Activating Empathy:
The Social Lives of Rights Images

Amy Johnstone

Anthropology

Goldsmiths College

University of London

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD

2014

Abstract

This dissertation addresses the increasingly important role visual media plays in the construction of human rights discourse in an attempt to denaturalise the idea of human rights in its western democratic context. This is a shift from other anthropological approaches which have focused on rights in 'other' contexts at the expense of naturalising and disguising the constructed nature of human rights in western democratic contexts. To research this I have followed selected images from campaign work of a major human rights organisation through their production, distribution and reception. I base my research on interviews with informants and participant observation as a volunteer with Amnesty UK and as a member of three local Amnesty groups. In doing so I develop an account of images that focusses on their place in social relations, rather than a textual analysis of their representational qualities. An approach that is increasingly prevalent in anthropological accounts of images, but that I believe to be unique as an approach to rights images. I put forward the argument over ten chapters that pictures are used by activists to facilitate a process of imaginative identification with distant others that staff at AIUK call 'empathy'. I examine this process of imaginative relating from both the point of view of staff, and of those publics that encounter images to argue that images mediate imaginative relations in ways that suggest a rethink of both 'empathy' as a concept, and human rights as a practice. In doing this I hope to develop understandings of human rights and visual media, and also rethink anthropology's role in studying transient phenomena.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Declaration

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

List of Acronyms Used:

AAA	American Anthropological Association
AI	Amnesty International
AIUK	Amnesty International United Kingdom
ANT	Actor Network Theory
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASSK	Aung San Suu Kyi
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CNC	Caring not Committed
HRAC	Human Rights Action Centre
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IAR	Individuals at Risk
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
IS	(Amnesty) International Secretariat
IWD	International Woman's Day
MSF	*Médecins Sans Frontières*
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PIP	Project Implementation Plan
UN	United Nations
UDHR	United Nations Declaration of Human Rights
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
WHRD	Women Human Rights Defenders

Introduction

Figure 1a: Student demonstrators, New Inn Yard, 21 March 2009

London, near Liverpool street, and over fifty students and members of staff gather outside Amnesty's Human Rights Action Centre to peacefully protest the illegal detainment of prisoners of conscience in Burma's notorious prisons. The demonstration has been organised by Amnesty UK staff in collaboration with student groups from around the UK, and focusses on the '88 Generation Prisoners'- a group of students arrested and imprisoned since 1988 for organising peaceful protest, and 'misusing media'. Participants hold placards bearing close up photographs of the faces of the different 88 Generation prisoners, as well as a short sentence about them. As the procession sets off it is fronted by a large banner depicting a map of South Asia, with illustrations of prisoner's faces and names, inside the outline of Burma. Next follow men holding up cage bars, looking downcast dressed in prison garb. They are surrounded by demonstrators in camouflage jackets with signs that read 'for your protection and safety: your conversation is now being monitored, we are policing your use of the internet. By order of the Burmese army'. Behind them snake the hundreds of students silently holding the placards of prisoners.

Figure 1b: Student Demonstrators, Liverpool St, 21 March 2009

On the short walk from New Inn Yard to Liverpool street station, passersby stop, some take pictures with smartphones or cameras, some walk alongside the demonstration asking questions, while some walk on unmoved by the spectacle. A girl who has been standing watching for a minute or two approaches one of the demonstrators to my right, and asks who the people in the pictures are. His reply is that 'they could be you'. He points to her phone and tells her that using her phone is a misuse of media, and asks if she's a student. When she replies that she is, he tells her 'so were they, now they're prisoners'. He then asks her if she'll take action for Amnesty and hands her a leaflet. As we walk away I see her filling in the leaflet. As the group reach the rally spot outside the station some chants start up, before those with microphones take over to explain the demonstration. One of the chants is repeated more than others, and is revived on the walk back the New Inn Yard:

'PRISONERS ARE, PEOPLE TOO,
PRISONERS ARE, PEOPLE TOO,
PRISONERS ARE, PEOPLE TOO...'

While a wide range of images are used in diverse ways in the broad field of rights, the idea of 'humanising' rights was one that was particularly prevalent in my fieldwork. The demonstration described and illustrated above suggests something of the importance to rights activists of this 'humanising' in their work- the pictures, names, and geographical locating of prisoners of conscience serve to remind the public that 'prisoners are people too'. My fieldwork took place over two years, working and conducting participant observation with those involved in rights campaigning for Amnesty International including members of staff, photographers and agencies, local groups and grass roots activists, as well as members of the public encountering campaigns. During this time I focussed my attention on following rights images, their use, and their actions. I charted images used by Amnesty from campaign design, through circulation, to public reception using participant observation and extensive interviews in Amnesty International UK, with local Amnesty groups, and at sites of encounter with the public. I was concerned with understanding how my informants approached images, and what they do with them.

The idea that emerged most strongly in relation to images was what informants called 'empathy'. One staff member summed it up particularly succinctly when she told me that Amnesty was '*the human face*' of human rights. She went on to say that '*if people just had a little more empathy then the world would be a better place, I think here we can do that with pictures, they show this is a person, like me or you*' (Interview, October 2010). For those involved with rights, a concept of empathy was a powerful motivator, and it was something intimately tied up with experiences of images. Throughout this thesis I elaborate on what empathy means to staff, and how it is expressed through campaign design. I ask what criteria and experiences staff draw upon in forging and constructing empathy, as well as examining how these ideas play out in practice when campaigns are encountered by the public.

The word empathy is occurring with increasing regularity in the political and social spheres of Euro-American[1] culture. US President Barack Obama's oft quoted speech

---

1   The term Euro-American is used throughout the thesis to describe the broad geographic and cultural context that is often described as 'the West'. Euro-American more accurately describes the two areas in which AI have their largest offices and where the organisation originated.

calling for empathy in the wake of Hurricane Katrina sums up an approach to empathy echoed in many recent publications, that sees empathy as the prerequisite for peace and global cooperation (for example Barry 2010; Rifkin 2009; Ehrlich & Ornstein 2012). Obama claimed that to empathise is to be more inclined to help others:

> 'You know, there's a lot of talk in this country about the federal deficit. But I think we should talk more about our empathy deficit - the ability to put ourselves in someone else's shoes; to see the world through the eyes of those who are different from us - the child who's hungry, the steelworker who's been laid-off, the family who lost the entire life they built together when the storm came to town. When you think like this - when you choose to broaden your ambit of concern and empathize with the plight of others, whether they are close friends or distant strangers - it becomes harder not to act; harder not to help.' (Obama 11th Aug 2006)

The president of the United States here articulates something similar to the version of empathy that I encountered in fieldwork- one based on seeing the world through another's eyes (Moyn 2006:399). I argue that it is this relationship that staff designing campaigns hope to achieve, and believe that images can provide. This represents a departure from the model of rights campaigning as sought through compassionate sympathy (discussed in Chapters 3 &4), as well as the imagery generally expected by humanitarian organisations (See Benthall 1993 & Chapter 3). This thesis follows on from a recent revival in anthropological literature exploring what is meant by empathy, and what it might mean to care for others or take action on their behalf (e.g. Kelly 2012a; Wilson & Brown 2009).

Empathy is a term with shifting meaning, and a heavy baggage of theoretical and social expectations, which I will attempt to address in more detail later in this introduction. The relation that is described above, and that I argue is planned for and desired by campaigners, is more akin to that described by Kelly as 'imagined identification' (Kelly 2012:753), than the empathy rooted in pity and suffering described by Wilson & Brown (2009:23). Kelly describes imagined identification as 'a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for compassion, sympathy, or empathy'

(ibid:755). I argue that when staff talk about empathy, it is this imagined identification that they describe, and in doing so offer a re-imagining of what empathy might mean for a rights campaign in the absence of pain, and sympathy, thus suggesting new possibilities for how we conceive of responsibility to distant others. My thesis brings out, through ethnographic description, both how campaigners plan for and implement this relation, and also how in practice relations mediated by images are undertaken by staff and local groups. A picture emerges of the process of imaginative identification that is at once a product of planned image use, and also a response to images themselves, as experienced by activists working in a surprisingly closed sphere. While this is infinitely more complex and nuanced than initially appears, there are many similarities in imaginative identification undertaken by informants. I show how through limiting networks of communication, and the formation of communities of practice, imaginative identification emerges as a social and learnt process taking place in activist contexts in relatively coherent ways.

What follows below is an account of the rationale for focussing a study of rights on campaign images. By examining the role of images in rights, and approaches taken in the past, a picture is built up of a field where rights images are instrumental, yet the study of them has been addressed largely only in the narrow sphere of representational analysis. I begin with a discussion about the various roles of images in rights, before going on to highlight some methodological advantages which image study can provide in the analysis of the unfixed and broad field of rights. I then sketch changes in academic approaches to images and objects, and how these pertain to the field of rights. This is followed by a detailed introduction to Amnesty as an organisation and the reasoning behind my choice in focussing attention on that particular organisation, and specific departments within it. I conclude with a discussion of how the thesis should be read, discussing terminology, and the structure of the thesis.

Images in Human Rights

Amnesty International's symbol of the candle in barbed wire suggests something of

the importance of visibility for the process of human rights. Illuminating that which is hidden is crucial to the process of compliance: making visible the violations of human rights tolerated or committed in countries puts pressure on them to make changes. Keenan points to the importance of images in a transnational campaign whose main objective is to illuminate and expose violations as evidence that these abuses are taking place (Keenan 2004: 438). Visibility in this sense goes beyond the abstract sense of the term with its connotations of 'making known', to something quite concretely visual. Photographs and images of abuse are important in human rights processes as evidence. In the recent Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) fact finding report on Human Rights in Gaza and other occupied territories (2009), for example, over 30 videos and 1,200 photographs were analysed as evidence (A/HRC/12/48 p. 43), including but not limited to images of bodies after soldiers attacked a house (ibid:161), footage of the Al-Quds Hospital attack (ibid:141), and photographs of rockets being launched (ibid). These pictures are mentioned explicitly, and form an important part of the body of evidence.

Photographs have a long history of providing impetus for change, through showing visually the conditions requiring this change. Early movements towards social justice, such as Barnardos photographs of boys 'before and after', and the documentary photography of Riis which exposed living conditions in New York, called for change through showing conditions requiring intervention[2]. Pictures therefore are both proof, and witness. More recently in the case of Abu Ghraib prison, the claims for change were not widely recognised until supported by visible evidence in the form of photographs. In human rights processes, where increasingly testimony is considered suspect or unreliable, legal practitioners look for the tangible and physical as proof of abuse (Ticktin 2006; Kelly 2009). This can take the form of physical scars as visible evidence of abuse, or photographs depicting physical evidence of abuse, conditions, or situations. The role of images as proof can be seen as part of a preference in human rights practice for recognition of the physical violation of rights, and physical suffering.

---

2   This is discussed in depth in Chapter 3 where the relation between pictures and social activism is
    developed.

Visibility is important in a different way for the public-facing side of human rights activism. For activists, this idea of making visible is the central point of their work. They want people to see them, and through that engage with their work and human rights. Utilising the media is often how this is achieved. Presentations to the UN, and direct government lobbying, are an important part of the work that human rights organisations do, although raising public awareness and shaping public opinion on human rights issues is arguably the larger part of their work. Certainly for Amnesty International there are many more staff employed to manage their public activism than there are in research departments. Activism work of this sort is a highly visual undertaking because, as McLagan points out, it 'increasingly takes place in and through media' (McLagan 2005:223), and in this arena visuality is a central communicative tool (ibid 223). Such is the importance of visuals in modern media communication that Levin describes modern life as 'hegemony of the visual' (Levin 1993), stating that the mass media audience demands a visual presence (ibid:4). While visual takes many forms for activist activities, from demonstrations, to civil disobedience, flyers, and the increasing importance of web presence, all activities share a focus on being seen as a means to being heard. In Amnesty International UK's *Groups Media Handbook* (Amnesty Media Unit 2005) local activists are encouraged to 'make it visual' to 'catch people's attention' (ibid: 16). While this suggests the visual as a means to an end, images are still a dominant form of communication for campaigns, and a first point of contact for many people in Euro-American settings when encountering human rights. In effect, images are crucial to the construction of human rights as a coherent field of activism through a focus on being seen, and rights organisations are the key source of images for members of the public.

