PRODUCING THE ETHICAL GLOBAL SUBJECT:
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL’S NOT HERE BUT NOW CAMPAIGN AND
THE LIMITS OF REPRESENTATION

by

CHRISTINE ARNOLD
B.A. (Hons.), The University of British Columbia, 2009

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Abstract

The discourse of “global citizenship” is circulating throughout educational institutions in Canada with increasing prevalence, and yet, is rarely problematized nor called into question. This discourse and practice is steeped in notions of liberal humanism and moral goodness, resembling “the civilizing mission” of the colonial era, in which the “civilized European” travelled to “exotic” places to “tame and civilize savages”. This thesis is a theoretical inquiry into the production of the subjectivity of the global citizen, focusing on the visual as a site of production. Through an analysis of a visual human rights advocacy campaign produced by Amnesty International in Switzerland in 2006, entitled Not Here But Now, I ask the following questions: (1) How do the visual and textual elements of this campaign produce the subjectivities of the viewer and the viewed? (2) What does this tell us about the limits of representation? What are the constraints of NGOs in terms of interrupting the grammar of the representations they are embedded in? (3) How does this relate to wider questions and assumptions about global citizenship? Can it help us to imagine global citizenship otherwise? Theoretically, I draw on Donna Haraway’s (1988) concept of situated knowledge, Edward Said’s (1978) Orientalism, and Jacques Rancière’s (2004) dissensus. The goal of this thesis is to provide a framework for analysis and thinking about how one comes to understand what it means to be a global citizen in the West, and what kinds of actions this presupposes. By looking at one site of production (the human rights advocacy campaign), through a modality (the visual) that has received little attention to date in global citizenship studies, I hope to provide readers with a framework to guide their own analyses and unpacking of the assumptions embedded at other sites and through other modalities. Bringing such an analysis to the fore will hopefully allow for a more accessible,
critical reading of the cultural texts that are embedded in our daily lives, and ultimately, a greater possibility for thinking global citizenship otherwise.
Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Christine Arnold. The images of the Amnesty International *Not Here But Now* campaign were provided by Amnesty International’s Chapter in Switzerland. They are the property of Amnesty International Switzerland and the Walker Agency in Switzerland, and have been reproduced here with the permission of both parties.
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Dedication

For all of the people who bravely share their stories with the world.
Figure 1: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)
Chapter One - Introduction

Background to the study

A story

I wish to begin by briefly recalling the story of Anton Schmidt. Schmidt’s name came into the public purview during the famed Eichmann trial in the wake of the Holocaust in 1961. He was a sergeant in the German Army, and was “in charge of a patrol in Poland that collected stray German soldiers who were cut off from their units” (Arendt, 1994, p. 209). During his post, he came across members of the Jewish underground, whom he ultimately helped by supplying them with forged papers and military trucks. It is said that he did not do this for money, but rather according to Schmidt in the last letter he wrote to his wife, "I have merely behaved as a human being" (Cohen, 2000). Schmidt is said to have continued in this fashion for five months, until he was caught and soon after, executed. In famous account of the Eichmann trial, Hannah Arendt recalls:

During the few minutes it took Kovner to tell of the help that had come from a German sergeant, a hush settled over the courtroom; it was as though the crowd had spontaneously decided to observe the usual two minutes of silence in honor of the man named Anton Schmidt. And in those two minutes, which were like a sudden burst of light in the midst of impenetrable, unfathomable darkness, a single thought stood out clearly, irrefutably, beyond question - how utterly different everything would be today in this courtroom, in Israel, in Germany, in all of Europe, and perhaps in all countries of the world, if only more such stories could have been told. (Arendt, 1994)
I begin here for I believe that Arendt raises a fundamental question about the ways in which we as human beings act in response to the suffering of others, and importantly, the conditions that support the disruption of the status quo. Arendt ruminates on the notion that "under conditions of terror, most people will comply but some people will not." What Schmidt’s story allows us to consider is the possibility of resistance to one of the most egregious systemic evils in known history, the Holocaust. And such resistance, at least in the stories we have been told about Schmidt, was not for political reasons, but rather, existential: for the shared fact of being human. In another letter to his wife in which he recounts the sight of mass murder and of children being beaten, he proclaims, “I could not think and had to help them” (Cohen, 2000). Schmidt’s story provides insight into the possibility of being differently in the face of unjust, totalizing systems that cause pain and suffering for so many.

While the context of Schmidt’s story is certainly extreme, I am personally interested in the modalities through which totalizing systems of power and domination take hold, and seek to understand why it is ostensibly so difficult (and indeed, rare) to disrupt them. Global injustice is produced and reproduced through myriad discourses, and this thesis looks closely at one discourse that, if not considered critically, reproduces the status quo of unjust global relations: global citizenship. I explore the ways in which this discourse has the potential to uphold a very specific and epistemically violent global imaginary, and inspired by Schmidt, consider the circumstances that facilitate its disruption.

My relationship to the topic

I came of age at a time when a commitment to global citizenship was increasingly evident at the secondary and postsecondary school levels. Through my own experience, growing
up in a privileged, predominantly white neighbourhood in the city of Toronto, I recall being repeatedly offered the narrative that I was “so lucky to have what I had,” and further, “that it was my responsibility to give back and help the less fortunate;” I was expected to become a good global citizen. While I do not necessarily disagree with such assertions on responsibility, the avenues offered to take up this responsibility constructed a world that was divided into “haves” and “have nots”. The narrative held that we, here in Canada (presented as a homogeneous, privileged nation-state) have so much, and that we¹ should do our part to “help” them, over (in an undefined, also grossly homogenized) there. In this narrative, the specificity of place was rendered irrelevant.

For many years, I accepted this narrative and enthusiastically participated in this system, volunteering my time to support initiatives both locally and abroad. I was determined to do my part to “change the world” and to make it a better place. My faith in the narrative I had been offered, however, began to unravel when I started to ask more critical questions. What did it mean to assume the position of the “helper”? What kinds of relationships did that presuppose and reproduce? What enabled this position of privilege in the first place? How was my own privilege directly related to the marginalization of others? How was I complicit in the suffering of others? Further, who was I to act upon others? In attempting to do good, was I not just reinscribing unjust power relations that were potentially the cause of the problem in the first place? Why were we attempting to “fix” challenges of global injustice with the same approaches that ostensibly created them? Audre Lorde’s (1984) words were fitting: why do we continue to use the master’s

¹ Throughout this thesis, I use the collective “we” to implicate myself in a collective of privileged Western actors who assume the role of global citizens. While the purpose of this work is to call into question the assumptions inherent in this subject position, the power of the discourse is such that I feel drawn into this collective identity whilst at the same time, questioning it.
tools to dismantle the master’s house (p. 110)? These questions ultimately led me to critically engage with the discourses of global citizenship and humanitarianism.

The problem with global citizenship

The discourse of “global citizenship” is in many ways expected to speak for its self. A discourse that circulates throughout educational institutions in Canada with increasing prevalence, it is rarely explicitly defined, problematized, or questioned. At UBC, the institution where I study, global citizens are referred to in the 2004-05 Annual Report as those who,

Are willing to think beyond boundaries of place, identity and category, and recognize all human beings as their equals while respecting humanity's inherent diversity. Within their own sphere of influence, global citizens seek to imagine and work towards a better world. (UBC, 2004/05)

Relying on notions of liberal humanism and assumptions of moral goodness, this definition of global citizenship could be classified as what Edelman (1988) refers to as a “condensation symbol,” that is, a catchall phrase that appears to stand for something good, is difficult to disagree with, and is thus rarely called into question.

Popular approaches to global citizenship education have been focused on what Heron (2007) calls “the helping imperative,” that is, the presumption that it is “our” role (as “white”, privileged people living in the West) to go and help the “Other” (an overwhelmingly undefined, homogenized Other that is produced as an object of the West’s desire). There is an operative assumption that the Western actor is always already capable of helping the Other, regardless of her/his personal capacities. The assumptions embedded in this discourse and practice closely follow the structure of ‘the civilizing mission’ of the colonial era, in which the ‘civilized
European travelled to ‘exotic’ places to ‘tame and civilize savages’ (see Said, 1979). As a result, the very identity of the Western actor is embedded in this self/Other relation, defining her/himself in opposition to an Other that is in need of her/his help (Said, 1979). The subject position of the global citizen is thus paradoxical: by occupying the role of the helper on the global stage, the global citizen can in fact play a crucial role in maintaining global inequalities by reinscribing unjust relations of power and oppression, relationships that contribute to the creation of such inequalities in the first place. Often failing to confront one’s complicity in the harms she/he wishes to ameliorate, Razack (2007) notes that in Canada, this version of global citizenship is supported by a national mythology that places us as “completely innocent, as a middle power and as nice Canadians (p. 390),” a mythology made possible by “a willful blindness about our collective history, [making us] unable to call up, for example, anything that might show us how we are implicated in the West’s power over the non-West” (p. 390).

While many in the international development field attempt to try and “fix” the problem of global injustice and inequality, Andreotti (2014) suggests that rather than trying to find a solution to such grandiose problems, a more generative focus would be on allowing ourselves to make new mistakes. This requires a conceptual shift, rethinking mistakes as a site of possibility, rather than as a site of failure. She notes that while many people have good intentions, relying on the systems that have created problems to try and fix them will only continue to yield similar results: reinscriptions of power for Western actors and the continued disenfranchisement of non-Western others.

This thesis grapples with the question of why we continue to make the same mistakes again and again, and then, what it would take to open ourselves to new mistakes. It asks what it would take to re-imagine relationships across time and space, to disrupt dominant systems of
power and domination, and ultimately, to imagine global citizenship otherwise. It is primarily a theoretical inquiry into the production of the subject position of the global citizen, attending to the paradoxes and contradictions that make it so difficult to imagine this subjectivity otherwise. While the discourse of global citizenship is produced in myriad spaces, I focus my discussion on one site of its production: the visual. To date, the role of the visual in the production of global citizenship discourse has been relatively unattended to in the academy. I believe it to be a necessary site for analysis as banal, everyday spaces play an important role in the production of subjectivity, a process Said (1979) refers to as banal Orientalism. To ground this discussion of the role of the visual in producing the subjectivity of the global citizen, I focus my attention specifically on a visual human rights advocacy campaign produced by Amnesty International in Switzerland in 2006, entitled Not Here But Now.

**Why this campaign?**

My decision to analyze this particular campaign is not embedded in a belief that it is representative of all human rights advocacy work, but rather, that it raises theoretical questions about the ways in which a global subjectivity is produced, and provides a means to consider some of the dilemmas and challenges that arise in the possibility of imagining global citizenship otherwise. Attention to the field of human rights advocacy is important as I argue that such advocacy work has been and continues to be critical in the production of a global imaginary that situates the Western actor as a helper of others or a dispenser of rights on the global stage, while in many cases failing to recognize her/his complicity in the creation of an unjust global order. I approach this campaign as part of a much larger machinery of global NGO and advocacy work that serves to maintain a very particular global imaginary, and contend that participation in this
kind of work is inherently political, though it is often represented in a depoliticized manner. This campaign allows me to explore some of the inherent contradictions in such work through a sympathetic critique.²

Further, the visual focus of the campaign is particularly important, as there is very little research in the field of global citizenship studies that considers the role of the visual in producing this subjectivity. One of the aims of this thesis is to develop a framework through which to approach images that are part of this production, drawing attention to the signs (Barthes, 1957) that produce certain assumptions about the Western actor on the global stage. I explore the limits of representation as a modality through which to disrupt the status quo when engaging with human suffering and consider alternative possibilities for re-imagining this engagement. As I will illustrate in the coming chapters, this campaign is particularly interesting because it represents a departure from traditional practices of representation in human rights advocacy campaigns and appears to be challenging traditional assumptions in this field. As such, it serves as an avenue to discuss the challenges of disrupting systems of power and domination, and facilitates an exploration of the ethical dilemmas that are arguably inherent in witnessing the suffering of others.

Research questions

Broadly, this thesis considers the role of the visual in producing the subjectivity of the global citizen in the West, specifically attending to three sets of questions:

(1) How do the visual and textual elements of this campaign produce the subjectivities of the viewer and the viewed?

² By this I mean that I do not mean for this critique to be taken as an attack on the work of Amnesty International, nor the folks who developed this campaign. That said, I believe it important to engage critically with such work in order to bring to the fore the seemingly banal ways that unjust systems are produced and often left unquestioned.
(2) What does this tell us about the limits of representation? What are the constraints of NGOs in terms of interrupting the grammar of the representations they are embedded in?

(3) How does this relate to wider questions and assumptions about global citizenship? Can it help us to imagine global citizenship otherwise?

Context

The world that we live in is increasingly characterized by the collapse of time and space, meaning that our lives are arguably more globally entangled than at any other point in history. This has dual implications for the way we engage with the suffering of distant others, and in turn, how we imagine ourselves as global citizens. First, the consumption of the suffering of distant others has become a fact of daily life in the West. Advancements in technology allow for increased and somewhat constant avenues through which to engage with this suffering, and violent imagery has become the norm in communications practices. As a result, it is necessary to ask questions about how this imagery produces the subjectivities of both those who are represented by, and those who consume this imagery, ultimately attending to the “grand narrative” (Lyotard, 1984) that is constructed and naturalized through it.

Second, a global economic system of neoliberal capitalism means that perhaps more than at any other point in history, we are all actively complicit in creating the conditions that cause human suffering. Globalized supply chains make inextricable links between many forms of consumerism and violence against the person. Thus the subject-position of the global citizen is inherently paradoxical: the global citizen is encouraged to actively take a stance against the human suffering that they are undoubtedly participating in inflicting. There is incredible power in upholding this paradox; by failing to call into question the conditions that create suffering in
the first place, exploitative relationships are naturalized and one is left to believe that their role in ameliorating this suffering is to offer their “help” and subscribe to notions of global citizenship. I explore this paradox through the lens of this campaign, considering the way it addresses (or not) the viewer’s complicity in the suffering of the viewed.

The overarching context of this work is situated in notions of Western liberalism that justify and naturalize international intervention. To uphold the “human rights” of others is increasingly a justification for Western intervention in countries throughout the world; however, it is necessary to think critically about the assumptions embedded in international intervention, and the worldviews that these assumptions privilege (Mutua, 2001). This is not to say that human rights are entirely for naught, but rather, to recognize the ways in which the human rights narrative is part of a wider colonial, civilizing narrative. This thesis asks how we might engage across time, space, and place in ways that embrace complexity, plurality, uncertainty, and seek to disrupt relationships that are exploitative in nature? It questions wherein lie the possibilities for spurring people into thinking critically about how their own lives factor into the suffering of others? Rather than seeking to simply try and “fix” these realities (which will always result in some kind of cultural privileging), it explores the possibility for thinking critically at a systemic level about living together across difference (V. d. O. Andreotti, Ahenakew, & Cooper, 2011).

Theoretical framework

My exploration of the assumptions embedded in global citizenship discourse is grounded in the work of three major theorists. The first is Donna Haraway (1988), whose concept of situated knowledge is central to notions of global citizenship, drawing attention to the fact that all knowledge is embedded in place. In my research, I am interested in the extent to which this
campaign addresses the idea that knowledge is situated. I argue that in order to disrupt unjust systems of power and domination, the global citizen must first recognize the context of power and privilege present in the helping relationship, working to reconstruct it as a relationship that acknowledges and dissects the ways in which power and privilege operate in the production of social problems.

