must note how the staging of the world in representation—in its writing, in *Darstellung*—dissimulates the choice of and need for 'heroes', paternal proxies, agents of power, *Vertretung*. (p. 74)[29]

Diana was initially understood precisely as a hero, a paternal proxy (after all, Diana is a mother figure, similar to mother-earth), and an agent of power. This acceptance is indicative of a collective desire for justice for the victims of femicide along the US-Mexico border, and in particular, justice from the colonial relations that move women's bodies into the types of working conditions where their vulnerability is guaranteed.

Diana writes that the working class women of Ciudad Juárez "can no longer remain silent," regarding the abuses that they have suffered as maquiladora labor became a part of quotidian, working class, female life. Ultimately, Spivak argues that oppressed women in the global south cannot speak and be heard—cannot take agency. Diana appears to break this aporiē—to take the step forward even toward her own death. Diana is heard—international audiences respond in astonishment. However, what audiences heard was not the subaltern. It was a representation of the subaltern. Likely, Diana was a troll—an agent trolling Mexican society—perhaps finding humor in the futile work of the police and the moralistic concern of the masses for the death of two men in a city known for the countless deaths of women. This is also a moment for self-reflection. If Diana was a troll speaking on behalf of working class women, I am an academic speaking on a troll. I am trolling a troll. Typically, one is not advised to troll a troll—one is guaranteed to lose. However, I am trolling a troll outside of the Internet. I am coaxing the troll to come

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[29] *Darstellen* refers to "representation or rhetoric as tropology" (my note: economic or material needs) and *vertreten* to rhetoric as "persuasion," particularly in representative democracies (p. 71). Both forms of representation are needed in a Spivak's model.

out of its cave.

Crossing this aporiē is necessary, following Mbembe: "the subject of Marxian modernity is, fundamentally, a subject who is intent on proving his or her sovereignty through the staging of a fight to the death" (p. 20). But Diana is not the Diana that audiences assumed. She was a fabrication. And despite being a mythical fabrication, Diana points to several *real* metamorphoses.

3.6 Instrumentalizing Death

Lastly, I will attend to the matter of understanding the body as instrument in the metropolitan relationship between Mexico and the United States. Diana writes that she is an instrument. She refers to the acts of vengeance as being instrumental in the fight for justice. However, we can think of her bodily instrumentality in two ways. The first is the anticolonial, ballistic, suicidal instrumentality and the second is that without a body, Diana is a rhetorical instrument—a form of persuasion to arms.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the mythical Diana transforms Actaéon, the hero of the myth, into a deer. Once Actaéon becomes a deer, his own hunting hounds attack and kill him. The hounds do not recognize Actaéon after the transformation—perhaps the dogs fail to realize that Actaéon can possibly *be* Actaéon inside a different body. Actaéon suffers this punishment because he has walked into Diana's spring and seen Diana's naked body. Although Ovid's poetic persona claims that Actéon was innocent, Actéon suffers this punishment because he was a voyeuristic opportunist (Book III). At first glance, the violence of voyeurism is not the same as the violence of physical rape, which is not the same violence as murder. In other words, the mythic violation of Actéon, the

alleged crimes of bus drivers, and femicidal violence in Ciudad Juárez are different in category. However, the myth exists in the realm of metaphor. Entering the spring where Diana bathes is a metaphoric penetration. Even the senses are metaphoric. Seeing is a metaphoric touch. To *uncritically* narrate this myth, commit it to memory (as poets did), and retell it over again, is to engage in what Spivak calls "the danger of appropriating the other by assimilation" (p. 104). Similarly, Sergio González Rodríguez (2007) explains that through "these communicative processes, the murders of women in Ciudad Juárez have achieved cyber-event status, in which world vision is expanded by moving beyond the restricted focus of the news item or media event" (p. 83). How do we bring Diana from the tomes of antiquity into the Internet, not as a goddess but as a troll, in order to discuss rape culture in an international context? What responsibility does a privileged first-worlder have to the rapes and murders of unknown, foreign women? How can a mythic and fictional figure navigate and inhabit such complex and contradictory positions?

Diana transforms her body into a weapon—not into a suicide bomb, following Mbembe and Murray—but into a smaller machine, one made of moving parts that can be replaced, one that is typically forbidden in Mexico and is *fabricated* abroad, in the United States to be specific: a handgun. Mbembe explains:

> The body does not simply conceal a weapon. The body is *transformed* into a weapon, not in a metaphorical sense but in the truly ballistic sense […] Homicide and suicide are accomplished in the same act. And to a large extent, resistance and self-destruction are synonymous. To deal out death is therefore to reduce the other and oneself to the status of pieces of inert flesh, scattered everywhere, and assembled with difficulty. (emphasis added, p. 37)

Mbembé (2003) explains that the human first negates nature—reduces nature "to

his or her own needs"—and transforms nature in a process that exposes the human to "his or her own negativity" (p. 14). Returning to the myth of Diana and the metamorphosis of Actaéon, some striking similarities stand out between the ancient myth and the new Diana. Diana transforms Actaéon into a stag. This narrative takes place in a pastoral landscape; therefore the *natural* transformation (fantastic as it is) from human life to animal life appears *logical*. Diana transforms the intrusive hunters in her story—the bus drivers who are alleged rapists—into corpses. Death, within this notion of nature, is no longer the same event—the binary of life. Death, and not life, is the natural state—life is the thing that we inhabit and that we fail to understand even after millennia. In order to understand this shift in a conception of nature we must move from a humanist and anthropocentric notion toward what the city-machine creates—the conversion of human into *thing, tool, assembler*.

What we know from Ovid to be metamorphoses in *his* nature are exchanges within the parasitic machine, a new nature—as Diana transforms a component, a fragment, of the machine into a corpse, she confronts her own place and instrumental function within it. What began as a call for justice and emancipation—for participation in what Mbembé calls a romantic society where sovereignty[30] as autonomy is a possibility, turns into the realization that the living body itself is the only *instrument*.

The second form of instrumentality regards the limits of truth. The truth of Diana's confession is not that she murdered two bus drivers. The truth of Diana's confession is that she has been transformed into an instrument of death—an instrument of vengeance. Because she is not a captured criminal, this is not the type of the truth that the

[30] Mbembe (2013) defines sovereignty as "the power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (p. 11).

state is after, and it is therefore not recognized as truth. Because the news reflects the reality we know, the confession trumped all other proofs. Diana transformed men into corpses and unveiled the reality of her nature—the border metropolis as machine, and in the process made herself vulnerable to the connected parts of the city-machine: "the war machine, the police machine, the criminal machine, [and/] or the machine of apolitical conformity" (González, 2007, p. 11). She did not reappear to avenge the deaths of 400 women and girls by transforming a third driver to corpse because it is not known whether their deaths were at all connected to the femicidal context. Assuming that Diana had a real-life counterpart, a body, that she *was* a murderous avenger, the act was silenced—her act, and herself by extension, is subdued by one branch of the city machine—including apolitical conformity. But it is most likely that Diana's real-life counterpart was safely disconnected from the violence of Juárez, particularly at the time of writing a confession—a troll.

Diana's actions, though not literally suicidal, or, suicidal in the sense that her cyber-life has ended, conclude in various forms of death. Audiences never hear from her again—not as an assassin, not as a troll, not even as a memory or anecdote. Once the confession was reconsidered and repackaged as a hoax, the best thing to do was to forget that anyone ever *believed* in Diana. The fact that no other bus driver showed up dead leaves a desert of speculation open for the taking, offering no comfort of truth. As a real body connected to the violent contexts presented: Was she killed by bus drivers? Was she imprisoned? Did she simply retreat, fading back into the city machine? Knowing, or assuming, that she is a troll: The fragments of discourse about her become the fragments of flesh, the bullets, the casings, the gun powder that together might tell a story. Where

did you go, Diana? After all, "the human subject has to be fully alive at the very moment of dying, to be aware of his or her own death, to live with the impression of actually dying" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 38).

Diana's call to arms was not persuasive in the sense that women in Juárez began a violent campaign to combat gender violence. Instead, the author of the confession is aware of the material conditions of working class women in Ciudad Juárez, using phrases like "the necessity to work late into the night." The troll's success in giving life to Diana, a disembodied confessor to crimes (this is no exaggeration—there is no criminal body here), is best explained by the fact that male bus drivers refused to go to work the following week because they feared for their lives. Could these men continue ignoring the deaths of the women that they transport to and from work? Could international corporations, some of which are located in the United States, continue to ignore gender violence, when, as a result of the drivers' fear, working class women could not arrive at the factories and assemble parts and pieces for export into the developed world? Furthermore, from among these men, those who abused their office and molested, violated, harassed, and in the worst circumstance raped and killed women, be moved to a different consciousness?

Of course, this question assumes (without moral judgment, perhaps) that *some* male bus drivers are involved in this organized crime. It goes without saying that this consciousness is not new for the women of Juárez, and perhaps not new to women in most places. Diana's true metamorphosis is from subject to sovereign—from submissive to imperium—with all of its murderous connotations. That democracy has shifted from representative power of the people to disembodied power of global market economies is

very telling because the criminal here has no body to punish and a soul that cannot be captured. Therefore, the last observation I will make is that for Diana, the body is the ultimate violent instrument. It is no accident that she calls herself an instrument instead of an *agent* or a *voice*. As an agent, she can be stopped. As a voice, she can be silenced or ignored, and perhaps never heard. As a body, she enjoys the same vulnerability as any other human—a vulnerability to death itself.

3.7 Conclusion

If death is the final aporiē, nonviolence is the step toward death and as such, this is a step that cannot be taken back—once death's aporiē is crossed, the transformation that takes place is so firm that there is no complete memory of what we used to be—only fragments of an identity we once performed. The social transformation, or "metamorphosis of punitive methods" (p. 24) that Foucault addresses in *Discipline & Punish* are a "double process: the disappearance of the spectacle and the elimination of pain" (p. 11). This double process, Foucault adds, removes the body as the locus of punishment and centers the soul, under the guise of modernist and scientific terms like "psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness, etc." (we might add, *identity*) resulting in a political economy of bodies whose control lies precisely in the fear of punishment of the soul: a removal or rights, freedoms, privilege, and access to anything from basic bodily needs to less necessary pleasures that provide the soul with spirit—with life (p. 29).

Here, Diana has brought the spectacle out of its hiding place—an action that the masses welcomed. But the spectacle of death is not exactly what it was in 1700s

France—a public parade where a criminal is physically tortured. Here, Diana uses communication media: from news outlets in print and airwaves, to social media like Facebook, in order to publicize the quick (the use of a firearm, rather than the slow torture) death of an alleged serial rapist. And Foucault's critique resurfaces: "the execution no longer bears the specific mark of the crime or the social status of the criminal; a death that only lasts a moment—no torture must be added to it in advance, no further actions performed upon the corpse; an execution that affects life, rather than the body" (p. 12).

It is necessary here to emphasize that following the second murder of a bus driver, several other bus drivers in Ciudad Juárez refused to work, telling news reporters that they feared for their lives. In part, this fear exists because the alleged killer could be attacking bus drivers without concern for who they are and what criminal actions they may or may not have engaged in. Most importantly, Diana crosses a boundary, or a series of boundaries. Where she was once a human, a person, a laborer, a woman, she is now a spirit, a goddess, or a ghost. Where she was once under submission to the sovereign, she is now the sovereign itself—deciding on the lives and deaths of others. Most importantly: The public aspect of the executions, paired with their international media presence, tells others that if they engage in crimes against femininity (rape, assault, and feminicide), their punishment is no longer administered by the state of impunity or the state of exception, but by the hand of a rogue, unknown, powerful, superwoman. She could be any woman. She could be your spouse, your daughter, your neighbor, or your employee.

Diana's transformation extends beyond the transformation rapist-corpse to the transformation of who the sovereign is and exactly where sovereign power resides. If

democracy is the failing experiment of modern societies (the state has taken a life of its own and responds to interests that are better understood as the interest of the democratic, capitalist state, and not the interest of the people), then Diana is an ephemeral interruption of this logic—an interruption that allows those interested in social and political change an opportunity to glimpse into the deathly and bodily sacrifices that are necessary in order for larger transformations to take place. Diana is an example of the type of violence that needs to take place in order to change the system. I do not mean that rapists ought to be killed with impunity. I mean that the modern logics that are communicated about who can and who cannot engage in violence need to be interrupted, even if it means challenging state violence with violence.

It is important to note that even though most news sources simply repeated the news of Diana the hunter of bus drivers without ever questioning the truth behind the confession, and in turn, the truth behind the information they provided society, there were few journalists who immediately questioned the existence, veracity, and/or authenticity of Diana the hunter of bus drivers. In the following chapter, I will analyze two news articles written by Luis Chaparro—a journalist who was committed to pointing to the falsity of this confession. Chaparro's investigations demonstrate 1) that the troll will not easily be identified, 2) that if the troll were identified, the public would not be made aware of it and 3) that Diana, despite being nothing more than a fake confession written by an online troll, gave thousands, if not millions, of people hope in a just society.

CHAPTER 4

THE HAUNT OF CREDULITY: ANALYZING THE FEMINICIDE NEWS STORY

Throughout the 20th century, mythic analysis gained popularity in the United States. This is in part due to Roland Barthes's book, *Mythologies* (1957), which was often read alongside other continental scholarship. Soon, Barthes's own name would become synonymous with mythology. But myth had been the interest of many thinkers, philosophers, and rhetoricians in the Western tradition—far before Barthes became popular. Feldman and Richardson (1972), for example, dedicated a collection to the renewed interest in myth that preceded modernity's own concern with mythology. In their collection, they demonstrate how various figures, from Karl Marx to Isaac Newton, were concerned with mythic analyses of culture long before its 20th-century prevalence.

According to Barthes, myths are: a system of communication, a message, a form (and structure), a mode of signification, and a type of speech. For Bathes, the role of history is important to mythology: history "converts reality into speech" and history "rules the life and death of mythical language" (p. 108). Furthermore, myths are a type of writing or speech, like metaphor, narrative, or poetry, but perhaps requiring more connection with history than those, for instance, like the epic narrative.

In this chapter, and throughout the dissertation, I argue that myths evolve from communication itself—meaning that there is no single origin of a given mythology. For

instance, the Western myth of the great white savior, which assumes that in narrative a white, heroic, masculine man will rescue women and win the day, has no single originary moment of conception; that is, there is no untangling of the *discursive unknown*. For Barthes, myths evolve from history, and even history itself is treated within modernity as a knowable, modernist object. History is often told linearly and often comes with the conviction of a truth or fact of events having occurred. Yet, as Barthes and so many others have suggested,, history is a very powerful discourse often missing a lot of information—through accident or omission—including what poststructural and intercultural scholars have called *absent histories*.[31] Most importantly, history—is socially constructed and would not exist without a desire to communicate—and therefore, without communicative practices—including the oral tradition of storytelling that exists transculturally.

A writer with a literary background, Barthes did not conceive of myth primarily in terms of oral speech. Indeed, myths, he suggests, can appear across multiple media and can consist of "modes of writing or of representations; not only written discourse, but also photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity, all these can serve as a support to mythical speech" (p. 108). Furthermore, Barthes argues that myths always return across time as a response to existing, material contexts. As he writes, "But this is the point: we are no longer dealing here with a theoretical mode of representation: we are dealing with *this* particular image, which is given for this particular signification" (p. 108). Myths are always bound to micro- and macrocontexts, even when they appear to be universal. Of course, the flaw of this approach to mythologies is to assume a single,

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[31] See Martin and Nakayama (2010) *Intercultural Communication in Contexts*.

solitary knowledge about what a given myth signifies. As I intend to demonstrate, several journalists made an attempt to interpret the *meaning* of the myth of Dianalacazadoradechoferes—all coming to very different conclusions.

Borrowing from Barthes, it is important to note that myths resurface for specific purposes at particular times. In other words, myths are only *meaningless* when they are dormant, inactive, or forgotten. *Activated* myths inform and persuade, moving people to action and evoking specific sentiments in populations. Myths can be read through more lenses than the mixture of historical and semiological approaches advocated by Barthes—an approach that ultimately seeks to arrive at meaning. Unlike Barthes, I am not concerned with the quest of discovery of meaning. I am interested in approaching mythologies from a poststructural perspective, asking: What is the role of mythologies in postmodernity? With this research question in mind, I will use deconstruction in my approach to journalistic discourse that, at times, hints at mythology in order to argue that certain ruptures in modernity allow cultural scholars to witness the transformations of immaterial forces (mental, psychic, emotional forces) into material phenomena. In order to do so, I will borrow ideas about the spectral, spiritual, and immaterial from Jacques Derrida's *Spectres of Marx*, Roberto Bolaño's *2666*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. It is my contention that this approach is attuned to the various, almost random, influences participating in a given event.

In what follows, I will use Derrida's term, "hauntology," from *Spectres of Marx*, alongside Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, specifically, the myth of Actaéon and a poem titled "Rumour," both of which appear in Metamorphoses. In "Rumour," Ovid describes the role of rumor, the seemingly careless act of passing information without concerning

oneself with the veracity or truth of the information. Ovid's poem warns of the "haunt of credulity," which is a seemingly inevitable and seemingly inescapable gullibility that pertains to communicative acts. The haunt of credulity lies in that it presents itself when it is least expected. Finally, a smaller component of my theoretical reading is influenced by Roberto Bolaño's *2666*. Bolaño's novel is a piece of postmodern literature. The novel is divided into five parts that Bolaño intended to publish as separate novels. The novel does not follow a main or singular character. Rather, the novel allows readers to witness Ciudad Juárez at different moments and through the eyes of different characters. Two of the characters of particular interest are detectives investigating feminicide, who demonstrate certain surreal and haunting aspects of the city. Moreover, Bolaño shows the importance of newspapers (and news broadly), in the formation of everyday discourses and in the social creation of reality in Ciudad Juárez.

I will describe these theoretical concepts and highlight some of the most pertinent contributions, in light of my analysis. In the analysis, I will take three news articles about Diana la Cazadora de Choferes and analyze them using the concepts described. Additionally, part of what I will do in my deconstruction of news articles is provide nuanced interpretations of key phrases in the news articles. The three articles selected were authored in Spanish, and part of the labor that I engage in is translation. The process of translating these articles is not a mere matter of converting one language to another. Rather, this process itself reveals the crucial role that language plays in constructing understandings of life, death, and existence. More details regarding the selection of articles will be given shortly before the analysis.

4.1 Hauntology and Structural History

Hauntology (*hantologie*) is a term credited to Jacques Derrida in his *Spectres de Marx* (1993). There, Derrida attempted to respond to the uncertainty surrounding the current state of global Marxism: whither Marxism? Where is Marxism going? *Is Marxism dying*? (Magnus and Cullenberg, 2013). John A. Riley (2017) explains that Derrida coined the term as an attempt to "rekindle the spirit of the Marxist international against the triumphalist rhetoric of the early 1990's, following the fall of the Berlin Wall" (p. 18). Derrida, Riley argues, "wanted to show the brutal side effects of unchecked free-market capitalism and to demonstrate that ideas thought to be buried would keep returning, albeit as specter-like traces" (p. 17). It is not without meaning (and certainly not without my comment here) that while Derrida delivered his two landmark lectures at the University of California, Riverside, the United States, Mexico, and Canada *sealed the deal* and passed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—a historical moment for citizens of Mexico and the United States—despite their varying interest in the role of Marxism in the contemporary academy.

Hauntology is not the study of ghosts as conducted by *Ghost Hunters*—or a television show about ghosts, haunted places, and the technologies that aim to capture and prove the existence of ghosts. Hauntology aims to connect ontology to its dialectic correspondent: If ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, existence, and reality, *hauntology* replaces being, existence, and reality with "the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive" within what we know to be existence, being, and reality (Davis, 2017, p. 373). Hauntology, then, treats the spectral, the spiritual, and the ghostly as real forces and influences—as rhetorics that

affect everyday life. Colin Davis (2017) explains that hauntology was welcomed by critics across disciplines mostly due to the claim that deconstruction, Derrida's go-to method of analysis, was always a Marxist project. As a consequence of Derrida's efforts to resurrect Marx as germane to deconstruction, Davis argues that Derrida also rehabilitated the topic of ghosts "as a respectable subject of inquiry," not by aiming to prove that ghosts are objectively, empirically real, but by treating the these forms and influences as *real*. Davis places hauntology within the ethical turn in deconstruction, a moment when critical scholars engaged in deconstruction discuss topics such as justice and responsibility, and emphasizes that although hauntology is not concerned with the conviction that cartoon-like ghosts exist, it is concerned with uncovering forms or types of ghosts—ideas and images thought to have been buried, such as Marx, and in my case, such as Diana.

Derrida's approach to deconstruction places a lot of value on two structures—the word and the sentence. What differentiates Derrida from Barthes is that Derrida seeks to deconstruct the word and the sentence, structures that already appear to be meaningful, in order to demonstrate other possibilities—possibilities that move beyond the semiotic interpretation of phenomena and toward less comfortable spaces. Meaning is not arrived at but, rather, is part of an atmosphere and coexists with other meanings and other unknown *things*. With this lesson in mind, in what follows, I will analyze news articles written by three journalists, playing close attention to the ways in which their writing contributes to the construction of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes.

4.2 NAFTA and Global Circuits of Capital

Within cultural studies, the critique of capital, capitalism, class oppression, and wealth should never be sacrificed or circumvented. Some argue that power resides predominantly in formations such as race and gender, an important and powerful argument that I do not mean to undermine, but such an argument does not cancel the need for a critique of global circuits and global rhetorics of *economic growth and development*, which, using deconstruction as a methodology, when seen from the side of the developing world, tend also to be *economic oppression and exploitation*. Of course, many will argue that the critique of capital can take the form of intersectionality, where socioeconomic status or "class" analysis becomes only one of the ways power is contested. Again, I do not mean to diminish intersectionality as an analytic frame. I do, however, want to emphasize the importance of critiquing capital as a central focus. Additionally, intersectionality centers the individual experience, even when larger conclusions are drawn from the analysis of individual experiences. Capitalism affects populations—individually *and* collectively. More importantly, capitalism functions differently in different international contexts. The role of the nation-state (here, the federal government) in managing and influencing an otherwise free market should always be questioned—and I do not know that intersectionality is necessarily and in all cases, the best way to approach such texts.