A 'Way In' to Rights

If visuals are a key element of how rights are imagined and constructed, they also offer something more- they offer a 'way in' to the study of rights that is at once situated, and also mobile. Whilst previous approaches to rights in anthropology have focussed on local distant appropriations of rights 'in context' (see Merry 1997; Wilson 1997), increasingly, in the wake of debates about the nature of culture as unbounded

(Wolf 1997:387), and the instability of the ethnographic field in a globalised context that sees slippage and movement as an inherent feature of life (Hylland Eriksen 2003:4), there are questions about how we study things that have aspirations and applications across the world. In these cases, it is not enough to compare isolated instances, because that would fail to take into account the way in which for many global phenomena it is not the things themselves, but rather, the links between them that make them meaningful, as recent studies on activist networks have shown (Keck and Sikkink; Ghils 1992). Rights are one feature of this modern situation that has been notoriously difficult to study (Goodale & Merry 2007:12). Rights are at once a body of legislation with impact transnationally, a set of philosophical and moral ideas, and a wide network of concrete locations, artefacts, organisations and individuals (ibid). Finding a way in to these different versions of what rights are, and mean, is no simple task. Recently, anthropology and the political sciences have seen novel and interesting approaches to the study of rights, through attention to networks themselves (Riles 2006), and focussing on various locations where rights are performed legally (Alston 2006; Provost 2005) to try and answer the question of where rights are situated[3]. Levitt & Merry suggest focussing on the circulation of rights ideas as a way into the 'vernacularised' nature of human rights (Levitt & Merry 2009:448). They suggest that by looking at the circulation of global messages into local situations we can begin to understand why some messages are adopted and others not, thus illuminating both the global and the local (ibid:443). What I believe a study of campaign design and dissemination offers is not only a localised approach to rights, but also an insight into the process of creating local campaigns with transnational aspirations, making it a localised form of transnationalism.

In her edited collection *Documents: Artefacts of Modern Life* Riles describes documents as 'paradigmatic artefacts of modern knowledge practices' (Riles 2006:2), and as such says that they provide a ready-made ground on which to experiment with how to 'apprehend modernity' (ibid). She goes on to detail the many ways in which documents influence and are present in modern life, and to argue that they play a central role in constituting modern life and that their ubiquity renders them emblematic of modernity itself (ibid:5). I would suggest that the same conditions can

---

3   See chapter 3 for a discussion of anthropological approaches to rights.

be found in images. They too are ubiquitous: they transcend the rights process in their various guises as evidence, publicity, and illustration. As such they provide, as documents have for Riles, a 'way in' to something that is not characterised by a set place or space. While documents contain the ring of legality to them- as laws, and as the paperwork that supports the legal process, images suggest something different. Through images I hope to be able to access not only the legal version of the rights process, but also the ways in which rights are constructed, discussed, and supported outwith the legal process. Through the visual media that is produced not as evidence, but rather as marketing to persuade and support the idea of rights, images are more than documents of rights, they help to constitute rights themselves through campaigning (McLagan 2005:223). Like Riles' documents, images are overlooked, mobile, and ubiquitous, but unlike many documents, images are largely public. Public images are selected from a pool of equally interesting not-so-public rejected images, and their selection can give valuable insight into the processes of constructing rights as a coherent activist sphere. When public, they have the potential to circulate outside of the networks normally associated with rights, or to extend them. For this reason campaign images provide a 'way in' to rights that look at rights as a social phenomenon that exists outwith legal channels.

By this I do not mean to suggest that images are merely a means of structuring a methodology that allows access to the public flows and encounters of rights, although they are that too. Images are at once the structure and the focus of this study. Through their construction, deployment, and movement, a picture can be built up of the connections and movements of rights campaigning, as well as of the role that images have in the rights process, and what they mean to the people who encounter them. I follow images through these processes in a campaign context in order to grasp their movement, and their role in campaigns. Through interactions with images I hope to add to understandings of the role and scope of images in the field of rights, as well as developing new ideas about how images themselves can be approached. To do this, an approach to images is needed that looks not at what they show, but rather at what they do (Pinney 2004:8).

What Images Do

There is a relatively large area of image critique in the related field of development and relief work, where images are interrogated for their use of disempowering visual tropes (see Benthall 1993:177). This criticism is centred on several key concerns: depiction of 'suffering others' as distancing (Perlmutter 1998), as othering and exploitative, both creating and reinforcing stereotypes (Campbell 2003; Campbell 2002), the silencing of people presented in images (Malkki 1996), and their consequent reduction to 'bare life' (Agamben 1995:42). These studies tend to focus on humanitarian and development organisations' images, rather than those concerned with a human rights agenda. These approaches, while appearing to share many attributes, are not interchangeable (Moyn 2007:27), as will be discussed later in this chapter. This is coupled with an awareness of the inbuilt inequality in photography between those who make and those who are represented in images (Price 1997:58), and the potential of photographs to lie through framing by the photographer of what to shoot and what not to shoot (Jacobson 2002:10). Studies of these kinds are concerned with the representational aspect of NGO images, and highlight the use of certain tropes such as the well-known Oxfam Child of the 1960s. I would suggest that this does not pay enough attention to the ways in which visual activities form a narrative of their own through their use and context.

There exists a gap in the study of this phenomenon. While studies of rights related images are relatively common (see Benthall 1993; Boltanski 1993; Dogra 2012), especially in sociology where there is a growing interest in the study of mediated rights (see Nash 2010; Philo & Berry 2004; Freedman & Thussu 2011), and there are some studies of NGOs themselves (see Fisher 1997; Keck & Sikkink 1998; Hopgood 2006; Cottle & Nolan 2007), there are few studies which link these two things up meaningfully. By that I mean that there are few studies of rights images which examine the production of rights images (exceptions include Dogra 2012), and yet fewer which look beyond the images as visual representations to consider the images in social situations. It is this particularly anthropological approach that I propose to undertake in this thesis.

Images have a central and instrumental role in a process of human rights that is designed around the principles of seeing and being seen. Yet studies have tended to focus on semiotic readings of pictures that are based largely on the opinions of the authors, and offer little in the way of discussion about how rights images are used and function among people. This is an approach to visuals that Pinney describes, as the 'visual as language' (Pinney 2006:132). Pinney suggests four central approaches to the study of visuals, of which 'the visual as presence' (ibid:137) is most relevant to this project. This approach attempts to situate images in their material context. Pinney goes on to suggest that there is predisposition in much of visual culture to 'dematerialise the image' (ibid:137), at the expense of appreciating the embodied nature of the encounters which people have with images (ibid:139). Anthropology, with its focus on unpicking the social, and an approach to methods which emphasises being there, is well placed to look at rights images anew, through their 'presence', that is their status as objects as well as representations, not only through what they show, but through what they do, and how people interact with them.

Increasingly, art academics are looking at images in new ways intended to push past deconstructions of representations, in order to consider their activities in the world. Mitchell asks 'what they want?' of images (Mitchell 1996), while Elkins looks at the way images 'stare back' (Elkins 1999). Art is increasingly being considered for its social aspects (Bourriaud 2002), and images are considered as embroiled in human relations that determine their meaning. At the same time anthropologists are considering the increasing role which objects play in constructing and determining human social life, and are approaching the study of objects by viewing them 'less in themselves then for their place in an exchange or ritual that will have an effect' (Miller 1994:400). Studies such as Appaduria's *Social Life of Things* turns the focus onto objects themselves, as he states:

> '...we have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories. It is only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculations that enliven things. Thus, even though from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a

methodological point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context.' (Appadurai 1988:5).

This effectively opens up the field to the consideration of the role which things play in determining human social life. Since Appadurai's study, anthropologists have considered the role which objects have in determining the self (Munn 1983), asserting that objects can have gender (Strathern 1992), and thus further destabilising the divisions between people and objects.

The outcome of this destabilisation is the extension of agency to include human and non-human actors alike. Theorists point to classical anthropology, and the re-examining of Mauss' essay on *The Gift* (Mauss 1989), where objects (in this case, shells) are seen acting as agents. In his analysis of the *Kkula* ring Mauss poses the notion that gifts are never really free, and that an object may in fact be doing more than simply facilitating social relations (Mauss 1989:xii). The gift itself takes meaning from the identity of the giver, and social expectations. Through this it creates action on the part of the receiver, to reciprocate the action of gift-giving. Shells therefore, are instrumental in provoking action. Munn points out that 'Although men appear agents in defining shell value, in fact without shells man cannot define their own value. In this respect men and shells are reciprocal agents of each other's own value' (Munn 1983:283). It is not helpful to think either that people affect objects' meanings, or that objects affect people. Rather, people and objects exist in relations of reciprocity, through which meaning is made, as the shells suggest.

Gell's *Art and Agency*, and Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT), have emerged as two of the dominant contemporary approaches to understanding the agency of objects in anthropology. Gell describes an approach to art in which agency is created through investment and intentionality by human actors (Gell 1998:99). In this theory, objects temporarily take on human agency (ibid). Gell argues that objects were 'made to mediate social agency' (Gell 1998:7). It is suggested by some thinkers, however, that Gell does not follow through enough with his argument to give objects their true recognition as independent agents (Leach 2007:167). Latour offers this recognition, for him agency is to be found not in Gell's human intention, but in systems of

relation, preferencing neither human nor object actors (Latour 2005:64). To treat objects in any other way is to make the 'mistake of starting with essences, those of subjects or those of objects.' (Latour 1999:108). By this he suggests, as others do, that there is no basis upon which to make the assumption that objects are inherently different from humans, and that to do so is an imposition of our own cultural expectations (Hearne, Holbraad & Wastell 2007:3). Therefore while both theorists may agree that objects can act as agents, they disagree on where this agency originates. Throughout this thesis I reflect on how these ideas of agency correspond to the visual material that I encounter.

Strathern's fieldwork points to objects as being part of people in Melanesia (1992:14), therefore suggesting that the line between humans and objects is not as clear as we might think. Gell's conception of artworks as carriers of human agency in effect makes them extensions of humans themselves (Gell 1999). This has significance for images, as they have the added 'stigmata of personhood' (Mitchell 2005:30) in that they can show people, and in human rights often take the form of a photograph or image of a particular person. Indeed at times a photograph may be more 'real' than the person it stands for. This is true of passport control where a person must match up to their picture to be allowed safe passage (Kumar 2000; Torpey 2002). In human rights it is true in the sense that a photograph or visual bruise is considered more 'proof' and real than the testimony or claims of the person (Kelly 2009:779). The representational nature of images therefore renders them a different type of object, one which may not conform to the same patterns of agency that have been set out by other anthropological accounts.