Following Haraway, Edward Said’s (1979) concept of Orientalism provides an integral lens through which to consider the ways we relate to the suffering Other. Particularly, I am interested in the way the global citizen imagines her/himself in opposition to the Other, and how this impacts the possibility of thinking global citizenship otherwise. By relying on a victim/savior narrative (where the global citizen takes on the role of savior), the global citizen occupies a privileged space in which she/he is positioned as a holder of universal knowledge who can dispense rights, aid and education, veiled in the ostensible desire to feel and do good. It is important to deconstruct this space of privilege and to consider the context in which it was produced. I argue that the human rights advocacy campaign artificially separates the global citizen from what I conceptualize as the global victim, casting the world into two categories, those who can help, and those who must be helped. Within the context of this study, I consider the ways in which visual markers are used to construct differences between “us” and “them”, and to signify the subject position that one takes on in interacting with this visual human rights advocacy campaigns.

Finally, Jacques Rancière’s (Rancière, 2004) notions of consensus and dissensus frame the role of human rights advocacy organizations in the production of global citizens. According to Rancière:
Consensus means much more than the reasonable idea and practice of settling political conflicts by forms of negotiation and agreement, and by allotting to each party the best share compatible with the interests of other parties. It means the attempt to get rid of politics by ousting the surplus subjects and replacing them with real partners, social groups, identity groups, and so on. Correspondingly, conflicts are turned into problems that have to be sorted out by learned expertise and a negotiated adjustment of interests. Consensus means closing the spaces of dissensus by plugging the intervals and patching over the possible gaps between appearance and reality or law and fact. (p. 306)

This definition is relevant in two ways. First, consensus is depoliticizing. It attempts to reduce conflict between people (conflict that has the potential to be generative, though I do recognize that it may not always be), and replaces politicized actors advocating for their own needs and interests with institutions and experts who are supposedly more equipped to engage with one another in a decision-making capacity. By replacing dissenting individuals or groups of actors with experts, a more totalizing system of power is enacted that supports the status quo. In this context, the possibility for newness is very limited. Looking to the future, I want to think about the potential for the visual as a medium to produce a global citizen that operates in a state of dissensus, which according to Rancière, “is not a conflict of interests, opinions, or values; it is a division put in the “common sense”: a dispute about what is given, about the frame within which we see something as given” (p. 306). In consideration of the Not Here But Now campaign, I explore the ways in which the frame within which we see something as given (that is, the fact of human rights abuse, the way we think we should relate and react to it), are both upheld and disrupted. I use this to enter into a conversation about the possibility for the visual to help put a
wedge in the “common sense” and make space for a new way of relating to distant others. Returning to Andreotti’s (2006) notion of critical global citizenship, the idea that we need to be more open to making *new mistakes* is consistent with Rancière’s dissensus, suggesting the need to work *outside* of a common sense that is epistemically violent.

**Methodological approach**

This study takes a critical visual analytical approach (Rose, 2007) to the analysis of Amnesty International’s *Not Here But Now* campaign, which ran in 2006 through their chapter in Switzerland. The critical visual analytical approach attends to the campaign at three different sites, through multiple modalities. First, it considers the “site of production,” with particular attention to the history of Amnesty International as an organization and the ways that this history informs the interaction of the viewer with the images. Second, it addresses the site of the image in significant detail, considering the ideological underpinnings of the campaign through the framework of Thompson’s (1990) five modes of operation of ideology. Finally, it briefly considers the site of the audience, considering the location of the campaign and the way that space specifically could impact the interaction of the audience and the campaign.

**Significance of study**

Global citizenship education has drawn increasing attention from the academy and the community in recent years (V. Andreotti, 2006; Ibrahim, 2005; Jefferess, 2008; Rizvi, 2009); however, there is limited attention to the particular sites and modalities through which this subjectivity is formed. The goal of this paper is to provide a framework for analysis and thinking about how one comes to understand what it means to be a global citizen in the West, and what
kinds of actions this presupposes. By looking at one site of production (the human rights advocacy campaign), through a modality (the visual) that has only been marginally addressed in global citizenship studies, I hope to provide readers with a framework to guide their own analyses and unpacking of the assumptions embedded at other sites and through other modalities when we are thinking about what it means to be a global citizen. Bringing such an analysis to the fore will hopefully allow for a more accessible, critical reading of the cultural texts that are embedded in our daily lives, and ultimately, a greater possibility for thinking global citizenship otherwise.

Chapter structure

The first chapter has outlined the impetus for the study, defining the research questions, and laying out a theoretical framework. Chapter Two is a literature review that brings into conversation several areas of literature. I begin by framing the literature in the context of the grammar of modernity (Mignolo, 2007) and what Maldonado-Torres (2007) has termed “the coloniality of being”. This framework contextualizes the role of the global citizen in the modern teleological project (Hoofd, 2012), and ultimately provides insight into the reasons that it is so difficult to disrupt the system this discourse is embedded in. I then explore literature on cosmopolitanism and global citizenship, which I ultimately link to discussions of the visual and witnessing. Chapter Three outlines the methodology for the thesis in detail, beginning with my approach to reading the images in this campaign through what (Stern, 2012) terms a “hauntagogical” (pedagogical + haunted) reading. Working through this lens, my methods primarily include historical and critical visual analysis (Rose, 2006). Chapter Four is an analysis of the campaign in question, attending to Rose’s (2007) three sites where meaning is made, as
discussed above. Chapter Five discusses the implications of the analysis, addressing the
dilemmas that this campaign raises with respect to wider questions about the discourse of global
citizenship and the role of the visual in engaging with the suffering of distant others. It concludes
with a brief discussion of the ethical dilemmas inherent in witnessing (Oliver, 2004) the
suffering of distant others, and considers how the visual might help us to imagine these
relationships otherwise.
Figure 2: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)
Chapter Two – Literature Review

Modernity as the basis for global citizenship

There is a significant, yet small, body of scholarship that examines the relationship between ideals of global citizenship and the project of Western modernity (see for example Todd, 2012; Mignolo, 2000; Spivak, 2004; Biccum, 2007; Rizvi, 2009; Nash, 2008); this thesis draws upon and aims to extend this field of inquiry. The central argument is that to understand the global citizen as a subject, it is necessary to look to the history of modernity, and in turn, the production of the modern subject. Hegel (as discussed in Habermas, 1987) locates historical modernity in “three landmark events: the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the discovery of the New World.” He argues that this string of events can be characterized as “the moment in which the pre-global began to be re-articulated by the global” (cited in Mignolo, 2007, p. 467). While Schmitt (1952) argues that this moment was more of a “transition,” Mignolo (2007) asserts,

> The problem with the idea of ‘transition’ is that, once the new appears, the old vanishes out of the present, which is precisely the problem with the rhetoric of modernity for those who are not lucky enough to be in the space where time and history move forward. (p. 467)

Indeed, those who are not lucky enough to be in the space where time and history move forward are subject to “the dark side of modernity”: coloniality (Mignolo, 2007). Maldonado-Torres (2007) elaborates on this, arguing that what he calls the “coloniality of being” is constitutive of modernity itself:

> The project of colonizing America...became a model of power, as it were, or the very basis of what was then going to become modern identity, inescapably framed by world capitalism and a system of domination structured around the idea of race.
This model of power is at the heart of the modern experience. Modernity, usually considered to be a product of the European Renaissance or the European Enlightenment, has a darker side, which is constitutive of it. Modernity as a discourse and as a practice would not be possible without coloniality, and coloniality continues to be an inevitable outcome of modern discourses. (p. 244)

Thus, with modernity, two kinds of subjects emerged: the modern subject, and the subject who existed outside of the space where history moved forward. For Hegel, an important philosophical “principle of the modern world is freedom of subjectivity”: individualism, the right to criticism, autonomy or action (e.g., responsibility of what we do) and idealistic philosophy itself” (cited in Mignolo, 2007, p. 467) Those who are left in the shadows of the ‘dark side of modernity,’ thus become a project of the modern subject, who then works through the imposition of ‘salvation’ in attempts to ‘emancipate’ them.

Mignolo highlights the challenges of operating within this dark side, and the totalizing nature of what he calls “the grammar of modernity.” He discusses two possibilities for moving outside of this dark space: that of emancipation, and that of liberation, an act of de-colonizing. He notes that emancipation is a dangerous word insofar as it requires the impetus of the colonizer to take the initiative to emancipate. On the other hand, what he refers to as liberation is wrapped up in the project of de-colonizing, which he argues requires a process of de-linking. Mignolo asserts:

The target of epistemic de-colonization is the hidden complicity between the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality. For critical theory to correspond with decolonization, we need to shift the geography of knowledge and recast it (critical theory) within the frame of geo- and body politics of knowledge. Thus, the
first step in the grammar of decolonization could be cast, using an expression coming from the documents of the Universidad Intercultural de los Pueblos Indígenas del Ecuador, *learning to unlearn*.

I begin here for two reasons. First, the global citizen is made possible by the conditions of modernity. S/he is oriented toward the future, to the realization of a utopian horizon and is focused on the emancipation of the Other, the one who is cast into the darkness of coloniality. In the pages that follow, I play close attention to the ways in which this individualized modern subject acts upon the colonized Other as what Butler would refer to as a foreclosed object of desire, in the attempt and desire to emancipate her/him. It is within this context that liberal conceptions of cosmopolitanism and global citizenship have taken form (which I will speak to in the following section); what I want to think about, ultimately, is what it might look like to imagine a form of global citizenship that actively works to de-link from modernity, and in turn does not rely on or reproduce the coloniality of being by nature of its very existence.

The remainder of this literature review brings the fields of global citizenship education and visual culture into conversation with one another. It begins by tracing the roots of global citizenship discourse to the ideals of cosmopolitanism, and explores its evolution into what I argue has become a moral project of *emancipation* reserved for privileged transnational actors. I then turn my attention to the potentiality of the visual, and consider how representations of suffering others can operate both within and outside of the grammar of modernity, which Ahenakew et al (2014) argue,

Involves the inculcation and normalization of three particular desires. This refers to desires for: 1) modern teleologies (based on a seamless notion of progress as social engineering achieved through science and technology); 2) innocent heroic
protagonism (anthropocentric agency grounded on Cartesian subjectivities, i.e. being solely defined by “thinking”); and 3) totalizing forms of knowledge production (i.e. knowing/naming the world to control it). (p. 217)

Ultimately, I consider the ways in which representations of human suffering can serve to maintain or subvert the status quo.

**Cosmopolitanism and global citizenship: on the origins of the subject**

**Cosmopolitanism and the possibility of a universal humanism**

The roots of the notion of contemporary global citizenship are often argued to reside to some extent in cosmopolitanism (Calhoun, 2002; Dobson, 2006; Jefferess, 2008), the ideals of which traditionally “flourished as calls for unity among ancient Greek city-states” (Calhoun, 2002, p. 871). Today, cosmopolitanism signals the possibility of a global civil society (Mitrani, 2013), and in turn “formulations of world citizenship and the ideal of world governance” (Jefferess, 2008). While there are many articulations of cosmopolitanism, Pogge (1992) argues that the elements shared by all cosmopolitan positions are individualism, universality, and generality, expanded on by Pin-Fat (2013) as “any position in which human beings are the ‘ultimate unit of moral concern’ (individualism), are so equally (universality), and where their moral status extends beyond arbitrary factors such as national boundaries (generality)” (p. 244).

These articulations of cosmopolitanism have been subject to several critiques relevant to its serving as a foundation for the discourse of global citizenship. First, the very idea of universalism operates on an assumption of “universal agreement on moral values and practices globally” (Pin-Fat, p. 242). Given the non-existence of such universal values, the possibility of cosmopolitanism rests the on universalizing a “very specific Western, liberal, moral imaginary
in a way that replicates colonial capitalist logics of exploitation” (p. 242). Dhawan (2013) notes that the notion of liberal cosmopolitanism relies on the “specter of global capital…as the necessary precondition for the emergence of contemporary cosmopolitan sensibility” (p. 140). As discussed in the previous section, this notion of a “global” world came to be in the “transition” to modernity, which in turn left a large proportion of the population in its “dark side” It follows that cosmopolitanism thus “reflects an elite perspective on the world” (Calhoun, p. 874), an argument mirrored by Dhawan as she notes that not only does it allow the privileges of the global elite to remain intact, but it also effectively erases the “continuities between cosmopolitanism, neocolonialism, and economic globalization” (p. 140).

The critique that liberal cosmopolitanism reflects an elite perspective on the world is critical to destabilizing the pervasive arguments in favour of a cosmopolitanism built on the idea of common humanity. Dhawan questions the arguments in favour of the emancipatory potential of cosmopolitanism, such as those of Martha Nussbaum (1997) who argues that it “facilitates new alliances across state borders, regions, and even continents, thereby contesting patriotism and nationalism” (cited in Dhawan, 2013, p. 142), and that it provides a framework through which to “rethink our politics in a globalized world.” Nussbaum argues for a kind of humanism that calls on us to consider the intimate interconnections of our lives on a global scale concerning issues that range from “business to agriculture, from human rights to the relief of famine” (Nussbaum, 1997). However, the very possibility of emancipation, as Mignolo (2007) states, relies on the categorical differences between those who have the power to emancipate and those who must be emancipated. In a further exploration of arguments in favour of cosmopolitanism, Dhawan recounts the work of Ulrich Beck (2007), who draws attention to the fact that in a world that is increasingly interdependent, “we face common threats everywhere with respect to our
ecologies, finances, and security, so that any violation of rights in one part of the world is felt everywhere” (cited in Dhawan, p. 143). Beck asserts the need for a global civil society and institutions that can support it, and thus advocates for institutions such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Court as well as NGOs such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace.

While Nussbaum and Beck’s approaches aim to improve people’s lives and are thus laudable in their intent, their approaches fail to account for the disparity of vulnerability to global threats that people around the world experience, and further, the inherent imbalance between who has the agency to define viable action and what is “right” in such a system. Spivak (cited in Dhawan, p. 145) critiques this vision of cosmopolitanism calling it a shift from “the white man’s burden” to “the burden of the fittest” that positions the “unfit” as “unable either to help or to govern themselves” (p. 145). While new discourses of cosmopolitanism seek to shift to privilege local voice and disrupt a historically European, bourgeois, elite, and male practice, Dhawan questions “whether these vernacular cosmopolitanisms genuinely enable those who were previously exiled from the public sphere to be heard” (p. 146). Furthermore, this discourse is based on an assumption that there is a common humanity to be shared, and that it is possible to define such a humanity on equal terms.

Rather than subscribing to the possibility of a common shared humanity, Appiah (2006) provides a useful conception of cosmopolitanism that values human diversity and calls for a cosmopolitan subject who attempts to understand the connections and inter-relationships between people all over the planet. He defines cosmopolitanism not as a political, moral, or economic system, but rather as an ethical philosophy. The role of the individual in Appiah’s cosmopolitanism is to explore the possibility of “transforming ideologies and structures that
produce and maintain inequality and injustice” (cited in Jefferess, 2008, p. 28). Rizvi (2009) speaks to a possible configuration of such a cosmopolitanism, arguing:

This requires the development of a new approach around the old idea of cosmopolitanism, interpreting it not so much as a universal moral principle, nor as a prescription recommending a particular form of political configuration - nor indeed as a transnational life-style - but a mode of learning about, and ethically engaging with, new social formations. (p. 253)

These arguments echo the work of critical race theorist, Patricia Williams (1991), who argues that rather than ascribing to forms of universalism, a more useful place to start is by identifying differences among human beings, and to think critically about the ways these differences are constructed and realized through particular ideologies. The fact that such a configuration is still Cartesian in nature and privileges meaning/identity over relationships not mediated by language speaks to the difficulty of working outside or on the edges of the grammar of modernity, and leaves us with the question of how to learn about and ethically engage across difference in a way that doesn’t merely reproduce this grammar.