Many Marxist tenets ring true when analyzing the borderland maquiladora, for example, the freedom of movement enjoyed by multinational corporations across various borders, the demands for black market goods in both the United States and Mexico—narcotics and firearms—but also child laborers and sex workers. Most importantly, the

location of maquiladoras in Mexican territory (and not in the United States) has also produced unexpected phenomena: migration from Central and South America (not only to the United States, but also to Mexican cities where maquiladoras need thousands of unskilled laborers), unexpected urbanization (the urbanization of border cities is also the abandonment of rural towns and ranches—leaving ghost towns behind, some of which are used as mass graves by narco-police forces), the entry of women into the labor force (which, despite many appropriate progressive interpretations, has also evoked a deep and deadly misogyny that until now appeared to exist mostly within the domestic sphere), the emasculation experienced by some men (there are few employment opportunities for men, and often, women became the breadwinner of the family—leading some men to become *sicarios*, or gunmen, for various cartels—simultaneously earning a living and recuperating their masculinity through the exertion of deadly violence), and finally, the war on drugs (launched bilaterally by the United States and Mexico) has turned Mexico into one of the most violent places in the world (see Introduction), particularly for the poor, women, sexual minorities, immigrants, indigenous people, and intellectuals such as journalists, academics, and artists.

Thus, building off Derrida's hauntology, I turn to Ovid in order to further strengthen the interpretive tools that will help me analyze news stories about Diana. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* contains the myth of Actaeon, where Diana plays a major role. Moreover, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* also contains a poem called Rumor, in which the term the haunt of credulity emerges. Coupled with hauntology as a way of thinking about capitalist power relations in postmodernity, I use the haunt of credulity as a rhetorical concept that allows me deconstruct contemporary news about Diana la Cazadora de

Choferes.

4.3 Rumor and *the Haunt of Credulity*

A fundamental lesson that rhetoric teaches is that truth is relative. The sophists, for example, are regarded as wise teachers, but also as subversive, public figures (Barney, 2006). Thomas Conley (1990) explains that while there is no “single set of principles” that can be characterized as “sophistic,” but there are at least two ways that sophists taught rhetoric in ancient Greece: the Protagorean and the Gorgianic (p. 5). Conley credits Protagoras with “antilogic,” a “method of resolving disputes by examining the arguments on both sides of the question, *without recourse to some objective criterion of truth* or to some traditional standard of behavior. *Truth, for all practical purposes, was held by Protagoras to be inaccessible*” (p. 5, emphasis added). Gorgias, like Protagoras, “rejected claims to knowledge and held that opinion (*doxa*) was the only guide to action. Both, then, implicitly rejected the criteria of ‘truth’” (p. 6).

Sophists were controversial: Protagoras was famously accused of teaching his students to “make the worst case appear the better” and Gorgias was accused of giving his students a power comparable to “putting a knife in the hands of a madman in a crowd” (Conley, 1990, p. 6). Their most vociferous critic was Plato, who argued that rhetoricians “dealt in mere doxa, denying or ignoring truth” (p. 9). Doxa, in this sense, is not the objective truth of Plato’s philosophy, but instead an opinion, that when accepted by others, comes to be regarded as truth. Thus, in Plato’s *Gorgias*, Socrates demonstrates (or, attempts to) that rhetoric is corrupt and “has nothing to do with justice or virtue” (p. 9). Plato does this by attacking rhetoric, and Gorgias specifically, personified in Gorgias.

Poststructuralist and postmodernists, centuries later, insist that truth is relative—a position heavily critiqued by Plato. As R. Barney (2006) writes, one person may experience the wind as a cold phenomenon, for example, while another will understand the very same weather to warm. While both opinions are *true*, even while oppositional, one of the two, Plato argued, is *better*. The sophists, on the other hand, found in this naturally contradictory world an opening toward unknown and creative possibilities—maybe there is no wind at all and only our experiences of something we call *wind*. In reference to the sophists, Nietzsche (1901/1968) argued that they did not believe in the truth of "morality-in-itself," nor in the truth of "good-in-itself," but rather, that these concepts were created for and from specific conditions—and despite being generally treated as universals—did not exist as universals (p. 233).

When the news of Diana broke, the truth of the matter was central. The story sounded surreal—that is, the murders themselves did not at all appear unrealistic (this is, after all, one of the deadliest cities in the world). However, it appeared untrue or unrealistic that the murders would be accompanied by such a dramatic and personal confession. This confession, in other words, brought the reader close to the murders, but the link—the affect that readers felt—was itself what made publics ponder the truth—the reality—of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes.

Ovid was not a rhetorician. He was a poet. Still, several rhetoricians and poets

have discussed the relationship between rhetoric and poetry.[32] Ovid's poetry alludes to *constructedness* and *situatedness* of truth. Specifically, Ovid is interested in discussing the way in which something considered "true" is never solid and consistent, but dynamic. This dynamism depends on communication itself. Rumors, as Ovid warns, and as I hope to demonstrate, have the capability of becoming truth when certain unpredictable conditions assemble. In order to arrive at this conclusion, I will first present a definition of truth—not a new, or idiosyncratic definition, but rather an established anti-truth. Journalistic rumors, in particular, enjoy and possess a particular circulation that endows them with certain forms of credibility, but most importantly, of *credulity*—of leading and persuading audiences to believe and perceive the world in specific ways, rather than something possessed by a journalist of good repute: credibility.

Although Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is considered a singular poem, it is a collection of 15 books containing more than 250 ancient myths. Thematically, all of these myths involve a metamorphosis—a physical transformation, typically from human to nature (Aurora becomes the dawn, and Cycnus becomes a swan, for example). In becoming or transforming, the word also gains its structural, surface-level *meaning*, becoming a part of the environment: if I say *aurora* in Spanish, my audience thinks mostly about the dawn, and not about a myth; and if I say *cisne* in Spanish, my audience thinks mostly of a swan, a big, waterfowl, not a mythical figure.

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[32] From Aristotle's (335 BCE) *Poetics*; Victor Lange's (1963) *The Poet as Critic*; Enoch Brater's (1975) *W.B. Yeats: The Poet as Critic*; Oscar Wilde's (1891) *The Critic as Artist*; and Audre Lorde's (1978) "Power" whose opening stanza reads "The difference between poetry and rhetoric / is being ready to kill / yourself / instead of your children." The relationship between rhetoric and poetry is extensive, and rather than promote one form of understanding this centuries-long relationship, I want to draw attention to the necessity for my rhetorical criticism to take seriously the poetry that has established the mythologies under analysis.

During my research into Ovid's Diana, I encountered a poem called *Rumour*. Here, Ovid describes the *haunt of credulity*, a concept born from rumor. Rumor, according to Ovid, does not oblige by physical borders, but rather inhabits a metaphysical landscape that can reappear in various locations; involves what I refer to as panopticonic and panauditory dimensions; involves the interpretation, repetition, and reproduction or retelling of stories; and each retelling of a story further separates the listener from the original story. Furthermore, the *haunt of credulity*, the postlife or afterlife of gullibility, resonates with the ethical turn in deconstruction: "irresponsible error / groundless joy, unreasoning panic, impulsive sedition / and whispering gossip" (Book XII, lines 58-60). I take Ovid's conceptualization of rumor, its poetic, but most importantly, rhetorical role in creating reality, and use it to describe the relationship between news articles that told the story of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes. I argue that these narratives, in moments, fell into the haunt of credulity, and in other moments, resisted credulity's coax.

Rumour

Picture a space at the heart of the world, between the earth,
The sea and the sky, on the frontiers of all three parts of the universe. 40
Here there are eyes for whatever goes on, no matter how distant;
And here there are ears whose hollows no voice can fail to penetrate.
This is the kingdom of Rumour, who chose to live on a mountain,
With numberless entrances into her house and a thousand additional
Holes, though none of her thresholds are barred with a gate or a door. 45
Open by night and by day, constructed entirely of sounding
Brass, the whole place hums and echoes, repeating whatever
It hears. Not one of the rooms is silent or quiet, but none
Is disturbed by shouting. The noise is entirely a murmuring babble,
Low like the waves of the sea which you hear from afar, or the last faint 50
Rumble of thunder, when storm-black clouds have clashed in the sky.
The hall is filled by a crowd which is constantly coming and going,
A flimsy throng of a thousand rumours, true and fictitious,
Wandering far and wide in a turbulent tangle of language. 54-55
They chatter in empty ears or pass on stories to others;
The fiction grows and detail is added by each new teller.
This is the haunt of credulity, irresponsible error,

> Groundless joy, unreasoning panic, impulsive sedition 59-60
> And whispering gossip. Rumour herself spies every occurrence
> On earth, at sea, in the sky; and her scrutiny ranges the universe.
> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book XII, lines 39-63

Ovid argued that each retelling of the story further separated the listener from truth: “the fiction grows and detail is added by each new teller” (Book XII, line 57). While it is tempting to follow this model, my small but meaningful modification is that the retelling does not necessarily separate the listener from truth, but rather from the nuances of the prior (not necessarily original) story. Additionally, each retelling points the listener toward aspects that were not present before—aspects that only appear as the story is adapted and recontextualized for different audiences and for different purposes.

Ovid’s meditation on the role of rumor in constructing reality helps me explain Internet cultures, and in particular, the way truth is formed discursively, rather than existing independently of discourse. Ovid wrote this poem as an introduction to the metamorphosis of Cycnus, a Trojan warrior who is transformed into a swan while battling Achilles. Cycnus warns Achilles: “rumor has told me all about you,” indicating that Cycnus is prepared to defeat Achilles because Cycnus has received favorable information from “rumor” (Book XII, lines 86-87). Achilles is unable to defeat Cycnus because at the moment before his death, Neptune transforms Cycnus into a swan in order to save his life (κύκνος, kýknos, translates to *swan*).

Rumor, in this case, can be interpreted as supplying accurate information—or, more accurately, information that happened to be accurate. Rumor, then, is not antitruth or the antithesis of truth; nor is rumor necessarily synonymous with truth. Rumor is information, valid or invalid, true or untrue, that allows people to make decisions. Seen this way, information and *mis*information *become* the same thing: there no longer is a

concern for objective truth and, simultaneously, rhetorical appeals begin to take on the forms of truth and to exist in vehicles previously associated with truth. My concern with information and media emerges from the fact that Diana la Cazadora de Choferes existed discursively in social media—and her rhetorical momentum was in great part founded on the reliance of rumor—on the willingness to pass messages, stories, news, and images along—on the social role of sharing and forwarding—on participation in the digital age. Rumor, thus, undergoes its own metamorphosis or transformation, when the information provided by rumor proves to be helpful.

Apart from Ovid, Roberto Bolaño's *2666* (2004) also helps me think through modern concepts of truth and credulity, particularly when investigating the phenomenon of femicide in Ciudad Juárez. *2666* is one of the best pieces of public memory regarding the murders of women of Ciudad Juárez. *2666* won Chile's Altazor Award of the National Arts in 2005 and the USA's National Book Critics Circle Award in 2008. *2666* was published a year after Bolaños's death. Furthermore, Bolaño was greatly influenced by his friend and colleague, Sergio González Rodríguez, author of a renowned trilogy on modern violence: *Huesos en el Desierto* (*Bones in the Desert*), *El Hombre sin Cabeza* (*Man without a Head*), and *Campo de Guerra* (*Battlefield*), as well as a collection of critical essays, *The Femicide Machine*. Jean Franco (2013) dedicated "Apocalypse Now," the last chapter of *Cruel Modernity,* to the work of Bolaño, including the friendly and collaborative relationship between the two authors.

2666 is a long examination of several themes in contemporary, violent, modern Mexico. As such, the novel is divided into five *parts* (each of the five chapters is literally titled "*la parte de*… / the part about…"). The fourth chapter, *La parte de los crimines*,

the part about crimes, is of particular interest to my analysis of Diana, contemporary journalism, as well as the relationship between modern mythologies, credulity, and veracity. Bolaño's description of Ciudad Juárez becomes a basis for imagining the investigative work in the context of deathly Ciudad Juárez. No, Bolaño is not discussing real detective work. His detectives are fictional. However, following Derrida's hauntological frame, I argue that reality itself—including detective reality—is influenced by forces that are more than material. Additionally, Bolaño purposefully separates the artistic, theoretical, and *critical* interpretation of modern violence (in the first chapter) from the scientific, forensic, and practical investigation of violent crimes (in the fourth chapter) in order to demonstrate some of the pitfalls of strict, scientific inquiry in modern times.

One of the things of which Bolaño is thoroughly aware and that is crucial to my analysis, is the role of print journalism—not only in modern Mexico, but along the borderlands. Apart from reading academic research, the young detective, Lalo Cura, also claims to read *newspapers*—plural. Bolaño also includes the fictional names of newspapers that report the deaths of women through years of investigation: *El Heraldo del Norte*, *La Tribuna de Santa Teresa*, *La Voz de Sonora*, and *La Raza de Green Valley*, to name a few. This is important because reading multiple newspapers can help investigators make connections to larger webs of underground organizations—organizations that encompass more than the local. These newspapers, coupled with the vernacular treatment of real people talking about the news—what Ovid personifies as Rumour—create a deathly atmosphere that can be best described as *surreal*: a simultaneous credulity of the unreal and a distrust of and even rejection of journalistic

reality. While Ovid's describes Diana, he does not describe Diana la Cazadora de Choferes. Rather, Ovid's myth and poetry help me analyze Diana la Cazadora de Choferes. Similarly, Bolaño does not write about Diana. However, Bolaño write about two crucial components pertaining to a just understanding of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes: temporal, spatial, and (geo)political contexts. Thus, the works of Ovid and Bolaño will be crucial to the analysis of news coverage of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes.

4.4 News Media and the Creation of Diana

Chris Dent (2008) argues that one of the crucial roles that journalists play in contemporary society is "to hear the confession of the public" (p. 201). Diana la Cazadora de Choferes confessed to the murders of two bus drivers. Her confession was sent to two local news agencies. Moreover, journalists retell and, in the process, reinterpret the confession, all while placing the confession within specific contexts and while crafting the confession for specific audiences. Dent refers to this process as discursive formations, thinking through Foucault, a process that must assume an accepted notion of truth, and that in the communicative process, further develops and alters truth itself. Of course, what Dent does not emphasize is that the journalist is not exclusively a journalist, but is also a member of the public who *also* seeks to confess. And this aspect becomes clear when we look at the writings of the journalists who covered the murders of the bus drivers—writers who do not think of their role as *objective* tellers of truth, but who instead infuse their journalism with ethical, complicated dimensions.

Diana la Cazadora de Choferes appears in a confession and is re-presented by

news sources. The confession was sent to *RadioNet* and *LaPolaka*, but authorities do not know exactly who sent the confession, even though the confession was traced to an IP address in El Paso, Texas. Her case was seen on television, print media, radio, and online. I focus on online news sources, given that online news facilitated the dispersal and spread of the news of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes beyond Ciudad Juárez—and beyond Mexico—to learn about the alleged hunter of men.[33] This is not to say that print news in other places did not also spread the news. Rather, I choose online news because certain sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, are places where people share news without having to "be there." Diana la Cazadora de Choferes also appeared on television news, but I am interested in journalists who, when writing about Diana, write against the grain, resist the dominant reading of Diana, and question either the veracity of the confession, the connection between the murders and the confession, or the very existence of Diana.

My original sample of online news articles included more than 123 news stories, varying from major news agencies (national and international), to local news sources, magazines, periodicals, and blogs. I will mention a few of the major sources that will not receive critical attention in this essay in order to give my audience an example of the themes and sources that contributed to the discourse surrounding Diana. Then, I will discuss three specific articles in order to describe Diana la Cazadora de Choferes in terms of hauntology and credulity.

Local news sources, meaning sources from Ciudad Juárez and El Paso—thinking

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[33] As part of this research project, I collected a variety of local newspapers and tabloids. I do not mean to diminish the value of local, print news. In fact, I hope to expand my analysis in order to include more local voices—such as Luis Chaparro's. Additionally, Ono and Sloop's (2002) *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration, and California's Proposition 187* argues that digital vernacular media often rely or cite traditional news media.

about the metropolis as a cultural, border unit while recognizing that there are cultural differences among the two—include *El Diario, Juárez Noticias, El Paso Times, La Polaka, and Norte Digital*. *El Diario* reports that an alleged assassin sent a message to various news media.[34] The report includes sections of the confession as well as a synopsis of the events: on Wednesday morning, around 7:45, the first bus driver was killed—outside of the bus, attempting to flee. The following morning, around 8:25, another bus driver was killed—in a different neighborhood, but on the same route. The assassin was identified by eyewitnesses as "approximately 50 years old, dark-skinned, with dyed blonde hair, wearing a cap or visor, jeans, and a plaid shirt" (par. 9). *El Diario* also reported that nearly half of the drivers of Juárez's route 4A "threw in the towel" and decided to stay home, fearing for their lives (Orquiz, 2013). *Juárez Noticias* included important sections of the confession, but they were careful not to make any major claims, perhaps because they were waiting for more information regarding the investigation to come in.

Various national sources covered Diana la Cazadora de Choferes, like *Terra, El Mexicano, Excelsior, Zócalo, Milenio, Vanguardia,* and *Sin Embargo*. *Terra*, for example, retold the narrative, including Diana's entire confession, her self-styled signature, and the email address used by the author of the confession. Salvador Gómez (2013), reporting for *Grupo Imagen Multimedia* and being broadcast throughout Mexico's television station *Cadena Tres*, interviewed bus drivers like Juan Morales, who reported being afraid to work after the two assassinations. Gómez reports that in the days following the assassinations, fewer bus drivers showed up to work, decreasing the

[34] "Envió un comunicado a diversos medios de comunicación" (par 1).

number of buses available to citizens, like Juan Olivas, who depends on public transportation. Olivas explains that he has no choice but to ride the bus because this is his only means of transportation.

Excelsior reported that half of Ciudad Juárez's bus drivers did not show up to work on the days that followed the assassinations. Ten out of twenty of the drivers of route 4A, the route covered by the two murdered bus drivers, Zárate and Flores, did not show up to work, fearing for their life. Additionally, the articles reported that were fewer passengers on public transportation, and those who ventured into the buses were joined by undercover police officers who were dressed as civilians. *Excelsior* explained that Juárez police also distributed a composite sketch based on testimony from 20 eyewitnesses to the crimes. The sketch depicts a woman with a visor over her head.

International coverage varied in style and content. *El País*, a news organization based in Spain but with correspondents throughout Latin America, reported the news without significant elaboration. *El País-Uruguay* simply repeated what was already known, without expanding on the basic facts. The same is true for *StarMedia-USA* (based in Miami, Florida, but owned by France Telecom—a subsidiary of Orange). Their Spanish-language report merely repeats the same narrative—a mysterious avenger of sexual crimes—a mysterious confession—fear and excitement among the population. Colombia's *El Espectador* also retells the narrative, adding that Diana's actions ironically mark her as equal to the criminals she sought to exact retribution upon. *New York Magazine* retells the story by appealing to American exceptionalism: Its story is that Juárez is and continues to be a violent place, but now there is a woman taking justice into her own hands. Similarly, *Hilltop Views* celebrates that Ciudad Juárez has "finally found

[its] savior from the horrific femicide that has been occurring in their town" (Pina, 2013, par. 1). Apart from the evident savior complex, Juárez is not exactly a *town*—the metro population exceeds two million. Stereotypical images of Mexico dominate how American journalists conceptualize of Diana—through and through. Perhaps the best US-based synopsis of the case comes from *USA Today*. There, readers are given a fair summary of the events as they occurred, but then the narrative ends in mystery: "the public may never know what the truth is" (par. 16). And indeed, years after the murders and the confession, the public now remembers Diana as a strange, uncanny, and unbelievable event—a mystery that never came to a resolution.

T.S. Eliot wrote that the world ends with a whimper.[35] Gradually, Diana withered—disappeared and was forgotten. US-based *Univision* and Mexico's *Milenio* and *Vanguardia*, for example, explained that Diana sent a second message to local media, to *RadioNet*, specifically, in Ciudad Juárez. There, Diana explains that she is being followed—but she does not elaborate: Is she followed by the police or the military? By a gang of off-duty bus drivers? By so-called *narcos*?

El Mexicano, one of Mexico's most popular, national newspapers, ran a story about the upcoming filming of *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* (2013), a low-budget movie that aimed to memorialize the acts of Diana the avenger, and the topic of the following chapter in this dissertation. In this story, readers are presented with local bus drivers' opinions about the making of the film. Many bus drivers find it insulting that this topic would be taken up—some argue that they are not rapists, while ignoring the possibility that their colleagues may be rapists. Although it is unfair to characterize all of

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[35] *The Hollow Men* (1925). Lines 97-98.

Juárez's bus drivers as rapists, consider a story that was published in the wake of the investigations.

Nearly 1 month after the murders, *Excelsior* ran a follow-up story. Gregorio Reyes Luján, a 30-year-old bus driver, was arrested for sexually abusing a minor. According to Carlos Coria Rivas (2013), an unidentified girl was taking the bus to school. She was the only passenger in Reyes's unit. Reyes allegedly drove the bus to the station, where he did not allow her to exit the bus, and forced himself upon her. The crime was reported to Ciudad Juárez's Prosecutor's Office Specializing in Female Victims of Gender-based Crimes[36] and Reyes Luján was arrested days later. While this arrest does not necessarily indicate an orchestration or organization of sexual crimes, at minimum it demonstrates that these types of attacks do happen—and that, according to Diana's confession, this is the reason that the bus drivers were murdered in the first place. Furthermore, it is notable that Reyes Luján was pointed out by the girl—and not by someone in the bus terminal, during business hours.

It is also important to note that since the murders—almost 4 years ago—several news agencies (local, national, and international) have deleted their reports about Diana, including *El Mexicano, La Polaka, El Paso Times, Proyecto Diez, Radio Nederland Wereldomroep, UnoTV,* and *Zócalo.*[37] Although I do not look into the reasons behind the absence of these stories, I cannot help but think that there is a bit of embarrassment *present* in the *absence* or erasures of these reports—reports that contributed to the discursive creation of a powerful figure.

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[36] *Fiscalía Especializada en Atención a Mujeres Víctimas del delito por Razones de Género*

[37] *El Paso Times* and *Norte Digital* had a story published collaboratively in *El Paso y Más* [elpasoymas.com]. The story has been removed (date checked: March 10, 2017).

Initially, I limited the collection to the first 30 days following the assassination of the first bus driver, José Roberto Flores Carrera, who was killed on August 28, 2013. I limited this collection in order to have a contained bank of news articles. After collecting and reading through as many articles as I could find within a month of the assassination, I began to code, looking for themes that emerged organically. I abandoned this methodological approach around October (1 month after the collection ended). I conducted a second search in October and came across Gloria Castrillón's piece in Colombia's *Cromos*—a fashion, celebrity, and glamour periodical publication. Castrillón, presumably, speaks to a more specific audience—Latin American women (of course, men read this magazine as well). I then began adapting my original research questions. During the first days of my research, I myself confess, to being unaware of the extent to which Diana la Cazadora de Choferes was a fabrication. In other words, I was one of the members of the public who gullibly believed that Diana might exist—after all, the murders and the deaths were real—why should the confession not also be real. In October, it became evident that Diana's existence may not be precisely what I had imagined.