This reimagining of the relations between people and objects has important implications in the field of image study. Rather than seeing images as products of human intentionality, we can consider their meaning as coming out of social relations. This is a shift from the way in which images have been thought of as products of their creator's 'vision'. If images are not bound to their maker's intentions then a new approach is needed,one that considers 'not a history of art, but a history made by art' (Pinney 2004:iv). Rather than seeing images, then, as illustrations of ideas held elsewhere, we can consider images as in part changing and determining the

world around them. Exciting new possibilities then emerge for the study of rights images, ones that does not ask what they show and do not show, but that looks at how they act to determine experiences of rights.

Therefore to study human rights images in a way that does not presume to deconstruct their representational meaning, one must also refrain from presuming the nature of the relations in which they exist with people. While I draw from the theories above by approaching human rights images through their involvement in social relations, I do not employ either a Gellian or Latourian model of agency, rather I reflect throughout the thesis on the types of agency at work in the field of human rights images. By keeping an open focus, I hope to avoid an essentialisation of images, and instead to let them emerge throughout the thesis in the terms in which they are understood by my informants, thus painting a picture of how human rights images work as productions of human rights in campaign context. I have suggested some of the limitations created by a study of representational properties of images alone, in terms of the imposition of subjective authorial readings,where it is important not to replace one subjective approach with another. I hope that by approaching rights images with a flexible take on the nature of their social engagement, I shall be able to account for their role in human rights as a social process without the imposition of expectations. The section below discusses the context of my study to explain the focus on Amnesty International for studying the production and consumption of human rights images, and the organisational structure in which the images are produced.

Amnesty International and AIUK

Organisations and the visuals that they produce play an important role in the process of human rights, and it is not one that can be understood simply by looking at the images. In order to account for images in social contexts, I based my study of human rights visuals on those used and created by Amnesty International. This is among the largest human rights organisations in the world, with over 3 million members, and representation in 200 countries. It is therefore influential in the arena of human rights, and produces the majority of rights campaign visuals in circulation. Below I describe

the structure of Amnesty and its sections in order to explain my choice of focus on the UK section. I use Amnesty's own published accounts of their history and structure, as well as written accounts of the organisation published by academics, and Hopgood's detailed ethnography of Amnesty's International Secretariat (Hopgood 2006) to build up an account of an organisation with a complex structure. Facts stated about membership numbers and section organisation come from Amnesty's own accounts (Amnesty UK Website, accessed November 2013) unless otherwise indicated.

Amnesty International (AI) was founded in 1961 by Peter Benenson as a response to the imprisonment of Portuguese students over a 'toast to freedom', which prompted an appeal in the British newspaper The Observer for members of the public to write letters on their behalf. Like most creation myths the story has been retold so many times that aspects and details were bound to change. The famous toast to freedom, used heavily in Amnesty's birthday celebrations in 2011, has been questioned, as well as the motivation and timing of Benenson's appeal (Rabben 2001:181). However the growth of the organisation since then is well documented and without question (Powers 2002:iv). What started as a letter writing campaign has now grown into one of the largest reporting and campaigning bodies worldwide involved in Human Rights. International bodies such as the UN Reporting Committee look to AI reports to guide decisions about their recommendations, and it is for their detailed reports that AI arguably is best known. Rarely do I pick up a newspaper with information on human rights abuses which does not quote or look to Amnesty International for a comment or information, and by many people it is considered a world moral authority on rights (Hopgood 2006:xi).

Amnesty is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO). As such they appear on the UN lists of affiliated INGOs alongside organisations such as Oxfam, The International Red Cross, ActionAid and MSF under a broadly shared of being not-for-profit, and operating to improve social and material conditions around the world[4]. They share a concern with social improvement justified by the notion of 'humanity' as a whole, however within this broad remit exist very different

4   See http://www.un.org/en/civilsociety/ for a list of INGOs that the UN cooperates with.

approaches to how and why this improvement might take place depending on an organisation's focus on poverty, aid, development or rights (Provost 2005:2). Aid and development organisations such as IRC and Oxfam are most commonly classified as humanitarian, while Amnesty International is explicitly concerned with defending the human rights set out in international law. Their manifestos demonstrate subtle yet important differences:

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S STATUTE

Amnesty International's purpose and its formal accountability is set out in its Statute. Key elements include:

Our vision and mission

Amnesty International's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. In pursuit of this vision, Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of these rights.

Figure 1c: Section from Amnesty International's Statute. http://www.amnesty.org/en/who-we-are/accountability/statute

Oxfam purpose and beliefs

Our Vision

1. Oxfam's vision is a just world without poverty. We envision a world in which people can influence decisions which affect their lives, enjoy their rights, and assume their responsibilities as full citizens of a world in which all human beings are valued and treated equally.

Our Purpose

2. The purpose of Oxfam is to help create lasting solutions to the injustice of poverty. We are part of a global movement for change, one that empowers people to create a future that is secure, just, and free from poverty.

Figure 1d: Section from Oxfam Mission Statement. http://www.oxfam.org/en/about/what/purpose-and-beliefs

The wording in the opening statement to AI's statute refers explicitly to the mechanisms of international law (the UDHR), while Oxfam's reference to rights are not legally defined, but rather described as the outcome of a 'world without poverty'. Therefore despite similar concerns, the focus on how to achieve these goals is distinctly legal in the case of AI, while Oxfam make no explicit reference to law as a means to affect change. As Wilson & Wilson point out 'human rights and humanitarianism share many of the same attributes and emerged from yet the intellectual origins' yet are 'distinct' (2009:5). While the two are concerned with universal human community and responsibility (Provost 2005:2), they are based on different principles (ibid). Provost, in her analysis of the similarities and differences

between the two points to the appeal to justice in human rights, and the inclusion of 'military necessity' in humanitarianism as one of the defining differences (ibid:5), the other being the often identified focus on compassion within humanitarian justifications for action (ibid; Meyrowitz 1984). Human rights organisations are focussed on an appeal to legally defined rights that everyone holds, as AI's statement suggests, and as such imply a certain degree of reciprocity. Humanitarianism on the other hand is 'justified less by a legal claim than by a moral one' (Wilson & Wilson 2009:8) - that is to say care for distant others is called upon 'from the heart' in the form of sympathy and guilt (ibid). As Moyn points out in his analysis of the relation between the two 'humanitarianism could underwrite violations of rights as well as their defence' because their primary remit to alleviate physical suffering, which is sometimes in conflict with people's rights (Moyn 2007:28).

While distinctions between the two approaches, like those sketched above provide a background to the field of major INGOs generally, it is not as rigidly a distinction in practice as legal theorists such as Provost (2005) would have us believe. Increasingly there is slippage in the language and practices of rights that some suggest is blurring the boundaries between the two (for example Fassin 2006:35). In addition to this slippage in goals and practices rights organisations often work with humanitarian ones on shared goals[5]. In my experience this was not without occasional animosity over the means to the shared ends. This is because while humanitarian organisations hope to appeal to the heart, for staff at rights organisations this is sometimes seen as counter to attempts to empower people to claim their rights (discussed in Chapters 4 and 6). The two approaches therefore consider themselves to employ different means to campaign for change. It is not my purpose here to tease out the many nuances of difference and similarity between the two approaches (see Provost 2005 for a discussion of this), rather I highlight this distinction as a background against which to understand the campaign activities of Amnesty International.

AI's influence, despite being overtly concerned with international law, does not stop at the walls of the UN, nor is it confined purely to the delivery of impartial country reports. Amnesty International is still very much the letter writing campaign group it

---

5   Examples of this include the ongoing Global Control Arms Campaign, and EQUALs coalition
    against sexism.

started out as, but rather than a few people in a dilapidated room in London (Hopgood 2006:24), AI campaigns through in-country sections throughout the world, and boasts a membership of over 2.8 Million. This includes hundreds of workers and volunteers, devoted largely to keeping the campaign wheels turning by running awareness campaigns to generate action from the public, similar to the letter writing of early days, as well as encouraging new members, and therefore generating income which supports campaign work, report compiling, targeted lobbying, and all aspects of AI's work. The scope and influence of AIUK makes it a suitable choice for conducting a study into human rights images. As a major player in the field of human rights, and with a high output and level of influence Amnesty International fulfils the criteria of being a human rights producer that many members of the public encounter through their campaign activities. The wide circulation of campaigns means that the study will provide a cross section of human rights engagement with images that is representative of some general trends in this area.

An organisation of this size is a vast and daunting field of study, but it is also unrivalled in its output and influence in the process of human rights. While from the outside Amnesty may appear as a homogenous international organisation[6], the reality in practice is that the work of producing visuals used in campaigns falls to distinct elements of the organisation, making the daunting task of engaging with Amnesty images more manageable. Below I discuss the structure, scope, and operation of Amnesty International in order to explain its selection as the focus of this study, and to rationalise a focus on a particular part of the organisation.

Amnesty International as an organisation consists of two distinct organisational parts- the International Secretariat (IS) and the regional sections. The International Secretariat is based in London and produces the famous Amnesty Reports. In this office, small teams of regional specialists monitor situations in countries in order to compile reports that are available online and produced in published format. As well as reports, the IS is involved in making recommendations to international bodies, and it is in this capacity that Amnesty has come to gain a reputation as an authority on

---

6   The fractious nature of the organisation is the subject of much of Hopgood's (2006) *Keepers of the Flame.*

human rights. However it is not through the secretariat that the majority of Amnesty's campaign work is done, but through sections based in over 80 countries, as well as by smaller volunteer-run offices in countries without a local section. Amnesty sections have handled membership, fundraising and the vast majority of campaigning since the 1960s, and are known colloquially by staff as 'the public face' of the organisation.

Sections therefore walk a line, like many charities and NGOs, somewhere between campaigning and fundraising. Their primary remit is confused by the nature of human rights campaign work being largely focused on changing minds and practice, rather than deliverables such as goods or aid, but nevertheless requiring funding to continue these awareness raising activities. These sections deal directly with the public, and the chances are that when you see an Amnesty poster, or take part in campaign action, it has been designed and implemented by your local section[7]. A member of staff at the IS once told me that the sections are 'Amnesty's PR department', because they do much of the outward public campaign work. As such they have an important role in defining how human rights look to the public, and act as one of the key mediations between the legal system of human rights, and the social practices and beliefs which support it. While campaigns involve many elements, their primary mode of delivery is visual, in terms of an emphasis on the images used on flyers, on the website, in the Amnesty Magazine, and by creating what is known as 'spectacles' such as demonstrations which, as well as being visual, also utilise pictures and banners. While for smaller sections direction on these visuals comes from the IS, for the larger organisations this is not the case, and all visuals are produced and circulated by staff in-house.

If there was a flowchart of the process of campaigns, it would probably have an arrow pointing out of Amnesty UK to regional offices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and from there to local groups to do the actual 'campaigning'. This would not be a totally accurate account of how campaigns are disseminated, which in

---

7 Large Amnesty sections (notably in the USA, Netherlands and the UK) design and implement their own material, while smaller sections get their material from the campaigns team at Amnesty IS. It is considered preferable by most staff at Amnesty to have regionally planned campaigns but some sections do not have these resources. The UK, being the context for AI IS as well as one of the larger sections, experiences some overlap between the two organisations.

practice is more ad hoc, with occasional use of so-called 'chuggers' and direct marketing from AIUK in the form of internet campaigns, newspaper campaigns, and events. However the basic principle remains that at the heart of Amnesty lie its members. Amnesty was an early adopter of subscription-based membership and remains legally accountable to its members. Asking members to take action for human rights is still the dominant campaign practice, and generally members who are also active in local groups disseminate campaigns through events and activities in their local areas. A great deal of campaign planning at AIUK is undertaken with this in mind, and local, student, and youth groups are instrumental in communicating plans designed by AIUK to wider audiences.