Global citizenship: an introduction

With the recognition in cosmopolitanism that we are indeed living in a more interconnected world, the idea of the global citizen as an actor who takes into account this interconnectedness, and their responsibility to this reality, has emerged. But what does it mean to be a global citizen? Who is global citizenship for? Is it a subjectivity reserved for the privileged elite, or is it equally accessible to all? Is it merely the subject of some idealized future system of global governance? Does the global subject have a responsibility to others around the world? Or
is it more of a technocratic subjectivity, one that is to be developed only to further the individual’s ability to be “successful” in a global context? These questions require a deconstruction of the discourse of global citizenship.

Recent studies on the production of global citizenship discourse have explored the way this idea is produced through educational institutions. For example, Mannion, Biesta, Priestley, and Ross (2011) consider the role of school curricula, specifically citing an example in the UK that “called for the curricula in schools and higher education to include a global dimension and educat[e] for global citizenship [in a way] that will prepare students for life in a global society and [to] work in a global economy” (p. 443). They argue that this response is encouraged by the activity of transnational organizations, and question its efficacy, referring to it as a “floating signifier that different discourses attempt to cover with meaning” (p. 443). They argue in their analysis that much of this curriculum is driven by the actions of transnational organizations, which according to Desforges (2004), “offer a version of global citizenship, which is highly circumscribed by their professional and institutional imperatives. (p. 549).” Beyond examining the context of the school, (Buckner & Russell, 2013; Ibrahim, 2005; Marshall, 2011; Standish, 2014), scholars are exploring the production of global citizenship discourse through the campaigns and practices of both International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and international volunteer agencies (Baillie Smith & Laurie, 2011; Desforges, 2004; Heron, 2007; Nash, 2008; Shukla, 2009; Witteborn, 2010). What emerges through this literature are three major schools of thought. One understands global citizenship as a moral, universalizing project, that places responsibility on the Western actor to help others in distant places. The second sees global citizenship in a more instrumental way, arguing that it is necessary to develop a global capacity in order to successfully navigate a world economic system that is increasingly global in
scope. A third school of thought calls for more critical approaches to global citizenship, questioning its possibility to play a role in challenging injustice and finding new ways for us to relate to each other in an increasingly interconnected world. It is this third approach that underscores my analysis of the role of human rights advocacy in global citizenship discourses. Particularly, I am interested in the idea of the moral obligation to be a ‘global citizen’, and understanding the genealogy of this.

**Global citizenship as a moral project**

Global citizenship as a moral project is “premised on the belief that agents have global responsibilities to help make a better world and that they are part of large-scale networks of concern” (Dower, 2003, vii). Departing from the cosmopolitan ideal of a global form of governance, this form of citizenship is less concerned with political subjectivity than it is with improving the material lives of others. Heron (2007) argues that this moral project is premised on “colonial continuities” that are in fact more concerned with the development of what she terms a bourgeois subjectivity and identity than a global one.

Heron uses the term “colonial continuity” to refer to “deeply racialized, interrelated constructs of thought [that] have circulated from the era of empire, and today remain integral to the discursive production of bourgeois identity” (2007, p. 7); she notes that while the expression of these constructs has changed over time, they are still recognizable in terms of their “original colonial manifestations and effects”. Heron defines these constructs as follows:

An integrated global awareness or “planetary consciousness,” that is, a world view that infers relations of comparison with the Other on a global scale, comparison in which the Other always comes off as somehow lacking or not quite
up to an unmarked standard. Operating alongside this sense of comparison and simultaneously authorized by it are a sense of entitlement and an obligation to intervene for the “betterment” of the Other wherever he or she resides. (p. 7)

These colonial constructs are embedded in the discourse of modernity, which Mignolo (2002, cited in Andreotti, Ahenakew, & Cooper, 2011, p. 22) argues was epistemologically “first Christian and then White” (p. 935). Andreotti et al recount Mignolo’s assertion that “Christianity and modernity occupy a double space of ‘epistemic privilege’” in which those who occupy such spaces are able to define what is universally good whilst deeming such definitions natural and objective:

Christianity and its aftermath, secular epistemology, had the privilege of being at the same time part of the totality enunciated and the universal place of enunciation while being able to make believe that the place of enunciation was a nonplace. Consequently, the order of the enunciated was the natural order of the world and the world, alas, was organized in dichotomous hierarchies. (Mignolo 2002, 935)

The assumption of a universal nature of humanity, combined with the power to define what such a humanity should be serves to justify “the violence and appropriation carried out in [colonialism’s] name” (Andreotti et al, p. 224). This definition of humanity was dichotomous in nature and built on “a self image of [Christian] Europeans as religious and moral, while non-Europeans were perceived to be nonreligious, immoral and in need of salvation” (p. 223). Such epistemological beliefs and understandings justified colonial encounters and civilizing missions, and seeps into the present through much of the present day international work done in the name of “development” and “global citizenship.”
Global citizenship follows this discourse of modernity and while it “represents the idea of universal inclusivity” (Jefferess, 2008, p. 27), the inclusivity it represents is structured upon the terms of reference of European imperialism. Jefferess argues, “The form of imperialism has changed: race discourse and the language of inferiority and dependence have been replaced by that of culture talk, nation-building, and global citizenship” (p. 28). To be a global citizen is thus not about the possibility of participating in a global form of governance (not to say that this would be an ideal state, either), but rather, to take up an ethical identity that aligns with the teleological project of European modernity (Hoofd, 2012). The global citizen occupies the privileged position that has participated in the project of modernity to his/her own benefit, and in turn takes on the moral responsibility of dispensing such a system to others. Global citizenship is therefore built on an “ethical distinction between those who help and those who are in need of being helped,” (Jefferess, 2008, p. 28) and “functions as an ethical stance or political philosophy that an individual adopts; it does not identify a particular political subjectivity”. When relations of solidarity are only built on this idea of moral responsibility, the political reality of the subject position is obfuscated; in turn the subjectivity produced through global citizenship discourse ultimately perpetuates systems of violence and domination while limiting the potential of imagination to subvert such systems (Dobson, 2006).

**Critical conceptions of global citizenship**

Global citizenship is a challenging discourse to deconstruct and analyze due to the fact that as a moral stance, it appears to exist with the express purpose of ameliorating the suffering of human beings. Indeed, there are actions taken in the name of global citizenship that do ease immediate suffering and I am by no means arguing here for the end of all forms of international
helping and humanitarianism. The issue, however, is that when a stance is accepted as uncontroversially “good”, it becomes difficult to address the potential harm that results from it (Janks, 2005). Jefferess (2008) argues that global citizenship as an “ethical framework for particular kind of action…serves to mask the structural violence of contemporary global relations” (p. 32).

Andreotti’s (2006) theorization of “soft vs. critical global citizenship” provides a helpful framework through which to consider a more critical conceptualization of the concept. Within this framework, Andreotti teases out some of the basic assumptions in these two different approaches to global citizenship education. On the “soft” side, she notes that the problem being addressed by the potential global citizen is often distilled to poverty and helplessness, that its purpose is to achieve “development, harmony, tolerance and equality,” that the role of the individual is to “support campaigns to change structures, donate time, expertise and resources” (p. 44), and that the goal of this form of education is to “empower individuals to act…according to what has been defined for them as a good life or ideal world.” On the other hand, a critical conception of global citizenship education addresses the problem of global inequality and injustice, and has a purpose of creating more equal grounds for dialogue and ensuring people have more autonomy to define development for themselves. The role of the individual is to “analyse [her/his] own position/context in changing structures, assumptions, identities, attitudes and power relations in their contexts (p. 43)”, while the overarching goal is to “empower individuals to reflect critically on the legacies and processes of their cultures, to imagine different futures and to take responsibility for decisions and actions.”

This critical approach to global citizenship draws on the work of both political theorist Andrew Dobson and postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak. Dobson (2006) argues that rather than
a global engagement founded on a moral obligation to others, our concern for others “whom we have never met and are never likely to meet” (Dobson as cited in Andreotti, 2007, p. 42), should be based on a “political obligation for doing justice stemming from a ‘recognition of complicity’ or ‘causal responsibility’ in transnational harm”. He cites the fact that the potential to take up a global subjectivity is unequal; that is, a global identity is not neutral, it is reserved for the powerful, ‘northern’ elite who determines what the interest of a global humanity in fact is, rather than representing a *universal* humanity or interest.

Andreotti draws on Spivak to call for attention to the epistemic violence of colonialism in current approaches to educating for global citizenship. Spivak argues that the “sanctioned ignorance” of this violence serves to both produce and naturalize a system that privileges the West and that in order to address this tendency, “educational interventions should emphasize “unlearning” and “learning to learn from below” (cited in Andreotti, 2007). By calling attention to issues of power, voice, and historicity, a critical conception of global citizenship engages actively with the complexity of the world. It recognizes contingency and the fact that global engagement will always take place in a space of uncertainty, where our claims to “knowledge” are circumscribed by the specificity of context and history. Ultimately, this conception of global citizenship recognizes that as privileged Western actors, we are all complicit in systems of global violence whether we mean to be or not, and in turn posits that the possibility of a more ethical form of global engagement hinges upon the recognition of one’s own role in inflicting transnational harm. It is only by recognizing and problematizing (and in turn, resisting or reimagining) our own participation in these systems that we can hope to imagine them beyond the “helping relationship” that is steeped in a colonial disposition.
In response to this, I ask how the visual as a modality can foster the development of a critical cosmopolitan consciousness, particularly, a critical conception of global citizenship. Beyond formal educational institutions – where an educator may intentionally create critical, reflexive spaces for their students to explore their own implication in global injustice and encourage them to re-think their role in the world – what are the possibilities for imagining a different kind of global subject (one that does not merely reproduce the violence of coloniality, in its adherence to the teleological project of modernity)? How do we learn to relate across difference, differently? I contend that the visual as an important role to play in this reimagining.

**Relating to the Other through visual means**

**The human as a visual subject**

Kelly Oliver (2004) argues, “How we conceive of ourselves determines how we conceive of others, and vice versa” (p. 2). She continues, asserting that there is an Intimate and necessary correspondence between how we conceive of others and how we treat them…[she argues that] how we conceive of ourselves as subjects and how we conceive of our subjectivity are at the foundation of what we believe about ourselves, the world, and other people, and we act accordingly. This is why in order to begin to understand domination and oppression it is imperative to investigate who we think we are and how we imagine others. (p. 3)

Mirzoeff (2005) has argued that we are primarily visual subjects, defined as “agents of sight”, and are in turn “objects of certain discourses of visuality” (p. 3). A globalized world is produced in large part through visual imagination, which “enables us to create an image on the basis of
something that is not accessible to the senses” (p. 4)”. Dussel (2009) argues that the result is a “global visual imaginary that [becomes] a central framework for making sense of the world, for attributing actions, for eliciting feelings of commitment or detachment” (p. 89).

W.J.T. Mitchell (2002) draws attention to the fact that visual culture is never static, that it is being produced and reproduced in every unique interaction. As such, he contends that visual culture must be conceptualized as a set of hypotheses “that need to be tested – for example, that vision is (as we say) a cultural construction, that it is learned and cultivated, not simply given by nature…[and] that it is deeply involved with human societies, with the ethics and politics, aesthetics and epistemology of seeing and being seen” (p. 166). Visual culture in this sense becomes about much more than a collection of images; rather, it is about what those images do, and how they interact with and produce individual subjectivities. Mirzoeff (2005) argues that images should not be analyzed as iconographic symbols, but rather as events, “that is, as the effects of a network in which subjects operate and which in turn conditions their freedom of action” (p.11). We must ask ourselves, then, what it is that images do in the context of producing the global subject (and further, what they have the potential to do). This question holds increased relevance if we accept Oliver’s assertion that how we conceive of our subjectivity cannot be separated from how we act in relation to others and the world.

**Visual citizenship**

I agree with Mirzoeff’s assertion that as humans, we are indeed primarily visual subjects, and in turn, that the globalized world is created in large part through imagination. Working from this assertion, Telesca (2013) offers a conceptualization of what she calls “visual citizenship”. She suggests that citizenship is “an effect of a managed identity and a means to exercise
sovereignty,” and argues that citizenship imagined audiovisually is “an active force in political life” (p. 339); in turn, Telesca aims to rethink the ways in which “audiovisual practices mediate political action and vice versa” (p. 339). Acknowledging the rich scholarship that explores the “extent to which representations of the disenfranchised render them agentless in the discourses of human rights, humanitarianism, and development” (p. 340; see for example Malkki, 2000), Telesca considers the way victims in these discourses are presented as “depoliticized, dehistoricized, infantilized, racialized, gendered, pictured en masse, without names, opinions, relatives, party affiliations, or pasts,” and seeks to move beyond descriptions, asking “what is at stake in these representations” (p. 340)? She argues for “a new notion of citizenship, not as a product or property distributed by the state, but as one that takes into account the entire population, both the possessed and dispossessed alike, forged as a relation of governance among various protagonists” (p. 341). How then might the visual contribute to a global imaginary that disrupts the depoliticization of representation, reclaiming the visual as a political space in which relations across difference are challenged and radically reimagined?

**What does the visual have to offer thinking about global citizenship?**

The visual plays an important role in imagining the global citizen as a moral actor, situating her/him as a benevolent hero, while situating the Other as one who is suffering and in need of help. The role of the global citizen thus becomes to ameliorate the suffering of the Other, feeding into what Teju Cole (2012) terms the “white-savior industrial complex,” which “is not about justice” but rather, “about having a big emotional experience that validates privilege.” This industrial complex is very much bound up in the representation of the suffering Other, and demands an exploration of the ethics of this practice of representation. I approach this section
with particular attention to the question of what space the visual can open up to offer less prescriptive possibilities for imagining our relationship to such suffering.

The representation of suffering: spectatorship, subjectivity, and witnessing

In *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), Susan Sontag debates the ethical dilemmas inherent in representing human suffering through the medium of photography. She argues that representations of suffering are necessary as it is only through seeing the suffering of others in an intimate fashion that the pain of others can be made “real” for those who are at a safe distance from it. Attending particularly to the photograph as a representational form, she contends that photographs themselves are neutral, and that it is context that compels viewers of photographs to take action. Writing in the context of war photography specifically, she argues that it is important not to assume that the only response to a photograph of atrocity should be a call for the end to the war as this would be “to dismiss politics” (p.8). Rather, she argues that such photographs can give rise to either a “call for peace or a cry for revenge”. While I agree with her reclamation of the photograph as holding political clout, I disagree with the notion that a photograph by itself could ever be neutral or represent some kind of objective truth. As I will show in my analysis later in this paper, a photograph is inherently political, and must be considered as such; to call a photograph neutral is to strip it of its power.