I chose these three articles from the 213 articles I found about Diana the killer of bus drivers, because the authors break away from predictable, stale, and standard ways of reporting—because some of the arguments they made about Diana presented possibilities both about Diana, and also about ways to make sense of gender violence in Ciudad Juárez. Whether it is due to the liberties granted by certain agencies, to the liberties earned by veteran journalists, or to the freedom enjoyed as independent laborers, these journalists and writers demonstrated: a knowledge of situations and contexts in Ciudad

Juárez (particularly in reference to feminicidios), a knowledge of the geography of the city itself (the routes of the buses, the locations of maquiladoras, and the proximity to the ports of entry to the United States), a knowledge of trade and commerce between the United States and Mexico, and a knowledge of Diana as a mythical figure—either through direct reference of the myth, or through reference to Diana's mythical characteristics.These criteria are important because they form or shape the context that allows for a more holistic understanding of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes. Moreover, they are aware that their knowledge may not be shared with their respective audiences, and take on an additional responsibility in their reports—a responsibility to not rush to conclusions.

This knowledge has a circular function. The fact that these journalists alluded to knowledge of these things in the first place indicates that their perceived responsibility as a *popular* voice is heightened, leading to a type of journalism that demonstrates a concern for civic action—an action that unearths the dead remains of women, resurrects discourses thought to be dead (hauntologically), and contributes to the rhetorical conjuring of the specter of Diana, the mythical hunter of men and protector of women.

In what follows, I will discuss the reports of three journalists. These journalists stand out from the original sample because they treated the news of Diana *exceptionally*. For example, Gloria Castrillón, in the fashion of Bolaño, chose to contextualize Diana's alleged actions—not necessarily to justify the deaths of bus drivers, but in order to point out the complexities of an act of feminist vengeance in Ciudad Juárez. Juan Lázaro, alluding to the myth of Actaéon and other fables, also contextualizes Diana's alleged actions. The myth of Actaéon tells of *the hunter*, Actaéon, who enters Diana's spring,

sees her naked, and thus becomes *the hunted*, when Diana turns him into a deer and he is killed by his own dogs. Lázaro chooses to do so by navigating through a ride in the buses—from one end of Ciudad Juárez to another—and allowing his audiences to see the ease with which crimes against working class women can and do take place in Ciudad Juárez, hence, showing why and how an act of vengeance might have been committed as a feminist protest of bus drivers' violence against women. Lastly, Luis Chaparro provides one the most fascinating readings of Diana. Chaparro is convinced that Diana is a hoax or a troll, and sets out to prove this point. Upon revision of his first impression of Diana, Chaparro does not deny that Diana is a troll, but comes to his own epiphany, claiming that the most accurate reading of Diana is that Diana exists, but only as a collective desire for justice. She exists in the hope that she evokes in the hearts of Juarenses.

4.5 Journalist 1: Gloria Castrillón

4.5.1 Feminicidio in Context

Gloria Castrillón published "*La mexicana que asesina conductores de bus por venganza* / The Mexican woman who murders bus drivers for vengeance" in *Cromos* in October. This article is divided into three sections: first, an introductory synopsis of the case, which includes a short contextualization of femicide in Ciudad Juárez; second, *preguntas sin respuesta*, questions without answers; and third, *más solas que nunca*, more alone than ever.

The synopsis begins with an ontological disclaimer: "*No se sabe si existe* / No one knows if she exists" (par. 2). It is a hauntological disclaimer, as it sets an eerie tone for

the remainder of the article. She writes that Ciudad Juárez is visited by *desconcierto*[38] [uncertainty, confusion, bewilderment, and *un-concern*; but also disorder and chaos—specifically, an auditory quality that presents itself as the opposite of harmony—the opposite of organized, structured music—noises within Rumour's mountain-kingdom that neither confirm nor deny, that both comfort and discomfort with the information they provide]. *Desconcierto* is accompanied by more fear than usual [*más miedo que de costumbre*], indicating that fear itself has become inseparable from the atmosphere in which discourse circulates (par. 2). Moreover, this fear is due to the apparition of she who calls herself avenger [*por la aparición de quien se hace llamar la 'vengadora'*] (par. 2). Apparitions are the subject of hauntology: In an ontological sense, hauntology occurs when something real appears and comes to be seen as real (and in this case, kills two men)—leaving their corpses as physical evidence; in the hauntological sense, this entity is spectral, spiritual, and immaterial, circulating back to the ontological questions concerning the nature of reality. The specter that appears in Ciudad Juárez does not precisely call herself avenger, Castrillón argues, as much as she makes others call her avenger [*se hace llamar*] (par. 2). In other words, the troll knows that the power does not only lie in calling herself Diana or avenger, but in the quasi-hegemonic, collective, populist consent: yes, you are Diana, the avenger of subaltern[39] women.

Castrillón offers a contextual frame for her readers to understand the role of Diana:

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[38]"En Ciudad Juárez hay desconcierto y más miedo que de costumbre por la aparición de quien se hace llamar la 'vengadora'" (par. 2).

[39] In Chapter 2, I discussed the role of Spivak in understanding why Diana might have been initially understood as a rupture in the way that working class women in Ciudad Juárez are represented—which she ultimately was not.

> Amid such a discussion, feminist organizations described Diana as a media creation intended to distract public opinion from what truly matters: the attacks, abuses, and homicides of women. According to unofficial figures, 1441 women have died in the past 20 years and an undetermined number are still [*siguen*—this is important to translate carefully, because in Spanish this means the murders are still continuing to exist] *disappeared.*[40] (par. 7)

Following a Derridian line of inquiry: How can someone described as *disappeared* continue to be? Or, more appropriately, assuming that someone dies or disappears, what existence does one take on after such a transformation? After all, within Western logics, death is the end; it is final. There is no consciousness, no soul, and so how can there be life once there is death? Within the Mexican context, *desaparecidas* (or, *desaparecidos*—Spanish, for better or worse, is a binary-gender language[41]) are people who are reported missing. The underlying interpretation of *desaparecida*, for readers who are distanced from the disappeared, tends to mean disappeared *and likely dead*. For the family of the disappeared, there is a sentiment of hope in stating that they may yet be found—that they may *reappear*—dead or alive—or in another state, such as DNA evidence that can at minimum suggest the *desaparecida* once existed in or near this space. Most importantly, one does not disappear, but rather, one *is disappeared*—someone disappears me—takes me from existence and into another realm, unknown but thoroughly imagined.

Reading between the lines, Castrillón tells her audience that Ciudad Juárez is a

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[40]"En medio de semejantes discusiones, organizaciones feministas llegaron a calificar a Diana como una creación de los medios de comunicación para distraer la atención de la opinión publica de lo realmente importante: los ataques, abusos y homicidios de los que han sido víctimas las mujeres. Según cifras no oficiales, en los últimos 20 años, han sido asesinadas 1441 mujeres y un numero sin determinar siguen desaparecidas" (par. 7).

[41] I would like to use more-inclusive gender pronouns, but translation makes this difficult. Spanish grammar relies on gender binary language for most, if not all, nouns. For more information, please see: http://nonbinary.org/wiki/Gender_neutral_language_in_Spanish

place where women have been the victims of a long and systemic project that aims to *disappear* them—to dissolve them to dust and sand—to nothingness. Additionally, Ciudad Juárez is a place where there are various planes of ontological existence—where there are disappeared women who may not accurately be described as dead, connoting inactivity and passivity. Rather, this other realm of *life* is unknown because it lies at the extremity of life and death, of physical existence and *otherly* existence. These women could be alive, but their location is unknown.

4.5.2 Unanswered Questions

Castrillón writes that the "constant and systematic assassination" of women in Ciudad Juárez—a place "bordering the United States"—is known throughout the world as *feminicidio* (par. 8). The victims, according to Castrillón, are low-income women between the ages of 15 and 25 who have abandoned their homes in small towns in search of a better life as maquiladora employees. Maquiladoras, Castrillón explains, "were established there [in Ciudad Juárez] after the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement" (par. 8). She then explains that feminicidios have been tabulated [*contabilizado*] since 1993, when the body of Alma Chavira Farel, a 13-year-old girl, was found raped, strangled, and dead. Castrillón then informs her audience that according to investigations, the majority of these deaths have been associated with sexual sadism, asphyxiophilia (*asfixofilia*; erotic asphyxiation), rape, and mutilation. While human rights organizations speak about 1441 dead women in 20 years, predictably authorities recognized fewer than 700 in the same time lapse.

"Who kills women and why?" Castrillón asks, responding that "there are no

answers [*no hay respuestas*]," even as a chronological list of six theories follow (seven, including the inoperative judiciary): 1. The judicial apparatus is inoperative [*inoperante*] and as a result, it has guaranteed impunity for those responsible for feminicide, to the extent that the Mexican state has been sanctioned several times by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the United Nations for its lack of action, prevention, and proper investigation. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and other foreign organizations have contributed in investigating this phenomenon, "and in twenty years more than six hypotheses have emerged—none yielding concrete results." 2. In the early 1990s, Chihuahua's governor explained that these were crimes of passion, and placed feminicide within the domestic sphere [*el ámbito familiar*]. 3. Contradictory evidence led to the abandonment of this hypothesis in favor of the theory that "one or several serial killers" arrived from "the exterior" [geographically indicating the United States, though not necessarily indicating the nationalities of the killers], committed these crimes, and left without a trace (par. 10). 4. Later, the crimes became associated with the maquiladora industry, given that the majority of the assassinated women worked in one or more of 235 production plants of auto parts and technological gadgets. Castrillón explains that it is estimated that 240,000 people are employed in the maquiladora sector—and the majority are women. 5. In November 2001, eight women were found in Campo Algodonero, outside of Ciudad Juárez and in the proximity of a maquiladora. According to Castrillón, apart from being tortured and mutilated, the backs of the women's bodies were marked with a triangle—opening a new line of investigation that included organized crime and groups of criminals. 6. In February 2003, mutilated bodies found in a place called Cerro Cristo Negro opened yet another line of investigation—black market organ trafficking. 7.

The last hypothesis is the production and distribution of snuff films, visually recorded rapes, tortures, and assassination—or, bluntly, pornography that ends with the assassination of a woman. Castrillón explains that the last two theories were abandoned due to lack of evidence.

Diana's confession, then, responds to a series of murders of women, 1441 according to Castrillón, who did not receive the same attention and care as two bus drivers. Assuming that Diana's confession is a false confession, the link nonetheless remains, as the author of the confession is able to draw attention the disappeared women and girls of Ciudad Juárez. As I read over these theories—the answers or responses that have emerged—hauntology points to the simultaneous existence and inexistence, presence and absence, of the answers. It is clear to me that the assassination of women in Ciudad Juárez, and in Mexico broadly, is systemic. The individualities and peculiarities of each assassination should not draw our analytic eye away from the fact that women are and continue to be assassinated *discriminately*. In other words, none of these answers will singularly solve or end all of feminicide, and yet all of these answers respond to the specific deaths of specific lives—that is, all of these responses point to the assembled, cultural answer: 1. The police are ineffective 2. Public violence against women begins as domestic violence against women 3. Foreigners live out a plethora of erotic, colonial, and violent fantasies when visiting Ciudad Juárez 4. The maquiladora is a key, local site of misogynist crimes against women 5. These crimes can quickly become organized crimes, especially when unemployed men begin to feel emasculated (this is not a justification, but rather a speculative explanation). 6. If there is an opportunity to make money by selling the organs of dead, poor people, what's to stop someone in the United States, but near

Ciudad Juárez, from looking for such a free-market opportunity? If I need an organ to live and can acquire one through the distanced death of another, what's to stop me? 7. And, most disturbingly, if someone's taste in pornography is a taste for the proximity to the real—a taste that after decades of internet pornography has *developed*—who's to stop them from generating an interest in snuff films? And if enough people have an interest and the capital to purchase, and perhaps participate in the making of these films, what would stop them from living out this *fantasy*?

Of course, I have ventured back into the realm of rumor and speculation. But the speculative and the spectral are not very different things—they inhabit the unknown, allowing us to glimpse and imagine, but never to hold and capture.

4.5.3 More Alone Than Ever

> We can only understand the apparition of Diana the avenger within this context: real or fictitious (*veraz o fantasiosa*) having a figure that does justice in the face of ineffectiveness and the peevish attitude of governors leaves a certain air of tranquility among the population. Women have reason to feel alone. No president has ever received them […] Authorities have denied femicide, stating that there are vendettas among drug traffickers (the Juárez cartel is the bloodiest in the country) and that figures are manipulated by NGOs to shame the city. (par. 14-15)

Castrillón uncovers the power of spectral discourse: Regardless of Diana's ontological existence, real or fantastic [*veraz o fantasiosa*; perhaps the connection between the phantom world and the *phantastic,* using the European spelling, is more evident in Spanish than in English; we could also say, *real or ghostly*] Diana's power resides in the public's credulity. Regardless of the existence of a hero, the belief and credence that a hero is defending women's lives has the rhetorical power to raise the *spirits* of a public that has learned to live in omnipresence of death and assassination, to

turning the public's attention away from the fact that more women are assassinated every day.

Unintentionally, Castrillón offers an eighth hypothesis: The violence of the narco-world is not inseparable from the violence visually identified as feminicide. In other words, if the death of women is a business venture, what is to stop capitalists, in Mexico and abroad, from orchestrating the marketable, *vendible* deaths of women? This question is particularly interesting when we consider the emancipation of men beyond Mexico—men with purchasing power whose actions can be justified through discourses surrounding a variety of supremacies: nationality, education, race, class, and sexuality.

4.6 Journalist 2: Juan Lázaro

4.6.1 Unfinished Labor

Castrillón's article achieved two major goals: She describes the importance of Diana as a figure of feminist vengeance to a predominantly foreign (Colombian) and female audience and, in doing so, she presents a powerful local context, despite the intended audience.

Juan Levid Lázaro's[42] "*La obra inconclusa de Diana, la cazadora* / the inconclusive artwork of Diana, la cazadora," is written by a Mexican journalist who is geographically separated from the events. Writing from Guadalajara in the state of Jalisco, Lázaro states that in his first state of the union address,[43] Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto assured that during his administration no one will be allowed to take

[42] T.S. Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, lines 94-95: "*I am Lazarus, come from the dead, / Come to tell you all, I shall tell you all*."
[43] *Primer Informe de Gobierno*, delivered on September 2, 2013.

justice into their own hands. This national context assumes a predominantly Mexican audience. Lázaro explains that "'Diana la Cazadora de choferes' did not hear him [Peña Nieto]—or chose not to—by the time the speech was delivered, she gave notice of the death of two drivers […] though her work [*obra*] remains inconclusive" (par. 1). For Lázaro, the functional term is *obra*—work, labor, piece, or effort. *Obra*, in the sense that Lázaro evokes, refers to the murders as *works* of art, similar to the French *oeuvre d'art*, but also as the products of labor: Laborer, in Spanish, is *obrador(a)*. Before getting into the details—before telling his audience why he has qualified Diana's labor as inconclusive, Lázaro describes mundane life in Ciudad Juárez:

> Mornings in Ciudad Juárez tend to be greyish. Mundane life in a city that has been considered the most violent in the world passes by without much commotion because it appears that people become accustomed to any reality. (par. 2)[44]

Lázaro presents a setting or plot for Diana. Her work of art is theatrical. Her murders are a performance. Derrida relies on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in his description of hauntological contexts—events that conjure ghosts and spirits. Here, Lázaro takes the liberty to describe the way in which Juarenses have become desensitized or unmoved by quotidian death and violence when he says "people become accustomed to whatever reality." Oddly, people are notably moved by *staged* or *choreographed* media assassinations, including Diana's soliloquies, which makes Lázaro comment: "wow, that *is* news" (par. 8). Reality, however, is thought of in less hauntological terms and in stricter, ontological terms: Reality is assumed to be material and physical. Hauntology interrupts ontological order.

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[44] Las mañanas en Ciudad Juárez suelen ser grisáceas. La vida matutina en una ciudad que ha sido considerada la más violenta del mundo transcurre sin mucho sobresalto, porque además parece que la gente se acostumbra a cualquier realidad (par. 2).

4.6.2 *Muy Malos*

Lázaro describes the assassination of Flores Carrera as something extraordinary, *fuera de lo común*, outside of the common. He also explains that when the assassin boarded the bus, just before firing her pistol, she yelled, *"¿se creen muy malos?* / you think you're so bad?" The bus driver attempted to flee, but died on the pavement. According to Castrillón, Flores Carrera was shot six times.

The ontological dimension of *¿se creen muy malos?* may be lost in translation. For practical purposes, we could say: "you think you're so bad?" However, to believe and to think are two different things. *¿Se creen muy malos?* is an ontological question: "Do you *believe* yourself *to be* so bad?" Additionally, Diana's question addresses the bus driver, but not in the singular. The assassin does not ask *¿te crees muy malo?* In addressing Flores Carrera as a plural or plurality, she is indicating that he is one of many bus drivers involved in organized crime against women and girls, and potentially, one of many bus drivers that she plans to kill. Moreover, she is indicating that Flores Carrera is part of a system, and in killing him, she is killing part of a system. Lázaro includes this question alongside a description of eyewitness accounts—meaning that speculation about the existence of a killer could be lessened. In other words, despite the veracity of the confession, a killer is out there, and she verbally said these words to the man she killed. The question that remains open is whether the system the assassin addressed in her question *¿se creen muy malos?* is the same system that Diana, the troll, addresses in her email confession.

¿Se creen muy malos? is also an agentic challenge. If violent behavior is justified by a belief in being *bad* (here, superior; *bad-ass,* the bad boys of this play), then credulity

should also save Flores Carrera from Diana's bullets—*if* he is truly so bad. Diana's challenge, *¿se creen muy malos?* when paired with the act of murdering, becomes a test to a hypothesis—calling someone's bluff: *let's see how bad you truly are*. The troll is challenging the monopoly on street violence—a rupture that has taken 20 years and many are happy to see.

4.6.3 The Perfect Setting

Lázaro further explains that this metropolis is "a stage fitting better than if custom-made" for this type of delinquent acts: From the margins of the city to the urban center, the landscape changes from schools and malls to mechanic shops and junkyards—a ride "long enough to nap in—long enough to rape in" (par. 4). Lázaro then provides a shortened version of the email confession that authorities received and explains that the following morning, Alfredo Zárate, a second bus driver, was assassinated using the same *modus operandi*.

Lázaro's second section, "*La mujer del rostro duro teme por su vida* / The hard-faced woman fears for her life," explains that following the second assassination and the media frenzy, Diana (the troll or the killer—or one and the same—this matter is unknown) emailed several media outlets, expressing fear for her life and ominously discussing that she had been followed the past couple of days—presumably by members of organized crime. Lázaro's interpretation is not that the assassinations were separate from the confession. Lázaro argues that the confession came from the killer, and as the media reported the event, several readers across social media platforms usurped her

identity and added to the confusion surrounding the investigation.[45] This media usurpation of Diana's identity further strengthens the bond between journalist and public: The journalist understands the importance and power of Diana's antipatriarchal, vengeful violence; the journalist interpretation of the events resonates within the public's own desire for change; the public adds noise—*desconcierto*—rumor—to the environment, in order to protect Diana's identity and contribute to a nascent revolution.

Lázaro explains that once the news was shared on Facebook, more people (across different parts of the world) became aware of Diana. However, Facebook, and the Internet in general, is a place where people lose inhibitions: They say what they think, they support different causes—even the most utopian and complex causes that aim to save or *change* the world. If this is the case, Lázaro continues, why not express what has become a knot on our throat?[46] Lázaro is evoking a collective pain among his readers, but he never mentions pain directly. Instead he speaks about two transformations. First, he explains that Facebook has given people the potential to change (*transform*, *metamorph*) the world through the support of causes. And even though he sounds optimistic, the reality he is faced with is much more sobering—can support of Diana truly end feminicide? Second, he addresses this implied question by evoking the collective frustration felt when living in such an environment. The frustration, the sentiment, something apparently immaterial, begins to take shape, to materialize itself, as a knot on

[45] "Tal parece que hubo un o una usurpadora en las redes sociales" (par. 13).

[46] "Facebook sirvió para conectar con más personas y, ya se sabe, internet permite desinhibirse, decir lo que uno piensa, apoyar causas, las más utópicas, las más complejas, las que salvarán o cambiarán el mundo. Si es así, por qué no expresar eso que se ha hecho nudo en la garganta durante tanto tiempo y con tantos abusos. Se toma partido, por qué no" (par. 13).

the throats of the public. Feminicide, even when it does not appear to affect us directly—even when the dead women are strangers—pains us and contaminates our reality.

Lázaro justifies the populist online responses to the apparition of Diana and the murders of the bus drivers, assuming that they were rapists, but he does not take into account the rumor and noise that the media and popular frenzy surrounding this case creates because he is far more interested in the collective response—the transformation of sentiment to a knot on our collective throat. He does not mention, and maybe he does not care to mention, that all of this rumorous discourse is creating truth itself—that the ontological line between rumor and truth is erased: One becomes the other, simultaneously. Maybe he does not need to address this because rumor and truth have always been one and the same.

Lastly, Lázaro indirectly connects Diana to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and to the media-geopolitics of Ciudad Juárez-El Paso. After describing the events—the assassinations, confessions, and media responses, Lázaro writes: "The human bit the dog. A lot of people die in Ciudad Juárez. Big deal! This time the dead are men and the assassin is a woman. *That* is news" (par. 8, emphasis added). The human bit the dog is reference to a *fábula*, a fable, a children's story with a *moraleja*—a moral or lesson. The story tells of a man who was bitten by a dog. He runs around his town bleeding, asking his neighbors for help. One of his neighbors tells the man to soak a piece of bread with blood from his wound and feed the bread to the dog. The man disagrees, scolding the neighbor and explaining that if he rewards his dog, all of the town's dogs will come bite him—expecting a bloody treat. The moral of the fable is that to reward evil is to incite evil to cause more damage.

To reference that the human bit the dog is an amazing coincidence, if not a smart intention. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, audiences are told of Actaéon, a hunter who wanders into Diana's forest. He accidentally sees her bathing in a spring, but decides to linger in a voyeuristic way. Angry, she transforms him into a stag—a male deer. As a deer, Actaéon's hounds do not recognize him and attack him—killing him.

The same impunity that has not maintained feminicide as an institution of public cleansing in Ciudad Juárez—that is, of the removal or *disappearance* of women—now serves Diana. Diana has committed murder. The dogs, animal-tools of violence, and in this situation, the police, do not recognize sovereign, violent power when it occupies a different body—a female body.