Therefore the production of campaigns is not something that remains in the office, it is taken up by local group members who prioritise different aspects of images, and by the public as they encounter images. Human rights images are not simply vessels which are 'encoded' with meaning (Hall 2006). The organisational process of Amnesty alone ensures that images are continually moving, and being re-produced, by different parts of the organisation and associated groups. Conducting fieldwork on images in these circumstances presents many obvious challenges, for example the various locations in which images exist, the many layers of production and reception at work, and the issue of scale between grassroots activism and transnational ideology. Therefore defining and planning a field and methodology which could account for the processes at work in planning and encountering images was of utmost importance. This is the subject of the following chapter, where a method allowing me to access campaign images as a process with many sites in production, circulation and reception, is discussed in depth.

Note on Terminology

It is helpful at this point to delineate some of the terms that are used throughout the thesis. As with many studies in academia, words used by informants may have very loaded meanings in academic language, and indeed have multiple meanings for different informants. I have tried to be clear throughout about what I understand terms to mean to different actors, but there are a few overlapping terms that come up

repeatedly that require discussion. Empathy as I refer to it in the thesis has a specific meaning when staff members use it. To them it is distinct from sympathy, which suggests the sharing of another's pain and the inbuilt hierarchy between sufferer and onlooker. However empathy is itself a rather loaded term with many meanings. When referring to the actual relations which staff members form, and seek to form, I favour the description 'imaginative identification' (Kelly 2012a:754) because it captures the imagined nature of the process at work, does not presuppose pain, and is not loaded in the same way as empathy is, and thus allows the specificity of this approach to be clear. When talking about theorists' approaches to empathy, and how they compare to this, I have tried to be clear about what empathy means to the individuals referred to.

Closely related to these terms are compassion and pity, both often used by informants and by academics in slightly different ways. Compassion in this case emerges as similar to but distinct from sympathy, because while it too involves a sharing of pain, it is also seen to be linked to action to alleviate that pain. It is this version of compassion used by informants that I refer to in the thesis. Similarly, when I refer to academic publications that deal with compassion, I am doing so in relation to their bearing on this definition. Pity is often equated with compassionate sympathy by theorists (Arendt 1990:90), and is generally used by staff members in a derogatory way to describe the power inequality that comes from sympathising with others. When I use these terms I do so not to unpick their meaning in finer degrees, but rather to explain the distinctions made by informants, and how these similar but not quite interchangeable categories of relating are enacted and borne out in practice.

The overarching term used throughout this thesis that still bears discussion is image itself. Elkins says that it is 'impossible even to make a reasonable list of meanings that are assigned to such words as image', because they are so many, and so varied between and within fields (Elkins 2011:1). Elkins here draws attention to the way that the image has different contextual meanings and interpretations. Throughout this thesis I use the term image, and images, as my informants approach them. I look to informants' definitions of images, although this is not without conflict or slippage. Broadly speaking, when informants use the term image they are referring to printed images in the form of photographs, info-graphics, paintings, drawings and other works of art. For the purpose of the thesis, image is expanded to include other aspects

of visual practice such as film, acting, and demonstration that while not always classed as 'image' in name fall under that category through the way that staff members treat and speak of them on similar terms and with similar expectations.

Synopsis

The thesis is developed in two parts. Part one is titled Production and deals with what AIUK hope to achieve with their images. Part two is titled Reception and deals with the way in which images are used and appropriated when released into the public sphere. These titles are designed not to be prescriptive, but rather are destabilised as discreet stages of image circulation, throughout the thesis. The remainder of the introductory section is devoted to a detailed discussion about the multi-sited approach to methodology, and specific methods employed to supplement participant observation. It deals with the particular issues arising from working within an organisation, and how these have impacted on the findings. It concludes with a discussion about ethical concerns and the action taken to ensure these have been met.

The thesis opens with an historical account of rights images to argue that there exists a tradition of compassionate activism rooted in images into which Amnesty fits. I argue that the field of rights images, and approaches to analysing the field, have focussed on images as a means to elicit compassionate sympathy, highly criticised by some theorists as detrimental to rights. However in responding to these criticisms, organisations have shifted the focus away from images of pain and are thus engaged in a rethink of what it means to show distant others. Rather than appealing to sympathy, Amnesty hopes to appeal to empathy. It is this appeal with which the thesis is concerned.

People Like Us (chapter 4) highlights AIUK staff members' central visual and campaign approach as oriented around individuals and portraits of people as a means of closing gaps with distant others. It uses archival research and ethnographic examples of the Burma campaign to suggest that for AIUK staff members, pictures of people are used to create a universal humanity crucial to the concept of human rights. It suggests that in imagining universal humanity staff members imagine the link

between people as residing not in physical suffering, but in cultural similarity, and thus hope to use visual tropes to create people who are 'like us' culturally and socially. The chapter compares the planned aims of image use with everyday staff practices of relating to distant others through visuals.

Imagining Audience (chapter 5) deals with the introduction of an Audience Policy by management at AIUK which identifies and encourages staff members to reach out to 'new audiences'. While the policy is specific in what this means, staff attitudes and practice relocate the new audience and identify it as 'different' in ways which reveal a persistent organisational identity. In imagining audience, staff members limit its potential and therefore limit to some extent who can participate in the moral economy of rights activism. In imagining audience, staff members are themselves undertaking a type of imaginative relating double: imaging an audience, and imagining them relating to the pictures which they select.

Gaps and Silences (chapter 6) discusses the lack of images of women in the appeal for abortion and women's rights in Nicaragua. This chapter looks at Amnesty's image criteria to understand why certain things are visually omitted from campaigns. It argues that the relatively loose concept of dignity used by staff members to explain omissions does not fully explain why some human rights abuses are more undignified than others. Rather, there are ideas of appropriateness which are not addressed openly by staff members but which nevertheless impact on campaign design. These ideas exist in terms of which kind of violence is unacceptable and which victims most vulnerable, and how their use reflects on Amnesty's image as an organisation. Dignity as it is used by staff members not only refers to dignity of the victims but also refers to their dignity as an organisation.

Part Two is based on my experiences working with local groups and addresses how the campaigns discussed in Part One were used and consumed by local groups and members of the public. It opens with an overview of the dissemination of campaigns by AIUK through local groups to provide a context for some of the differences between AIUK's intentions and campaign practice by highlighting differing

motivations and visions between local groups and AIUK staff. I use the specific example of Amnesty's 50th Birthday poster campaign to chart and follow a set of pictures into a variety of dissemination contexts. I suggest that in disseminating campaigns local groups have their own priorities, distinct from Amnesty UK staff agendas, and that this creates cul-de-sacs in the flow of information.

In Too Much Empathy (chapter 8) the goal of empathy identified in People Like Us is questioned through experiences of public interactions with campaigns at Lovebox Music Festival. In this chapter we see empathy as present, but without a knowledge of rights to ground it in similarity with distant others it becomes a barrier to taking action on their behalf. This chapter reflects on conditions needed to relate to images in ways that are productive of action on behalf of Amnesty, and the processes needed to go from imaginative relating to the recognition of the rights of others.

In Chapter 9, Performances of Pain, local groups are shown to reintroduce pain and suffering to the narrative through performances of the images – literal performances such as human rights skits and use of people in cages, as well as narrative performances, which draw from intervisual contexts. This chapter suggests that for local groups, shared pain is a component of connecting with distant others, and part of an embodied approach to experiencing images and distant others.

In Beyond Empathy (chapter 10) the themes from the preceding chapters are drawn together to reflect on how the processes of imaginative identification being undertaken relate to theories about empathy and care for distant others, specifically as these pertain to the visual. I suggest that for local groups and staff at AIUK there is a process of 'ethical looking' being undertaken. This chapter suggests that ideas of ethics are paramount to activists working in this field and that these ideas are worked out, in, and through images. It suggests that there are possibilities for rights images which are not images of atrocity, but that narratives about rights do not need to escape physical suffering or be reduced to merely the practice of compassion. Rather, activists engage in particular types of looking, and understanding these processes can contribute to debates on the presentation of rights and distant others. The thesis is

concluded with a summary of key findings and suggestions about future directions for research.

Chapter 2: Researching Rights Images

The fieldwork that I undertook to investigate human rights images involved following the images as they moved through various locations within and outwith Amnesty UK. This fieldwork took place over two years, from 2009-2011, and involved conducting participant observation within AIUK's London office in order to understand organisational and social principles behind and developing from image production, as well as participant observation with Amnesty local and student groups, and attendance at events and demonstrations where the images were present. This was supplemented with archival research and over 50 interviews. The rationale for this approach is discussed in this section firstly by defining what has been meant by the anthropological field in the past and looking at how current trends apply to my project. I then go on to describe in detail the sites of inquiry and the difficulties and opportunities which these presented before giving an overview of specific methods covered by the umbrella term 'participant observation' as they pertain to my chosen field site in order to give a comprehensive and transparent overview of my time in the field.

Defining the Field

Anthropology is often equated with a particular methodological process rather than a specific theoretical position (see Clifford 1992; Gupta and Fergusson 1997). Anthropologists traditionally go into 'the field' and conduct participant observation. It is this process of gathering information through immersion over an extended period of time (Amit 2000:2) which generates the type of data that anthropologists seek to gain, namely, 'the everyday living' (Levi-Strauss 1966:114). This allows anthropologists access to taken-for-granted-aspects of social life, which cannot therefore be found through direct questioning (Bourdieu 2003:285). The field therefore, has long been considered as intrinsically linked to the method of gathering data. Stocking points to Malinowski's defining methodological example as 'less a matter of concrete prescription than of placing oneself in a situation where one might have a certain type of experience' (Stocking 1992:58). This 'situation' traditionally took place in a distant locale such as a village (Amit 2000:2). Therefore when

Malinowski called for anthropologists to 'come down from the veranda of the missionary compound' (Malinowski 1926:99) 'into the open air of the anthropological field' (ibid:146-7), he clearly imagined that the field was a discreet location that could be entered.

Recent literature however, has emphasised the 'transitory de-territorialised, unfixed, processual character of much of what we study' (Malkki 1997: 86). Many anthropologists no longer assume their field site to be as unproblematic as previously imagined. Whereas previous notions of the field were geographically bounded, and equated with a culture, these ideas have been repeatedly questioned as we encounter 'groups no longer territorialised, spatially bounded, historically self-conscious, or culturally homogenous' (Appadurai 1991:191). The process of globalisation and the exchange of ideas and persons, as well as the interest in studying that which is transnational, and interacting with ever wider networks in ever changing situations means that situating oneself 'there' becomes difficult (Eriksen 2003). Indeed ideas of 'here' and 'there' which can be seen as endemic to traditional anthropology are now murky and unstable, causing anthropologists to pay more attention to how they frame and define their field, and the implications that has on their research. As Falzon sums up: 'World systems theory, transnationalism, migration studies that go beyond classical push-pull and/or integration concerns, diasporas, cosmopolitanism, and so forth: all posit frameworks and scales that invite supra- local understanding and therefore methodology' (Falzon 2009:5) .