Chouliaraki (2010) considers the way the representation of suffering operates in the field of humanitarian communication, arguing that such representations have been used to invoke pity in viewers in hopes that they will be inspired to take action (donate, volunteer, etc.) to end it. While such campaigns do ostensibly garner increased attention and interest, they have been criticized (Jefferss, 2012; Mittelman & Neilson, 2011; Nash, 2008) for reproducing the systems
of injustice they seek to ameliorate by invoking what Chouliaraki terms a “politics of pity” (2010) and fixing the spectator in a privileged space. Ariella Azoulay (2012) problematizes the stability and privilege of the position of the spectator: writing in reference to the spectatorship of the suffering of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, she asks what a “civil discourse under regime-made disaster” could look like. Azoulay asserts, “The central right pertaining to the privileged segment of the population consists in the right to view disaster – to be its spectator” (p.1). She continues, “What is at stake is not the enjoyment that potentially attaches to the act of spectatorship, but the act itself, which is reserved for the privileged bearers of citizens’ rights who are able to observe the disaster from comparative safety, whereas those whom they observe belong to a different category of the governed, that is to say, people who can have disaster inflicted upon them and who can then be viewed subsisting in their state of disaster” (p. 2). This notion of spectatorship extends to the position of privilege occupied by the global citizen as the actor who can choose to maintain a safe distance from the dangers they are spectating.

The possibility of a dialogic subjectivity: challenging the objectification of the Other

Representations of suffering that continue to produce a spectator with an impetus to act upon an other perpetuate the development of a privileged subjectivity that is developed through a “logic of exclusion” (Oliver, 2004, p. 6, drawing on Butler’s foreclosed object of desire). Oliver problematizes contemporary theories of subjectivity that contend identity is formed through the exclusion of the other for the way they “define the other in terms of the subject” (Oliver, p. 6). She asks if it would be possible to “develop a theory of subjectivity by starting from the position of those othered within dominant culture,” and seeks to imagine the possibilities for dialogic subjectivity that is non-contestatory in nature, a conception of intersubjectivity that does not rely
on “the Hegelian warring struggle for recognition” (p. 6). She argues rather for an “ethics of witnessing” that challenges the objectification of others through oppression and subordination. Arguing that “objects are not subjects,” Oliver suggests that “the speaking subject is a subject by virtue of address-ability and response-ability” (p.7), virtues which she identifies as critical to the process of witnessing. Witnessing, Oliver argues, is the basis for all subjectivity: “Oppression and subordination work to destroy the possibility of witnessing and thereby undermine subjectivity” (p.7). By rendering persons agentless through depicting their suffering as an object of our desire to help, depictions of suffering run the risk of undermining the subjectivity of the suffering other and in turn, removing the possibility of including their voice in the discussion about their own trauma.

Oliver continues with a call for the need to reevaluate our notions of recognition, arguing that “victims of oppression, slavery, and torture are not merely seeking visibility and recognition, but they are also seeking witnesses to horrors beyond recognition” (p. 8). She argues that when recognition is imagined as something that must be “conferred on others by the dominant group, then it merely repeats the dynamic of hierarchies, privilege, and domination.” (p. 8) She addresses the fact that recognition is often demanded by oppressed groups, and identifies this as a symptom of the “pathology of oppression.” She claims, “It is not just that the injustices of oppression create the need for justice. More than this, the pathology of oppression creates the need in the oppressed to be recognized by their oppressors, the very people most likely not to recognize them” (p. 9).

This pathology of oppression that relies on the dominant group to ameliorate suffering is a familiar narrative in both the visual realm as well as in discourses of global citizenship in the West. These discourses are mutually reinforcing; visual culture is filled with images of suffering
others that (both implicitly and explicitly) encourage the privileged spectator to consider the possibility of acting upon the Other to address injustice, rather than acting with them to recognize our complicity in their harm. As such, the spectator is produced as a protagonistic actor upon whom the fate of the sufferer relies. The spectator is positioned as a dispenser of rights, and the amelioration of suffering and injustice ironically relies on the possibility that the spectator will actively work to subvert a system that privileges them. Nash (2008) has argued that initiatives built on such assumptions are doomed to fail due to a “structural deficit”, that is, to truly be successful they would require privileged actors to give up their privilege and power. A paradox emerges in that the possibility of being a spectator to suffering requires a certain amount of privilege, and thus the subversion of the system that has produced that privilege threatens the possibility of spectatorship. I argue that the notion of complicity ultimately destabilizes the subject position of the spectator, which ultimately has the potential to help us reimagine this subject position in a more ethical way.

What I want to consider in the pages that follow are two things. The first is to look specifically at the relationship of images of suffering to imaginations about global citizenship in the West. How do these inform each other and what kinds of imaginations do they produce? What do they assume the role of the global citizen to be and what kinds of possibilities exist within this framework? The second is to draw on some of the recent theorizations about the potential of visual culture to help imagine things differently, and to ask what this might offer to the study and practice of global citizenship. For the remainder of this section I explore the work of authors that have sought to think beyond representation in their engagement with suffering in order to shift a frame of reference in which the global citizen can operate.
Moving beyond representation: imagining global citizenship otherwise

Appreciating the approximate

As previously mentioned, Sontag (2003) has argued that the value of representing the suffering of the distant other is in the fact that such representations make the suffering of others “real,” creating potential for one to take action. Walter Benjamin, one of the most influential thinkers in defining the field of visual culture, argued that photographic representations of suffering should be accompanied by explanations (i.e. captions) so that photographs were not misinterpreted (2008). Benjamin was wary of becoming trapped in what he called “the approximate”; he argued that when a photograph remained in the approximate, it risked losing its potential to convey meaning and be used as an object of persuasion for its audience, and thus he cited it as a liability. To address this, Benjamin argued that indeed the caption might be the most important part of the photograph, asserting, “The image gains in profile through the verbal information conveyed in the caption; from the accompanying image the information gains persuasive power” (Benjamin, 2008). He questioned the practice of engaging with a photograph that is not accompanied by text, believing such an engagement precludes the possibility for action due to a lack of understanding.

Möller (2010) problematizes this position due to its constraining effects on interpretation; he argues that accompanying an image with text is an act of translation that ultimately serves to alter meaning. Drawing on MacDougall and Castaing-Taylor (1998), he notes that “pictures and writing produce two quite different accounts of existence” (cited in Möller p.121) and argues that this is ultimately an “[infringement] upon the autonomy of the visual by addressing it in terms other than its own, thus effectively marginalizing or suppressing the accounts of human existence produced by means of pictures” (p. 121). Möller argues that this accompaniment of pictures with
text is part of the colonial production of knowledge, as written descriptions limit “the seeable to a particular form of the sayable” (p. 121); that is, they are limited by the constraints of their languages thus are “blind (or inhospitable) to things outside them”. This blindness represents an imposition, “approaching subjects in terms and languages other than their own and thus necessarily misrepresenting them” (p. 121). Möller argues for what I term a return to the approximate, that is, the practice of “disrupting standard expectations regarding knowledge production (that this is so and not otherwise) without aiming to provide definitive answers on its own” (p. 122); contrary to Benjamin, he believes the approximate should be seen as an asset and not a liability.

Such a disruption is uncomfortable insofar as it makes simplistic approaches to complex issues extremely difficult. By returning to the approximate, Möller argues, “Images render difficult a simplistic approach to the concepts of understanding, evidence, and empathy and testify to, respect, and communicate to the viewers the irreducible uniqueness of everybody’s experience in extreme situations” (p. 122). Attention to the unique circumstances of each person’s individual situation invokes Primo Levi’s (1988) conceptualization of “grey zones of indistinction”: spaces that do not lend themselves to classification or simple moral judgment. To appreciate the approximate would fundamentally challenge the moral project of global citizenship, calling instead for an introspective encounter with the visual. When we look at something that is beyond our frame of reference, and that we do not immediately understand, there is the potential for the viewer to become a “participant witness” (Möller, p. 122), to think beyond the frame of the photograph to the conditions that made it possible, and perhaps to draw oneself into those conditions.
**Politicizing the encounter**

Edkins (2013) suggests the possibility of moving beyond representation by politicizing the encounter with the photograph. Discussing the portrait photograph, Edkins challenges Sontag’s arguments that the purpose of the photograph is to make the pain of others “real” and that the photograph should be thought of as “neutral.” Edkins argues rather that “photographs have a political impact because of the sort of object they are: they are, precisely, objects that resist an easy narrativization. The traumatic moment is not something outside normal narrative time but something that inhabits it and destabilizes it at its core. (p. 143).” Edkins takes up Sontag’s argument that while horrific photographs are so powerful and upsetting that they can move you to tears, this visceral response cannot distract you from asking questions, calling instead for a more existential encounter with the photograph. She suggests that perhaps asking questions is “a way of avoiding looking” and argues that the moment of feeling connection with the photograph is one that must be valued in and of itself.

With respect to the role of the visual in producing the global citizen, Edkins offers the possibility of engaging with others without a response precluded by the need to know about them; that is, a practice of engagement that attends to the existential response one has to the Other. Drawing on Linfield (2010), she argues that we have “lost the capacity to respond to photographs…and connect to other people through them” (cited in Edkins p. 148). Sidestepping our personal response, Rancière argues that we are no longer in the habit of making sense of our own responses, instead turning to experts and journalists to tell us what images mean and how we should makes sense of them. Rancière believes that this resorting to the beliefs of others is a political process, what he calls “systems of visibility” that condition (or disable) our response. Sharon Todd (2012) calls for a need to reclaim the existential response to the Other (and in turn,
a shift that focuses on *learning from* them rather than *learning about* them) in her arguments for the “ethical possibility of education”:

This possibility for nonviolent relation to the Other, can only surface when knowledge is not our aim. Instead, learning from as opposed to about allows us an engagement with difference across space and time, it focuses on the here and now of communication while gesturing toward the future and acknowledging the past; it allows for attentiveness to singularity and specificity within the plurality that is our social life. (p. 16)

The visual (and in particular the photograph), thus holds significant potential in the production of global citizenship discourse if we shift our attention to restore the meaning of the existential response to the Other, in turn subverting and resisting a hegemonic narrative. Specifically, Edkins argues that the photograph serves to disrupt linear temporality: by drawing attention to a specific moment in time, the photograph does not necessarily adhere to “narrative histor[ies] of cause and effect” (p. 149). She draws on Barthes (1981) to argue that

The contemporary social or symbolic order, a sovereign order, relies on a linear narrative temporality – for its notions of origin, history, nation, and progress – and an objectified, docile personhood: a bare life that has no political voice, that does not return the gaze, that elicits no compassion…the photograph threatens to reveal the lack or excess around which the symbolic or social order is structured, and which must be concealed for that order to hold. (p. 149)

She goes on to note that when survivors of traumatic events “refuse to narrate those events in terms of heroism and sacrifice for the nation state but insist on encircling the trauma, the order of sovereign power is challenged.” I want to consider how a similar argument can be made in the
study of global citizenship. That is, when globally engaged actors refuse to engage on the pretense of heroism, what kind of challenge and threat does this pose to the dominant order? How does this destabilize our systems of visibility? What might it offer with respect to imagining things differently?

**Thinking global citizenship differently**

Global citizenship is often associated with a responsibility for rather than to or with others (Jefferess, 2008). The hierarchical construction of this position has made it one that is premised on the notion of taking action in attempts to ameliorate the suffering of others. I conceptualize one of the fundamental tenets for the subjectivity of such a citizen as having a right to act upon others. Critical conceptions of global citizenship ask us to think about how we might act differently, that is, to consider our own implication in the suffering of others, to consider alternative action and to call into question the power relations that exist as they influence the potential for acting and condition who gets to act. There is still, however, an underlying assumption that the global citizen is one who takes action to make the world a better place. To close this section, I want to explore the meaning making practices of human rights advocacy organizations, and ultimately, to contest it with a counter-narrative framed by Mirzoeff’s (2011) concept of “the right to look”.

**Visualizing human rights advocacy**

Several scholars have studied the nature of visual images used by human rights and humanitarian advocacy groups such as Amnesty International and Oxfam (Dogra, 2006; Vestergaard, 2008; Chouliaraki, 2010; Tallon, 2012). These scholars have drawn attention to the
role such groups play in educating Western publics about issues such as global poverty and human rights violations in the “global south,” as well as their role in helping to define the field of development both in policy and practice. Nearly 20 years ago, Shaw (1996, cited in Dogra, 2006) asserted that such groups could be conceived of as the “new institutions of representation” and argued, “their representations, including visual imagery, thus, influence policies, practices and discourses of ‘development’ and connect cultures globally” (p. 161). Dogra argues that NGOs play an instrumental role in challenging hegemonic voices about the “third world”, and that visual imagery has an important role to play in in contesting meaning. She contends that NGOs must present information about the world that honours complexity and does not necessarily seek to paint a clear picture for viewers even if it may create confusion in audiences.

In attending to the visual practices of NGOs, a classification schema has emerged on the basis of the “positive” or “negative” nature of the images used within the scope of a campaign. Chouliaraki (2013) notes a shift from the use of “negative” images (often depicting racialized women and children as passive victims of things like famine and disease) to attract attention of supporters in the West, to a more “positive” imagery that shows children playing and smiling, though in conditions that look premodern and give the impression that all people living in the global south live in rural settings. She characterizes this shift in representation as “ironic spectatorship,” wherein communications practices now focus on the heroism of the donor rather than on the plight of the people they are apparently soliciting support to help.

While it is useful to focus critique on the content of the images used by human rights advocacy groups, what such critiques fail to engage with are the assumptions that are embedded in the use of these images in the first place. Thus, while we can take Dogra’s argument that an important function of human rights advocacy groups and their campaigns is to challenge
hegemony, the very foundation that these campaigns are built on, that we should take action in order to help distant others and defend ideas such as human rights, is problematic if not considered critically. This inherent goodness often ascribed to working to defend human rights can be dangerous as, in turn, the epistemic violence and hegemony of modernity is upheld and naturalized. As such, any action that is taken in the name of “human rights” is suddenly justifiable, regardless of its impact.

To engage critically with human rights advocacy work is a difficult task; after all, people working in this field are arguably working for a good cause and many people believe that doing something is better than doing nothing. Janks (2005) argues that it is especially necessary to critically engage with “texts that we agree with” because it is through marginal spaces that we may open what bell hooks calls “sites of radical possibility” (1990, p. 149). My study seeks to destabilize the assumption that the global citizen should always “take action” and my attention to the visual is motivated by a set of questions posed by Telesca (2013):

Is it possible to imagine an effective human rights campaign without recourse to the short causal chain that pits victim against victimizer, violated against violator? To what extent is the making of the short casual chain part of the very lifeblood of the human rights debate, as much as it is its curse? Is visual citizenship only a means to signal when human rights are denied to individuals or entire groups, or is it also productive to think of it in ways that critique the very assumptions embedded in human rights discourse and practice. (p. 343)
The right to look

To take up Telesca’s line of questioning about the role of visual citizenship in destabilizing the assumptions embedded in human rights discourse and practice, I turn to Nicholas Mirzoeff’s (2011) concept of “the right to look” as a foundation for a globally-engaged subjectivity. I want to preface this discussion by recognizing the problematic nature of framing this possibility of “looking” as a “right”, indeed, employing such language risks a reification of a hierarchically organized form of engaging across difference. That said, what I believe Mirzoeff is attempting to get at is the possibility for a mutual exchange, and a mutual invention of the self through one’s relationship with the Other. He claims:

The right to look is not about seeing. It begins at a personal level with the look into someone else’s eyes to express friendship, solidarity, or love. That look must be mutual, each person inventing the other, or it fails. As such, it is unrepresentable. The right to look claims autonomy, not individualism or voyeurism, but the claim to a political subjectivity and collectivity: “The right to look. The invention of the other.” (2012, p.1)

Mirzoeff develops this notion of the right to look in response to what he calls “visuality”, tracing its genealogy to an early 19th century term meaning “the visualization of history.” He claims that such a visualization must be imaginary as the possibility of visualizing history is too substantive for any one person to possibly engage in, and notes that the ability to assemble a visualization manifests the authority of the visualizer. Thus, the act of visualizing is reserved for the powerful, as a way to create and control both moral and political economies. For Mirzoeff, visualizing is a process that is never completely realized: “The authorizing of authority requires permanent renewal in order to win consent as the ‘normal,’ or everyday, because it is always already
contested. The autonomy claimed by the right to look is thus opposed by the authority of visuality” (p.2). It is this contestation of the power to visualize that makes the right to look a significant as a form of resistance. Mirzoeff argues that visuality has been integral throughout history in realizing the project of European modernity, specifically citing the examples of the Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, and present day global counterinsurgencies. He claims, “The authority of coloniality has consistently required visuality to supplement its deployment force. Visuality sutures authority to power and renders this association “natural” (2012, p. 6). I argue that visuality continues to be an important supplement to the project of European modernity, and that it is a critical component to the production of a world that requires a ‘heroic’ version of global citizenship.