Discussing the role of the media, Lázaro explains that this story takes place in Chihuahua, in the north of Mexico—his audience is likely in central Mexico as he is writing from Guadalajara. Chihuahua is "close, very close to the United States, where certain television series have enjoyed success—Criminal Minds, CSI, Law and Order—shows that demonstrate special teams using the newest technologies as they attempt to solve the most complicated serial crimes or monstrous assassinations" (par. 17). Most importantly, Lázaro continues, these narratives show that Americans "achieve it," they solve the crimes, "and although it is fiction, one believes that it could be real, at the end of the day, it happens in the United States. Because what we have here [in Mexico] is a police body that inspires, more than anything, distrust" (par. 17).

Thinking back to Jean Franco and Roberto Bolaño, the myth of the modern and functional police state is present in Lázaro's writing. Violence in the United States does not appear to *exist* in Lázaro's framework because the exported media images of life in

the United States are favorable to the United States, feeding the myth that the United States is a model democracy, a model market economy, and ultimately a model society. Lázaro's geographic mapping of movement in Ciudad Juárez runs from east to west; from the extremities of the city and into the city itself. Lázaro does not consider the movement of people through the border, even though Ciudad Juárez-El Paso is one of the busiest ports of entry along the Mexico-United States border. Most importantly, Lázaro does not consider that the killer and the troll could have entered from the United States. Lázaro reifies the logic of borders by assuming that people do not easily move across and through the border. Lázaro also reifies this logic ontologically, by accepting the movement of Internet and television, which in the end is [im]material code or immaterial software, and rejecting the movement of media materially—or of media that can take on material forms.

4.7 Journalist 3: Luis Chaparro

4.7.1 Inexistence

In Michel Gondry's documentary *Dave Chappelle's Block Party* (2005), Chappelle jokes about predicting that John Allen Muhammad, the then-unknown identity of the famed D.C. sniper, was a black man. Similarly, Luis Chaparro, an independent journalist and freelance writer, argued that Diana does not exist—meaning that the author of the confession did not commit the crimes to which she confesses and that Diana is a fictive creation. Furthermore, Chaparro also argues that the "real" killer could very well live in El Paso, Texas, or anywhere in the United States—making the same type of predictive assertion that Chappelle boasts in the documentary.

Chaparro, located in Ciudad Juárez, walks from the Cordova port of entry on the Mexico-United States border, known as "el puente libre," to the places where the murders took place. Chaparro describes the ease with which an American could execute these crimes and escape to safety. Chaparro published two different articles, one in *Vice-México* and one in *Nuestra Aparente Rendición* (*Our Apparent Surrender;* also *Our Apparent Rendering*: an organization that argues: We *appear* to surrender, when what we do is render resistive experiences; render, do not surrender; demonstrate, do not give in). Chaparro's reluctant conclusion, found in his second article, is that regardless of her material existence and regardless of the connection between the murders and the confession, Diana exists *conditionally*: as a collective desire.

Luis Chaparro (2013) writes that:

> She takes her name from Roman mythology, the goddess of chastity. The borderland avenger is also a myth[47] that began in the local media. There is nothing true, in regards to journalism; there is no information, no investigation, no evidence, no conclusions. In the journalistic jargon we would call her "*una historia volada.*" (*Un Mito*, par. 1)

It is immediately evident that Chaparro's conception of reality is objective, observable, and material. Even though Chaparro has researched Diana as a mythological figure, his notion of myth is synonymous with falsity: A myth is a tall tale, a myth is a lie; Diana is a lie. Chaparro, perhaps without realizing it, gets himself into a variety of logical fallacies—mostly due to his commitment to objective truth. He explains: "She seemed a farce to me from the beginning" (Chaparro, *No Existe*, par. 2). In two articles, Chaparro (2013) discredits her existence, supplying no solution except violence and impunity and stating that the citizens of the metropolis spoke of Diana "more as a heroine than as an

[47] Myth, here, is used as a synonym for "lie."

assassin—which is strictly what she is [an assassin]" (*No Existe*, par. 57). Following his own logic, if she *is* an assassin, she must exist—in some form. Most astonishingly, if she is an assassin, and the confession is a hoax, it appears useless to spend time discussing the hoax instead of the assassin—unless, of course, there is something here: something that rhetorical criticism can help us unfold—something that tells us to look deeper into the confession, the audience reaction, and less into the murders of people in a city synonymous with murder.

Chaparro explains that he spoke to the Prosecutor's office and was given all the information they had: eyewitness accounts from about 20 people and the confession: "*el anónimo* (*así le llaman al mensaje*) / the anonym (that is what investigators call the message)" (par. 4-5). He also explains that he questioned how a 70-year-old woman could create an anonymous email and deliver the confession—not only assuming that a 70-year-old woman is incapable of doing so, but also separating his audience from the original report in an Ovidian-rumorous way: Castrillón explains that the woman was probably in her 50s and Lázaro explains that she was between 35 and 40 years old: "The fiction grows and detail is added by each new teller. This is the haunt of credulity, irresponsible error" (lines 57-58).

After speaking to the Prosecutor's office, Chaparro attempted to speak to the Director of Public Transit, who stood him up on five occasions and ultimately declined his request for an interview. Finally, Chaparro contacted Óscar Maynez, a criminologist and former feminicide investigator in Ciudad Juárez, who agreed to investigate the case of the murdered bus drivers alongside a journalist—Chaparro:

> Maynez told me an important thing: 'to me, the story is rushed from the beginning, and secondly, *mitificada*—*mythified*.' The criminologist was

> right, the story was based on assumptions [*suposiciones*]: there are two murders, there are no shells, they *assume* that she had a revolver because they found no shells; they *assume*—according to witnesses—that it is an adult woman of dyed blonde hair; they *assume* it was for the vengeance of sexual abuses that—they *assume*—were committed by these two men, and this theory surfaced from an anonym [*anónimo*—noun, not adjective; an anonymous message, what I call a *confession*], that they *assume*, is the assassin. (Chaparro, *No Existe*, par. 31)

Chaparro (2013) concludes by stating that investigators knew that the murders were made with the same firearm. He also explains that the *anónimo*, the confession, was sent to "a news portal of little credibility: one of those sites built on visceral rumors" (par. 33).[48] Additionally, Chaparro explains that he did not trust the confession because of the poor grammar [*ortografía muy básica*] as well as the fact that one of the bus routes under discussion did not operate at night (as the confession alleges) and did not go to the maquiladoras. Of course, this is not necessarily evidence that bus drivers did not engage in criminal activities, something that Ramón Barba Loza's (2013) film, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes*, addresses, as we will see in the following chapter.

Chaparro asks Arturo Sandoval, spokesperson for the Prosecutor's office, if they have thought about the possibility of an American murderer. Chaparro even explains that the murders took place about 10 minutes away from the border by foot. Sandoval's responses are short: "I have nothing on that subject" and "I don't know" (pars. 42 and 45). Chaparro goes on to detail his final conversation with the Director of Public Transportation as well as with the famous talk show host, Laura Bozzo. He concludes by stating that the email was traced to an IP address in El Paso, Texas: "Diana the hunter of bus drivers has been constructed in El Paso, Texas; the myth [*the tall tale*, *the lie*] grew because communication media spoke of her prematurely, and people believed the story

[48] Chaparro is referring to LaPolaka.com

because there was a lack of response on behalf of the authorities" (par. 85).

4.7.2 Existence

In his second article, Chaparro (2013) seems to have a change of heart or have gained a new consciousness, going as far as saying *sí existe*:

> Everyone has decided to believe the story, which is not strange. Just as the Romans needed to believe in a goddess of chastity to protect their women, Juarenses have the need of a heroine to protect ours. Both have created a myth. Diana the hunter is not one [woman]. She is 1441 assassinated women and girls, victims of different expressions of the antagonist of this story: femicide. Diana the hunter of bus drivers was not born on August 28, 2013. She began writing herself [into this story] in 1993, where the earliest registered femicides in Ciudad Juárez are found […] and despite being a myth [*a tall tale, a lie*], she exists. She exists in the most desperate and profound desires of our mothers, our daughters, and ourselves. She has come to do justice, even if it is based on a Roman myth that landed in this animal and savage land. (*Un Mito*, pars. 10-16)

Chaparro's shift in consciousness demonstrates a hauntological movement. Reality is no longer limited to the observable and material, but also the spectral, spiritual, and transcendent. Here, Chaparro speaks about Diana as the creator of herself—she *writes* herself into existence through a communicative vehicle that so far has been called a confession and an anonym. She exists because others see her and recognize her—this is the powerful rhetoric that endows ideas with *reality*. Similarly, myth is no longer limited to falsity and exaggeration. Myth is given the qualifier "despite." "Despite being a myth, she exists" means that Diana is exclusive among lies—this is the lie that is true. *Despite* does not indicate that myths have undergone a universal metamorphosis; *despite* does not indicate that Chaparro's perception of Diana has radically altered; *despite* indicates that Chaparro has reluctantly surrendered in the least of ways, by accepting Diana as an exception that can only exist in a place like Juárez—a place that he labels "an animal and

savage land." Ultimately, Diana exists in immaterial places, like collective desires for justice, that take on a materiality and alter our mundane ontologies.

Chaparro's shift in consciousness is notable because there, a most rhetorical transformation or metamorphosis has taken place. While in the first article he appears to have a strong desire to disprove Diana using logic, he ultimately sees the importance of such a figure in Ciudad Juárez. Still, the story that he presents reinforces assumptions about a failed and chaotic Mexican state and a utopian American society that Mexicans ought to emulate—Lázaro hints at this ideology by referencing televised American crime *fiction* (and not actual American crime statistics, for example). From the very beginning, Chaparro tells his audience that he could not arrange a meeting with different laborers, specifically, people who hold a public office like the Director of Public Transit. In this moment, the audience assumes that Chaparro tried to meet the director and was unable to. However, we later learn that Chaparro did eventually meet with the director, which indicates that the audience did not need to know these details. In other words, it is safe to assume that journalists often struggle to meet and interview people who hold public office. To give these details to the audience makes Mexican society appear uncooperative and self-centered. On one hand, the director has legitimate reasons to not cooperate—namely his own security. On the other hand, these sorts of problems—chasing subjects for interviews—also happen in other countries.

Furthermore, there is a certain assumption in Chaparro's first line, "everyone decided to believe this story, which is not strange" (*Un Mito*, par. 10). The assumption is that the people of Juárez are gullible, even uneducated—that they do not know how to read news without being so helplessly credulous. And in part, I find myself in agreement.

However, when writing for an international audience, this assumption can easily be expanded to Mexicans and Latin Americans. In other words, Chaparro does not consider that American news sources—as well as other international news sources—also participated in the propagation of Diana's story. Furthermore, the only valuable knowledge presented by Chaparro is logical, scientific, and observable. Anything that is immaterial or imaginative is unreal, mythical, false, and therefore has no material consequences. This, I argue, is a problematic flaw—a flaw that can easily be turned on him. He ultimately argues that a person that does not exist is guilty of murdering two men. The "logical" truth that Chaparro presents is that a lie killed these men.

In stating that she exists, he refers to her not as a person with a body, but as a myth or social construction that helps Juarenses cope with the trauma of feminicide. While myths are often created by societies, the dead bodies of bus drivers remain, as do the hundreds of unsolved feminicidal murders. Similarly, Chaparro's description of Ciudad Juárez as "an animal and savage land" is not a description that aims to uncover why Juárez (and by extension Mexico) is regarded in these colonial terms—animal and savage (*Un Mito*, par. 16). Instead, these terms are accepted as inherent and unquestioned. For Chaparro, chaos exists because the people and the land are untamable—not because social and material conditions that I describe in the first chapter have been instituted that create and maintain a Mexico forever chasing the dream [*Traum*] of developmentalism, but always subjugated by the institutions of the so-called first world.

4.8 Conclusion

The reappearance of Diana reveals certain functions of news media and journalism, myth, bodies, and borders. Two bus drivers are dead. They are accused of crimes against women that the state has failed to address. The state appears willing to play the role of ineptitude and impunity—bringing attention to this has not done much in the way of ending feminicide in Juárez. A variety of laws have passed addressing femicide specifically, but their passing does not equate the end of this problem.[49] Instead, I suggest analyzing this problem as involving interrelated circuits of influence—mainly free trade, epitomized in NAFTA—which allows for the movement of goods into the United States and the exclusion and immobility of people. An analysis of news discourse allows me to make important linkages between the ways in which theoretical concepts like hauntology, the haunt of credulity, and rumor function in contemporary Mexican culture. More specifically, when thinking through Derrida's hauntology alongside the works of Bolaño and Ovid, a better understanding of the rhetorical role of death in contemporary Mexican civic life can be attained. Here, we learn that indeed, spectral appearances and disappearances take on a rhetorical life, asking audiences throughout the globe to consider matters of life, death, and social justice.

Free trade morphed Ciudad Juárez into the necropolis currently known—a city with abandoned buildings—homes and businesses—a city that saw the rise of maquiladoras that encouraged migrations from Central America, as well as southern and central Mexico, toward Mexico's northern border. Still, this is a city where various cultural discourses circulate, including myths, narratives, and opinions about the role of

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[49] Chapter V. Article 325. Mexican Penal Code. Feminicidio. Active as of June 15, 2012 (Garita Vílchez, p. 48).

violence in contemporary life. In the following chapter, I continue the discussion of contemporary mythology in Ciudad Juárez by analyzing the visual, rhetorical elements surrounding Diana and epitomized in *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* (2013), a local, low-budget YouTube film that fictionalizes the narrative that I have discussed in the past chapters. This film brings out the most basic ways of understanding sexual violence in Ciudad Juárez as well as some of the psychic underlying assumptions and traumas behind the visual representation of femicide.

CHAPTER 5

Y AHORA, ¿QUIÉN PODRA DEFENDERNOS?: YO, *DIANA LA CAZADORA DE CHOFERES*

When the Ciudad Juárez investigators released the composite sketch of the alleged killer, they could not have imagined that this image, together with the narrative described in the confession, would unravel such complex observations about life and death in Mexican modernity. The sketch is based on eyewitness accounts—meaning, several witnesses agreed on aspects or characteristics regarding, not necessarily Diana (the confession had not yet surfaced), but the woman who killed two bus drivers on two seemingly separate occasions.

The police's composite sketch refers to the *real* assassin and was drawn *before* the confession was circulated. As the sketch was disseminated across platforms and screens, I dare speculate, the troll, whoever and wherever, must have noticed the visor on the killer's head—quite possibly part of the clothing ensemble created to conceal her identity. The killer wore a visor, yes, but the classical figure has also been portrayed wearing a visor, most memorably in *Diana of Versailles*, which stands at the Louvre, in Paris. There, as in many other incarnations of Diana, the visor is a symbol for the moon, and different images of Diana in the Western tradition depict Diana with a crescent moon above her forehead. From the moment the visor became associated with the moon above Diana's forehead, the name of the assassin became *Diane Chasseresse* in the media. And

Diane Chasseresse, which is in French, translates into *Diana la Cazadora*, in Spanish, evoking a different visual rendition of a familiar myth, and creating a different discursive, rhetorical function within women's rights and the fight for justice within feminicide discourse in Mexico because *Diana la Cazadora* (in the Mexican, not European context) alludes to other images that I will describe.

This story is—as all myths are—the result of coincidences taken for meaning. The fact of the murderer remains, and her story reached an entirely new audience when Ramón Barba Loza decided to adapt it. His film, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* (2013), takes the ancient and classical myth of Diana and, through creative license, depicts Diana as a Mexican *femme fatale*, importantly contributing to the materiality of the myth, to vernacular rhetoric, and also to popular culture. In this chapter, I will first discuss the myth of Diana within the context of 20th-century Mexico. In part, what I aim to do in this discussion is locate Diana within Mexican modernity. In order to do this, I will discuss Mexico City's statue (and its lore) La Diana Cazadora, as well as an autobiography written in the 1990s by the model of the statue and the role of a Mexican female wrestler, Diana la Cazadora, in Mexican contemporary culture. This background will then help me begin to discuss Ramón Barba Loza's film, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes*.

5.1 Femme Fatales and Mexican Modernity

A recurring question regarding Diana la Cazadora de Choferes, is: "Why Diana?" Why the myth of Diana, and not another myth? Why the classical *mythos* of Diana, and not something organically Mexican? Who says Diana is not or cannot be Mexican? After all, classically, the Romans *appropriated* the myth from the Greeks, adapting it in their

own ways. Moreover, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* influenced William Shakespeare, whose favorite poet, according to the Royal Shakespeare Company, was Ovid. Thus, even within the Western classical tradition, myths can transcend borders, languages, creeds, and even time. To assume that a myth has a definitive origin is problematic, as myths themselves challenge the critic when they fail to be *only* what the critic might expect them to be—when they take on different lives, when they influence certain politics, as is the case with Diana la Cazadora de Choferes. Furthermore, the rendition of Diana in the Louvre is, understandably, discussed in French, not in Latin or Italian.[50] Does Diana require a nationality, ethnicity, or language? And if she does, how far back are we willing to go? Far enough to move outside of Europe—outside of a *Western* understanding of Diana and mythology?

The Diana relating to vengeance in Mexico is Mexican—not Greek, Roman, or French—and still she is Diana; that is, she aligns well with classical versions of Diana across Greece, Rome, France, and elsewhere. In the 1940s, Mexican president Manuel Ávila Camacho sought to revitalize Mexico City and commissioned a program that included plans to rebuild Paseo de la Reforma. Paseo de la Reforma is a wide avenue that runs through much of Mexico City. This avenue was originally designed in the 1860s, but many of its landmarks, like *Ángel de la Independencia* (Angel of Independence, a gilded statue) and *Fuente de la Diana Cazadora* (Diana the Huntress Fountain), were built during Mexico's postrevolutionary years (1920s-1940s). The Diana statue is at the very center of a *glorieta*, a large roundabout, and many refer to "la Diana" as a landmark in

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[50] Here, I am referring to the statue called "Diana of Versailles," which is a marble statue and a replica of a bronze statue originally credited to the Greek sculptor Leochares (circa 325 BCE).

Mexico City when giving directions. At the time, *Fuente de la Diana Cazadora* was named *La Flechadora de las Estrellas del Norte*, or, "Shooter of the Northern Stars."

The following decade, Tito Davison's (1956) *La Diana Cazadora* is released. In this film, audiences are told the fictional story behind the making of Mexico City's *Fuente de la Diana Cazadora*—a statue located on Mexico City's Paseo de la Reforma. In the film, Julián, a sculptor, asks Marta (played by Ana Luisa Peluffo), a woman who practices archery and is married to a doctor, to pose for him. Julián admires Marta's beauty, and through the artistic process, and as the plot of the film develops, the two develop a romance.

Ana Luisa Peluffo was an actress during Mexico's Golden Age of Cinema, and was one of the first women to pose nude in Mexican film.[51] Ana Luisa Peluffo, thus, pioneers the intersection of Mexican femme fatale figures within modernity and the *mythos* of Diana. In *La Diana Cazadora*, Marta's marriage to a doctor symbolizes a movement in Mexican film away from the rural and natural (as was typical of films about the Mexican revolution such as *Los de Abajo*), and toward modernity—toward urbanization, infrastructure, and education. But within this narrative, the newly empowered women of Mexican modernity begin to be understood as a threat to the traditional order, and thus, Ana Luisa Peluffo's role as a femme fatale is to seduce men and destroy social order.

[51] Ana Luisa Peluffo appeared in films such as *La Fuerza del Deseo* (1955) "The Force of Desire," which is credited as first nude filmed in Mexico (*Vanguardia*; *Somos*). Peluffo has appeared in over 100 films, including titles such as *La Venenosa* (1949) "The Venomous Woman," and *La Adúltera* (1956) "The Adulterer." Although Tito Davison's (1956) *La Diana Cazadora* will not be analyzed in this chapter, I would like to spend more time discussing this film in a future project, as I have found no academic criticism of this film.

Much has been written about femme fatales in film, particularly in French and American film traditions (Grossman, 2007; Lindop, 2016; Sherwin, 2008; Walker-Morrison, 2015). And although the femme fatale figure and narratives associated with it also exist in Spanish-language, Latin American, and Spanish films, emphasis on the femme fatale in film analysis often receives less critical attention (Davies, 2004; Dick, 1995; Evans, 2007). Patricia Torres San Martín (2011), for example, describes two of Mexico's classic film noirs, *La Devoradora* (*The Devourer*) and *La Diosa Arrodillada* (*The Kneeling Goddess*). *La Devoradora* tells the story of a woman named Diana (played by María Félix) who seduces men and leads them to their death—including one who commits suicide in her presence. Diana is placed in urban settings, and it is said that when she walks the streets, men often turn their gaze toward her beauty. Torres San Martín locates Mexican film within the canons and conventions of Western film and argues that the femme fatale figure has specific gender functions for Mexican audiences. For female audiences in particular, Mexican cinema of the 1940s "needed to guarantee identification with the audience who has to be convinced that Mexico was living a new era and women had to be warned that misfortune could happen to them if they dared disturbing moral values" (p. 21). This new era can be understood as Mexican modernity, and specifically, as postrevolutionary Mexican modernity. Femme fatale figures, Torres San Martín argues, aesthetically "enhance an ambiguous moral, uncertainty and violence of modernity […] in the context of Mexican cinema, the femme fatale of the urban melodramas with hues suggesting film noir meant an entrance into modernity and a means of defeating" stereotypes associated with the Mexican revolution (p. 22).[52]

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[52] Torres San Martín is interested in film noir and femme fatale figures, within the

The Mexican statue of Diana, which is central to Davison's film, is in reality (that is, outside of the film's fiction) credited to the labor of Vicente Mendiola Quezada, an architect in Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex), and Juan Olaguíbel, a sculptor. The statue became an icon of feminine, Mexican beauty, and imitations of Diana fountains, statues, and roundabouts soon were built throughout Mexican cities and towns (including Chihuahua, Monterrey, and Villahermosa, to name a few), even while the "original" statue was located in Mexico City.

In 1992, nearly 50 years after the construction of the statue in Paseo de la Reforma, Helvia Martínez Verdayez published *El Secreto de la Diana Cazadora*, or, "The Secret of Diana the Huntress," an account in which Martínez *confesses* to having been the model of the now famous Diana. Martínez worked for Pemex where she met Mendiola and Olaguíbel and was 16 years old the first time she posed nude for the two artists. Eventually, Martínez began an on-again-off-again affair with the director of Pemex (an eventual Mexican ambassador to Russia), Jorge Díaz Serrano. Martínez's confession came in her old age, and people reacted with intrigue. Martínez made appearances in daytime television, giving interviews and repeating stories about the sculptors, the architects, and about a time when Mexico was transforming and rebuilding.

In her confession, Martínez explained that she occupied a specific space in the Mexican imaginary, as a model who could not be known personally (she was an employee at Pemex and no one, apart from a few coworkers, knew she was the model).