Cultures, therefore, if they ever did exist in discreet ways, are now so enmeshed in trade, media, and migration, that to understand them as bounded and discreet makes little sense. Rather, anthropologists are increasingly interested in looking at connections between things, instead of distinctly bounded fields. The global has often been opposed to the local for comparative purposes, but increasingly it is necessary to question this dichotomy. Connections between people are now considered important, and constitute a large and relatively unexplored part of social experience. Marcus' oft quoted piece *Ethnography in/of the World System* gave this ethnographic movement a name and a set of suggestions about how to conduct ethnography which was situated not by place, but in other ways (Marcus 1995: 105). He puts forward a list of possible structuring principles for conducting multi-sited ethnography, based on the types of

studies which anthropologists have been carrying out. These include: following the people, the thing, the metaphor, the plot, life histories, and extended case studies offering examples of each of the above (ibid 107-110). The seeds for this type of research can be seen in well-known studies such as those of Appadurai (1986) and Mintz (1985), who follow objects through their circulation, in order to build up a picture of the systems and contexts which exist in capitalist consumer flows of produce. Through approaches like this to anthropological methods, Marcus and others have moved beyond studies which posit local against global, to build up a picture of complex connections which produce world systems in which people live (Marcus 1999:50).

Following the Thing

For this project, the implications of such visions of the field are clearly important. Human rights, perhaps more than other areas of study, have been caught in this global/local bind through comparisons between local appropriations and a seemingly transnational legal set of ideas (Goodale 2007:16). Attempts to move beyond the binary often result in its being reinforced in other ways (ibid). Campaigns represent the seeming contradiction between global aspirations, techniques conforming to local market research, and the reduction of the global by campaigners into manageable audiences who represent or speak for global ones. Therefore a methodology which does not impose a divide between practices and the underpinning aspirations of transnational appeal, is needed to account for human rights as a practice. A focus, like Marcus suggests, on connections would seem to offer an answer, by showing processes of campaigns as they are intended- as mobile and transformative. However accessing connections is not a straight forward task. Appadurai's approach to economic systems, mentioned above, acknowledges connections by following objects. It thus offers an account of a wider set of social and world systems, or connections, illuminated by the object at various stages on its journey (Appadurai 1986: 11). This is a clear example of 'following the thing' (Marcus 1990:50). However a method that accommodates images is presented with a number of difficulties that Appadurai's study was not faced with.

Following the thing can be seen as applicable to rights images specifically, which are in many ways objects which move in material ways, and following them would seem to offer a means to understand the systems which they are involved in and contribute to, offering a way to access how images are used by people, and act on people, to produce and reveal understandings of rights which does not exclude their place as part of a wider process and project. However rights images are not simply things, they are also convergence points for a whole set of issues around human rights. Images are objects, but they are also representations, reproductions, and their status as such determines their use and circulation. In many ways this aligns them more closely to the following of metaphors, and the field technique which I used can be seen as a combination of these approaches. While the difference between following a thing and following a metaphor may seem academic at first glance, there were actually practical distinctions which are worth highlighting. While an object can be seen as moving in distinct geographic locations, a metaphor's locations are not necessarily geographically discreet. In the case of rights images it makes more sense to talk of sites in terms of 'contexts of engagement' rather than of set geographic places. Images were at times in the same physical space of AIUK's office, but in very different places depending on which team they were used by, for what purpose, and who was interacting with them. Sites in this instance are not only physically different spaces, but are also contextual ones in which images move and take on different meanings and uses. For that reason the study can be seen as a version of the social life of things, with its focus on motion and connections, but with key differences which are specific to the nature of images as bearers and creators of ideas which are enacted in various overlapping contexts, suggesting that we view them not just for where they go as objects, but for what they do as images.

This approach clearly borrows from both the multi-sited ethnographic approaches discussed above, and also from actor network theory's notion that objects gain their significance through their place in networks. This in many ways reflects the role of images as existing in both physical spaces, and those spaces that I have described as contexts of engagement. These contexts can be seen in this light as akin to networks through which image use and meaning can change without a change in the physical setting, but through their repositioning in these networks. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, understanding contextual meaning in the form of networks

is an important aspect of my approach to images. I draw on both Gell and Latour (Gell 1998; Latour 2005) when talking about networks in this thesis. While in this project images are indeed studied as existing in complex contexts of engagement, or networks, which determine their meanings, the question of where agency originates is left relatively open. While there is little doubt as to the effect images can have on humans around them, and that this agency goes outside human intentions, I have tried to pay attention throughout to the social relations which facilitate this, and account not for a point of origin, but rather for the processes at work which allow rights images to gain meaning and act to produce and reinforce what human rights are. So while images are treated as agents, in networks of signification, I do not begin the thesis with a predetermined idea about the line between humans and agents. Rather I reflect on this throughout the ethnography.

The Multi-sites of Amnesty Images

Figure 2a: The Human Rights Action Centre Entrance, Shoreditch, London.

As one of the most well-known organisations in the world, Amnesty has an important role in defining and communicating supporting narratives for human rights, as discussed in the introduction. This is done through campaigns and reports, and

through production of visual media in support of these campaigns. Amnesty is therefore an important site for the investigation of human rights images. However as mentioned above, within the organisation there were many different sites in which images were used and existed. For that reason I formed a research plan that involved following the thing not just in AIUK, but throughout the image's circulation through overlapping sites within and outwith the organisation. Taking into account approaches from cultural and media studies where the prevailing attitude is that media can only be understood in its circuit, and not as isolated moments (Hall 2006:295), and drawing from multi-sited approaches to ethnography. I attempted to capture a picture of image contexts of engagement through the many sites of production, circulation and reception. This begins with ethnography in AIUK where I focused on '...the ways in which individuals and groups negotiate the constraints of the particular material conditions, discursive frameworks and ideological assumptions in which they work' (Mahoon 2000:468) and extends into ethnography of reception with local groups which are themselves an extension of the organisation and form a key role in the circulation of images into the public arena. I hoped to convey and investigate human rights campaigns as mobile and dynamic through a study which is not only grounded in multiple geographic locations such as the office and local group meeting places, but also multi-sited and flexible enough to move as the images themselves do between different sites within those locations.

While my time at AIUK is primarily a study of media production in the vein of Ginsburg (1993;1999), the methodological approach is more akin to the studies of organisations, as I attempt to untangle the organisational principles and practices that underpin and shape image use. Ethnographic studies of and in organizations are not new, for as Susan Wright points out, 'anthropologists from Turner onwards have always been concerned with how people organize themselves' (Wright 1994:5). Richardson & Walker's famous study of shop floor efficiency was conducted in 1948 (Richardson & Walker 1948), and since then such studies have been growing in number (for a detailed analysis of these studies see Baba 1986), and coupled with studies of bureaucracy (see Britain & Cohen 1980 for a review). More recent accounts attempt to look at organisations as this project intends to, through how they think and act (see Weiss & Miller 1987; Douglas 1987), and through how these actions are the products of networks of significance. Studies have struggled with

bounding this network, as interconnectedness is potentially never-ending. The methodology for this project bypasses that by being focused not on the whole, or on one department, but on the cross-cutting field provided by images as they move through the organisation, and therefore a more comprehensive account of the process of campaigns can be built up. While it can never be entirely natural to limit the field, these limits are created in part by the informants' own practices, and therefore are not imposed exclusively by the anthropologist. Of course no campaign is entirely emblematic of the way that an organisation works because of the individuals involved and the campaign intention, however I hope that the field within the organisation created by the movement of images is as cross-cutting and organic as possible, and is therefore reflective of the processes of producing rights campaigns more generally.

In order to fully comprehend the significance and use of rights images I was keen to understand their use in contexts outwith the office. My focus was primarily on local and regional groups where it would be possible to participate in meetings and build relationships with groups of people invested and interested in the images. Through these groups I also had access to members of the public and attendees at events as they responded to rights images. Studies of reception are notoriously hard to undertake, and while there is growing anthropological interest, such studies are more common in fields such as media and cultural studies. I therefore looked to this field and used a hybridised approach based loosely on the field of 'audience research' characterised by Alasuutari (1992) and influenced by anthropological approaches to studying audience (Abu Lughod 1994), which now emphasise the meeting of production and reception in meaningful ways (Radway 1988:362). To do this, I use the term audience loosely to refer to those people who experience meeting the images publicly, because those were most accessible to me, and because I was interested in taking part in discursive and physical encounters through which people make meaning. In this way, I do not study audience widely or exhaustively, rather I focus on the creation of particular publics through encounters with images as 'concrete crowds' (Warner 2002:49) and their processes of meaning making. I do this by attendance at events including music festivals, film screenings, exhibitions, and demonstrations and taking part in what Wood calls the 'conversational floor' (2007), whereby people make sense of images at the point of encounter through conversation (2007:76). I use follow up interviews where possible, and attempt to ground these

encounters in wider social narratives.

Amnesty and the Human Rights Field

It is important, before proceeding to unpick the organisation of Amnesty International, to first place them in the context of the field of human rights campaigning. As discussed in Chapter 1, Amnesty International is explicitly concerned with human rights in a legalistic sense. Their statement appeals to the UDHR, and their campaigns and regular urgent actions clearly address violations of specific legal rights. As such I have suggested that their focus is similar to other INGOs, but differentiated from humanitarian organisations by this appeal to law as the means by which change is sought. This focus on law that comes with a rights based organisation has been critiqued by scholars for its potential to reduce complex socio-cultural situations into a set of objective facts required for a comparative legal process (Wilson 1997:153; Hastrup 2003:319). The field of human rights organisations and Amnesty in particular, has come under intense scrutiny for a portrayal of rights 'characterised by a liberalism and minimalism which strip events of their subjective meanings in pursuit of objective legal facts' (Wilson 1997:134). Wilson suggests that while human rights reports are written largely for an intended audience of the UN and international bodies (ibid: 135), their constructions of what constitutes a human rights violation, and stripped down version of individual stories into legal 'facts' permeate human rights discourse at the level of campaigns, local groups, and activists, who look to rights reports for their information (ibid: 154). Thus the field of human rights becomes one where subjective narrative is sidelined for the delivery of information through the genre of legal language.

Wilson's critique (1997), echoed more recently by Hastrup (2003), portrays human rights campaigning as legalistic and based on 'facts' that hide many of the decisions made in deciding what counts as a rights abuse. However, while this may be true of the reports written for evaluation at the UN, a closer examination of the organisation of Amnesty International suggests that this might be an over estimation of the role of law within the organisation. Within the IS, the part of the organisation that produces

the reports, there is a very small legal team (three practicing lawyers), and while other members of staff may have a legal background, it is not a prerequisite to work for the organisation. In fact Lisa, a member of HR responsible for looking at job applications at the IS and AIUK branches of Amnesty, told me that country specialist knowledge was the most looked for background in an employee (Lisa, interview, October 2010). Of course just because staff are not trained in law does not preclude their writing in that genre, especially where reports are concerned, however as discussed in the previous chapter, the organisation is not only concerned with producing reports. The wider scope of Amnesty involves campaigns designed within AIUK where the remit of communication is not to deliver facts in reports, but rather to 'change hearts and minds' (Alison, interview, January 2011). In fact none of the campaigns I worked on made reference to specific laws and bills, and as will be discussed throughout this thesis, were concerned largely with 'humanising' the legal process of rights through campaign.