The right to look offers an alternative to visuality that is premised on “the claim of the right to oneself as autonomy [which] further implies a claim of the right to the real” (p. 25). Mirzoeff goes on to define autonomy as per Autonomia (an Italian political organization, active in the 1970s) as “anti-hierarchic, anti-dialectic, anti-representative. It is not only a political project, it is a struggle for existence. Individuals are never autonomous, they depend on external recognition.” He argues that the right to look follows this, in that “my right to look depends on your recognition of me, and vice versa.” As such, the right to look is an attempt to challenge “the law that sustains visuality’s authority in order to justify its own sense of “right’”, and to “shape an autonomous realism that is not only outside of authority’s process but antagonistic to it”.

**Practices of looking in human rights advocacy**

Mirzoeff (2011) recalls a famous passage in Fanon’s *Black Skin White Masks*, that I believe articulates the difference between global citizenship as a right to act, and a new
conception of global citizenship that calls for a global subjectivity defined by mutual constitution of the selves: “By calling on humanity, on the belief in dignity, on love, on charity, it would be easy to prove, or to win the admission, that the black is the equal of the white. But my purpose is quite different: What I want to do is help the black man to free himself of the arsenal of complexes that has been developed by the colonial environment” (Fanon, 1968, p. 30). In response, Mirzoeff asserts, “The contest of visuality and countervisuality is not, then, a simple battle for the same field. One sought to maintain the “colonial environment” as it was, the other to visualize a different reality, modern but decolonized” (Mirzoeff, p. 14). I return to Mignolo’s call for an epistemic de-linking that I opened this chapter with, for it will only be through the disruption of the rhetoric of modernity and the grammar of coloniality that we will be able to radically reimagine our relationships across difference. The question then becomes: what role can the visual play in imagining and producing a globally engaged subjectivity that seeks to move beyond the maintenance of a colonial environment?
Figure 3: Amnesty International, *Not Here But Now* Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)
Chapter Three – Methodology

Object of inquiry

To explore the role of the visual in the production of global citizenship discourse, I have chosen to focus my attention on one visual human rights advocacy campaign. This campaign is of particular interest because it attempts to disrupt the status quo and is a notable departure from the more dominant practices of representation in human rights advocacy that feature the “Other” as an object of pity for the Western viewer; rather, it appears to be directly challenging the banal ways that social inequalities are legitimated in global geopolitical discourse. I use this campaign as a departure point from which to consider the ways in which visual practices that are embedded in our everyday spaces inform and produce the subjectivity of the global citizen. Further, I consider the potential for disruptive campaigns to help us to re-imagine unjust global relations to form the basis for a more ethical relationship to the suffering of others, that situates the implicatedness of the viewer at the forefront.

Drawing on this campaign as an example, I aim to achieve two things. The first is to call attention to the visual as an important site in the production of a certain kind of global subject, elucidating the tensions and dilemmas that arise even when such visual practices appear to challenge the status quo. The second is to provide a framework for analysis of visual practice that attends to the logic of coloniality and the grammar of modernity such practice is embedded in. My hope is that this framework can be applied more broadly, making a critical reading of such cultural texts more accessible. As previously mentioned, the campaign in question is Amnesty International’s 2006 Not Here But Now, implemented by their chapter in Switzerland. The campaign consisted of over 200 unique images superimposed on bus stop ads in cities throughout Switzerland. A selection of the images are included within this text for reference. My
analysis attends to the campaign as a whole and draws on individual images as examples. The images address issues of torture, child labour, child soldiers, and war. (See Figures 1-13)

**Methodological approach: a critical visual analysis**

My methodology is qualitative in nature and follows what Gillian Rose (2007) has termed a critical visual analytic approach. Below, I describe in some detail my framework for analysis at each of what Rose suggests are “sites at which the meanings of an image are made: the site(s) of the production of an image, the site of the image itself, and the site(s) where it is seen by various audiences” (p. 13). I then outline my overarching approach to the text, informed by Stern’s (2012) concept of a “hauntagogical” reading.

Each of the sites where meanings are made, Rose suggests, has three different aspects, or modalities, to consider. The first is the technological modality, the definition of which she borrows from Mirzoeff (1998, p. 1) as “any form of apparatus designed either to be looked at or to enhance natural vision, from oil paintings to television and the Internet.” This is concerned with questions such as how an image is made, what visual effects are used, and how it is transmitted, circulated, or displayed. The second is the compositional modality, which “refers to the specific material qualities of an image or visual object” (p.13). This modality considers questions such as what genre the work was created in, how the actual image is composed spatially, what viewing positions are offered to the audience, and its relation to other texts. (p. 30). Finally, the third is what she terms the social modality, a shorthand term she uses to refer to “the range of economic, social and political relations, institutions and practices that surround an image and through which it is seen and used” (p. 13). The questions considered in in this final modality include who/when/who for/why the image is produced, the visual meanings derived
from the image itself, as well as considerations of who interprets the image and how they do so. This thesis to some extent addresses all three of the sites delineated by Rose, and several of the modalities within each. Below, I speak briefly about the focus of my analysis and outline the methods I will employ to go about doing so.

**The site of production**

I begin with a discussion of the site of production, with specific attention to the social modality in this site. Given that the images in question were produced by Amnesty International, a widely recognized international human rights advocacy group, it is necessary to situate an analysis of their campaign in a wider understanding of the approach, values, and history of the group’s work. I begin with a brief historical background of Amnesty International, providing an understanding of how the organization came to be and their relationship to the global human rights movement. I also use this section to bring some of the major arguments in the global human rights debate to the fore, elucidating the tensions (particularly those that arise when human rights are taken as an ontologically stable assumption) inherent in this work. Analyzing the work of an internationally recognizable brand requires attention to the fact that a viewer’s engagement with the material will be informed by their understandings/assumptions of what the group stands for. As such, one must read both within and beyond the text in order to understand the sense the reader will make of the material. This section includes both primary research from Amnesty International’s web-based materials, as well as a review of academic literature on the history of the organization.
The site of the image

At the site of the image, I am primarily interested in elucidating the ideological underpinnings of this campaign. I employ a socio-semiological approach drawing on Hodge’s (1988) definition of ideology:

In contemporary capitalist societies as in most other social formations there are inequalities in the distribution of power and other goods. As a result there are divisions in the social fabric between rulers and ruled, exploiters and exploited: such societies exhibit characteristic structures of domination. In order to sustain these structures of domination the dominant groups attempt to represent the world in forms that reflect their own interests, the interests of their power. (p. 3)

Rose (2007) elaborates on this, suggesting “ideology is those representations that reflect the interests of power. In particular, ideology works to legitimate social inequalities, and it works at the level of our subjectivity” (p. 75). What is particularly interesting about this campaign is that at first interaction, it appears to be directly calling into question the ideology that banally legitimates social inequalities, challenging the status quo. My analysis is primarily concerned with this possibility, asking whether it is able to do so, or whether it simply reproduces an ideologically similar subject.

My analysis at the site of the image is framed by John Thompson’s (1984, 1990) five modes of operation of ideology, a framework he offers to help make sense of the way seemingly banal practices of representation can actually serve to further the ideological assumptions that reproduce the status quo. The modes outlined by Thompson include reification (where states of affairs are presented as natural; outside of time, space, and social processes), legitimation (where something is represented as legitimate and therefore worthy of support), dissimulation (where
relationships of domination are concealed, denied, obscured), unification (which establishes a
collective identity irrespective of difficulties and divisions), and fragmentation (which separates
people into different groups often to divide and rule).

A semiotic analysis pays attention to the signs, signifiers, and codes that operate in a text
to produce meaning and define what Stuart Hall has called a “preferred reading” (1974). Thus,
through this analysis I seek to identify the elements at play in this particular campaign to see how
it contributes to the production of meaning making in the wider discourse of global citizenship.
The global citizen is ostensibly a subject who acts to improve the state of affairs in the world
(and is concerned with those who live beyond the borders of their state), and seeks to ameliorate
the suffering of people around the world. Traditionally, this subject position has been represented
in visual media through the image of the benevolent Western helper. As mentioned in my
literature review, human rights and humanitarian appeals were characterized by the
representation of the agentless Other in need of help, waiting for the (usually white) Western
savior to liberate them from their suffering (a practice that notably took hold through appeals
during the famine in Ethiopia in the ‘80s). Chouliaraki (2013) has discussed the ideological
underpinnings of such representations at length, calling attention to the ways such images rely on
Western ideals of progress and emancipation, while suggesting that non-Western others need the
help of those in the West to reach their level of enlightenment.

This campaign is a notable departure from such practices of representation, appearing to
take a more critical approach and disrupt the status quo in terms of its practices of representation.
This is precisely what makes it so interesting. I want to consider the possibility for human rights
advocacy to depart from the aforementioned dominant narrative, to assess its potential to help us
imagine a global citizenship otherwise. In so doing, I aim to bring about some of the
contradictions and paradoxes embedded in the field of human rights advocacy specifically, and
global citizenship discourse more broadly. These paradoxes begin at the site of the image, and I
believe attention to the ideological underpinnings in each allows us to unpack their disruptive
potential.

**The site of the audience**

The final site Rose outlines with respect to the analysis of visual material is that of the
audience, seeking to understand the ways visual material is interpreted and experienced by its
audiences. Given that this campaign took place in 2006, I am unfortunately unable to speak to
people as they interact with it. That said, I believe the context of the campaign to be significant,
taking place as it did in Switzerland, and thus I briefly discuss the significant of this location to
such a campaign.

**A hauntagogical reading**

The photograph and the viewer come into their relationship with each other as
incomplete entities. The photograph is limited in what it can represent, and the viewer
can’t ever fully account for the social fields that produce the identities, cultures, and
languages that she emerges from. The subject is incomplete and in a constant state of
emergence from social fields or what Mouffe calls the “constitutive outside”. (Stern,
2012)

My reading of the images in this campaign takes into account the wider relational context
in which they were produced, and is specifically framed by what Stern (2012, p. 177) defines as
a “hauntalogical approach (haunting + pedagogical): to viewing photographs. This approach
“engages the images not for what is visible in the frame, but as products of historical, linguistic, cultural, economic, and political spheres – what I refer to as the presently-absent or social fields – that remain spectral.” He goes on to argue, “what is made optically present in a photograph is always-already constituted by absences, by social fields, that are not captured by the apparatus, but are like presently-absent ghosts haunting it”. Drawing on art historian Graham Clarke’s (cited in Stern, 2012) assertion that photographs are “far from being a mirror image of the world,” but are rather a “complex interplay between presence and absence,” I consider the way this interplay can be used to deconstruct and complicate the narrative that an image offers. In the context of the Not Here But Now campaign, I attend to the different narratives that surface surrounding the images when absences are or are not read-in. Stern argues further that “the feeling of being haunted is precisely an emergent moment through which a viewer can cultivate a certain kind of relational understanding that can lead to ways of thinking about politics and ethics” (p. 178). This relational understanding is critical to the possibility of an ethical relationship with images, and thus an ethical viewing practice; as John Berger (1977) contends: “we never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves” (p. 9). To ethically engage with the suffering of others, then, we must read ourselves into the practice of viewing, and consider it relationally. That is, we cannot view the suffering of others as something that is outside of ourselves, nor as something that we have no responsibility for or to. We must begin by interrogating our own role in creating the events we are witnessing. This requires a perhaps more uncomfortable engagement with our own complicity in the suffering of others, which arises when we read an image precisely for what is absent in it, or what it is haunted by. My analysis of this campaign attends, therefore, to both what is within the frame of the image, and to its haunting.
Figure 4: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)
Chapter Four - Analysis of the *Not Here But Now* Campaign

**Overview**

As previously discussed, Amnesty International’s *Not Here But Now* campaign was a series of 200 images developed in 2006 by their chapter in Switzerland. It features real photographs of human rights violations superimposed on backdrops that are made to blend in with the surrounding cityscape, providing the illusion that the events are taking place in the immediate space. The campaign departs from traditional modes of representation in humanitarian communication, and appears to attempt to disrupt common time/space assumptions about human rights violations. Rather than work through each image in detail, my analysis is cast more broadly on the aspects of the campaign that run throughout all of the images. There are times where I draw attention to one specific image; however, I attribute greater significance to the fabric of the campaign as a whole than its component parts. I begin my analysis at the site of production.

**The site of production: Amnesty International and the global human rights movement**

When a viewer comes into contact with this campaign, their knowledge (or lack thereof) of AI’s work will heavily influence their process of meaning-making; therefore, to understand the campaign, it is necessary to situate it in the wider context of the work of Amnesty International, a globally recognizable brand. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the site of production is what Gillian Rose (2007) calls the “social modality”. That is, “the range of economic, social and political relations, institutions and practices that surround an image and through which it is seen and used” (p.13). To consider this effectively, however, requires a further step back and broadening of scope to consider the wider landscape in which AI has come
to be such an important actor on the global stage: the global human rights movement. While AI purports not to have come into existence as a result of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the two movements have coincided and become entangled with one another in the view of the public.

The global human rights movement

The roots of the global human rights movement reside in the wake of WWII, with the development of the UN’s “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (UDHR). After this war, the international community vowed to never again allow atrocities of such magnitude to happen, and adopted a range of measures to ensure this, including the creation of the United Nations (UN). The UDHR was developed as a complement to the UN Charter as a “road map to guarantee the rights of every individual everywhere” (United Nations, Accessed 2015). It was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. At the level of global governance, the UDHR is complemented by several functions meant to realize the rights that are laid out in the declaration. These include the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Human Rights Council, and several Charter- and Treaty-based bodies.

While universal human rights are a sound idea in principle, their realization has been much more complicated in practice. As such, they have been subject to criticism, which often posits the danger that the discourse of human rights can be used to justify international interventions that further relationships benefiting powerful international actors at the expense of others. Some argue that it was the context under which these ‘universal rights’ were developed that is the problem. For example, Makau Mutua (2001) argues that the discourse of human rights is Eurocentric, arrogant, and colonial in nature: “The corpus falls within the historical continuum
of the Eurocentric colonial project, in which actors are cast into superior and subordinate positions” (p. 205). Because of this, he claims that its “basic claim of universality is undermined” (p. 205). Mutua asserts, “a historical understanding of the struggle for human dignity should locate the impetus of a universal conception of human rights in those societies subjected to European tyranny and imperialism” (p. 205), and notes that the voices of non-Western activists are very rarely heard in the movement. Finally, he argues that the movement “rejects the cross-contamination of cultures” instead relying on “the transformation by Western cultures of non-Western cultures into a Eurocentric prototype” (p. 205). These Eurocentric beginnings continue to manifest in assumptions about human rights violations in the present day: Western nations decide what counts as a human rights violation on the global stage, and when it is necessary to take action to stop it. The problem is not that action is taken in the name of human rights, but rather that there is an active choice about when and when not to take action, and this choice is political. While the Declaration appears to protect all people equally, in practice, some bodies are privileged and warrant international response, while others simply do not.