Mexican context. I do not spend a lot of time discussing film noir because the film I will analyze does not fall into that category. The stereotypes that Torres San Martin argues that film noir's Mexican, urban femme fatale attempts to surpass are those of the *charro* (the Mexican cowboy or equestrian) and the *china poblana* (a Mexican feminine indigenous stereotype, similar to *la india María*).

She had posed nude for the sculptors in a room in the back of Pemex's corporate offices in Mexico City (which, in the context of the interviews given to *Chilango* and *Animal Político*, sounds like a taboo), and she had an affair with her superior, who at the time was a married man, a taboo that in conservative, Catholic circles was controversial, even though she did eventually marry Díaz Serrano. Most importantly, Martínez's confession is accompanied by black and white photographs where all of Mexico could see the young woman, holding a bow and arrow, and artists working beside her.

Helvia Martínez provides for another confession (apart from the confession in Chapter 2) that certainly seems like an interesting chapter in 20th-century Mexican history. However, I point to this story in order to emphasize that the larger *mythos* of Diana has a life and "history," within Mexican culture, and this *mythos*, though particular to Mexico, borrows from a European tradition. The 1920s-1940s were a crucial time for Mexican intelligentsia. Postrevolutionary Mexico saw efforts to urbanize and modernize, as well as movements like *el ateneo de la juventud* (described in the Introduction), what Ruben Gallo (2005) refers to as "Mexican modernity," which is a second revolution fought by artists and writers, as well as the beginning of the golden age of Mexican cinema. Mexico was rebuilding after the Revolutionary War. Mexico was also in the midst of creating a new identity, one that was aware of the deathly and traumatic cost of fighting wars: the War for Independence from Spain, the war against the United States, the war against French occupation, and the most recent Revolutionary War. Moreover, Mexico was becoming a new home for Europeans fleeing wars of their own, particularly so-called subversives like Leon Trotsky. Mexico also became the home of many Spaniards fleeing the Spanish Civil War. In 1937, for example, the Lázaro Cardenas

administration welcomed the so-called “niños de Morelia,” 456 children who arrived in Mexico from Bordeaux, France.[53]

Helvia Martínez’s confession, at minimum, demonstrates that the muse who would serve as the image of naked huntress, coupled with the images and narratives in Davison’s (1956) film, began with a Mexican desire for a new, modern, rebuilt, and *renovated* country—after all, that was the purpose behind the renovation of Paseo de la Reforma. During this time, Martínez’s body would become an icon, even if no one knew, even if the iconicity was associated with Ana Luisa Peluffo, and for decades, the story behind the “real” model was unknown. Moreover, because Mexico City’s statue was replicated throughout Mexico, she, transitively, became the muse for them as well. As an icon, the idea of Diana la Cazadora would remain within the Mexican collective conscious. Moreover, Diana la Cazadora would become synonymous with feminine beauty in the Mexican imagination, and everyday parlance would reveal this to be the case when Diana La Cazadora would take on yet another transformation (apart from a deity, a myth, a statue, and a confessor) a *luchadora*, or wrestler.

Roland Barthes’s (1957) first chapter in *Mythologies* takes wrestling as a starting point. Barthes admits that he is interested in amateur wrestling, as opposed to fake wrestling. But despite this distinction, Barthes argues that wrestling, above all, portrays “a purely moral concept: that of justice. The idea of ‘paying’ is essential to wrestling, and the crowd’s ‘give it to him’ means above all else ‘make him pay’” (p. 19). The more base the action of the villain, the more delighted the public becomes upon seeing his punishment.

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[53] See Pedro Pérez Herrero (2005) *México y la guerra civil española*: http://www.elcultural.com/revista/letras/Mexico-y-la-guerra-civil-espanola/15713

More than 10 years after Martinez's confession, in 2005, Diana la Cazadora is now a term used for wrestler in Mexico's Consejo Mundial de la Lucha Libre (CMLL). Mexican wrestling is typically divided into two groups, *los rudos* and *los técnicos*. *Los rudos*, "the rough guys," are typically villains, and they perform as roles associated with populist notions of villainy, depending on contemporary culture. *Los técnicos* are the formally trained, disciplined defenders of all that is good and beautiful—they fight the good fight, with faith and conviction. Typically, *rudos* and *técnicos* will fight in groups of two, against each other, providing a certain visual symmetry in their spectacle—there are four wrestlers fighting in a stage, called a *cuadrilatero* (quadrilateral). They often represent the struggle between good and evil, in a very basic sense. Diana la Cazadora made her debut in Mexico's CMLL in 2005 alongside her partner *India Sioux* (Sioux Indian), and their rivals were the villainous *Princesa Sujei* (Princess Sujei) and *La Nazi*[54] (now, *La Comandante*, the Commander).

Here, I am assembling a variety of images in order to arrive at Barba Loza's rendition of Diana with a concrete background in mind. The composite sketch, *Diane Chasseresse* in the Louvre, *La Diana Cazadora* (the statue and her replicas throughout Mexico), Davison's *La Diana Cazadora* (as well as film noir femme fatales), Martinez's (1992) autobiography, and the presence of a popular culture figure—a female wrestler

[54] *La Nazi* began using the name, *La Comandante,* in 2009. Originally, *La Nazi* wore a replica of a Germany Nazi uniform, including swastikas, and performed the Nazi salute, known as *Sieg Heil* or *Hitlergruss*. Lucha libre, like Davison's film, is not a central object of analysis, but rather an important part of the context that needs to be known. Wrestling matches are staged—they are performances. The sport is very popular in Mexico. There are wrestling rinks, known as arenas, in several cities, including Ciudad Juárez, Mexico City, and Monterrey. There are several wrestling organizations in Mexico, like AAA (known as Triple A) and Consejo Mundial de la Lucha Libre (CMLL). There is also a women's organization, known as Lucha Libre Femenil (LLF). However, CMLL is not exclusive to men.

who fights neo-Nazis and goes by the name of *Diana la Cazadora*—came together in the imagination of a troll who then wrote a confession, perhaps not knowing what would follow. As I have explained, the media picked up the confession and the news spread uncontrollably. Understandings of Diana "chain out," that is, they move from local, regional, and "small" understandings, toward publics (Bormann, 1972).

One of the crucial places where Diana la Cazadora de Choferes made an impression is in the mind of Ramón Barba Loza, a longtime producer of Mexican films. His take on Diana la Cazadora de Choferes, however, is not only informed by the trajectory of Diana within Mexico that I have just described. Barba Loza depicts Diana as a femme fatale, a dangerous, beautiful, but deadly woman. Moreover, Barba Loza depicts the press as a particular threat to social order, and depicts the role of news media in creating reality—even in cases where they do not intend to. My analysis will be divided into three sections. First, describe the relationship between rape culture and film—thinking particularly about the relationship between rape culture and feminicide in Ciudad Juárez. Then, I give a description and summary of the film, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes*. Finally, I describe the function of the narrative by discussing specific moments in the film. This way, the analysis takes into account both the image, not necessarily divorced from discourse, but existing alongside discourse, as well as discourse that cannot be explained without acknowledging its interdependence with the image.

5.2 Rape Culture and Film

Throughout this dissertation, I have dedicated attention to feminicide within the Mexican context, and although scholars have written about feminicide in connection to

film (Jeffries, 2013), I want to dedicate more attention to the representation of rape, rather than the systemic extermination of troublesome women at the hands of the state. I do this because the film does not centralize feminicide within the story of Diana la Cazadora. Instead, the murders of the bus drivers and the rapes and murders of women seen in the film are dissociated from the violence that Ciudad Juárez has experienced. As a result, the crimes that Diana avenges drastically change. In her confession, Diana claimed to avenge the women who were victims of violence in Ciudad Juárez. In the film, Diana's vengeance is personal, meaning she is avenging her sister and her friends. The difference is that the rapes and murders of Diana's sisters and friends become depoliticized and dissociated from the feminicidal context.

Sarah Projansky (2001) defines rape culture as:

> a culture in which sexual violence is a normalized phenomenon, in which male-dominant environments (such as sports, war, and the military), encourage and sometimes depend on violence against women, in which the male gaze and women as objects-to-be-looked-at contribute to a culture that accepts rape, and in which rape is one experience along a continuum of sexual violence that women confront on a daily basis. (p. 9)

Much of the violence in Ciudad Juárez, the setting of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes, is normalized, which is not to say that feminist organizations and human rights organizations in Ciudad Juárez (among many others) have accepted the normalization of sexual violence. Still, news of dead women has become a norm of sorts. Moreover, Ciudad Juárez is a militarized place, and this militarization contributes to the overall culture. Lastly, rape exists within a continuum of violence—and this continuum certainly includes the systematic murder of women. Rape culture will be a crucial term to remember throughout the analysis of the film, where audiences are invited to view representations of rape.

5.3 *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes*

My first impression of *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* (2013) was that it needed a strong dosage of verisimilitude—the film is not convincing, for a variety of reasons, and thus, as viewer, I found that I did not believe or trust the narrative and the characters. But upon a closer reading, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* is not a bad piece of fiction as much as it fails to be a good piece of realism: a more serious account—with some ontological acknowledgement—that something supernatural has ruptured the fabric of modern reality. In other words, the narrative does not take into account some of the most supernatural dimensions of the story. Diana la Cazadora de Choferes ultimately challenged taken for granted notions of nation, the border, gender relations, and other social relations that make up *reality*. And the thing is, this film aims to be taken seriously: It is not a parody (or comedy, for that matter), it is not surrealist (Diana is a real woman, and not a spirit, ghost, apparition, or deity), and it is not a horror story or a fantasy thriller. In terms of genre, this film falls somewhere between a melodrama, morality play, detective fiction, and femme fatale—always including elements from one generic convention, but always pointing toward other genres.

Diana la Cazadora de Choferes is not a quality movie, and at the same time, I do not want to make fun of the movie. I aim to take it seriously, which can be difficult to do, because, as both viewer and critic, I am not convinced that the movie takes itself seriously from beginning to end. There are serious moments, which I will discuss and analyze in detail, but there are also moments when the movie slips, and viewers are reminded that they are watching a film. Generally, a movie can intentionally not take itself seriously, and still arrive at some artistic purpose. In the case of *Diana la Cazadora*

de Choferes, there are too many technical distractions, such as a character who dies and reappears later in the film (inexplicably—as though he had not died). Or, for example, in another shot, an ambiance, overhead microphone enters the frame—violating the unspoken agreement between viewer and film (no, this is not a documentary, mockumentary, or documentary drama where this might be acceptable). At times, the film feels rushed. At other times, the dialogue sounds unrehearsed, almost improvised.

Ramón Barba Loza, the film's producer, specializes in three genres as listed on his website: *acción drama* (action drama), *drama erótico* (erotic drama), and *sexy comedia* (sexy comedy). Barba Loza's films, regardless of genre, are low-budget, for-TV films. They are the types of films that Robert Rodriguez parodies in *Machete* (2010). The film consists of crucial elements: crime, sex, cops, weapons, assassinations, and vigilantism. One could say that Barba Loza's films are the thing that Rodriguez engages in dialogue. Most of his films are lowbrow films, at least *drama erótico* films and *sexy comedias*, because women's bodies are intentionally treated as objects to be visually enjoyed, particularly by what Laura Mulvey (1973) refers to as the male gaze.

Diana la Cazadora de Choferes belongs to the first of Loza's genres, *acción drama*. This film appears to be an exception, as it does not take the female body as a central visual object, but rather calls attention to some of the everyday ways women's bodies are entangled in sexist discourses. Moreover, this film, despite having three rape scenes, only shows women's seminude bodies on one occasion—something unlikely in the other two genres. The naked body is shown in *drama erótico* and *sexy comedia*, but concealed and protected from view in Diana la Cazadora de Choferes. Additionally, the rape scenes are not filmed for the explicit pleasure of the viewer, but rather, places the

viewer in an uncomfortable position—as a witness to rape who must "acknowledge the story" (Projansky, 2001, p. 117). Despite the technical issues I discussed in *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes*, in giving attention to Diana la Cazadora de Choferes, the film presents the question: Can a film that retells the story of oppression, and in this case, gender violence, equate to activism? Or, does the viewer internalize these images as *already* activism—implying that "there is nothing left for the spectator to do"? (p. 117). I do not mean to say that viewers do not or cannot also enjoy this type of film, but rather, that the pleasure of viewing *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* is different from the visual pleasure in the other two genres. In this film, the pleasure of seeing women's bodies is justified by the idea that men, and bad men in particular, are going to be punished, even killed. Moreover, such criticism runs a particular risk contemporarily in what Sarah Projansky and others have called "postfeminist"[55] societies: "when men face rape in a postfeminist context, they emerge from the experience as idealized postfeminists who can embrace both masculinity and femininity and as a result become even better feminists than are women" (p. 94).

Finally, it should additionally be pointed out that Barba Loza filmed two other movies the same year as *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* (and using cast members from the film under analysis), *La Banda de los Bikinis Rosas vs Cobras Negras* (2013) and *Las Colegialas Traviesas* (2013). These two films are *sexy comedias*: In one film, a group of

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[55] Projansky (2001) refers to postfeminism as an era, beginning in the 1980s, in which "feminism had supposedly arrived, successfully made changes that gave women 'free choice' and 'equality' with men, and as a result was no longer needed as an activist movement" (p. 11). She further argues that "the popular acceptance of some feminist anti-rape discourses *contributed* to a cultural representation of feminism as 'already successful' and thus no longer necessary: rape narratives helped support postfeminism, which in turn implied that feminist activism was no longer necessary" (pp. 11-12).

pink-bikini-clad super agents fight off a group of black-bikini-clad terrorists; in the other film, a group of college students engage in a variety of sexually suggestive acts in order to pay tuition. Of course, good actors can play a variety of roles, and there should be no reason why someone like América Rodríguez cannot appear in both types of films (and she does). What I point to is the reality, and at the same time the dissonance, that the viewer is forced to experience knowing that the sexism that is called out in *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* is existent in other films made by the same organization.

I do not mean to suggest that women must be represented in one of these two ways: as pure, immaculate beings or as explicitly sexualized (rather than sexual) beings. Rather, I find it interesting that Barba Loza found in Diana's story something worthy of memorializing. As with most myths (and in line with Ovid), *something is lost and something is added with each new telling*, and the Diana that Barba Loza presents *metamorphs* into a new memory.

The film tells the story of Diana the killer of bus drivers, just 3 months after the first article appears about Diana's confession. As a B-made-for-TV-movie, the film takes creative license in its narrative, portraying Diana as a hero, and constructing her mission as pure and justifiable. Within the film's narrative, Diana, the character, is neither a troll behind a computer in the United States nor is she a spirit, superhero, or deity that appeared and exacted justice on behalf of women. Diana is a real-life, everyday, mundane, average woman whose life has become complicated by the deaths of her mother and sister, and, as a result, was simply fed up with patriarchal violence and decided to take matters into her own hands, killing four (rather than two) bus drivers. We find out the character, Diana, has been a victim of domestic violence. Furthermore,

throughout the film, we also witness the rapes and murders of two of Diana's female colleagues and friends, as well as the rape and murder of Diana's own sister. Additionally, Diana's mother dies *of a broken heart* after the death of her daughter, Marica, Diana's sister.

What follows is not a story about superheroes who exist in everyday life, but rather a story of heroism in everyday life. Diana kills four bus drivers: two that, according to the plot, did not participate in rape and murder, and two who were rapists and villains and, thus, who were presented as stereotypical sexual predators—participating in the rape and murder of female maquiladora employees when they rode the bus to and from work.

Despite the fact that the film is about Diana, who confessed in public to murder, the film works to distance its Diana from the confessor. Not only does the film say she killed four, not two, bus drivers, but the film also portrays the Chief of Police as critical of news media. He is often heard blaming "the damn press," *la maldita prensa*, for putting pressure on his organization and getting in the way of the investigation.

One of the crucial components of this film is its perceived on-site location. *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* was filmed in Naucalpan, in the State of Mexico—just outside of Mexico City. *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* was not actually filmed at the border between Mexico and the United States. Still, this film takes advantage of Naucalpan's militarized police in cinéma vérité style (see Cock Peláez, 2012), documents a presence of military-police vehicles in quotidian, Mexican life. Presented in this way, this film creatively interprets the documentary genre: *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* is not a documentary because it is a work of fiction. However, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* is

filmed on-site in Mexico—in places where these specific forms of sexual violence and misogynist discourses emerge—even though these sites are not Ciudad Juárez. Therefore, several of the scenes, and especially the scenes that transition between sections of the narrative, function as documentary-fragments within a larger, fictional narrative.[56]

There is no set or studio (with the exception of one of the final scenes, which takes place in an auditorium or theatre): There is only the city—its streets and *vecindades* (low-income urban apartment housing), its newsstands, taco stands, maquiladoras, police stations, and bus terminals. There are no costumes—there are uniforms on the bodies that the audience questions: Are they off-duty cops? Yes, they are. Barba Loza hired off-duty police officers and used real militarized police vehicles from three different police stations across Naucalpan (see Credits). Are they actors? Well, if they weren't before, they are now. There is a script and there are characters, but the characters are so similar to the actors—and the script is so similar to the rehearsed and normalized *scripts* of everyday life—that a certain dissonance results, leading to an awkward possibility for reading the film: *This is an exceptional movie because these actors—and the extras with minor roles in particular—do not know how to play themselves*. The presence of the camera visually disturbs the actors—the story they are rehearsing is not fiction at all.

In the opening scene, a police officer speaking on a walkie-talkie holds back a smirk, knowing that there is a real danger to portraying himself. And the same is true of the women who, in their roles, make jokes about killing rapist bus drivers—if the actresses let themselves be taken by the story, if they play themselves too seriously, this drama might become a violent account—a documentary. This is the hard line that these

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[56] See Alejandro Cock Peláez's (2012) *Retóricas del Cine de No Ficción en la Era de la Post Verdad* "Rhetorics of Nonfiction Postverite Film in the Age of Post Truth."

actors are faced with—and the line that the audience knows disturbs the verisimilitude throughout the film. Often, I asked myself: Do I really want them to be better actors? Or, is this desire for verisimilitude a desire for something else?

5.4 Diana as Femme Fatale

América Ramírez plays Diana. América Ramírez has been a model and a singer, and she has acted in several low budget films.[57] As a recording artist, she is known as *América Ramírez "La Mexicana."* In the past, she has played characters that are highly sexualized for the screen. In the film *Como Ratas Rabiosas* (2002), she played a character called "chamorros," which translates to "calves," reducing her to her body parts.

América Ramírez is a good choice for Diana, given that the idea presented in the film is Diana as *femme fatale*. *Femme fatale*, from the French for "fatal woman" or "deadly woman," is a film and television archetype that emerged during the film noir era, particularly in French films (Walker-Morrison, 2015). Several works have been written about the archetype of the femme fatale (Boozer, 2000; Davies, 2004; Dick, 1995; Evans, 2007; Grossman, 2007; Lindop, 2016). The femme fatale is "the ruthless siren who commits criminal acts and/or lures her male victim into committing them on her behalf before seeking to eliminate him" (Walker-Morrison, 2015, p. 25). Deborah Walker-Morrison (2015) argues that such media representations of women speak to larger social and cultural trends between men and women. For example, the "spider woman fatale figure" appears in American cinema during the 1940s and 1950s when "a crisis in masculinity precipitated […] the nation's traumatic experience of the Second World

[57] Apart from the two films mentioned, Ramírez has also appeared in *Como Ratas Rabiosas* (2002) "Like Rabid Rats," and *Semilla de Traición* (2002), "Seed of Betrayal."

War" (p. 25). Looking cross-culturally at French and Argentinean femme fatales, Walker-Morrison argues that although there are limits to this view, a low sex ratio (a low number of men, compared to women) tends to lead to higher "socio-sexuality (promiscuity) particularly among women" (p. 25). The femme fatale figure, then, cannot be easily separated from the cultural contexts, and specifically the constructions of sex, gender, femininity, and masculinity that permeate culture. As archetypes, femme fatales combine "physical seductiveness with lethal ambition" and today are typically thin and athletic, and they wear dark, slim-fitting clothing when they go into the darkness of the night (Walker-Morrison, 2015, p. 25).

But the femme fatale's dark side is not simply that she can lure one, and typically a male *one*, to his own death. As Miranda Sherwin (2008) explains, the femme fatale appears to function as one half of a dialectic about female subjectivity, female spectatorship (in contrast to Mulvey's male gaze), and male masochism. Male masochism is the explanation behind a man's consent. In other words, lured men are not unaware of the danger they are in. Instead, their awareness of the danger provides a certain pleasure, which culminates in their own suffering, destruction, or pain. Male masochism is connected to psychoanalytic readings of film, and in particular to the pleasurable death drive. Thus, the concern with the femme fatale is a bit more ideological, hegemonic: The lured male is initially driven by curiosity and a desire to learn something unknown, and upon knowing that his life is on the line, risks his life and when he dies, he dies in ecstasy. For the masochist male, there is no better way to die than in the service of such a woman. For the woman watching the male on the screen, the male becomes the object of attraction, flipping the power dynamics discussed in Mulvey's essay on the male gaze.

The male's submission is considered taboo, or a perversion, and what is at stake is all of society: Single, independent women become a deadly threat to the social order in their manipulation and eventual destruction of men.

The title hero of *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* is visually different from the woman eyewitnesses described, outside of the film. Instead of focusing on the sketch, the film focuses on the blonde wig—a tool meant to conceal the identity of the killer—and drops every other description (including the visor). The film's Diana is not a middle-aged woman, but a young woman (remember how journalists debated the age of the killer, placing her age between 35 and 70 years old). She is not wearing everyday, average clothes. Instead, she is dressed in black. Moreover, her outfit is athletic and skintight. On one hand, this places América Ramírez among many women who have been muses to works of art that depict Diana's mythological beauty. On the other hand, the black athletic outfit places Diana within the femme fatale archetype, following depictions of beautiful, yet deadly women such as Marlene Dietrich throughout American film noir of the 1930s and Anne Parillaud in *Nikita* (1990)—a specific femme fatale type that has enjoyed success in Canada (*La Femme Nikita*, 1997-2001) and the United States (*Nikita*, 2010-2013) after their respective TV-adaptations (which, after all, are replicas of sorts).

5.5 Quotidian Life and Rape Culture

The film highlights setting, place, and location—its on site filming, its in situ composition and invention—with acting less emphasized. *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* does not have the budget to create representation of the conditions of police oppression that one might see in films like *District 9* (2009) or *Elysium* (2013). But it has

something better: Mexico. Throughout Mexico, one can find an actual militarized police force. Thus, the viewer is taken into the police districts, the impoverished neighborhoods, and the maquiladoras (at least, the streets outside of the maquiladoras).