Rather then than seeing the process of human rights campaigning as either legally orientated, as Wilson does, or entirely devoid of the constructions set up by organisations when they write reports, the work of Amnesty International must be seen as a response to both. By which I mean that to understand the campaigns produced by Amnesty, they must be viewed in light of the legally determined field of rights monitoring, and their own legal aims, but also as part of a wider field of INGO campaigning, discussed in the previous chapter, that puts organisations in competition with each other for funding for similar but differently orientated goals. The mediation between the research side of Amnesty's work, and the campaign side, takes place through Amnesty's local sections like AIUK. While the IS produces reports factually, to stand up in court as evidence, AIUK see their work as translating this research into appealing campaigns (discussed in Chapter 4). Wilson's critique is aimed at publications produced by Amnesty's IS (Wilson 1997:134), and largely ignores the work of sections. Therefore while slippage between reports intended for the UN and the general public, as Wilson rightly points out , is inevitable (1997:154), and staff work within a context where appealing to law is their ultimate remit, there is also a process of mediation undertaken by Amnesty sections that attempts to alter these legal narratives into campaign ones. It is this process whereby rights that were legally

defined originally become campaigns for public consumption that this thesis is concerned with. For that reason I base my research within AIUK, rather than the IS, to better understand what criteria, if not legal ones, staff try and appeal to the public. Below I discuss the organisation of AIUK as I understood it to work in practice. I elaborate the alliances and processes behind campaign production throughout the thesis, but a background to the context of production is important for understanding not only my role and interactions in the field, but also for understanding how the findings presented in the thesis came about.

The Organisation of AIUK

The flow diagram given to new staff at orientation shows a flow of information from the IS to sections, whose workers are given campaigns which they implement according to local conditions (Appendix 1). Sections have clear roles and responsibilities, as discussed briefly in the introduction to this thesis. They handle recruitment, managing groups, and mobilising campaign action through public appeals and local groups. While the IS shines a light into dark corners, the sections make sure that as many people and as widely as possible see what has been illuminated, leaving sections with a clear mandate as the mass communicators of rights abuses. In this vision of the organisation there is a streamlined relation between the two, with the IS providing information and direction, and the sections acting on them. The reality of course is not so simple, and while the flow chart works as a guide to the structure of the organisation as a whole, the relation in practice was not quite so straight forward. To describe 'Amnesty International' is actually to describe a number of complementary and sometimes antagonistic organisations, which come together under that name and the well-known candle symbol. To navigate the internal organisation of this organisation in practice, rather than through neat flowcharts, was a confusing and often difficult task. However it is a crucial aspect of the production of campaigns and one that I had to untangle in order to conduct fieldwork. I will begin briefly an elaboration of the relation between the IS and the UK section discussed in the introduction, before going on to describe the UK section, where I was based, in more detail.

Many see the International Secretariat as the 'real' Amnesty, and in many ways this is indeed the beating heart of the organisation. It is the centre of research, the place where decisions are made about which countries, issues or individuals are put forward for campaign, and all of this behind bullet-proof glass and airport-style security which gives the impression of sombre importance. The sections on the other hand, the 'commercial' side of the organisation which are places that the public can visit, are in danger of being overlooked as simply the little sisters of the IS. In practice, however, sections hold considerable sway within the organisation. The relations suggested by the flow charts showing information and ideas flowing from the IS downwards to sections, and then to local groups and the public, are misleading. In fact staff at the IS number less than those at the larger sections (UK, USA and Netherlands are among the largest) and staff in these organisations have acquired a high level of experience and skill in campaign work before they find themselves working at Amnesty. The size and skill of sections means that they function fairly autonomously. Sections have their own organisational structures, and their own priorities and areas of expertise, which often exceed the IS's capacities, and bring into question the relationship between the two. The UK section for example does much work in Burma and in the Palestine and the occupied territories, meaning that UK staff members have contacts, information and priorities which the IS staff, being more commonly desk bound, do not. This means that when making campaign decisions about these regions the UK is often the authority. Other sections have their own areas of authority. Therefore while the IS retains an aura of mystique and a self-styled parental role over sections, the reality is that large sections and IS work on a horizontal plane, with different areas of specialty. For the production of images, this has implications. While on an international level the IS does produce many visuals which are given to smaller sections in non-Euroamerican countries, and even runs some of its own campaign designs here in the UK, the UK section AIUK has a much greater output of visuals in Euro-American contexts, and its own systems, authority and processes to do this.

This relation is not unproblematic, as will emerge throughout the thesis. The IS and UK sections have considerable overlap as both are based in the UK and produce campaign materials, yet both have different approaches to doing this. Staff at the UK

section certainly, take pride in their running of the section's campaign work, and do not always agree with the choices made by the IS. The UK section has its own colour scheme, logo and font, but the differences in output are often more subtly to do with how those involved imagine Amnesty and human rights campaigning, as will be discussed later in the thesis. There was sometimes what one staff member described to me as 'tension' about 'who's in charge'. AIUK members often disliked too much direct control over their running of the section. For the most part staff get along and work productively with colleagues from the IS in the few instances where they have any direct collaboration, despite these differences. In the recent turmoil caused by proposed plans to restructure AI, so that more of its operations would be based outside of the UK, UK section staff and IS staff protested together in solidarity against management decisions that most staff disagreed with. Though this was after my fieldwork had finished, friends in the organisation spoke to me about how it was only then that they were meeting many of the staff in the IS. This speaks to a certain level of separation between the two in practice. Decisions made in campaigning then, are a product of this relationship, on the one hand cordial with shared goals, but on the other hand separated by a structure and practice that contains a certain degree of ambiguity about decision-making and ownership of the Amnesty legacy.

Amnesty International UK is based in a converted factory in Shoreditch, East London. When the section moved into the custom-renovated building almost ten years ago, it was designed to be a 'flagship', somewhere where the ideas and work of Amnesty could be shown to and accessed by the public, as well as a 'human rights hub' for London. Rather than being called AIUK, it is named the 'Human Rights Action Centre'. Its exposed brick walls, large glossy portraits, and inspirational artwork, speak to the type of organisation that the UK section aspire to be. It is a far cry from the formal and colourless IS. The building is open plan, broken up occasionally by glass, and despite state of the art sound-cushioning there is always a buzz of conversation audible. The building spans an open basement, and three further floors of similarly open plan desks. It can feel like a maze for new staff, because of the numerous stair cases, and the lack of sign posting about which team sits where. During the majority of my time there the office was arranged roughly as follows. Basement: Education & Student team, Ground Floor: Facilities Management,

Activism Team (including Individuals at Risk), First Floor: Campaigns Team, Press & Media, Second Floor: Design, Supporter Care, Events, Brand, AITV, Third Floor: Finance, IT Support, Web Team. However the ever increasing Brand and Events Team had to be moved twice during my two years there to accommodate their growing size, and arguably therefore their increasing importance in the running of the organisation. The flow chart available online and given to staff when they join AIUK, shows the role of the board and management, with the different teams low down on the list. Interestingly has flows ending with all but the campaigns team. The chart is mainly an 'account of accountability in the organisation' I was told during my induction. Further charts detailing the relationships between teams in departments exist (see Appendix 2). The charts show that within each of the departments at Amnesty there exist several teams, and within these teams there are further distinctions.

While charts like this are useful in a broad sense, the system at AIUK for collaboration between teams is such that it is difficult to show in chart form. Most undertakings are managed in one team, but supported by project groups who meet regularly and take on different aspects of the project. The lead team decides who is most appropriate to include on the project group, but most activities at AIUK involve members of the marketing team (to promote activities), and the campaigns team (to guide the campaign focus). Individuals from these teams are chosen depending on the project, the indented deliverables, and to some extent the working relationships between staff members, since how well people get on working together plays an important role decisions about recruitment to project teams. A better description than the flow chart would be to look at a more detailed layout of the building, which shows teams sitting together. Rather than having a floor for each department, which would technically be possible, the teams which work most together are often based near each other geographically in the building. There are also odd pockets of people who sit outside their teams for reasons of practicality or preference. Mikey, a colleague in the events team, is not a member of the student team, but he sits in the basement with them because he runs the student conference. The building therefore is a more realistic visualisation of the movement of ideas and people in AIUK. It is not entirely linear like the flowcharts suggest, but is arranged in practical and sometimes

impractical ways, and when you first enter the building you get lost several times a day, but after a year of working there that seems impossible. This was how I felt about many aspects of life at Amnesty: what had seemed at first to be mystifying would eventually become second nature to me. I needed a field approach that could accommodate movement through these different structural and interpersonal aspects of organisational life, yet which did not end up as an account of Amnesty itself more than an account of the images I set out to study.

Limiting My Field of Vision

Human rights images are mobile and discursive in nature, and they benefit from examination which looks at them in motion, as discussed above. However, defining and limiting the field through objects is very much constructed by the anthropologist (Amit 2000:15), and runs the risk of over extending the field and losing the depth and relationships which are crucial to gathering ethnographic data (Horst 2009:119). As Burawoy warns, 'bouncing from site to site anthropologists easily substitute anecdotes and vignettes for serious fieldwork' (2003:673). The above section suggests something of the scale and complexity of AIUK. Its multiple teams, its reliance on local groups, and a lack of clear information about how these all relate made for a complicated overall field site. For this reason careful planning was undertaken to devise an approach based on images, which allowed for the development of relationships and a sense of place within the sites visited. The bulk of my research was carried out at Amnesty UK's head office, the Human Rights Action Centre (HRAC) between November 2009 and August 2011. This allowed me to conduct participant observation from my position within the organisation as a volunteer over an extended period of time and to identify key images and campaigns to follow. While I had initially intended to follow images from just one campaign, the practicalities of my role within the organisation meant that I interacted with a number of campaigns over the two-year period, as campaigns ran their course and were 'wrapped up'. For this reason I follow images from a number of key campaigns over that period, to build up not a profile of a particular campaign which would preclude differences between campaign topics and regions, but rather to paint a picture of Amnesty's visual campaigning more generally. In my voluntary capacity I was able to get involved with many stages and processes of image design and marketing, and to

observe similarities and differences between people and campaigns.

In order to continue to follow the images after their treatment by AIUK, I took part in three local and student Amnesty groups on a regular and semi regular basis over the course of my fieldwork. There are 240 local groups across the UK, which form an important part of Amnesty's distribution strategy. Local groups are trained and briefed on campaign objectives, and provided with materials and support to campaign locally. They do this by organising meetings, fundraising and most importantly by raising awareness and encouraging people to take 'actions' in the form of letter writing, or signing a petition either online or offline. It was often suggested to me by staff at AIUK that local groups 'do the really hard work' of being Amnesty's 'face on the street'. In this way, by working with local groups, I was party to the first point of contact between public and pictures, as well as being involved in their further propulsion into public arenas. The informed decision to limit my participant observation to these arenas was based on analysis of the circulation of Amnesty images conducted as a pilot study during my previous MSc by Research, and to some extent on my undergraduate dissertation. Both of these projects suggested that these two areas are points at which images are designed and altered greatly, but which could also provide an opportunity for in depth analysis of production and responses. I used pre-existing contacts in my hometown of Edinburgh to gain access to a group there, who were chosen because of their role in supporting AIUK campaigns during the annual Edinburgh International Festival, which is one of the main events in the AIUK campaign calendar. Attendance at Edinburgh group meetings was varied, falling intensively over the summer months when I was based in Edinburgh (July-August 2010 and 2011) and semi-regularly during the rest of the year. Regular attendance was possible with groups in London and Cambridge, selected because they are extremely active local and student groups respectively, and I was able to attend monthly meetings of both groups. Meetings took place in designated halls and university rooms, and while attendance did vary, there was a core of people in each group with whom I came to form close relationships. To supplement these sites, other places where fieldwork took place included events at which campaign materials were disseminated such as music festivals, film screenings and exhibitions organised by Amnesty or other local groups and interested parties, over 50 interviews with other activists, photojournalists, and media representatives, and archival research in AIUK's

Resource Centre and the collection of materials held in Amnesty's International Secretariat. Through being present at the above sites I was able to gather information at important stages throughout the circulation of Amnesty's human rights images and to gain insight into their multiple and shifting meanings and uses.

Observant Participation: being in the field

Figure 2b: My Staff Card. Staff are issued with an identity card allowing access to the building during and after hours.