Amnesty International

“There is something powerfully attractive in being an organization of record, in witnessing. In saying: This person lived.” (Hopgood, 2006, p. 233)

Amnesty International positions itself as “a global movement of more than 7 million people who campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all” (amnesty.org). Its vision is “for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.” AI started in 1961 when a British lawyer by the name of Peter Benenson learned of the imprisonment of two Portuguese students
for raising a toast to freedom (Amnesty International, Accessed 2015). He published an article in the Observer newspaper entitled, “The Forgotten Prisoners” and subsequently launched a worldwide campaign, “Appeal for Amnesty 1961”. Over the next decade, AI would grow tremendously; by 1970, the organization boasted 850 groups in 27 countries, and claimed to be responsible for the release of 520 prisoners in that year alone. Throughout the 1970s, AI successfully campaigned to the UN to adopt a Declaration on Torture, upon which they began a worldwide campaign against torture. Throughout the 1980s and 90s, AI campaigned against the death penalty, political killings and disappearances, racism, torture, Apartheid, as well as campaigning in favour of women’s and refugee rights. It also advocated for the development of a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC), and launched its first educational resource, “Teaching and Learning about Human Rights”. Over the past 15 years, AI has “change[d] its Statute to incorporate economic, social and cultural rights, thus committing itself to advance both the universality and indivisibility of all human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (Amnesty International, Accessed 2015). While it has continued to campaign against torture and political prisoners, it has also started giving attention to issues such as the death penalty, freedom of expression, reproductive rights, international justice and stopping corporate abuse. It has been argued that AI pioneered many of the tactics that we now take for granted with respect to the role of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), and that its research and monitoring activities, combined with its public membership, “legitimated its efforts to influence the creation of norms through the UN” (Clark, 2010, p. 9).

Amnesty’s present and future, however, are not without contestation. In Hopgood’s (2006) account of his year of ethnographic research inside AI’s headquarters in London, he found an organization split between a group of people highly committed to the organization’s
past and roots (whom he refers to as the “keepers of the flame”) and a group of people interested in leveraging the organization’s brand in the name of social change, and who were concerned with an increasingly competitive market and a need to survive in the context of neo-liberal globalization (whom he refers to as the ‘reformers’). This tension was at the very heart of debates of how Amnesty could and should move forward with their work. Interestingly, this dilemma is also at the very heart of the dilemma of witnessing, as it relates to global citizenship.

Amnesty was founded to bear witness to prisoners of conscience around the world. The work of the organization was not meant to be political, rather it was more concerned with morality, a concern that has ultimately led to the organization taking on a position of moral authority on the global stage. One of the original members of the International Secretariat (IS) for the organization in London recalls,

For me, what was special about it was what it purported to try and deliver. Which was objective information about individuals in particular parlous situations vis a vis their governments. That it was accurate, it was careful, it was not grinding political axes. It was providing the information that others could grind political axes with if they wanted to. That’s fine. But that it was just simply a voice of cool, calm documentation to prevent history being written by the victors. (Hopgood, p. 14)

This idea of objectivity has been central to building a sense of moral capital for the organization. Hopgood notes that classically, moral authority is enhanced when “the speaker does not “possess marks of belonging (he or she is seen as an honest broker who has no interest and therefore acts morally)” (p. 14); on the other side of the equation, he argues, is that political authority is only possible when a person does have marks of belonging. According to this logic, political and moral authority cannot possibly coincide with one another; in 1961, when the organization was
charting a trajectory, it was ultimately moral authority that prevailed as a priority. Hopgood argues that it has been the accumulation and protection of moral authority that has been Amnesty’s main achievement.

The preservation of this moral authority has driven the priorities of the organization for a great deal of its history; in the past several years, however, Hopgood notes, “As new members and staff have joined, established AI culture has become more porous to the society around it. Amnesty’s detached identity has been destabilized, its walls breached by those as concerned about the human rights of women, minorities, the poor, and nonheterosexuals in their own societies as about POCs. These reformers seek to use stored authority for more openly “political” ends, in other words, wanting Amnesty to be a sentinel no longer but a player.” (p. 11) The idea of drawing on stores of moral authority to use for political ends is a strong departure from Amnesty’s beginnings as an organization of witnessing. The core principles of the organization have shifted from the belief that “what’s right is right” to an attempt to answer the question “what can we do for whom?” -

I wish to call into question the possibility that Amnesty’s work has ever been truly objective in nature, which brings about a bigger question about the nature of witnessing. That is, is the act of witnessing ever one that is void of politics? To some extent, is it not always a political act to witness and survive an act of violence? Levi (1988), in reflecting on his experience as a Holocaust survivor, explains that the very possibility of bearing witness suggests some degree of complicity; that by surviving, and not being of the group that has been killed, the witness holds some degree of responsibility to and for the suffering of others. I do not necessarily take issue with the fact that Amnesty founded itself on the basis of witnessing, but rather, that they represent this as a depoliticized act. Wilson (1997), in a chapter discussing the
representation of human rights violations, calls into question the supposed objectivity of Amnesty’s reporting, and calls for context of the conflicts that surround them, particularly in campaigns that rely on images. He also issues a wider question to “the powerful representational claims articulated within human rights discourses,” calling for a need “to drag them down from the rarefied epistemological and moral high ground, and include them in more sociological debates about the interpretation, understanding and explanation of empirical evidence and the limits of representation.” In the case of this campaign, the very tension of AI’s past and future is crystallized in the accompaniment of images of human rights abuses with the text “It’s not happening here, but it is happening now.” That is, the more traditional act of witnessing is accompanied by what I argue is an explicitly political statement. The implications of this will be addressed further in my discussion of the site of the image.

**Technological modality**

Beyond the social modality, Rose calls attention to both the technological and visual modalities, which I will briefly address before moving on to an analysis at the site of the image. With respect to the technological modality, the most significant factor to take into account is the fact that it is a visual campaign. The visual as a medium holds significance as a mode of knowledge production and translation insofar as it has traditionally been thought of as a form of representation imbued with objective truth, that is, the photograph has long been seen as an honest representation of what is there, and attributes significance to what is held in the image itself. Azoulay (2012) argues for a more critical engagement with the photograph, calling into question its assumed ontological stability and the depoliticized way in which it is often read. Instead, she argues that the very act of spectatorship of a photograph that depicts suffering is
always a privileged act, not insofar as it is enjoyable, but rather that the possibility of taking up the position of the spectator is one that is not available to all. The privilege inherent to this act is a political one, and thus the act of witnessing suffering depicted through visual means must be considered a political act. As it relates to global citizenship, it is the global citizen that is positioned to consume such depictions of suffering and to in turn act to ameliorate them. This ability to consume the suffering of others and to make an active decision about whether or not to act on the knowledge must also be conceived of as a political act. The photograph, then, must be reconceived of with attention to both the politicized space it occupies as a representational medium, and also for attention to that which lies beyond its frame. Rather than attributing an objective truth to visual representations of suffering, Azoulay calls for attention to that which has been excluded from the content of the photograph, and that has ultimately led to the conditions that allow for the event in the photograph to both take place and be captured. Within this campaign, the representation of human rights violations with no allusion to the contextual factors that caused or allowed for the incident to take place, is consistent with Amnesty’s approach to attempting to witness in an objective manner, resting on assumptions of the photograph as a depoliticized object with ontological stability. When we consider this with resepct to the role of the visual in mobilizing the subjectivity of the global citizen, it is not surprising that global citizenship has come to rely on a groundwork of morality, rather than attending to the political nature of this subjectivity. This depoliticization is one of the primary factors that ultimately leads to the inefficacy of the global citizen as an actor that challenges the status quo, crytallizing the roles in the global imaginary of who is situated as helpers and who is considered able to help.
**Compositional modality**

Compositionally, the campaign furthers the depoliticization of the photographs by actively decontextualizing them and embedding them in the everyday experience of the viewers. The images are of actual human rights violations superimposed on a background that is made to look like it is part of the immediate space. There are two aspects of this approach that warrant discussion. First, this embedding of the images in the everyday experience of viewers could actually be read as a political act, bringing the suffering of others into the everyday of people who are likely in some form complicit in their suffering, and who have potentially been able to keep this suffering out of mind as they move through the world on a daily basis. To this end, such images could serve as what O’Sullivan calls an “object of encounter” (2006); that is, the image interrupts the common sense of the viewer and their expectations, moving them to thought. This departure from expectations in the everyday has the potential to be generative and move the viewer to a space in which they think through their relationship and responsibility to the suffering other. Such disruptions are ultimately necessary in the reconfiguration of relationships of power and domination. That said, the embedding of these images in the immediate space of viewers, accompanied by the text “It’s not happening here, but it is happening now”, elicits a different kind of relationship to the photograph, denying the complicity of the viewer and rather offering them a voyeuristic viewing relationship with the representation. By allowing the images to speak for themselves, devoid of context, they promote the viewer to engage in what Haraway (1988) has termed the “god trick”, that is, the ability to see everything from nowhere. Arguing that an objective perspective is in fact impossible to achieve, Haraway advocates that we should view with attention to “situated knowledge”, that is, to recognize the ways our perspectives have been developed and influenced, and the way that informs our
processes for making meaning in the world. She argues that this perspective “allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see” (Haraway, 1988, p. 583). While it could be argued, as per Möller (2010), that the provision of context would interrupt the potential of the photograph to speak for itself, I believe that in the context of the construction of the particular campaign, the absence of this context serves an objectifying function to those who are represented.

The site of the image

At the site of the image, I draw on all three modalities to elucidate the ideological underpinnings of this campaign; to do this, I attend to the signs, signifiers, and codes that produce meaning in the context of Hall’s (1974) “preferred reading”, and that mobilize particular subjectivities. My aim here is to think critically about the impacts – both intended and unintended – of such campaigns; it is not meant to serve as a criticism of the organization as a whole nor for the people who are behind its creation. I frame this through John Thompson’s (1984, 1990) five modes of operation of ideology, which include reification, legitimation, dissimulation, unification, and fragmentation. Through this framework, my discussion spans all three of the social, compositional, and technological modalities.
Figure 5: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)

Figure 6: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)

Figure 7: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)

Figure 8: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)
Figure 9: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)

Figure 10: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)

Figure 11: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)

Figure 12: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Thompson’s modes of operation of ideology</th>
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<td>States of affairs presented as natural,</td>
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<td>that is associated with AI’s</td>
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<td>Relationships of domination are</td>
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<td><strong>Unification</strong></td>
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<td>collective identity irrespective of</td>
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<td>of women and children, perhaps</td>
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<td>appealing to a common sensibility that these groups are naturally innocent and in need of protection.</td>
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<td>Separates people into different groups</td>
<td><strong>Fragmentation</strong></td>
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<td>often to divide and rule.</td>
<td>The text in the image, that this is “not happening here but is happening now” assumes a time/space divide between the viewer and the viewed. By using a temporal signifier, it relegates the viewed to a time in</td>
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Table 1: *Thompson’s modes of operation of ideology applied to AI’s Not Here But Now campaign.*
the past, assuming a less modern, less civilized subject. We who are viewing, are privileged with a more modern subjectivity than the present-day Other. The subjects whose faces we see are all racialized people, while those whose skin colour is unclear are not directly interacting with the camera.

Reification

For Thompson, *reification* is the process of presenting a state of affairs as natural, as outside of time and space. This campaign is built on premises of de-contextualization/re-contextualization and dis-location/re-location. If you were to only attend to the visual images of the campaign, they are effectively outside of time and space. This rupture is in one sense what makes the campaign so effective. The images serve as “objects of encounter,” (O’Sullivan, 2010) bringing the viewer to thought as they interact with them, and disrupting what they expect to see and what is part of their usual surroundings. Considered from the technological modality, this decision to embed photographs in the everyday landscape is significant. It brings into the consciousness of the viewer an event in an immediate way that confronts them and forces them to make a choice about how to proceed. The potential responses are multiple. Perhaps the viewer is familiar with the kind of images that are being displayed, and it is the re-location of the images that causes pause. Perhaps images of torture such as these are not images they have been exposed to before or spent much time thinking about, and as such, they are jarred by the images themselves. What is significant is that the images cause this moment of pause, and the viewer must then decide how to proceed. They may choose to forget about it and move on, they may choose to try to learn more about the image they’ve seen, or they may just let it sit with them.
Regardless of how the viewer proceeds, this act of re-locating images of suffering in the immediate space serves a disruptive purpose that can serve to foster dissensus (Rancière, 2004). It puts a wedge in the common sense, prompting a recognition in the viewer that things are not how they should be, and can further move the viewer to question why it is that the viewer assumes things should not be this way. That is, why should such suffering only happen elsewhere, and what is the role of the viewer in that suffering?

Interestingly, while the images themselves appear to exist beyond time and space, they are accompanied by text that locates them temporally in the present but elsewhere. The text on all of the images reads: “It’s not happening here, but it is happening now.” The implicit message within this text is that while such grotesque violations against the person cannot possibly happen in this immediate space, they can happen elsewhere. This statement invokes Said’s (1979) notion of Orientalism, that is, defining one place in opposition to an Other. The people represented in these images are not the same as us by virtue of the fact that what is happening to them is occurring beyond this space. It is not happening here. Thus, while the images are disruptive by nature of their being embedded in the immediate space, they reaffirm a fundamental difference between “us” and “them”. The viewer is able to define her/his space by virtue of the fact that this kind of thing does not happen there. This textual element effectively allows the viewer to absolve her/himself of responsibility for what is happening in the image, casting it into a space of Otherness, whilst at the same time removing the impetus for the viewer to address the human rights violations that may very well be taking place in their place and space (for example, in Zurich).

The decontextualization of the images is significant insofar as it removes the historical and social context from the story of the image. What is at stake here is merely the act of
suffering, rather than what leads to the act. To a degree, this is not surprising given AI’s approach to witnessing as an objective practice. Yet, I wish to delve further and take up Oliver’s suggestion that a central aspect of witnessing is bearing witness to that which cannot be seen. Thus, it is the circumstances that facilitate the moment captured in the photograph that are important, not necessarily what is in the photograph itself. By simply focusing on a discrete moment in which a violation is taking place, the possibility to ethically witness the event, to respond to it, and to address it (Oliver, 2004), are greatly compromised. Thus, rather than a dissensual moment that can provoke a new way of thinking or being in the world, the campaign reifies assumptions that human rights violations happen in Other, less civilized spaces than here.