In the opening minutes, for example, audiences witness the space of a police unit. The camera is placed where arrested criminals might be positioned. The audience is shown, in other words, the streets of Juárez (or from another militarized Mexican city) from the perspective of the back of a police car, not from the police's point of view. In another shot, audiences are shown the police’s pick-up trucks that patrol the streets. Two to three officers stand, holding assault rifles across their waist, as the truck drives through the streets. When the truck arrives in the police station, where the arresting detective, Agente Rodríguez, is to meet the Chief of Police, Comisario Belmont, two men in American-style SWAT gear accompany the detective through the hallways of the police station—an act that is not only unnecessary and unlikely, but that demonstrates to national and international audiences the police apparatus that oversees civilian life in Ciudad Juárez.

The film also captures the places where the police *cannot* police. The camera crew enters the back of the bus where three rapes and several more murders take place. First, the crew catches the fictionalized account of Yolanda’s rape in the back of Braulio’s bus. Then, the crew records the way in which Braulio and his accomplice force Doris and another woman to undress. The two women cry and cower, and the two men proceed to rape and kill them. Lastly, Braulio and his accomplice take Roberto and Marica into their bus. There, Braulio’s accomplice beats and ultimately kills Roberto. Then, the two have their way with Marica, strangling her. Once dead, they decide to

dump her body.

The events that I describe are fictional. The bus is real. And the idea that this happens is presented to the audience. It does not happen quite like this—perhaps it is far more gruesome and disturbing—but it becomes difficult to argue that crime cannot be organized in this way.

5.6 Silencing Diana

Diana la Cazadora de Choferes is supposed to tell the story of Diana. Instead, the film tells a story *about* Diana, but not a story *of* her—not a story of her own, not a story *by* her. Diana is not the central character. Diana receives very little camera time and very few lines. The film relies on an elementary, narrative symmetry, where virtually every character has an ontological counterpart—someone whose existence verifies their own existence, and whose actions are explained by the other's existence. In a way, this narrative structure, in its simplicity, is reminiscent of lucha libre's *cuadrilatero*, the four-sided stage where two groups of enemies fight for populist righteousness.

The story is told from the point of view of Agente Rodríguez, the lead investigator (see endnotes, transcript 1).[i] After capturing Diana, Comisario Belmont, the Chief of Police, invites Rodríguez into his office and asks questions about the case. This sets up the frame narrative; what the audience sees throughout the remainder of the film is Rodríguez's account of the events—not Diana's. Diana is silenced in two specific ways: as a woman (Rodríguez is a man) and as a dissenter (Rodríguez embodies one section of the state—the police). The frame is not a conversation between Diana and Diana's mother, for example. The frame is a conversation between a detective and a chief

of police, inside the police station. The story that audiences see is an official, state story, even if fictional.

In other words, politically active women even, and especially when their politics are deadly, are not what they say they are, but what the state says they are. The symmetrical relationship between Rodríguez and Belmont highlights the ease with which those in power are seduced toward more power at the expense of others. Belmont, for example, discusses how Diana's capture will be beneficial to his career, and discusses running for office (mayors and city representatives in Ciudad Juárez are paid more than their El Paso counterparts, making government positions competitive, and often people charge local politicians with corruption). Rodríguez, on the other hand, is a stereotypical "good cop"—and his role is to convince Belmont that Diana should not be considered a criminal without looking at the complexities of the case. There is an assumption of mutual respect between the two, which is one of the reasons that Rodríguez is able to contradict his superior. Otherwise, the frame for this story would crumble the moment Rodríguez attempts to defend Diana. All Belmont has to do is remind Rodríguez of his position.

Belmont begins by explaining his situation to Rodríguez, and in the process, he presents the difficulty of governing—almost apologetically. Belmont says that the district attorney, the mayor, and the governor, "and especially the press, that damn press!" were on top of him, pressuring him to find Diana. Rodríguez explains that she is in a cell, ready to give her confession to a judge. Belmont follows by saying, "Great job, this will benefit us politically, perhaps I'll become district attorney, or mayor, and you'll be on my staff." Rodríguez rejects the invitation, explaining that this type of move goes against his

principles, and that he cannot advance *at the expense of a woman*. Finally, Belmont explains that he must speak to the press, but before doing so, he would like to hear the story directly from Rodríguez. Rodríguez begins to narrate, and the audience is introduced to yet another symmetry in plot: four female maquiladora workers and four male bus drivers. Again, this appears to be the second match between *los rudos* and *las técnicas*.

Having Rodríguez narrate completely displaces knowledge of Diana la Cazadora de Choferes's call. To begin, the film treats Diana la Cazadora de Choferes as a real person, and not as a troll. Therefore, to have this story told from the perspective of the state, embodied in masculinity, and interpreted through a masculine lens, is completely antithetical to the liberation that Diana calls for in her confession. Diana's confession emphasized that women suffer in silence, but that they will suffer no more. For Diana, to silence women is tantamount to making women suffer—to a violent form of oppression. I do not argue that Rodríguez cannot have his own account. I argue that Rodríguez's account should not be presented as Diana's account—which is what the film ultimately does. Second, Diana's confession warns that if women are not treated with the dignity that they deserve, she will take matters into her own hands. I interpret this moment as the place where nonviolence is no longer a viable option—where freedom can only be fought for literally. The fight for freedom, in other words, cannot be nonviolent. My conclusion is that Diana's call for emancipation did not break the limit concepts that the public and the press perceived were being broken. The film, on the other hand, finds that Diana can break these limits. However, this does not mean that women will be liberated, and violent misogyny will end. Rather, Diana is treated exceptionally because she has behaved

exceptionally. Diana is forgiven and the state incorporates her valor into their own narrative: Diana functions as an example of what Mexican women in oppressive conditions should do—if you want justice, you have to fight for it, and the state will reward you. In other words, the system works because good cops, like Rodríguez, will make the case to their superiors on your behalf—have faith in these good men.

5.7 *Desgraciados*

Four women walk along the sidewalk, outside of a maquiladora: Marica, Doris, Yolanda, and a fourth whose name the audience never learns (see endnote, transcript 2).[ii] They make small talk about the weekend, and decide they will go dancing. Marica, Diana's sister, explains that she cannot go dancing this weekend because she has to stay home and take care of her sick mother. During the small talk, Doris explains that she needs to find a babysitter for her kids. At this moment, the women comment on Doris's kids' father. Yolanda says that he is a lazy (*huevón*), useless man, and that Doris even supports him financially. Doris agrees, asking them not to bring up that *desgraciado* (wretch, loser) because she does not want to talk about him. This small conversation serves to set up one type of masculinity within this narrative: *desgraciado*. A *desgraciado* embodies a loser, but something more. Someone who, apart from being a loser, has no issue with being a loser and even takes advantage of those around him, leading everyone to the misery that he embodies.

A bus pulls up to the sidewalk, and as the four women enter the bus, they are met with *pirópos*. *Pirópos* are inventive, creative pick-up lines. At their most benign, they are compliments that rely on a metaphor: "I wish I could be the sunlight, so that I might enter

your window and say good morning while you're still in bed." These are the lyrics from the popular birthday song, *Las Mañanitas*, and which show the extent to which *pirópos* can be compliments when they are welcome, and also "creepy," and disturbing when they are not welcome. At their worst, they are unsolicited catcalls, belonging to the realm and continuum of rape culture. In the film, the women certainly are not happy to be complimented on their looks as they enter the bus. The man giving *pirópos* is a *desgraciado* bus driver.

The four women sit on the back of the bus, and the conversation changes, from the weekend, to the constant harassment in their encounters with bus drivers:

> Yolanda: Damn, old *desgraciado*. Always bothering us.
> Woman 3: And it's not just him. There are so many *desgraciados*.
> Doris: The other day, another bus driver asked me out. What do you think?
> Marica: We should report them to the authorities. Right?
> Yolanda: Oh, Mari, police reports are useless.
> Marica: Well, we should do something.
> Woman 3: These men don't even respect their own mother.
> Doris: There is only one thing we can do: kill them all.
> Marica: Are you crazy? You don't know what you're saying, seriously.
> Yolanda: I think it's a good idea. (15:34-17:11)

Within this conversation, it is evident that this group of women thinks of bus drivers, generally speaking, as *desgraciados*. Furthermore, when Marica suggests that they report these harassments, we learn that police reports are useless, questioning the role of the police in civilian society. The solution, according to Doris, is to kill them all—a solution that is echoed by Yolanda. Within the conversation, Doris means to say *kill all bus drivers*. Expanding this notion within a femme fatale framework, the desire to kill the bus drivers is the desire for revenge—to take matters into their own hands, to be their own powerful beings. Moreover, these women, despite being working-class women, are

presented as a threat to patriarchal order because, in Mexican modernity, working class women go from being domestic workers, to occupying jobs that endow them with public mobility and even opportunities otherwise not afforded to them. As can be seen, this is also a moment where Western feminist so-called "freedoms" are put under a microscope: Are these working class women truly free?

To step outside of the law is a taboo, and immediately, the "good" person in the group, Marica, scolds them—how could you say such things? Meaning: Only men can step outside of the law, and even then, they are lucky to get away with it—and not what one might expect: *Thou shalt not kill.*

Marica exits the bus. Yolanda tells her to say hi to her mother and to Diana for her. Once Marica is gone, Doris and Yolanda comment on Marica, calling her a *santurrona* (goody-two-shoes; someone who spends a lot of time praying to the saints). They also mention that what she really needs is *un buen macho*, a good man, meaning, a manly man.

Within this small conversation, the film presents another form of masculinity, the opposite of a *desgraciado*, *un buen macho*. *Un buen macho* should not be confused with *un buen hombre*; macho signifies more than sexuality. Macho is bestial, animalistic, and instinctual. A *macho* mates like any other mammal, even if it means forcing himself on *hembras* (females), whereas *a man*, *hombre*, marks a distinction between a human and an animal—specifically, that humans have the capacity to control their instincts. *Un buen macho*, then, becomes a paradox or contradiction. A good macho should be able to breed—even if it means to rape—and is not concerned with raising his offspring (male care for offspring is very rare among mammals). At the same time, their expressed desire

for masculine bodies—and their freedom to dance on the weekends—demonstrates that these women have the right to enjoy a sexual lifestyle, without being reduced to it. In other words, *real* women have desires, and there is nothing wrong with that.

5.8 *Entre Tacos y Tortas*

Audiences are then introduced to three other bus drivers, Decencio, Roberto, and one other who remains unnamed throughout the film.[58] Together with Braulio, these four bus drivers complement the four maquiladora laborers. Just like the four maquiladora laborers, who were chatting on their walk from the maquiladora to the bus stop, and inside the bus, the setting for the conversation among bus drivers is also quotidian, and defined by their profession—their labor within the city. They are sitting at a taco stand located on the sidewalk of a busy street, near the bus terminal. This is the place where they routinely have their lunch break. Braulio asks them how their day went, specifically, how much money they made from fares. One by one they answer, until Decencio explains that he had a bad day: "They stopped me, they robbed me, the police pulled me over, and my bus broke down." Braulio laughs and continues: "I, on the other hand, had a wonderful day. I picked up a group of maquiladora girls—they're very good-looking, *buenisimas.*" What follows is locker-room talk, only not in the privacy of a locker-room, but in public—literally on the sidewalk. In a genuine way, Roberto talks about being in love with one of those girls, Marica. Roberto, one of the "good" bus drivers, actually has an interest in courting Marica, the santurrona. The rest of the bus drivers talk about how

[58] Again, this film relies on symmetrical structure in notable ways. There are four female maquiladora employees who rely on public transportation on a daily basis, and one of them remains unnamed throughout the film. There are four bus drivers who interact with the four maquiladora workers, and one of the bus drivers remains unnamed.

easy it is to seduce women. Braulio claims that all he has to do is whisper pretty things in their ear and they melt at your feet. Braulio says he is like a hummingbird, happily flying from flower to flower. Braulio also says that women were made by God to serve men. One of the bus drivers says that every man should have seven women, and Decencio replies that he cannot handle one, his wife, who beats him if he misbehaves.

After the first rape scene—a scene in which Braulio forces himself on Yolanda—the four will meet again in a restaurant, and once again at the taco stand, where Agente Rodríguez will interrogate them. The day after the assassinations of Roberto and Decencio, Braulio will meet his colleague at a sidewalk newsstand, where they read about the assassinations—and probably—about the murderer of bus drivers. They are concerned that someone is after them, apart from the police.

5.9 Nightlife in Ciudad Juárez

The scene at the taco stand ends, and the audience is taken to a party. The three women go out dancing with three men.[59] One of the men convinces Yolanda to go to his apartment and spend some time alone. Yolanda agrees, but he stops the car before arriving and wants to have sex in the car. She turns him down and he kicks her out of the car, leaving her alone in the middle of the city. It is after dark, and she is wearing a short dress as she walks through the dark and lonely streets. She walks to the bus station near the maquiladora where Braulio, the same bus driver who she encountered earlier that day, picks her up.

Once again, Braulio tells Yolanda how beautiful she looks, and Yolanda is not

[59] These men are not very important to the plot of story—only one of them is given lines; none of them are given names; once again, there is a symmetry between women and men.

happy about it. The two are alone in the bus. Braulio tells her that this is the last run of the day, so she is fortunate that he found her. Braulio also asks her to sit in the front of the bus, so he can admire her legs. For several minutes they do not speak—they simply glance at each other through the rearview mirror. Yolanda starts to become concerned that they are going off-route—this can be discerned from the music, which changes from soft piano to a more serious and ominous tone, and from the look on her face as she looks out the window. The bus comes to a stop somewhere other than an official stop. The audience does not know where they are—there is only darkness outside of the bus. Yolanda breaks the silence.

> Yolanda: What are we doing here? Why did you stop?
> Braulio: We haven't done anything yet. But this is a beautiful place, isn't it? We can chat for a bit. You look gorgeous.
> Yolanda: I told you to take me home!
> Braulio: We are very close. Behave, relax, and I'll take you to your doorstep.
> Yolanda: I clearly told you where I wanted to go!
> Braulio: I heard you. We can have a good time, can't we?
> Yolanda: Let go of me! What are you doing?

Braulio hits Yolanda across the face. The screaming continues and the film transitions back to the meeting between the agent and the chief of police—Rodriguez's narration. The audience is left to fill in the gap—to assume that she has been raped.

Although the man at the party did not rape her, he punished her for rejecting him. His punishment was abandoning her to the night. Of course, he did not know he was abandoning her to be raped. Still, these seemingly passive actions are placed within the conversation of rape culture. A person has the right to say no, without repercussion. The man knows he cannot force himself on Yolanda, but reacts with a passive-aggressive punishment: You're on your own. The man knows the risk she faces, and thus, his refusal

to transport her to a safe place is itself an act of violence.

The moment that Yolanda is on her own, the city's gaze falls upon her body. The clothes she is wearing lose any meaning or intention she may have had—they no longer signify her right to a good time—her right to her sexuality—they become pretexts for her rape. Sarah Projansky (2001) explains that rape films have a complex relationship with women's vulnerability. Rape films tend to promote two antithetical types of narratives: "those that depict women's vulnerability as leading to rape and those that depict the rape of an independent woman as making her vulnerable" (p. 30). The dilemma lies in that the first type of narrative explains that women should aim to be independent in order to avoid rape, whereas the second type of narrative suggests that an independent attitude can itself lead to rape. The dilemma, in most cases, is solved when the woman incorporates herself "into a stable heterosexual family setting" (p. 30).

Patricia Torres San Martin's (2011) discussion of the role of femme fatale figures in Mexico emphasizes that these films tend to be warning of the misfortunes that "could happen to them if they dared disrupting traditional moral values," to women in modernizing, we might say postfeminist societies (p. 21).

5.10 Rape as Transformative

The conversation between Rodríguez and Belmont shows some of the ways in which raped women are positioned by government officials, in this case a detective and a chief of police with political aspirations (see endnotes, transcript 3).[iii] Rodríguez explains that Yolanda was found alive, but that she was destroyed: "the girl was destroyed—in a state of shock. She won't speak. She is not the same person." The experience transformed

Yolanda—where she was once a strong, and outspoken woman who joked about killing bus drivers, Rodríguez now describes her as *unable to speak*. Rape, then is a tool for silencing women, literally. Moreover, if silence is what needs to be broken, according to Diana la Cazadora de Choferes, then silence is assured through continued, systemic rape. Most importantly, Yolanda, who was not killed after being raped, does not appear throughout the rest of the film. As far as the viewer is concerned, she might as well be dead, because the narrative is no longer concerned with what becomes of Yolanda. In this way, the film itself advances sexist notions: Yolanda is now a ruined woman and no longer a valuable person.

Belmont then guesses that her boyfriend probably raped her—the man who left her on the street that night. Rodríguez explains that he was not guilty—that they tracked him down and "had him tested." Belmont then explains: "she was probably confused for a prostitute, taken, and raped." Belmont is using the same excuses that government officials have used throughout the years—that feminicide victims are killed by their husbands as the result of crimes of passion, and that these women tend to lead a double life as sex workers—somehow justifying their deaths. Even if these were true, those "facts" would not justify the rape and murder of women—and a critique of Belmont's own perspective does not take place.

The audience is then taken back to the taco stand, where the bus drivers joke around during their lunch break. Braulio brags about having had sex with one of those girls from the maquiladoras. He does not mention that he forced himself on her, and also explains that they are not prostitutes. He tells them that they should come with him next time, and that he can introduce them to girls who are willing to go far for a little bit of

money. Decencio, a married father, rejects the invitation. Roberto, who courts Marica, also rejects the invitation. A third unnamed bus driver agrees to come with Braulio.

That night, they pick up Doris and the unnamed maquiladora worker in their bus.[60] They corral them into the back of the bus, and when the women attempt to flee, Braulio lifts his shirt in order to show them that he has a pistol, suggesting that if they do not cooperate they will be killed. The men make the women undress and eventually force themselves upon them. This is the only time the audience is shown seminude women. Unlike Yolanda, these two women are not left alive.

Audiences are not shown their assassinations, but the following scene is Rodríguez's explanation: "Upon seeing the violated and beaten bodies, I felt that we were dealing with a group of sexually deviant degenerates." Rodríguez then explains that there was a witness who said that a bus had been in the area that night. Rodríguez began investigating among bus terminals, but suddenly, "there was a very popular (*muy sonada*) declaration against rapists. That's when I met Diana, a powerful woman whose comments to the press threatened our investigation (*nos pegaron muy duro*)."

Where Yolanda's rape transformed her into a silent being, for Doris and her partner, rape transformed them into corpses—into lifeless bodies. This transformation has everything to do with the power their voices have—a power that can best be silenced with their death. This transformation can (and should) be mourned, but we have to remember that we do not know what type of transformation death can be—there is a certain openness to death—a certain chaotic aftermath that can also be a path to

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[60] This is another example of the symmetry that the narrative structure relies on. This time, there are two women and two men inside the bus—one of the women is unnamed, as is one of the men.

something like justice.

5.11 "Let's get not caught… Let's keep going"

Thelma and Louise (1991) is a popular film that has received much critical attention,[61] and that follows a similar narrative structure. In *Thelma and Louise*, a man, Harlan, rapes and beats Thelma. Louise finds Thelma during the act, and kills Harlan. They then become fugitives and drive across the United States, and Hal, a "good cop," attempts to persuade them to turn themselves in. The film ends when the police finally catch up with them in the Grand Canyon, and the two women are faced with a decision—to turn themselves in or to drive off a cliff. In the memorable final scene, the two women are sitting in a convertible and make the decision together, saying "let's not get caught… let's keep going." They drive the car off a cliff, and the film ends with a bit of enjoyable ambiguity.

On the other hand, Diana la Cazadora de Choferes begins with Diana's capture. In other words, "let's not get caught" is not an option for Diana—within this film. Diana is caught from the outset. Rodríguez then recounts the narrative, which, again, is the narrative that the audience sees. Rodríguez met Diana before any of the bus drivers were killed, and before the confession was made. Diana entered the police station, yelling and

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[61] I relied mostly on Sarah Projansky's chapter "Feminism and the Popular: Readings of Rape and Postfeminism in *Thelma and Louise*," in *Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture* (2001). Other notable critiques of this film include Marleen Barr (1991, 1993), Sharon Willis (1993), Cathy Griggers (1993), Ann Putnam (1993), Cara J. MariAnna (1993), Patricia Mellencamp (1995), and Martha McCaughey (1997). I do not want to discuss *Thelma and Louise*, but I do find it fascinating that one of their potential destinations, when fleeing from "the law," was Mexico. In part, I find that feminism in the United States and Mexico is *different*, without saying better or worse. Mexico is far from a feminist utopia, to say the least.

making a scene, demanding justice for raped and dead women, and telling the police officers that they were not doing their job. Rodríguez calms Diana down. Diana is depicted as a hysterical woman. Rodríguez explains that he is following a particular line of investigation (he does not explain to Diana what he explains to Belmont, that there was a witness who saw the bus drivers near the crime scene). Therefore, the audience is meant to think that the public is informed on a need-to-know basis for the integrity of the investigation. In other words, there is no corruption, ineptitude, or impunity: the public just has to wait for the police to work things through. Of course, this explanation hides the idea that families have been perpetually waiting, now for decades, for the captures of the killers of their family members.

What happens from here is the material of *telenovelas*. Roberto learns that his two colleagues have raped women and are suspects, so he wants to protect Marica, the girl he likes, from the bus dirvers, who want to kill her because she might speak out against them. Roberto finds Marica outside of the maquiladora, but before he can rescue her, the two armed bus drivers force them into their bus. They drive away, kill Roberto, and rape and strangle Marica (Roberto is actually killed twice, once by these two bus drivers, then again by Diana; but, of course, the idea that one can have more than one death is fascinating)—killing her. The death of Marica marks the birth of Diana, la Cazadora de Choferes. Diana puts on a wig, a black outfit, and dons a revolver. She hunts down the first bus driver, Decencio, who has not participated in any of the rapes and murders. She kills him. She hunts down Roberto, who is also *innocent* of the crimes that Diana accuses him of, and kills him (even though he was already killed by his colleagues in an earlier scene). Both men are killed walking the streets of Ciudad Juárez.

Next, Diana kills the unnamed bus driver—one of the two who actually was involved in the rape and murder of her sister and coworkers. She walks into his bus, early in the morning, as commuters are getting ready for the workday. She is the last person aboard, and kills him in accordance with news reports of the assassination of the two Ciudad Juárez bus drivers. The ultimate villain, Braulio, is also killed, but the film does not show his assassination. Instead, Rodríguez explains to Belmont: "you already know the details of the fourth assassination." Belmont might know the details, but the audience does not. The most villainous of the bus drivers is also killed, but the audience is not allowed to *enjoy* his assassination, even after being subjected to several rape-murder scenes.