In my field sites both in the HRAC and with local groups, I conducted participant observation through being a member of staff or group member. This obviously creates certain ethical considerations, which are dealt with in more detail in the section immediately following this one. There are also methodological considerations as I was implicated in the thing that I was studying to a greater degree than is usual in anthropology. This is a shift which has been characterised by Turner as 'observant participation' to account for the changed field dynamic (Turner 1990:10). I originally

applied as a volunteer in the events team where my responsibility was programming human rights films for screening at the HRAC, but I found that it was a limiting role for my research purposes, and I changed position to be an Events Volunteer attached to current campaign events, with occasional secondments to other teams as part of the Volunteer Exchange Program. In that way I was able to be part of the working groups relating to specific campaigns, and was present for their launch and publicity events. I was supervised directly by Laura and Amanda, both members of the events team, and useful contacts and supporters of my research. Over my time at Amnesty, my responsibilities grew. I took on the role of Volunteer Representative as one of the longest serving volunteers, and my responsibilities especially around the Amnesty Media Awards were such that many members of staff were surprised to find out that I was a volunteer, let alone that I was a research student conducting research on human rights images in Amnesty.

This obviously presented as many difficulties as it did opportunities. The issue of consent required me to regularly remind people that I was doing research, and to reaffirm my position as a researcher with new and distant members of Amnesty's 250 staff. For my immediate team and those on working groups with me this was not an issue, as my regular questions and scribblings in field journals would have been reminder enough, had I not also asked for signed consent to using meeting and other materials and from every new interviewee. Often the quick turn over of volunteers and temporary staff meant that continuous rather than one off consent was required. In some cases, where consent was in doubt or where I was unsure of the nature of materials, I sought consent retrospectively. However my dual role as researcher and member of the team also presented me with opportunities: taking part in daily work meant that I was able to experience my time at Amnesty as other staff did, and relate to their point of view, and day to day activities were not necessarily marred with the obvious stigma of being an outsider, or the difficulties of translation.

In field sites throughout my research, the issue of insider/outsider was a prominent one. As discussed above I was often 'part of the furniture' in my field sites, and as a British graduate I had a broadly similar background to my informants in all my field sites in terms of class and social background. My manager at AIUK had a degree in Social Anthropology, and within both AIUK and in my local groups I had social

connections with some individuals through shared acquaintances. This would seem to position me as 'native' or insider in the traditional anthropological dichotomy. In practice I found that distinctions like this were not very useful because the shifting nature of identification and the nuances of social life meant that I was never either inside or outside. Rather, I was at times a researcher, at times a student and at times a member of staff. There were differences and similarities between me and colleagues in terms of gender, regional background, position within the organisation or group, and age. In some contexts these were highlighted, which implies that suggesting that the anthropologist can ever be either inside or outside takes far too broad a view of the dynamics of social relations. I tend to agree with Narayan when she calls for a removal of this dichotomy in favour of understanding fieldwork 'in terms of shifting identifications amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations' (Narayan 1993:2). I have tried throughout the writing of this thesis to draw out these relations and reflect on their impact on my findings.

There were elements of work in Amnesty that were very reminiscent of the work that social anthropologists do. Throughout this thesis I discuss some of the similarities in approach to questions of representation, and dealing with difference, noting that often staff at Amnesty and theorists in academia are drawing from the same knowledge pool in a way that is increasingly being considered in anthropological accounts. Riles, in *The Network Inside Out,* suggests that for her study on Fijian activist and bureaucratic networks, the subject of the study was equally indigenous to her informants as it was to academic traditions (Riles 2001:2). She suggests that 'we are already inside the network' (ibid:4) and calls for a methodology that turns it inside out, that is to say that finds a point of access from within (ibid). In many ways I have tried to answer this call. At a literal level I was based within the organisation, and at a theoretical level I was within a knowledge system that was shared but that I have attempted to turn outwards and make intelligible. However at the same time I am conscious of trying not to overestimate similarities, or prejudge the practices at work as merely the result of a shared knowledge pool. To do so simplifies the way that different pools, practices and power dynamics interact. What results is an account of Amnesty and my position that is detailed and reflexive about these issues.

My role as a volunteer with my own workload also created time pressures and

limitations to my potential field in terms of access. Making requests to sit in on meetings that I was not already party to was not comfortably received by staff, and access was an issue which determined some of my choices about which campaigns to follow and how to be involved. The problems of access when you are 'studying up' are well documented (Nadar 1972), and it has been pointed out that the imbalance of power means that those being studied have the means to exclude themselves or aspects of themselves from interrogation (Cooper and Packard 1997:5). While there were certainly times when my role prevented me from gathering information in specific sites, and from certain informants, these barriers were often explicit and enshrined in organisational hierarchy charts produced by AIUK. Thus I was able to identify and adapt to these 'blind spots' by utilising other methods. Throughout the thesis I am explicit about where information was not available, and how I adapted. As well as access which was prevented through the hierarchy of the organisation of which I was on the lowest rung as a volunteer, there were also practicalities which prevented me from having full access. Muzzucato points out that anthropologists studying flows and exchanges will have to contend with a greater level of simultaneity than previously (Muzzucato 2008:69). This is because things will be happening at all field sites all the time, and the anthropologist will only be present at one. This was true of life within an organisation as well. Most work is done independently and quietly on computers, and while I was involved in some parts of image production, other parts were being conducted elsewhere in inaccessible ways at the same time. Anthropologists are increasingly involved in working at their chosen field sites (Marcus 2009:197) and their jobs and roles will make them bound to do certain things at certain times. This was the case with my work in Amnesty, which meant that research was undertaken while at the same time I had deadlines and tasks to complete which were demanding, time-consuming and prevented me from getting involved with every activity or event which looked interesting. To address these limits I conducted interviews which supplemented participant observation, in order to fill in blanks created by issues of access. I heard opinions and versions of meetings from those present which often created interesting comparisons between competing versions of the same things. I had to select therefore, not only when to prioritise my presence, but also who to interview about things that I had missed. Interviews formed a significant aspect of my field research and I found that clarifying things that came up in other contexts in meetings helped to clarify consent for certain

topics. The selection of interviewees and topics is clearly anthropologist driven, however the flip side of that is that the selectivity is overt, rather than in straight participant observation with its mystique of unbiased 'integration'.

Ethics and Considerations

Consent

My research complies fully with the ASA ethical guidelines. All research participants consented to taking part, with written agreements where possible, and were informed about the purposes for which the information would be used. The conditions of my being able to conduct research of this sort were worked out with my head of department at Amnesty and require anonymity for all informants and so for that reason names have been changed. However the nature of the organisation is such that often there is only one person in a certain role or meeting in which case name changing was rendered useless. In these few cases I have made attempts to protect their privacy by other means such as changing incidental details of the meeting or situation, or making efforts to disguise their role where it is not crucial to the narrative. As mentioned above, consent in this situation is hard to ensure and required continuous reminders to new staff. Initially upon undertaking research I put out a notice on the intranet letting staff know about my project and inviting people to come and speak to me about it. While this generated some interest at the time, over the research period it often felt that people saw me more as a volunteer than a researcher. This required me to make judgement calls about what information was appropriate to use and what was private. I have attempted to seek explicit consent in every instance where I was unsure about the privacy of the material. The same difficult balancing of my role as a researcher took place with local groups where I was seen very much as a local group member. In the case of Edinburgh and Cambridge I had existing ties with members of the local groups from prior to undertaking research. However in these locations consent was easier to manage because of the bounded nature of the groups, for unlike Amnesty's constantly changing 250 staff, local groups were small enough that I could sit down with each member and discuss the project and their role in it. I had no objections from anyone taking part. When using materials from members of the public I sought consent from people who are quoted directly and where possible

conducted follow up interviews.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer with Amnesty I had to sign a confidentiality agreement which prevents me from disseminating any materials marked 'internal'. Amnesty as an organisation is very concerned with confidentiality because of the sensitive nature of their research. This is less the case for AIUK who do not handle the sensitive case information held at the IS, but I felt it necessary on occasion to seek consent for the use of documents which were not market internal, but which I would not have had access to outwith my role as a volunteer. I chose to err on the side of caution where Amnesty's organisational confidentiality was concerned because of the importance placed on it by the organisation. For that reason, very few documents have been reproduced in this thesis. I have summarised where possible, and I focus my attention and analysis on what people say and do with these documents rather than on the content of them. Amnesty UK are concerned with organisation transparency following a series of recent scandals, and most of the information that I use pertaining to the organisation of Amnesty and the processes involved are freely available in the public domain.

Positionality

My insider status in my fieldwork contexts as mentioned above brought issues of consent and required me to make judgements about appropriateness throughout the writing up of my field notes. It also raises questions of objectivity because as an insider myself, it sometimes took an effort to see things with the outsider perspective which anthropologists value. There were times when being so involved with projects and the work place frustrations which come as a result of that meant that I had to make extra efforts to reposition myself as an observer and researcher, to take part in 'participant deconstruction' and to step outside of participant certainties (Shore and Wright 1997:16-17). In order to counter to some extent these potential biases I have tried throughout the thesis to be explicit about my role and relationships in different situations, and I have made every effort to be self-aware and reflexive while in the field. I hope that my insider status works not to make me a sympathetic researcher,

but to make me an aware one, and allows me to understand and explain some occasionally confusing practices by AIUK and local groups in their terms, and with a genuine understanding of the pressures and processes behind them.

Despite, or possibly because of my close relationship with the people I worked with throughout my fieldwork I imagine that some of the people depicted will disagree with my analysis of some matters. Previous studies in the field of charities and NGOs have found a critical response from those involved (for example Mosse 2004:x), partly because of the nature of their work as funding dependent, and therefore their deep concern with regulating the flow of information and the representation of the organisation (ibid: 12). To counter potential negative responses, I invited participants to read my work and the parts of it pertaining to them. The invitation was rarely taken up, and I was told more than once that I was 'trusted' to 'do justice' to the material. I hope that I have been able to live up to this trust, and I have tried to give an honest and balanced analysis of the paths of human rights images. The analysis and perspective however is not a final word on any of my informants, fieldwork contexts or indeed on human rights images: it is simply my version of these things as I saw and understood them.