Legitimation

Each of the images is branded with the Amnesty International logo and includes the text “amnesty international” beside the text, “It’s not happening here but it is happening now”. Thus, from the perspective of Rose’s social modality, the inclusion of the organization’s logo adds legitimacy to the images of human rights abuses in the campaign; drawing on its history and position as an organization of objective witnessing. The assumption of neutrality of Amnesty International creates a situation in which the images are assumed to be read as neutral, rather than an explicitly political statement. As a globally recognizable brand, there is a strong chance that the viewer will have some knowledge of Amnesty International as an organization that seeks to elucidate human rights abuses around the world and to work to stop them. The AI branding is significant in considering the subjectivity that is mobilized in the viewer. The notion that the witnessing of suffering could ever be an apolitical act is similar to and perhaps informs the subjectivity of the global citizen whose intent may also be to act apolitically. I argue that it is
necessary to reconceptualize such acts as political if we are to imagine an ethical global citizen. Just as I argue it is necessary to look beyond the frame of a photograph to attend to the circumstances that facilitated the captured moment, it is equally necessary for the global citizen to attend to the circumstances that facilitate instances of human suffering that they seek to ameliorate. Without attention to this, the global citizen is at risk of merely legitimating the status quo and further reifying global inequality, rather than taking meaningful action to address it.

**Dissimulation**

Thompson identifies *dissimulation* as a process of concealing, denying, or obscuring relationships of domination. The campaign makes use of the technological modality to perform this act of obfuscation. Again, the decision to embed the images in everyday space is significant here. The presence of the images in immediate space performs the social act of appealing to a common sense of humanity. There is a sense that *we are all on the same page here*, we are subject to a *similar set of experiences*, and we share a *common sense of humanity*. This extends to a common sense of *vulnerability* as well. In reality, it is much less likely that a common passerby, consuming these images in Switzerland, is vulnerable to violence and suffering in the same way as the people pictured in the images.

Perhaps more significant, however, is the social aspect of dissimulation, in that the viewer’s complicity in the depicted act is disregarded in the setup of this campaign. By displaying isolated instances in which human rights are being abused, the campaign removes the event from the social fabric that created it. Rather than attending to the foreign policies and global conflict that often has its roots in colonialism and the exploitation of land to extract resources, this campaign attends only to the moment of the incident as it occurs between
individuals. It fails to shed any light on the conditions than led to the moment, nor does it provide any information about the event in question such that an interested viewer who wanted to learn more could investigate what they are viewing. This dehistoricization of the event in question has a depoliticizing effect and in turn fails to attend to systemic injustice.

**Unification**

The process of unification, according to Thompson (1990), establishes a collective identity irrespective of difficulties and divisions. Due to the decontextualization, the victims in the images are imbued with a sense of innocence, a feeling that they are being indiscriminately subject to torture and abuse, with no sense of the context of how these situations are initiated. Of particular interest is the difference in the portrayal of faces in the images; that is, the images that show the faces of the person that is being subject to the abuse (and in particular, those that direct the gaze of the person featured directly at the camera), are disproportionately of women and children. Contrarily, the images that appear to be depicting men are of them being tortured, with their identities hidden. This signals a process of unification, establishing a sense of common identity for the viewers based upon the common conception of women and children as vulnerable.

**Fragmentation**

Thompson refers to *fragmentation* as the separation of people into different groups, often with the intent to divide and rule. The campaign explicitly separates groups of people, performing the act of fragmentation. This draws a clear division between the self and the Other, and allows the viewer to define themselves in opposition to the Other, what Said calls
Orientalism. Further, by separating groups into those who are viewing and those who are viewed, the ethical potential of witnessing is disrupted, mobilizing a politics of pity (Chouliaraki, 2010), and falling into many of the common traps of humanitarian communication. This fragmentation is performed in two ways. First, as previously discussed, the text in the images produces a time/space divide between the viewer and the viewed. The space “here” is marked by assumed safety and security, a sense that the kinds of violations shown in the picture could not possibly be happening. The use of a temporal signifier, delineating between what is happening “here and now” vs. what is happening “there and now” privileges the space of “here” and relegates those represented in the photographs to a time in the past; it assumes a less modern, less civilized subject. The viewer, then, takes on “white man’s burden”, or in my opinion, the more aptly called “white savior industrial complex”, to help to civilize those that are stuck a less civilized past. The second way the campaign fragments people into different groups is through racial representation. While the torture victims appear to be somewhat ambiguous from a racial standpoint, the subjects whose faces we can see as the spectator are all racialized. This serves to create a divide between the most likely white, privileged spectator of suffering and the sufferer, further invoking the white savior industrial complex. Within this set of images, there is a sense that while anyone can be a victim of indiscriminate torture, issues such as child labour, child soldiers, and violence against women are reserved for a non-white population.

**The site of the audience**

As this campaign took place nine years ago, I am unable to say with certainty how it was responded to or what kinds of reactions it invoked in its audience. I don’t intend to speculate on this; however, the location of the campaign is significant and I will touch briefly on this aspect.
The campaign took place in cities throughout the country of Switzerland. Switzerland has a history of neutrality as a country and is consistently ranked among the wealthiest countries in the world (according to the International Monetary Fund, Switzerland had the fourth highest GDP per capita in the world in 2014). Assuming the audience of the campaign is a reasonably accurate representation of the population, these factors corroborate the notion of the depoliticization of the images; in a country that generally perceives itself to be neutral, it is likely that the images were not read to have a political agenda. In this context, assumptions about the possibility to objectively witness in a depoliticized manner may be amplified; however, I argue that this makes it all the more necessary to consider the implications of the way the campaign works to mobilize particular subjectivities and to further particular assumptions about how to engage with the suffering of others and act as a good global citizen.

The audience for this campaign ultimately extended far beyond the borders of Switzerland, due to the acclaim it received on the international advertising scene. It was awarded a Gold Outdoor Lion at Cannes International Advertising Festival in 2007, a Yellow Pencil Award from D&Ad (Design & Art Direction, a global agency that seeks to promote excellence in design), and the Corbis Creativity for Social Justice Award (D&Ad, n.d.). According to Daniel Meienberger, Amnesty International’s marketing manager at the time, the campaign was being discussed by hundreds of bloggers online within days of its launch, which ultimately led to tens of millions of downloads. Interestingly, the global nature that this campaign took on by virtue of its popularity and intrigue ultimately presents an interesting question: how does the nature of the campaign change when the images are consumed by spectators who are out of place? Does this form of viewership ultimately alter the meaning of the campaign, removing the viewer from the immediate space and ultimately allowing them to engage with it in a voyeuristic, rather than
engaged manner?
Figure 13: Amnesty International, Not Here But Now Campaign (© Walker Agency, Switzerland, by permission)
Chapter Five – What Does This Mean for Global Citizenship?

For this final chapter, I bring my findings from the previous chapter into conversation with my research questions, and ultimately, explore how this campaign both calls into question and reinforces the status quo. Particularly, I consider the role of visual campaigns such as this in mobilizing the subjectivity of the global citizen, with an aim to think about how the visual could help us to imagine a global citizenship otherwise. Jacques Rancière’s work is of particular significance in this chapter; I want to think about what facilitates a move beyond a state of consensus and into dissensus. I argue that it is only in this space of dissensus where there lies a possibility for something new, and feel that it is imperative that we learn how to foster this state if we have hope for a new way of living together in the world across difference. To structure the chapter, I speak to each of the research questions separately, and then offer a conclusion based on these discussions.

Research question one: how do the visual and textual elements of this campaign mobilize the subjectivities of the viewer and the viewed?

Subjectivity of viewer

While this campaign appears to attempt to subvert the status quo, my findings indicate that it indeed reinforces it in insidious ways, perpetuating an ideological position that ultimately serves to legitimate social inequalities. The viewer in this campaign ultimately occupies a privileged space, one in which they can be the spectators to suffering that happens elsewhere. This elsewhere is clearly defined as Other to the immediate space, an interesting finding, given that the campaign occupies the public space of a wealthy, Western nation. Ultimately, the viewer has the privilege of these images being a disruption to their daily navigations through the city;
the suffering depicted is not something they are necessarily used to seeing on a daily basis, and thus will likely move them to a moment of contemplation.

This reality for the viewer ultimately holds a great deal of potential if it were to be harnessed in such a way that moved the viewer to interrogate their personal relationship to the suffering and perhaps to implicate themselves in it. The text of the campaign, however, indicating that this situation is not happening here, allows the viewer to push the experience into a space of otherness and disregard for their own potential involvement in it. That is, their complicity in the violations of human rights throughout the world is disregarded. In a world where capital moves across borders with increasing ease, and investments take on a multinational character, as well as one in which we are increasingly interconnected by global supply chains, it is nearly impossible to extricate actions in one part of the world from their impact in other parts of the world. Thus, I would argue that the text of the campaign is somewhat misleading; to a large degree, these events are happening here, insofar as the decisions being made here (which include both decisions about whether/how to take action and decisions about whether to identify our complicity in the suffering of other) are directly impacting the experiences of the people depicted in the images.

The inclusion of the AI logo as a visual aspect of the campaign makes use of a globally recognizable brand to mobilize a globally engaged subject who is concerned about the suffering of others. The campaign as a whole is consistent with Amnesty’s approach in that it ostensibly displays an objective depiction of a moment in time thus providing the viewer with a moment to objectively witness the event. It is particularly interesting to think of this in light of the debate about whether photographs should be accompanied by captions to provide context to the viewer. According to Benjamin (2008, p. 294), photographs require captions to provide context and
avoid their being read incorrectly. Möller (2010) challenges this argument, suggesting that the caption is inherently limiting in the way it tells the viewer what sense to make of a photograph, rather than allowing them to make meaning through their interaction with it. As previously mentioned, Möller argues this is an act of translation that compromises the visual medium’s potential. This tension plays out in the campaign: by remaining consistent with Amnesty’s brand of objective witnessing, the photographs appear to allow the viewer to make whatever sense of them that they may. That said, by providing no context, and by accompanying them with AI’s logo, the images are depoliticized, and do not move the viewer to interrogate their own role in the conditions depicted in the photos.

Major international NGOs play a significant role in producing the identity associated with global citizenship. They provide opportunities for people to engage in global movements, they bring information about human rights violations into the public sphere and make them visible, and they ultimately define the kinds of action that are appropriate to take if someone is interested in acting to improve the human condition on a global scale. As such, the approaches they take are critical to informing the subjectivity of global citizenship, and for conceptions of cosmopolitanism. In the case of Amnesty International, the subjectivity they privilege is one of a moral, objective witness, which is ultimately the subjectivity they mobilize in viewers. I argue that this is ultimately impossible, just as photographs provide a curated image of the world through the eyes of the photographer, the act of witnessing will always be influenced by the history and experience of the witness; how they witness will therefore always be a political act. While the inclusion of the AI logo in the campaign is to be expected, it is still worth noting that the brand does have a significant impact on the way the campaign will be consumed, which must be taken into account in considering the subjectivity it mobilizes.
**Subjectivity of the viewed**

A common tension in humanitarian communication is the degree to which it objectifies the people it represents in order to draw attention to a specific instance of injustice. Oliver (2004) argues that subjectivity is reliant on the factors of address-ability and response-ability. That is, to what degree can a person be addressed and to what extent can one respond to their situation?

Often in evaluating this aspect of humanitarian communication, scholars consider the gaze of the subjects depicted, questioning whether the gaze is directed at the viewer in a helpless manner, in a sense issuing a cry for help. Within this campaign, I believe that it does not fall into this trap; the gaze in the majority of the images is not directed at the viewer, but rather engaged in the act taking place in the image. This signifies a sense that the subjectivity of the person in the image is not contingent on the recognition of the viewer; rather, there is a sense that this event is happening, regardless of whether or not you are paying attention to it. At the same time, the representation of human subjects with no context attached to their situation is dangerous insofar as it removes the potential for the viewer to respond to the situation or address the subject.

Without attending to the situation of the subjects, the representation of these events risk becoming a kind of pornography of violence that elicits a belief that the events taking place are morally wrong, but that makes an interrogation of the wider circumstances leading to the events nearly impossible.
Research question two: what does this tell us about the limits of representation? What are the constraints of NGOs in terms of interrupting the grammar of the representations they are embedded in?

Overall, I believe this campaign did a relatively good job of avoiding many of the problematic practices of representation in humanitarian communication. It arguably moves beyond a politics of pity and provides a disruptive moment for the viewer. The issue, however, is that representation is an inherently political practice that must consider questions such as who gets to represent, who is represented, and what story the representations are meant to tell. This campaign ultimately calls into question the possibility for a human rights campaign that relies on practices of representation to ever truly challenge the status quo; it suggests that the process of representation is inherently limiting. The representation of a human rights violation, taken out of context, in a wealthy Western nation, by a globally recognizable human rights organization, is likely to spur a reaction of wanting to ‘help’ to make things better for a suffering Other. In this sense, the campaign reveals an important tension in representational practice: while in some ways it appears to be subverting the reproduction of structural violence, in other ways, it reinforces it. Indeed, the subjects in the images (both violators and violated) are predominantly racialized, giving purchase to the notion that this is a problem of the “Other” that requires white, Western intervention in order to ameliorate it. This is telling of the wider system we find these images in, one which privileges action on the part of the ‘West’, and obfuscates many of the factors that can serve to facilitate structural violence, such as discourses of human rights and humanitarianism. While it seems to offer a fresh way of thinking about representations of suffering, one that shakes the epistemic foundations of the spectator, I have argued here that it maintains the status quo in many ways. To return to Rancière, it operates in a state of consensus,
failing to call into question the given frame of reference and relying on a stable view of human rights discourse. The challenges of representation are particularly salient when considered in the context of Mignolo’s “grammar of modernity,” that keeps the colonized in a “dark space of coloniality”. As discussed in Chapter Two, Mignolo argues that emancipation from coloniality requires the process of learning to unlearn on both the part of the colonizer and the colonized. This campaign, by relying on representations of the disenfranchised, and relying on common beliefs about the immorality of human rights violations and thus the need to help those who have been subject to them, is trapped in a modern teleology that privileges a particular worldview and reinforces a dominant global imaginary. What alternative possibilities exist for addressing global violence and advocating against it that do not reinforce and uphold the hegemonic structures that created it? How do we foster pluriversality, and self-determination in our approaches to talking about and represented human suffering? How do we ensure that we understand this as a politicized, historicized act? How do we move beyond dominant narratives and toward critical alternatives? Andreotti (2011) has argued that we risk becoming un-intelligible if we stray too far from dominant narratives in critical initiatives; while I agree with this assertion, what this campaign reveals is that perhaps we need to take the risk of becoming un-intelligible if we are to truly be able to challenge the status quo and foster critical understanding across difference.

Research question three: how does this relate to wider questions and assumptions about global citizenship? Can it help us to imagine global citizenship otherwise?

Global citizenship is premised on the idea of a liberal humanism; the notion that at our core, humans are all the same, and that we can peacefully coexist on the Earth. As mentioned, a soft version of global citizenship (see Andreotti, 2006; Jefferess, 2008) privileges the Western
actor and relies on a charitable model where the powerful extends a hand to the “powerless” in order to help them and play a role in the alleviation of suffering. This version of the global citizen is primarily a moral subject; one who uses their position of privilege to aid others. Humanitarian and human rights campaigns have long appealed to and played a role in constructing this version of the global citizen. Images of suffering, starving, and seemingly nameless, black bodies have long populated humanitarian appeals for organizations such as World Vision (Chouliaraki, 2006) and campaigns such as Band-Aid. While such campaigns raised significant funds throughout the 1970s and 80s, they began to draw criticism both for their essentializing representation of people living in ‘developing’ countries, as well as for inducing what has come to be known as “compassion fatigue” (Chouliaraki, 2013). The general trend in response to this criticism has been a shift to campaigns that tell stories of strength and agency with respect to people in the developing world. While this is certainly a welcome shift in my view, it still fails to engage the viewer in a critical understanding of their role and complicity in the structural violence that results in the suffering of so many around the world. Lack of attention to this complicity or a blatant disregard of it is an act of epistemic violence, one that requires attention.