The end of the film is Belmont's press conference. Belmont delivers a relatively short and uninformative speech to the press:

> Welcome, friends in the press, communications specialists, radio, and television. As you know, for years we have had the highest rate of violence in the country. We have been the victims of organized crime. A lot of women have died. We are living the pain, resentment, and impotence of so many mothers, daughters, and husbands. Unfortunately, we have been incapable of solving these problems. We have tried, but our effort has been insufficient. Therefore, the people have taken the law into their hands. The people are getting payback. This has turned into a war, gentlemen, over what we have been unable to do. I don't know whether it is corruption, interests, I don't know, I don't know if there are deals struck with organized crime. I don't know what is happening in this country, gentlemen. Let me say it, the woman that we have in custody is not the killer of bus drivers. We do not have enough evidence to hold her, and therefore, we are the ones who are guilty. (1:29:30-1:32:40)

According to Belmont, women are only valuable as they relate to the nuclear family: as mothers, daughters, and wives. In accordance with Projansky, the film absolves Diana, and this process happens by aligning her interests with patriarchy's own interests. This is why the death of a sex worker, or of a woman leading a double life, is not as surprising or

worthy of investigation, as the death of a maquiladora worker. After the speech, Belmont looks to Rodríguez, who is standing beside him, and commands: "let her go. She is free." Rodriguez walks off the stage. Belmont resigns as Chief of Police.

The second observation has to do with a point that I have been alluding to throughout: the relationship between the symmetrical narrative structure, and lucha libre. Barthes argues that the joy of wrestling is the spectacle of seeing the villains of society pay—the "good guys," make the bad guys pay for their crimes by causing physical pain upon their bodies. In Mexico, this ritual takes place in a four-sided quadrilateral stage, called a *cuadrilatero*. Moreover, the wrestling teams fight in equal numbers, and audiences can see the fight from a variety of angles and vantage points. Belmont's explanation, "the people have taken the law into their own hands, the people are getting payback," places Diana as a media spectacle intended to provide Ciudad Juárez audiences a performance of feminist, social justice. In other words, the dead bodies of the two bus drivers, who were in fact killed by a woman, together with the confession and the film, provide a spectacle that can be seen in multiple dimensions—not a theatrical performance, which can be seen from a mostly frontal perspective, but a *lucha*[62] spectacle, where dramatic intricacy is unnecessary because people are there to see the villains pay with their blood. If drama demands build-up, *lucha libre* rejects the entirety of narrative structure for a prolonged climax: the fight.

The final scene presents Rodríguez unlocking Diana's cell. He opens the gate and says, "Diana, you are free." Diana walks toward the open gate and asks, "Seriously?"

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[62] *Lucha*, apart from meaning wrestle, also means fight or struggle. A common chant at protests, for example, is *la lucha sigue*, "the struggle continues," or "the fight must go on."

And she should be incredulous. This ending is absurd. I understand that certain artistic liberties are to be expected—that the film does not necessarily aim to be a piece of historical fiction. However, the idea that an average person would get away with murder, once she has been captured, and simply because the story itself was so moving, is unrealistic. Put in another way—absurd situations like this happen, sure, and when they are presented, it is their absurdity that takes center stage. Here, Diana's freedom is presented as a good and normal end, and not as an absurd, but real end.

Thelma and Louise are denied freedom and become their own agents in a suicidal, and arguably liberating final scene. As Sarah Projansky (2001) explains, Thelma and Louise learn that "the law will not believe them, that they will be blamed for the rape, and that going to the police is useless" (p. 129). The title characters "refuse to let the representatives of the law carry out the death […] choosing their own form of death instead" (p. 132). Diana, on the other hand is dormant, inactive, on pause, waiting, throughout the entire movie. In other words, if the movie takes place during a conversation, Diana has been sitting in a jail cell the entire time that Rodríguez has been talking. Rodríguez, the man who takes her from her home in the opening scene, is also the man who lets her go, in the final scene. Rodríguez is active. Diana is waiting to be activated.

The possibilities that *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* leaves the viewer with are narrow. First, Diana (not the film representation, but the myth that the film rests on) is a new embodiment of sovereignty, following Mbembe's concept, one who behaves as if death were not; one who can stand outside of the law and not be of the law. The fact that she gets away with murder further solidifies the idea that she is sacred in one way—the

forces that the public generally allows to work outside of the law (the government, for example) often fail in their mission of providing a nonviolent solution in the everyday lives of citizens. Therefore, even violent state power has to be respectful of Diana, someone who can turn her deadly power on more than bus drivers. Second, the Diana we are seeing, like the troll, is fictional from beginning to end. The woman who assassinated the bus drivers in Ciudad Juárez was never caught—at least not for those specific crimes. The only way that someone like Diana can get away with murder (once apprehended) is in anything but the real (and, of course, without resorting to corruption): in our imaginations, in our film representations, even in our online creations.

"*¿En serio?*" or, "seriously?" is a proper reaction for a real person. Belmont, powerful as he may be, would not be able to let her free without facing charges from other sectors of the state. The decision of her guilt is not his to make—he is not a lawyer, a judge, or a jury—and yet in making this decision he is all and more: lawyer, judge, jury, and chief of police with political aspirations. The film presents corruption as something that can be rescued when a corrupt politician surrounds himself with moral people, like Rodríguez. Corruption is not the abuse of one's station; corruption is the abuse of one's station for the benefit of oneself. Here, Belmont abuses his station in order to save Diana. In doing so, he also must go through a transformation: he has to stop being who he is (a chief of police with political aspirations) and the audience, and probably Belmont himself, does not know what he will become. Perhaps he will face charges for letting Diana go without a trial—without a second set of eyes on the case and evidence. Perhaps he will not face charges and be forced to look for a different line of work, learning that he cannot be a public servant.

Several things are happening in Belmont's speech. 1. The state can say that they are guilty, because no one will charge them—no one is going to incarcerate the chief of police. There is nothing to be lost or gained (or, there is very little) from the state's confession that they are guilty of impunity. At most, Belmont resigns, a new chief of police is appointed, and the impunity continues. 2. The chief of police is circumventing the justice system by refusing to persecute Diana (and ignoring the labor that Rodríguez has done). Furthermore, the court system should ultimately decide if she is guilty—not the police. 3. The choice to let Diana free may appear to be the result of an ethical dilemma, but in reality, Belmont is doing what he imagines the people want and placing himself as a candidate for another position that requires a vote. To resign in this manner aligns him with the populist sentiment that government is failing (and Belmont, as an insider, can help fix this) 4. His resignation, if it is to be interpreted as acknowledgement of impunity, does nothing to correct the state of gender violence in Mexico. If this case is about more than the singular case of Diana, and is ultimately about gender violence, violent masculinity, and governmental impunity, then the real concern should be that Diana killed two innocent people and that Braulio, the head rapist, is allegedly dead—only Rodríguez and Belmont know the details of his death—the fact of his death.

If the state acknowledges that Diana's actions are justified, then the state is guilty of interfering with justice when they hold Diana, seeing now that Diana would also have gone after Braulio, a rapist and assassin that, for all the audience knows, remains at large.

5.12 Conclusion

Ramón Barba Loza's (2013) *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* extends the mythic understanding of Diana within a Mexican context. While appearing to be a bit disconnected from two traditions, Ovid's Diana in *Metamorphoses* and the Mexican iterations that include Olaguíbel's statue in Mexico City as well as Davison's film and CMLL's wrestler, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* places Diana within an international archetype—the femme fatale. There, Diana can take on specific functions that do not appear as evident in the former myths.

Barba Loza's take on Diana documents a particular moment in Mexican, civilian and quotidian life: the presence of death and the presence of the military. Moreover, Barba Loza's choice of actors and extras—particularly the choice to incorporate *real* police officers into the film—creates an interesting rupture where actors are forced to dissimulate their everyday lives.

Finally, while Barba Loza's film can be considered a *failure* in many ways, the most problematic aspect is the silencing of a hero whose major contribution to Mexican popular discourse is a call to notice that the women of Juárez are being silenced. The film does not ponder what the narrative might be if taken from the perspective and voice of Diana—rather, the narrative is appropriated by the state, and ultimately, Diana's rebellious words are incorporated into the state. Representation is not an easy thing. Surely, the *solution* is not to create a different narrative told from Diana's perspective, but to make gestures to the choices that we make and to acknowledge that while this story is important, it is being memorialized through masculine perspectives and through masculine eyes: Ovid's, Olaguíbel's, Davison's, Barba Loza's, and my own. In what

follows, I will conclude this dissertation and posit questions about the ethics representation in neocolonial, sex, and gender contexts. I do not imagine that solutions will come easily, but I do posit that crises of masculinity in contemporary Mexico surface as gender violence. Thus, attention not only resides with Diana, but also with the violent men in her life. How might we expand our understanding of sexual violence? What (other) voices are often ignored?

CHAPTER 6

RETORICA MORIBUNDA: LOCATING LIFE AND DEATH IN CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN DISCOURSE

In this dissertation, I have contextualized violence within what I refer to as post-NAFTA Mexico. The term *post-NAFTA* refers to the social, political, and economic transformations experienced in Mexican civic life after the passage of NAFTA. Other scholars have referred to the term post-NAFTA in order to describe a shift in political power away from the federal government, and in particular, away from Mexico's executive branch, and toward NGOs and drug cartels (Dresser, 1998; Wise, 1998). Until 2000, Mexico's executive branch had been occupied not by an authoritarian figure, but rather by a party dictatorship—meaning that the same political party had occupied this office for approximately 70 years.

I extend the term post-NAFTA by referring to the ways in which trade policies affected populations. In particular, I focus on some of the unexpected consequences of NAFTA: human migrations (within Mexico, through Mexico, and out of Mexico), urbanization, and violence. NAFTA dramatically increased the number of maquiladoras along Mexico's northern border, and as a result, cities like Ciudad Juárez increased in population at a high rate. Local governments struggled to respond to some of the dynamics that followed NAFTA, and new forms of criminality were born in the cracks and crevices where the governmentality's eye could not reach. Gradually, citizens began

to notice that crimes were going unpunished and that investigations were not resulting in the apprehension of criminals. Most importantly, even when criminals were captured for heinous crimes, the crimes themselves continued. In other words, violence in Mexico had become an everyday occurrence. Violence became a sort of symptom of a collective problem, and not an individual condition. It was not long before popular descriptions of the border, both in Mexico and in the United States, amounted to lawlessness, a description that both attracted and repelled foreigners.[63] For some, a lawless place indicated danger, violence, kidnappings, and death. For others, lawlessness was amusing—a real life apocalyptic and dystopian film—a place where one might participate in the most carnal, colonial of fantasies without the fear of public shame, incarceration, or even guilt.

It is in this place that the myth of Diana the hunter re-emerges. Ovid's Diana is the goddess of the hunt, the moon, and femininity. In Actaeon's myth, Diana lives in a pastoral setting, accompanied only by women—woodland nymphs. In antiquity (and even today, perhaps), the pastoral setting represents the place where the barbarians live—violent and passionate. The woods are also a place where *civilization* itself is called into question: where one might step out of the everyday discourses of civic life in order to see the social construction of several of the things we otherwise learn to naturalize—terms like freedom, justice, law, and even life and death. Diana remerges in a city that is urbanizing rapidly—perhaps *unnaturally* rapidly—and not in a traditional pastoral setting. This growth comes with its pains—and these pains are the unexplained and unsolved deaths and disappearances of many of its citizens.

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[63] See Charles Bowden's (2010) *Murder City*, for example.

Diana in Ciudad Juárez, just as Diana is in every iteration, is not objectively real—she occupies the liminal space from which several dialectics can be questioned: real and fake, citizen and state, civilization and barbarism, male and female, foreign and domestic, dead and living. Diana is a fabrication—a work of art—that responds to the real conditions of everyday life in Ciudad Juárez. I began by taking Diana's confession itself as one cultural fragment—one part of a much larger rhetorical text. I described the role of confession within modernity, explaining that confessions are typically associated with two varying notions of guilt. First, the guilt of a criminal, whose confession is tantamount to truth itself because we assume, at times erroneously, that no one would confess to crimes that they did not commit. Second, the guilt of lying about one's own identity—the intrapersonal struggle of knowing something about ourselves that we do not share with society—from addictions of various types to something like sexuality.

Diana's confession is that she and her colleagues have suffered in silence. Confessing, it seems, is but a step toward agency, because after confessing, Diana says that they will no longer suffer in silence—that speech itself is an emancipatory tool that will reverse the tables against patriarchy. The hope for potential revolution withered, and the celebration of such a possibility is witnessed in the film. Still, patriarchal violence remains throughout Ciudad Juárez.

Soon after the confession was published by news media, several responses followed, like the applause of an audience. The comments on Diana's Facebook fan page demonstrate that her performance was seen and admired in more than Ciudad Juárez. Corridos, narrative songs, commemorating Diana can be found on YouTube. Audiences responded with such enthusiasm that Diana took on a second life. In this dissertation, I

focused on the debates regarding ontology among journalists and in a low-budget B-film that memorialized her actions.

Reports of Diana can be found throughout the globe. I narrowed my investigation to three specific journalists. These journalists were chosen because they were interested in two crucial aspects: the local conditions in Ciudad Juárez, which, as a rhetorician I refer to as the *exigence* that Diana responds to—her *raison d'être*—and second, all journalists found a relationship between the place or setting (Ciudad Juárez), and a variety of terms, which when analyzed rhetorically, point toward larger questions regarding ontology in present-day Mexico. These terms include credulity, veracity, fantasy, apparition, disappearance, and myth (in the pejorative sense—myth as *lie*). Two larger conclusions are drawn from this analysis: first, that there is an important relationship between physical location—bodily presence, even. In other words, one cannot fully comprehend this case without understanding the importance of physicality and materiality. The second conclusion is that today, as news can spread very quickly, visually spread across a variety of platforms or screens, an old tenet of rhetorical criticism emerges: There is no objective truth, rather, truth is that which becomes truth, and under a variety of unpredictable conditions, anything can become truth. A postmodernist case for doxa emerges, but within the context of Mexico's post-NAFTA and postrevolutionary societies, we might qualify this rhetorical notion of doxa as inheriting from two other traditions: *ateneo de la juventud* and *estridentismo,* two post-revolutionary movements that evoked similar calls to action.

The three journalists chosen also happened to report the news from different parts of the world and to different intended audiences, creating a more wholesome picture of

Diana and the events surrounding her confession. Moving from the outside in, Gloria Castrillón writes from Colombia, in South America, to an audience composed predominantly of Colombian women (this is not say that others did not read her report). Juan Lázaro writes from Guadalajara, Mexico. Guadalajara is not located on Mexico's northern border, but despite this, Guadalajara is familiar with some of the struggles in Ciudad Juárez. In other words, Guadalajara is no stranger to maquiladoras, corruption, feminicide, and cartel violence. Lastly, Luis Chaparro is located in Ciudad Juárez and writes both for a local and a foreign audience. Chaparro and Lázaro both describe their own travels throughout Ciudad Juárez. Lázaro describes the experience of riding a bus from the *colonias* ("shanty towns" or low-income neighborhoods) in Ciudad Juárez into downtown, where the assassinations of bus drivers took place. Chaparro, on the hand, travels from El Paso, Texas, to Ciudad Juárez, and interviews several locals—including the Director of Public Transportation and the Spokesperson for the Police Department in Ciudad Juárez. Chaparro hypothesizes that the murder (and even the murderer) is a hoax, and that, if the murderer were real, she could have easily come from the United States.

It is not difficult to imagine Diana's story reaching Ramón Barba Loza, the filmmaker behind *Diana La Cazadora de Choferes* (2013). The story of Diana alone—told without much drama or exaggeration—is enough to capture the attention and even imagination of foreign and domestic audiences. But the violence in this story was not enough, and Barba Loza takes creative freedom in embellishing certain aspects and silencing certain other aspects. Barba Loza's film memorializes Diana, but in doing so, the memory that is created of Diana is very different from the event that the three journalists above reported. Barba Loza advances a problematic notion of justice—and in

doing so—creates an *apologia* (a defense, not an apology) for certain actions: Diana's murders, the state's ineptitude, and even for patriarchy's role in contemporary Mexican society. Barba Loza's film serves several crucial functions. First, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* recreates Diana as a femme fatale—sexualizing Diana for the viewer's pleasure. Mexican film scholar, Patricia Torres San Martín (2011), has written about the relationship between femme fatale representations of femininity in relation to patriarchal ideology. Expanding existing literature on femme fatale stereotypes and Mexican cinema studies, I argue that *Diana* is an honest, even if problematic, attempt at memorializing an event of cultural significance for diverse audiences.

As a result of this execution, my second argument is that *Diana* strips agency away from Diana, the confessor of the second chapter. In other words, the film representation of Diana is the narrative about Agente Rodríguez, a male detective in Ciudad Juárez's police department. The story is told from the point of view of this masculine character. Therefore, the voice that audiences hear—which is one and the same as the narrative structure of the film—is that of a man, and not Diana's voice. Voice was crucial to Diana, the confessor, who said that she could no longer remain silent about the abuses that filled her with rage. Voice was the tool of liberation and vengeance, and in the film, voice is the thing that Diana is not allowed to possess.

Lastly, this film also functions as an accidental documentary. This movie is filmed in Naucalpan, near Mexico City, and not in Ciudad Juárez. Despite this important note, Naucalpan is one of the cities that was militarized following the 2006 presidential declaration of a war on drugs. As a documentary, the film makes use of three police stations, several police vehicles, and several extras who themselves are off-duty police

officers (according to the film's credits). Audiences witness the violent power and presence of the state, witnessing scenes where military vehicles patrol civic life—or even seeing the inside of police stations and prisons. Apart from documenting the militarization of civic life, *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes* also documents the places of vernacular discourse: the inside of city buses, bus stations, newsstands, taco stands, and maquiladoras, for example. These are not presented as quiet places, but rather, as noisy and bustling centers of civic life where rape culture exists and functions in specific ways.

Diana la Cazadora de Choferes inhabits a liminal space among many rhetorical dialectics: real and unreal, modern and ancient, Mexican and American, Western and Indigenous, living and dead. Diana appeared to break Gayatri Spivak's aporia: The subaltern cannot speak—or, worded differently, it is impossible for the subaltern to speak. What audiences saw and did not have the vocabulary to describe was this exact phenomenon: A most oppressed class, within this context, has taken violent action—the type of suicidal, necropolitical violent action described by Achille Mbembe—and as a result, her voice (and the voice of oppressed, maquiladora workers in Ciudad Juárez) is being heard—the content of her message is being taken seriously. Moreover, Diana's speech appeared to place government authorities in a new position—perhaps a position that would enable them to make progress in the fight against feminicide—by disallowing authorities the opportunity to dismiss the importance and seriousness of the confession. Diana gave Ciudad Juárez authorities an ultimatum and suggested that if conditions did not change for maquiladora employees, more alleged rapists would be killed. Thus, Diana moves from hero to vigilante, pointing to the rule of law as something that does not actually work for all people, and that treats the powerful exceptionally.

However, Spivak's aporia was not broken, as Diana became more of a myth, or a lie, and less of a real person, following Chaparro's description. In the end, the subaltern did not speak. The link between the confession and the murders was never proven, and the murderer of the bus drivers remains a mystery.

To this day, no one knows whether or not Diana was *real*. The confession was most likely a hoax, turning Diana into an ultimate example of doxastic truth in a postmodern, poststructuralist Mexico. Diana's existence is disembodied. As a specter, she cannot be pinned down, and anatomized—opened, dissected, and shown to be *anything*. Instead, she shows herself as something that can only be described by her unknowability. We witness her—we cannot deny that the murders took place—we cannot deny that the confession was made—we cannot deny the feelings of euphoria at the thought of justice—we cannot deny that even this feminist tale was appropriated by dominant, patriarchal culture and made to function on behalf of dominant sexuality and the state. What does this leave us?

My analysis of Diana contributes to studies of the fragmentary nature of cultural, rhetorical texts. Often, a rhetorician's object of analysis will be treated as something more or less confined. Critical rhetoric, however, insists that critics create the texts that they analyze. Moreover, critical rhetoric, when committed to *telos*, following Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop (1992), obliges the critic to be open and vulnerable about their politics, which then invigorates the critical process by allowing others to participate in criticism. Diana allows audiences to witness the difficulty of placing borders around Diana, a figure that has to be properly contextualized and who, we must be aware, can always take on new forms.

Thus, this analysis also contributes to rhetorical understandings of ontology: of truth-making processes and constructions of reality. Ontological questions bring up two major findings. First, a central question regarding Diana is whether she exists: whether the words that are said or typed by someone are necessarily that person's; whether words can even be possessed—and whether such possession, should it exist, necessarily indicates truth. Here, identity is inextricably tied to confession. If identity is the relationship and negotiation between the things others say and think I am, and the things that I consider myself to be, what happens when I type the words "I am Diana"—and define Diana as an avenger of crimes against women? Does one become the identity that one has created—or is the process much more complex?

Apart from identity, the second finding concerns ethics—more specifically, the civic responsibility that we all have as communicators to tell others, or not tell others, the truth. Of course, this concern is always qualified by a variety of contextual considerations. Even more important, such a claim would require that we treat "the truth" as an objective, unchangeable thing—which raises a plethora of problems on its own. For me, the central question is, when do we believe the words others say? This is an important question in the treatment of my artifact at nearly every stage: When, how, and why do we believe a confession? When, how, and why do we believe the reports of journalists? When, how, and why do we believe a film's account of a given event?

Credulity, as Ovid warns, is something that haunts us. Rumors, like myths, are not lies, but hints or intimations of the condition of reality. Rumors inform, but they also misinform. Credibility is a type of reputation built by consistently representing reality in honest, reliable ways. Reputation, however, is not something we can control (and often,

we fool ourselves into thinking we can)—and, thus, credibility also suffers this fate. One can almost hear, for example, Luis Chaparro beg his audience, "please, believe me," there is more to this story than a mysterious murderer—there may be nothing here at all but two murders that became an opportunity to bring attention to death an violence in Ciudad Juárez. And if so, why pay attention to Diana and not to the systemic ways in which working class women in Ciudad Juárez are killed? This case predates our contemporary American concern for fake news, and it is not to say that this is the origin of fake news, but rather, that contemporary consumption of news—in different international and transnational contexts—is prey to credulity. In turn, this means that credibility itself, which at one point could be lost, is now flattened: A report from *The Washington Post* and *Vice* lives the same form of life, online. Thus, this dissertation engages the rhetorical notion of credibility across national and cultural contexts, as well as across languages—which itself is a complex, rhetorical, and *inventional* process.

6.1 Suggestions for Future Research

The process of creating an artifact is a process of selection. Through this process, certain parts are not used, but they are not forgotten. For example, there are three major areas that I do not discuss in this dissertation, that I would have liked to discuss, and that I think other rhetoricians might be able to study.