While the notion of global citizenship is inherently limited due to its embeddedness in modern metaphysics, Andreotti suggests that a necessary shift in this discourse is an approach to global citizenship that directly interrogates this complicity and attention to structural violence, what she calls a critical global citizenship. My interest in this thesis is to consider the ways in which a more critical notion of global citizenship can be mobilized in the general public, and to what extent the visual can play a role in shifting the landscape of how such a citizen is imagined. This campaign is of particular interest because it appears to be an attempt to do this; it disrupts
the viewer and calls attention to the reality that people are suffering human rights violations within the context of the viewer’s everyday experience. The campaign has the potential to address complicity in transnational harm; that is, the reality is that the viewers of this campaign are complicit in harm by virtue of their everyday actions, and thus, the positioning of the images in the space of the everyday is both significant and effective. Unfortunately, by virtue of the accompanying text to the image, noting these events are specifically not happening here, this element of the campaign is essentially removed, and it becomes another way to operationalize an Orientalist viewpoint, whereby the viewer can define themselves based on what they are not (with what they are not being that which is depicted in the image). While I argue that this campaign ultimately fails to foster dissensus, and put a “wedge in the common sense” (Rancière, 2004), I do believe that it provides a strong departure point from which to start to draw on the visual as a way to help reimagine global citizenship. I would argue that what is required is a global citizen (and perhaps citizen is not the right word to use here, for it reinforces assumptions about statehood and nationalism that are rooted in colonialism and violence), or a global subject whose subjectivity is constructed through their relationship and responsibility with and to others. That is, a mobilization of existential sensibilities about what it means to be human, with attention to the political realities of our lives, the way our actions impact one another, and further, how a critical understanding of power and exploitation need to be at the forefront of this imagination. Rather than imagining our lives as a linear progression in which we as a species are all moving and working toward a utopian horizon, which will always privilege a particular, hegemonic view of the world, I wonder if we can think more about the ways that we are connected to each other, and the ways that the visual could help us to explore this relationality. The question from an
educational perspective then, is how to engage with the visual in a way that brings attention to relationality and to its own limitations.

Stern’s (2012) “hauntagogical approach (haunting + pedagogical)” to viewing photographs is one example of how to do this, attending not only to that which is visible in the frame, but to viewing what is in the frame “as products of historical, linguistic, cultural, economic, and political sphere – what [he] refer[s] to as presently-absent or social fields” (p. 177). He argues that this feeling of being haunted is “precisely an emergent moment through which a viewer can cultivate a certain kind of relational understanding that can lead to ways of thinking about politics and ethics,” he further draws on Berger’s (1977) contention that “we never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves”. This relationality as a basis for subjectivity is at the core of the potential of the visual to inform a fluid global subjectivity that is inextricable from one’s relationship and responsibility to the Other. Our subjectivity is wrapped up in the experience of witnessing the Other, not in an Orientalizing way, but rather understanding the subject and experiencing subjectivity as being incomplete and in a “constant state of emergence from social fields”; referred to by Mouffé as the “constitutive outside”. A photograph can never be fully complete, and nor can a viewing subject; it is the relationship between the two that is constitutive of meaning. In this way, the viewer must participate in what is happening in the photograph, implicate themselves within it to make meaning of it, and to be constituted as a subject in the viewing process. Extending this to global citizenship, global citizen cannot be subjects in and of themselves; this is not merely a subjectivity that one can claim. Rather, it is mutually constituted through relationships to and responsibility to Others, in which we are invented through our relationship to the Other and thus rely on them to inform our subjectivity. In this way, with respect to the visual, it is not the
representation itself that is significant, but rather what haunts that representation; what is presently absent in that representation. I argue that from an educational perspective, then, if we want to truly educate for an ethical global citizenship, we need to consider how to attend to that which is presently-absent. It requires a participation in the act of witnessing that implicates the self, while at the same time decentering the self and calling into question the notion of a modern, autonomous subject.

**Countering hegemonic narratives**

I briefly explore here three examples of both visual and artistic expression that offer the opportunity for a mutually constituted subjectivity and a more ethical form of witnessing. These examples offer a departure from intelligibility, opening up the process of meaning making to imagining a global subjectivity that situates complicity and participation at the forefront. This departure from intelligibility is critical because when we steadfastly commit to remaining intelligible, we only engage with others on the pretenses of discourses that are governed by those who are already in positions of power. By reifying categorical assumptions about who acts/who is acted upon, who gives/who receives, and who speaks/who listens, the possibility for the reimagination of existential relationships and in turn, our ethical responsibility to others and with them is significantly limited. Each of these examples invites participation on the part of the viewer whilst appealing to the existential reality of being human. This does not mean that we have to agree, to desire the same things, nor to hold similar values; it is rather an invitation to say, “I am”, and “you are”, without a preconceived notion of what should follow. I argue that it is through such relational understandings that we can open ourselves up to new mistakes and diverge from ideological underpinnings that privilege Western ways of being.
Appealing to existential sensibilities

Using the Aboriginal teachings of the medicine wheel as a starting point, Andreotti et al (2011) argue, “All knowledge is connected to a context (it comes from somewhere), no knowledge is individual knowledge, and every knowledge is also an ignorance of other knowledges produced in different contexts” (p. 234). They go on to consider the role of stories in the search for “ethical epistemological pluralism.” Drawing on Jackson (2010) and Bastien (2004), they assert,

When a story is told, it is up to the listener to find the threads in it and create their own connections and symbolic interpretations based on root metaphors that are collectively shared…the process of interpretation is one of provisional coconstruction of symbolic meaning related to the immediate context and an elusive shared reality that is constantly shaped, reshaped, made and invented in the process of knowledge construction in language. (p. 234-5)

This begs the question of how connecting to others through existential sensibilities and root metaphors rather than through an assumed teleological project of progress and logocentric relationship to language could offer new frames of reference and “open the imagination to other ways of being, especially those that have been repressed by colonialism” (p. 235). What then, might such relationality look like in practice? The pieces in question arguably transcend the notion that the success of a public intervention or campaign should be measured by its ability to provoke action, but rather, they draw their value from potentially moving the viewer to call into question given frames of reference. I briefly consider how each piece appeals to existential sensibilities that could lead to an alternative politics. My purpose is to explore how existential sensibilities could inform our political possibilities, subverting the current dominant system in
which I believe our political sensibilities inform existential possibilities. Rather than operating as “objects of recognition” (O’Sullivan, 2006), reaffirming that which we believe to be true, these artistic interventions operate as “objects of encounter”, calling into question our place in the world and serving as a point of rupture from which to reconstitute such relationships.

The performance artist: *First Contacts* by Peter Morin & Ayumi Goto

Over the course of an hour, Morin and Goto provide an account of a personal journey through the violence of colonialism: of having one’s identity violently stripped away, of reaching out to another only to find that their hands are also tied, and of the long, arduous process of healing. Much of the performance consists of Morin weeping in Goto’s arms, as she scrubs him, attempting to cleanse him and ostensibly rid him of the demons that have come to possess him. This process of healing is one that requires the cleansing of the whole body, inside and out. For

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3 I refer here to a performance entitled “First Contacts” by Peter Morin & Ayumi Goto, which was performed on March 15, 2014 as part of the Performing Utopias Conference at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada.
what feels like an eternity, Morin violently wretches into bowls, the ‘contents’ of which are then carried by Goto to the audience. She stops at each audience member, one by one, and makes an offering. That which Morin has excavated from his body is now offered to those of us watching, and in that moment we as an audience must confront a truth: we are not simply spectators to this suffering, but participants.

Drawn into the story that was unfolding in front of me, I felt many things: anxiety, fear, resentment, resistance, curiosity, wonder. Prior to being asked to literally take on the pain of Morin, to scoop it out of the bowl and put it in my body, I had connected to the performance as a witness to a suffering that I could not personally know. Perhaps I could say I was “bearing witness” (Oliver, 2004) to that which could not be seen. Something changed, however, in the moment that I took on that pain: as a “participant witness” (Möller, 2010), I could no longer distance or detach myself from his suffering, nor deny my complicity. A direct connection between my body and the suffering body on the ‘stage’ shifted everything for me; I now carry him with me and all that I take his pain to mean.

The artist: Postcards from Rwanda by Alfredo Jaar

*Note: Photograph of “Postcards from Rwanda” could not be included for copyright reasons. Please visit [http://alfredojaar.net](http://alfredojaar.net) to see the project.

“Josephine Mukayiranga is still alive!” It is a seemingly benign assertion: that an unknown stranger is still alive. Why should the recipient of the postcard care? This is precisely the point. In the wake of the Rwandan genocide in 1994, Jaar travelled to the country to try to make sense of a crisis that he felt was being largely misrepresented in the American media. His piece ‘postcards’ literally consisted of buying postcards from local trading posts in Rwanda,
usually postcards that depicting idyllic and quintessentially ‘African’ land- and person-scapes, and addressing them to random people living in the United States. The handwriting on the postcard would name a person living in Rwanda that Jaar had met, and declare that they were still alive.

Receiving such a postcard could potentially be a very disruptive experience. The moment in which one realizes they are directly connected to the lifeblood of another human being reveals a new way of thinking our responsibility to others. To ignore the crisis is no longer to merely not bother to take up an interest in the issue, it becomes an active disavowal of the life of another. If the postcard recipient were unaware of the crisis, the arrival of the postcard could signal confusion, a moment of questioning why they received this postcard and from where it came: an interrogation of the meaning of the connection between the recipient and the sender of the card. Jaar raises important questions about our responsibilities to one another on an existential level; for him it is not about a teleological project in which we are working toward something in particular, but rather, a moment of recognizing that the other exists, and in that moment, mutually constituting one another as human.

The public artist: Native Hosts by Edgar Heap of Birds

For years, I walked around the UBC campus, encountering signs such as the one pictured above proclaiming, “BRITISH COLUMBIA TODAY YOUR HOST IS KWAGIULTH.” They were unsettling and I didn’t quite know what to make of them, but they consistently filled me with questions and wonder. What did these signs say about my relationship to the land I was walking on? It was several years before I engaged more deeply with the pieces and perhaps ‘understood’ them more in line with what I understand to be the intentions of the artist.
The signs destabilize the ground one walks on; they call for attention to the fact that we are visitors on unceded territory, while at the same time calling into question the notion of ownership of territory in two ways. First, many different Nations are depicted as hosts on these signs; rather than simply asserting that, for example, the Musqueam whose Ancestral and unceded territory UBC is situated on are hosts, the signs call into question and conversation the whole project of white settlement. Further, the choice of the word ‘host’ is important; in my interpretation, this disrupts colonial relations of power and lays claim to the land, while at the same time actively inviting visitors. It is not to say that you cannot share my land, but rather, that you must do so on my terms. To be hosted is an act of hospitality and taking care. Hosting is also an activity that requires a relationship, that is, one cannot be a host without a hosted. The encounter with the sign operates at once to destabilize the ground the viewer walks on and to draw them into a relationship with the host.

**Conclusion**

I argue that we need to reimagine global subjectivity in a way that destabilizes the necessity of *knowing* each other, but rather draws on existential connections and relationality as a
pretense for an ethical relationship to the Other. To do this, we must be willing to encounter the Other on terms that are neither ours nor theirs, but rather, terms that emerge through that relationship. Each encounter will be different, each relationship will be different, for this is the very lifeblood of relationality. The visual can play an essential role in this reimagination, but in order for it to do so, we must move beyond representation and allow the photograph to speak for itself and to elicit relationality by attending to the presently-absent, and that which is beyond the frame.

Human rights campaigns occupy a paradoxical and nebulous space; they aim to draw attention to the often grotesque circumstances of people who physically occupy an other space, and yet they rarely call attention to the complicity of their target audience in creating the harms they wish to ameliorate. The work of representing violence is challenging and complicated, and it is incredibly important to attend to its consequences. Of particular importance is who is represented, where these representations appear, and who consumes such representations. I am concerned that representations of violence in Western nations that fail to implicate the viewer in the circumstances of the image risk reifying unjust relations of power, and the discourse that pits the ‘civilized’ against the ‘uncivilized.’ This analysis has looked at one campaign that appeared to try and shift the narrative and strategy of human rights advocacy work, and yet, still privileges a particular worldview that is centred on the autonomous modern subject.

In Chapter Two, I considered the following set of questions from Telesca (2013), which I will return to and reflect upon to close:

Is it possible to imagine an effective human rights campaign without recourse to the short causal chain that pits victim against victimizer, violated against violator? To what extent is the making of the short casual [sic] chain part of the very lifeblood of
the human rights debate, as much as it is its curse? Is visual citizenship only a means to signal when human rights are denied to individuals or entire groups, or is it also productive to think of it in ways that critique the very assumptions embedded in human rights discourse and practice. (p. 343)

To me, at the root of this set of questions is the call to reimagine human rights advocacy in a more expansive manner. Rather than imagining violence as an interaction between discrete actors, I would argue that it would be more effective and more ethical to imagine it in a more fluid sense, that is, to disrupt the supposed boundaries that surround an act of violence and to think about the ways that we are all implicated in that act, and in allowing it to happen, we are also complicit.

What would this reimagining mean for human rights advocacy in the West? First and foremost, I argue that it requires a departure from the idea of heroic protagonism and the destabilization of what Teju Cole (2012) calls the “white savior industrial complex.” The figure of the heroic protagonist on the global stage is rooted in a violent colonial narrative of “civilizing missions” and “taming savages.” Rather than a worldview that divides into a civilized self and an uncivilized Other, we need to situate a commitment to pluriversality at the forefront: a version of the world that makes space for multiple ways of being. To witness the suffering of another in this context is cannot be about exposing some kind of deficit in the Other and imposing a course of action on them. It must rather be about witnessing an act in a holistic sense, one that attends to the historical and political nature of the act, that implicates the witness, and that confronts the viewer with her/his own complicity.

What we see, what we are shown, and how we interact with it, plays an integral role in how we imagine and understand our relationships to distant others. The campaign in question in
this thesis used the visual medium in an attempt to disrupt the daily experience of viewers in Switzerland, making them consider the realities of people in other places. This moment of disruption is an important one, for within it is the potential to forge a new direction, to think, act, and be in different ways after the disruptive moment. Ultimately, however, this campaign’s moment of disruption served to distance the viewer from the event they were viewing. It situated the event in an ‘other’ place, and thus absolved them of responsibility to or for the event, and of their complicity. It allows the viewer to take on the role of the heroic protagonist, the savior who is naturally endowed as a dispenser of rights, and who can join Amnesty International in fighting for those rights for others. To be clear, I am not arguing that to join in this struggle is necessarily always a bad thing; however, in doing so, the viewer is likely to uphold the hegemonic global structures that contributed to the production of this violence. In the final chapter of this thesis, I have considered some alternatives to human rights advocacy premised on heroic protagonism. Each of the examples requires participation by the witness, and the invitation to join the struggle depicted in the picture. In each of the examples, there is no obvious path to follow, no one-size-fits-all approach to engaging with the people in or behind the visual representation. Rather, the opportunity to relate to another human is presented. For me, this is wherein lies the emancipatory potential of the idea of global citizenship: that we may relate to one another, to find ways to co-exist in the space that we share, and to recognize the way our ways of being impact the lives of others. Future research in this field should thus attend to the ways that the visual can help us to disrupt violent colonial narratives, and explore the ways a global citizenship hinged on relationality and pluriversality can be fostered.
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