First, the community of "people" assumed throughout the dissertation is very broad. I am interested in Ciudad Juárez working class people, in their vernacular discourse, and in their management of life and death. Of course, this experience can be extremely different from one person to another, and when I think about these "people," I

am thinking about my own experience in this city, having been a member of this "people," but not about any specific person. Thus, another way to create a community is to analyze online responses to Diana—to think about online communities. Soon after the confession, a Facebook page went up called "Diana La Cazadora de Choferes." Though it is no longer visited, it once served as a "place" where people might discuss violence. Similarly, several of the news articles allow for readers to comment, and often, readers would comment that they did not believe that Diana, the confessor-murderer, existed—typically explaining that the 4A bus, allegedly, does not pick up passengers near the maquiladoras.

Second, and connected to the idea of online communities, other works of art (apart from the film) were made in memory of Diana. Francisco Cabrera (2013), for example, composed a corrido, "Corrido de Diana la Cazadora," a Mexican narrative song, commemorating Diana. This corrido falls within the scope of vernacular discourse, and in the future book project, I plan to include a chapter of analysis dedicated to this song. Similarly, Alice Leora Briggs (2013) made a graffito drawing of Diana's murder, "Diana Cazadora de Choferes," to accompany Yuri Herrera's story on *This American Life*. These works, though traditional in their own way, are shared through new media platforms and reach audiences that are more than local.

The final area that merits further analysis, and which would supplement my chapter on Ramón Barba Loza's (2013) *Diana la Cazadora de Choferes*, is a femme fatale critique of Tito Davison's (1956) *La Diana Cazadora*.

6.2 Research Beyond Dissertation

I plan to turn this dissertation into a book manuscript, expanding the book by two to three chapters. Additionally, I plan to write a second book. This book picks up where the final chapter of this dissertation leaves off: *retórica moribunda*. Retórica moribunda is a rhetoric about life and death in contemporary Mexico. More specifically, this concept aims to describe the ways in which death plays a vital role in the rhetorical lives of Mexican citizens. Death becomes mundane—everyday—to the point that new ways of raising consciousness are required. Gradually, these new ways come to redefine death itself.

In this project, I want to look specifically at the relationship between sex and violence in tabloids. The tabloids that I analyze have been collected from several militarized cities: Ciudad Juárez, Monterrey, Ciudad Victoria, Iguala, and Tijuana. All of these cities have dealt with extreme cases of militarized violence. Juárez is known for feminicidios, the murders of women. Ciudad Victoria is on the route between Central America and the United States, and San Fernando (a small town, located nearby) is the site of two mass graves. Iguala is the capital of the state of Guerrero, where the 43 Ayotzinapa students were murdered or "disappeared." Recently, Tijuana's El Pueblito prison, now abandoned, was the site of mass executions due to overpopulation. Prisoners' families have been unable to find hundreds of prisoners, and authorities simply state that the prisoners have disappeared.

What I aim to do in this project is connect the militarization of Mexican cities to continued violence in Mexico. I plan to argue that Mexico is currently reducing populations, engaging in necropower, and using a variety of discourses to justify the high

number of deaths. Most importantly, Mexico itself is turning into a necrospace for the unwanted of the United States, to the point that deportation often means death. This is particularly true when we consider that immigrants are deported to unfamiliar places, and that many of those deported to Mexico are not Mexican, but Central American.

6.3 Future Project

In a larger, future project, I would like to invest more time discussing and deconstructing the relationship between vernacular rhetoric and mythology. There are two specific areas within this dissertation that I believe deserve better attention. I would also like to spend more time discussing the importance of *being there*—the importance of field methods alongside rhetorical studies in cases that are about specific places, people, and events.

The first area is public responses. These public responses include public comments left on online news about Diana, the Facebook page that was created on behalf of Diana, and most importantly, a corrido that was performed and posted on YouTube. The corrido is a musical, poetic genre. It is a narrative song that typically tells the story of real people who should be committed to some form of history. Narcocorridos, for example, serve to historicize the life and times of some of the most loved and hated narcos, or they might tell the story of a narco who successfully outsmarted authorities. Diana's corrido is important to critique, as it does not belong either to the narco label or to the dominant culture.

The second area deserving of more attention is the history of Diana, the myth, within Mexico. Five years after Helvia Martínez Verdaye published her confession,

Mexico's *Consejo Mundial de Lucha Libre* (Worldwide Wrestling Council) signed *Diana la Cazadora*, a luchadora (female wrestler), to their organization. Diana, the wrestler, was a *técnica*, one of the good wrestlers who fought against *rudas*, villains. Diana further advanced the idea of Mexican feminine beauty. She was considered both deadly, violent, and powerful as well as just and beautiful. Many of the vernacular ways of knowing the myth of Diana, in the Mexican context, then do not come from direct Western sources like Ovid, but from Mexican modernity and postmodernity: the statue in Mexico City and the replicas found throughout the republic, the confession of Martínez Verdayes as well as the interviews she gave on national television, and a popular female wrestler. It is important to note here, that while Diana is known to "originate" in the Western canon, this iteration of Diana is hybrid—it is a collage of cultural knowledge possible in a place like Mexico.

Lastly, I would like to discuss the importance of being there. Throughout the past 4 years, I have travelled to Mexico extensively. I have gone to Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, Mexico City, Ayotzinapa, Iguala, San Fernando, Monterrey, and Ciudad Victoria—among many other places. All of the places mentioned above have been known, unfortunately, for mass murders of various types. It is for this reason that I emphasize the importance of being there. Yes, a rhetorical critic can write about a place and never go there. But the critic is limited in what they can knowingly say, simply because not being there limits what a person knows.

For McGee (1990), rhetors produce rhetorics from scattered texts; thus, the idea that a text can be found or discovered and that it is an already constituted entity prior to criticism is but an illusion. As a critic, rhetor, and rhetorician, I have entered the

fragmented world of death discourse and brought with me the fragments, pieces of death culture. Thus, in the future, I would like to expand my methodology in studying *retórica moribunda* to include ethnographic approaches to rhetoric such as rhetorical field methods (Middleton et al., 2011), as well as critical participatory rhetoric (Middleton et al., 2015), in addition to a more traditional method of textual analysis. Ethnographic approaches are important to this project because dominant discourse, readily available in newspapers, on television, and in films, as well as public speeches made by officials, do not capture fully the everyday rhetorical texts produced and available throughout Mexican society. Thus, as Ono and Sloop (2001) suggest, *vernacular* texts must be found "on the streets"; such discourse must be examined in order to shift power relations. Simply relying on dominant texts as our objects of focus, Ono and Sloop suggest, reproduces relations of power, thus reinscribing marginality, while perpetually recentering the voice and perspectives of dominant institutions within society.

Rhetorical field methods help us to find discourses that are not available in dominant media and thus are highly circulating texts. By using such a methodology, we gain access to (and make known by paying critical attention to them) discourses in everyday life and across cultural spheres. Furthermore, in addition to gaining access to texts that are not "public," hence reframing the private/public dichotomy, I have also "lived with" them. I have not simply entered Mexico, grabbed the texts I needed, and left—I carry with me the rhetorical texts, as lived experiences, as tattoos or scars, and thereby draw deep insight experientially from my research sites and inhabitants. These experiences, even when it is not evident, help me to theorize contemporary death cultures in Mexico. Thus, a key advantage of eventually incorporating field methods to this

rhetorical methodology is that, in addition to collecting discursive fragments, I allow myself to see, live, and breathe the spaces I inhabit and the people living there.

FILM TRANSCRIPTS

[1] Belmont: Estaba yo ya muy preocupado. Tenía al procurador, al presidente municipal, al gobernador ¡encima! Y sobre todo a la prensa ¡esa maldita prensa!

Rodríguez: La tenemos en los separos. Está lista para hacer su declaración frente al juez.

Belmont: Muy bien, Rodríguez. Esto nos va a acarrear muchos beneficios, hablando políticamente, tal vez de aquí me vaya, no sé, a procurador, a presidente municipal, claro, tú serías de mi equipo.

Rodríguez: Discúlpeme, señor, pero yo no puedo estar en contra de mis principios.

Belmont: ¿Pero, que dices? ¡Esta es la oportunidad de tu vida! Podrás tener dinero, poder, un mejor puesto.

Rodríguez: Yo estoy en la corporación porque siempre quise ser un buen policía y ayudar a la gente a atrapar a los malhechores y castigarlos.

Belmont: Sí, sí, sí, eso se oye muy bonito, pero no se aplica en la vida real. No seas tonto. Piénsalo. ¡Piensa en grande!

Rodríguez: No tengo nada que pensar y menos a costa de una mujer.

Belmont: ¿Pero, estás loco? ¡Esa mujer es una asesina!

Rodríguez: Me disculpa, jefe, le traeré el informe completo. Su permiso.

Belmont: Espérese, Rodríguez, espérese. Estoy a punto de hablar con el gobernador, con el presidente municipal y con el procurador para darles la noticia.

Rodríguez: Sí, señor.

Belmont: Me voy a enfrentar a la prensa.

Rodríguez: No tendrá ningún problema, señor. Estoy seguro que hoy es su gran día. Quedará ante todos como héroe.

Belmont: Antes de enfrentar todo esto, quisiera oír su historia, su versión de todo lo que pasó de su propia boca.

Rodríguez: Como sabe, hace algunos meses supimos de violaciones y muertes de mujeres. Algunas trabajaban en las maquiladoras… (0:10:04-0:12:31)

[1] Marica: Ay, ojalá que no se tarde mucho el camión.

Yolanda: ¡Bendito fin de semana! Hasta que se terminó el trabajo.

Mujer 3: Sí, la verdad es que estoy cansadísima, así que voy a dormir sábado y domingo.

Doris: Bendita tú, que no tienes que cuidar tres hijos.

Mujer 3: Ay, mamacita, pues tú tienes la culpa, ¿o, qué, no te acuerdas cómo hiciste a tus chamaquitos?

Yolanda: Y lo peor, del padre que les buscaste, mendigo huevón que no sirve para nada. ¡Hasta lo estuviste manteniendo! ¿Y todo para qué? Para que agarrara y se fuera con otra.
Doris: Ah, bueno, ya, no me hables más de ese desgraciado.
Mujer 3: Ay, ya, anímate, vamos y le dejas los chamacos a tu mamá. Vamos.
Doris: Ay, no sé.
Yolanda: Ándale, anímate, al rato se va a poner bien bueno el bailongo. ¿Y tú, qué, Mariquita? ¿Vas a ir con nosotros o te vas a cortar?
Mariquita: Híjole, pues yo creo que no porque mi hermana Diana trabaja el fin de semana y tengo que cuidar a mi mamá.
Yolanda: Uy, no, esta sí que está fregada. ¿Y ustedes que dicen? ¿Vamos, o qué?
Mujer 3: Yo, por mí, sí
Doris: Yo también.
Marica: Órale, pues. Pues vamos a darle prisa porque si no, se nos va a hacer tarde y todavía tenemos que tomar dos camiones.
(13:22-14:33)
(The bus pulls up to the sidewalk)
Braulio: Qué bonitos ojitos, mi reina. Pásele, pásele, morenita, qué chula.
Yolanda: Ya, ya, ya. Déjate de galanuras y cóbranos.
Braulio: No te enojes, preciosa. ¿Cuándo vamos a dar una vuelta? Te invito a comer a donde quieras.
Yolanda: Brincos dieras, fíjate. Cóbrese.
Braulio: No me odies, mi reina. Acuérdate que del odio al amor nomás hay un paso. Toma. Cortesía de la casa.
Yolanda: Mejor cóbreme el doble. Sáquese.
(14:57-15:29)
(Once the four women are on the back of the bus)
Yolanda: Méndigo viejo desgraciado. Puro estar fregando.
Mujer 3: Y no solo ese. Son muchos los desgraciados.
Doris: El otro día, otro chofer me invitó a salir con él. ¿Cómo ven?
Marica: Pues deberíamos denunciarlos. ¿No?
Yolanda: Ay, Mari, por favor, para lo que sirven las denuncias.
Marica: Oh, pues algo deberíamos de hacer.
Mujer 3: Estos ya no respetan ni a su madre.
Doris: Solo queda una cosa: matarlos a todos.
Marica: Ay, ¿cómo crees? Cosas, no sabes ni que dices, de veras.
Yolanda: Pero es una buena idea.
Marica: Ay, ustedes y sus ideas, de veras. Ay, yo aquí me quedo. ¡Bajan!
Yolanda: Me saludas a tu mami y a Diana también.
Marica: Sí, gracias. Nos vemos el lunes, eh. (exits bus)
Todas: ¡Adiós!
Mujer 4: Ay, pobrecita, si no fuera tan santurrona.
Doris: Para mí, que lo que le hace falta es un buen macho.
Mujer 4: Tienes razón. Así se olvidaría de tantos rezos, vírgenes y santos.

Yolanda: Ay, pues a mí también me está haciendo falta un buen macho. ¿Entonces, qué? ¿A que hora nos vemos?
(15:34-17:11)
(New scene. Bus drivers eating tortas at a taco stand, at the end of the morning shift.)
Braulio: ¿Qué paso, muchachos? ¿Qué hubo? ¿Guardaste mi torta?
Food vendor: Sí
Braulio: Échala. Creí que ya te la habías tragado. ¿Cómo les fue?
Roberto: Pues, ¿qué preguntas? Solo a los pendejos les va mal.
Braulio: Por eso les pregunté. Ahí te hablan pinche chafirete.
Chofer 3: Si lo dices por mí, te equivocas, les apuesto que hice más que todos ustedes.
Chofer 1: Ay, cabrón. ¿A poco muy sácale-punta?
Chofer 3: Y a las pruebas me remito.
Roberto: Y a ti, ¿cómo te fue, güey?
Decencio: De la fregada. Me pararon. Me robaron. Me paró la policía y pa' acabarla se me fregó el camión.
Braulio: Nomás faltó que te meara un perro. Ahora sí ya sabemos quien es el más pendejo. En cambio a mí, me fue a toda madre. Subí a unas chamacas de las que trabajan en la maquiladora, es un grupito que se junta ahí, son como tres o cuatro, y están, buenísimas.
Roberto: Pues a mí me trae de un ala una chavita de esas.
Chofer 3: Sí, está muy bien, pero tranquilo, estas pulgas no brincan en tu petate.
Braulio: Pues yo no sé. Esas muchachas a mí me encantan. Y nomás es cosa de hablarle suavecito y al oído, a huevo que caen.
Chofer 3: Seguro. A todas las viejas les gusta hacérselas difíciles, pero luego caen redonditas.
Decencio: Lo malo es que cuando ya te dan el tesorito, ya se los quieren cobrar, hasta casa quieren.
Braulio: Yo por eso soy picaflor: pico, pico y califico.
Roberto: A esa chavita, hasta casa le pondría
Braulio: Ya, ya, que sea menos. Diosito hizo a las mujeres pa' que nos sirvan. ¿Pa' qué más?
Chofer 3: Dicen que nos tocan de a siete viejas por cabeza.
Decencio: Si yo no puedo con una, imagínense con siete.
Braulio: Bueno, nos tocan de a siete, pero no te pongas triste. A ti te tocan seis y un macho, pa' que te sople en la nuca.
Decencio: Bueno, ya estuvo. Se aprovechan de mi nobleza. Nomás porque tengo seis hijos y mi vieja me pega. (20:05-22:27)
(Diana's sick mother is trying to convince Marica, Diana's sister, to get a boyfriend. Marica does not want to date and thinks that men only want to have sex with her):
Mother: Piénsalo. Ya ves, tu pobre hermana está sola.
Marica: El desgraciado con el que andaba nada más la violó, la usó y la dejó. Desgraciado. Nunca le hicieron nada. Mi hermana quedó

marcada. Yo creo que por eso odia a los hombres.

Mother: Ya se le pasará, hijita. Y va a encontrar a un buen hombre que la ame. Piensa en lo que te dije. (24:00-24:34)

(The three women go out dancing with three men. One of the men convinces Doris to go to his apartment and spend some time alone. Doris agrees, but the man stops the car before arriving and wants to have sex with Doris, who turns him down. He kicks her out of the car, leaving her alone in the middle of the city. She walks to the bus station near the maquiladora where she is picked up by Braulio, the same bus driver that she encountered earlier that day).

Braulio: Mira nada más que chulada.

Yolanda: Ah, eres tú. Ahí me dejas en la esquina de mi casa, ¿no?

Braulio: Con todo gusto. Vienes de una fiesta, ¿o qué? Estás preciosa. Una condición: siéntate ahí para verte las piernitas. Tienes suerte, eh, porque está es la última corrida y afortunadamente me toco a mí.

Yolanda: Sí, verdad.

Braulio: Sí

(For several minutes they do not speak—they simply stare at each other and at the corners of the bus. The woman starts to become concerned that they are going off-route—this can be discerned from the music, which changes from soft piano to a more serious and ominous tone, and from the look on her face as she looks out the window. The bus comes to a stop somewhere other than an official stop).

Yolanda: ¿Qué hacemos aquí? ¿Por qué te detienes?

Braulio: Todavía no hacemos nada. Pero el lugar es bonito, ¿no? Podemos platicar un rato. Estás preciosa.

Yolanda: ¡Te dije que me llevaras a mi casa!

Braulio: Ya estamos muy cerca. Pórtate bien, tranquilízate y te llevo a la mera puerta de tu casa. Mira, tu bolsillo.

Yolanda: ¡Te dije claramente a donde quería ir!

Braulio: Ya te oí. Podemos pasar un rato a gusto, ¿no?

Yolanda: ¡Suéltame! ¡Déjame! ¿Qué estás haciendo?

(She yells and he hits her. The screaming continues and the film transitions back to the meeting between the agent and the chief of pólice—and Rodriguez's narration).

[1] Rodríguez: Llegué al lugar de los hechos. La muchacha estaba destrozada. Quedó en shock. Ya no volvió a hablar. Ni a ser la misma. Estuvimos buscando huellas de carros, de camiones, pero habían muchas. Es un lugar donde la gente va a divertirse, ¿me entiende?

Belmont: ¿Y qué pasó con las investigaciones? ¿Hubo alguna denuncia?

Rodríguez: Descubrimos su nombre por su identificación y supimos donde trabajaba. Fui a visitar a sus amigas a la fabrica de maquila. Me comentaron sobre una fiesta y un muchacho que se la había llevado. Él era el principal sospechoso.

Belmont: Seguramente él fue quien la violó. Me imagino que está detenido.
Rodríguez: No fue el joven quien la violó. Se hicieron las pruebas y el resultado fue negativo. El joven dijo que la había dejado en la calle.
Belmont: Ah, entonces la violación fue posterior. Seguramente la confundieron con alguna prostituta, la subieron, se la llevaron, la violaron.
(34:00-40:00)
(Two bus drivers decide to go on a raping spree. The narrative cuts back to Rodríguez.)
Rodríguez: Al ver los cuerpos violados y golpeados sentí que estábamos tratando con un grupo de degenerados y enfermos sexuales.
Belmont: Ah, sí, fue cuando me dijiste que tenías alguna pista del asesino o violador. Me acuerdo que en aquel entonces tenía encima a los altos mandos y sobre todo a la prensa, esa maldita prensa.
Rodríguez: Así fue, jefe, hubo un testigo que me dijo que la última vez que las vieron fue subiéndose a un camión de línea. Desgraciadamente no supo decirme cual. Entonces empecé a investigar en todas las centrales.
Belmont: Sabíamos que habían muchos asesinos, un asesino, no sé, que mataba a las mujeres, esa noticia dio la vuelta la mundo. Que mal quedamos aquí en Ciudad Juárez. Fue terrible, ¿te acuerdas? Tuvieron que venir policías del extranjero. Lo que no sé es, ¿qué tiene que ver las violaciones de ahora con los choferes muertos? No entiendo.
Rodríguez: Tuvo que ver y mucho. Hubo una declaración muy sonada contra los violadores. Ahí fue en donde conocí a Diana, una mujer de carácter duro, fuerte, hizo unas declaraciones ante la prensa, nos pegaron muy duro.
(50:20-51:54)
(Diana comes into the police station to complain that they have not solved the case).
Rodríguez: A ver, a ver, a ver, ¿por qué tanto escandalo? ¿qué está pasando aquí?
Diana: Tengo varios días presentando denuncias de violación y ustedes no han hecho absolutamente nada.
Rodríguez: Mire, señora, le comento que el Ministerio Público ya nos dio varias líneas de investigación y tenemos varias pistas para encontrar a los asesinos y violadores, así que tranquilícese, por favor.
Diana: Eso llevan diciéndolo meses, años, ¿hasta cuando se va a hacer justicia en este país?
Rodríguez: Le comento que yo personalmente estoy llevando este caso y le prometo que pronto agarraremos a esos asesinos.
Diana: Promesas, puras promesas. Estamos hartas todas las mujeres. Les

damos una semana más, si no, haremos justicia con nuestras propias manos.

Rodríguez: (to his assistant) Tenemos que hacer algo para atrapar a esos malditos. Esa mujer tiene razón. Lo peor es que el gobierno, la ineptitud, la corrupción, todo nos tiene atados de las manos. No podemos hacer nada.

(52:17-53:30)

(Regarding the composite sketch in the national and international press)

Rodríguez: Pero tenemos una testigo, hablaba sobre una mujer rubia, ahí empezaron mis sospechas.

Belmont: Sí, recuerdo muy bien el retrato hablado que dio, salieron grandes desplegados en la prensa de México y de todo el mundo. Creo que ahí fue cuando empezaron a llamarla "la mata-choferes," ¿no?

(1:22:50)

Before the press conference: "la prensa—esta vez si me va a oir"

Press conference:

Belmont: Bienvenidos amigos de la prensa y comunicadores, radio y televisión, como ustedes saben hemos vivido por muchos años el índice de violencia más alto de este país. Hemos sido víctimas del crimen organizado. Ha habido muchas muertes de mujeres. Estamos viviendo el dolor, el resentimiento y la impotencia de tantas madres, hijas, esposos. Desgraciadamente nosotros no hemos tenido la capacidad de resolver esos problemas. Hemos hecho nuestro mejor esfuerzo pero ha sido insuficiente, por eso la gente ha tomado la ley entre sus manos. Se está cobrando todas las venganzas. Esto se ha convertido en una guerra, señores, por lo que nosotros no hemos podido hacer. No sé si la corrupción, intereses, no sé, no sé si hay arreglos con el crimen organizado. No sé que está pasando en este país, señores. Déjenme decirles que esa mujer que está en la cárcel no es la mata-choferes. (Whispers among the press). No tenemos las pruebas suficientes para culparla, así es que los únicos culpables somos nosotros. Así es que, suéltenla. Ella es libre. (Rodríguez leaves the stage). Por último, señores, déjenme decirles que presentaré mi renuncia irrevocable. Gracias, señores.

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