Methods and data gathering

Within the blanket term of participant observation there have always been multiple methods employed (Bernard 2011:34). This was particularly the case in my research, where as discussed above, it was not always possible to have access to events, and aspects of people's lived experiences and parts of the organisation remained closed to me. For this reason I relied heavily on these additional methodologies including archival research, visual research and most importantly interviews. What follows is a brief overview of my use of these tools and how they worked in practice.

 i) Interviews

Interviews allow for several advantages over other methodologies, including a formalization of relationships, access to closed offices and individuals, a way of accessing specific and targeted information, and for exploratory purposes (Gray

2009: 371). One of the key advantages of interviews is that they facilitate focused and in-depth discussion where an interviewer can probe in order to clarify meanings and assumptions which would not be expressed otherwise because to the interviewee they are obvious (Arksey & Knight 1999:32). During the course of my research I conducted over 50 interviews and they formed a significant part of my data-gathering. Interviews were invaluable because they allowed for the gathering of information from hard-to-reach informants within AIUK and in the media including photojournalists, and at Amnesty IS with members of the research teams there (through structured, focused, in depth interviews: see Appendix 3). They also helped to build relationships with members of AIUK and key photographers, and provided me with background and specific information. Interviews however only informed me about what the interviewees themselves wanted or were able to convey. Bourdieu points out that we could ask ourselves why we put candles on a birthday cake as a way to count years lived, and that we don't know, we just do, or when we do have ideas they differ greatly between people (Bourdieu 1993:283). Much of social life is habitual, therefore, rather than theoretical (Jenkins 1994:439). In addition, informants may not want to talk about certain things and may censor themselves consciously or unconsciously (Holloway & Jefferson 2000:2). All are valid points, however the interviews that I conducted, backed up with long term participant observation as they were, avoided some of these pitfalls through being part of a package of methods rather than the primary source of information. For example I was able to make a comparison of practices observed with those being described by interviewees. When analysing interview data, as well as conducting interviews, I was able to bring in additional knowledge to inform my conclusions, thus allowing interviews and participant observation to support each other. Interviews were either structured or semi-structured based on loose questions devised for the individual being interviewed. They were recorded where possible on my mobile telephone using a plug in microphone, and detailed notes, with time references made to accompany recordings. In some occasions it was not possible to use a recording device because of respecting the wishes of the individual, or because I deemed it likely to be a barrier to the flow of conversation. In these cases, detailed notes were made during the interview and written up afterwards. Interviews took place in various locations.Informal interviews were held in the 'break out' area of AIUK where there is a small kitchen and a large dining area, while other interviews took place in the office

of the person being interviewed, if appropriate, or in cafes and pubs nearby. Maintaining privacy in the latter locations was difficult, but conducting some interviews in neutral locations outside the workplace or group meeting room was important to me because I found that conversation flowed more easily.

ii) Visual Methodologies

Visuals were a central vehicle for conducting this study as both the focus of study, and as discussed above, the means by which the study was structured. They were also instrumental as methodological tools themselves. My project is in a way a large scale photo elicitation. Clearly this is a simplification, but responses to images form a large part. Interviews were largely structured around images. Within the context of this project, making links between the verbal and the visual is given priority, as this is how narratives of human rights and agency of images emerge. Pink suggests that shared viewings of the visual 'offers further ways of exploring and creating relationships between verbal and visual knowledge' (Pink 2007:92). Talking about pictures is therefore key, and as discussed in the above sections, this involved following and using images to elicit narratives (e.g. Harper 2002; Pink, Kurti and Afonso 2004). As well as being the primary focus of the study, images facilitated much of the subsequent methods used. I observed that people find it easier to talk about images rather than simply about themselves, they create a buffer between interviewer and interviewee making the setting more relaxed, and they provide an impetus for discussions with further-reaching implications than those suggested by the images themselves.

Images are used throughout the text because context is crucial to the meaning of images and presenting these contexts visually will help to render these arenas accessible after the fact. This is in terms of the visual setting in which images, such as a demonstration or exhibition space, but also in terms of maps and visual aids to place the images and image trajectories and to process the network mapping. Use of visual methods has a controversial history in anthropology, with debate about the subjective nature of photography (Collier and Collier 1986; Hockings 1995), which have more recently been replaced with debate about *how* to use the visual rather than *if* (Pink 2007:10). The inherent subjectivity of images that has caused so much

concern is well positioned in a project whose concern is with the subjectivity of visual narratives, such that I would suggest that reflexivity is to an extent inbuilt.

iii) Archival Research.

In order to situate current campaigns in context I relied on archives held by AIUK and the IS. Amnesty UK stores information in the Resource Centre which includes copies of all reports, campaigning aids distributed to groups and all the materials which staff themselves use to research campaign strategies. I also used Amnesty Digital Asset Management (ADAM), a visual archive to which I was granted access thanks to the supportive staff at the IS. This allowed me to situate images in visual current contexts which are available to staff at AIUK. Because there is no one coherent archive reflecting a systematic narrative, I was not focussed on the archives themselves as my object of study as others have been (e.g. Derrida 1995; Foucault 2002). My intention was to gather information about campaigns and images from different periods, as well as to reflect on the images held in the archives and what their storage means to staff. I did not have access to Amnesty's full archival collection which is held in an old underground mine, and can be recalled by staff piecemeal with 'a suitable reason' from the Facilities manager at the HRAC. However I was able to use the catalogue to reflect on the materials stored, and the process for recalling these materials. Outside of Amnesty I used online resources to access the media, and compiled a collection of human rights and humanitarian campaign materials from other organisations in order to build up a picture of the intervisual context of NGO marketing. The archival research performed is not exhaustive but rather is illustrative and was used largely to inform my work in the field as well as a tool for analysing and understanding Amnesty's work.

Conclusions

Fieldwork has been re-imagined in the context of this project to accommodate the study of the transitory phenomena that are rights campaign images. This has been achieved by allowing the development of a flexible field site, defined by the various contexts of engagement that images move through as a result of campaign activities. I

was based as a volunteer at AIUK, and a member of three local Amnesty groups during my fieldwork, which allowed me access to the people and processes involved. To gather data I relied on a range of methodological approaches including participation and interviews. All of these methods were underpinned by the images themselves which formed the basis of the field site, and were also the means by which communication was facilitated. The methodological approach therefore utilised many elements of traditional anthropological research, including a strong focus on the lived experiences of people involved with campaign images, and understanding approaches to images and rights from the point of view of informants. At the same time the study can be seen as a deviation from traditional methods through its understanding of the field as created by image movement, rather than a grounded cultural or geographic space. Therefore greater emphasis on positionality was required to situate me as a researcher in these various arenas as my role was constantly changing, and many of the ethical considerations unexpected. In many ways the study serves not only as a study of rights images, but as a reflection on the methods and approaches which anthropologists use to engage with the transitory nature of much of modern life. The methods used in the thesis suggest that in order to study phenomena such as rights, which have a de-situated aspirational quality, as well as grounded local meanings, anthropologists must not only come down from the veranda, they must also find ways to move outside of the village without losing sight of it. For rights campaigns, where images are so central, this way of moving as shown above can be guided by them, as well making them the focus of the study.

Chapter 3: Human Rights and Images

In this chapter I provide an overview of the field of human rights anthropology and images to situate the findings in my thesis, and further develop the rationale behind my approach. I offer an account of the literature and history in this area that explains the fundamental importance of images to the field of human rights, and their many uses. I argue that rights images have largely taken the form of exposing that which is wrong, as a demand for change. I use literature from a variety of academic traditions including anthropology, philosophy, legal studies, and visual studies, as well as using examples of images and extracts from NGO statements and materials, to build an account of the important role that images have in the process of human rights, and the dominant uses of images and how we can account for them. I begin with a brief account of the history of human rights, and anthropological approaches to the study of rights. I argue that there is a bias towards the study of 'others' that reinforces a false impression of unity in Euro-American approaches to rights. I then go on to characterise the legal process of human rights, and the role of NGOs and images in the mechanisms of rights, before going into more detail about the photojournalistic origins of rights.

I suggest that there exists a 'circuit' (McLagan 2005) of rights images as claims, that is itself reflective of the process of international soft law and the focus on exposure mentioned above. This circuit requires not only that images expose what is wrong, but also an appropriate reaction from viewers to seeing the images that can be generated into public pressure. A practice in rights images of depicting suffering is identified, and it is the focus on showing people in pain and discomfort that is expected to elicit a response. This is linked to Enlightenment ideas about why we care about others to suggest that there exists a practice of appealing to the universality of pain to make claims for rights. Rights images then can be seen to call for sympathetic identification with others based on pain. In this respect they are shown to fit into wider trends that root rights in biomedical rather than judicial practices and identifications. I end by discussing critiques of this process and use of images, that are prevalent in academic and non-academic circles, and the implications

for a rights practice based on compassionate sympathy. It is with this background of critique that I suggest we must view the use of images by AIUK, by seeing them as a response to a particular tradition of rights images.

The Growth of Human Rights

Human rights are now the major internationally recognized and practised approach to social justice, and one of the few grand political narratives to which most governments at least claim to subscribe. Application of human rights law, and public awareness of and discourse on human rights, have grown steadily over the past few decades (Brysk 2002: 4), and while realization and application may differ considerably in practice, the language and ideals of human rights are used extremely widely (Wilson 1997:2). However, universal as they may appear, many theorists are quick to remind us that they grew out of a very particular Euro-American tradition of law and individualism (see Bell 1996; Zechenter 1997; Huntington 1996:41; Macpherson 1964).

Human rights are situated by many theorists as part of an historical development which has its roots in classical republicanism, and grew most firmly out of ideas about natural law, the theories on the social contract, and Enlightenment morality (see Douzinas 2000; Falk 1980; Freeman 1994; Hunt 2008; Shestack 1998). Human rights, seen in this way, are explained with attention to the move away from Divine Right of Kings, characterised by seventeenth century philosophy, towards rights as based on reason and mutual cooperation. Hobbes' theory of natural law is credited with framing philosophical thinking about rights (Macpherson1964:9). Hobbes' assertion is that individuals relinquish some rights, so as to be protected from their violent natures and the natures of others (Hobbes 1997). In claiming this, Hobbes and other thinkers of his time accept a universal element to rights (Hart 1984; Donnelly 1989). This is expanded and articulated by thinkers such as Kant and Hume, whose versions of rights as residing in reason and sentiment respectively (Kant 1983(1795); Hume 2000 (1740)), form the basis for much philosophical thinking during the Enlightenment, the culmination of which was the creation of the documents of revolution: The American Declaration of Independence (1776), the Bill of Rights

(1791) and the Declaration des Driots de l'Homme et du Citoyen (1789). In these historically specific documents, the language of the international legislature which is to be applicable to all nations can be found. The '...natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man' of the French document, and the 'inalienable rights' contain the very wording that comes to be used in the UDHR preamble (1948). This is of course a very brief account of a process, but is the broad strokes route that is most often described in historical accounts of rights (Hunt 2008; Ishay 2008). Rights, explained in this way, form a relatively coherent narrative which charts their development over time in Europe and North America. It presents rights as we experience them today, and in law, as a relatively inevitable result of a system of law, approach to morality, and attitude to the individual.

Yet the philosophical tradition from which rights are credited as coming, is also one where criticism of universal rights ideas has as long, if not longer, tradition (Waldron 1987; Lyons1984). While European and North American society saw the increasing presence of rights in law, it was not without its staunch opponents. Some of the most important thinkers of recent times came down on the concept of universal natural rights. Bentham's famously quoted that rights are 'nonsense upon stilts' (Bentham 2002:371), while Burke condemned rights as 'abstract principles' (Burke 1982:28) and spawned something of a pamphlet war with Thomas Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft on the rights of man (and woman) (See Blakemore 1997). Marx famously denounced universal rights in language not unlike that used by relativism later, by suggesting that rights were a products of capitalist endeavour (Marx 1977b:324). More recently there have been attacks on the UDHR and rights as they exist in international law. Rights are considered too vague to be usefully applicable (Kennedy 2002), and a 'dangerous dogma' which overshadows the principles it hopes to protect by trying to codify them (Blattberg 2009). As discussed later in this chapter, anthropological contributions that question the universality of rights play no small role in providing background for this critique. My point here is not to interrogate these critiques of rights, but rather to draw attention to the level of debate that exists and has existed around human rights both in terms of questions of the very principle of universal morality and in terms of questions about how this principle can be fairly pursued and protected through law.

Rights are far from unquestioned in their so-called sphere of origin. Recent debates and public outcry and debate about the introduction of a Bill of Rights to the UK to replace the Human Rights Act[8], suggest that while rights may have their origins in this social cultural setting, it is far from being a closed book. Debates exist around the acceptance of rights and the legal form their protection should take. While histories of rights do of course make ample reference to these critiques, they are an aside, the side that did not win the war of words. However while that may be true to some extent, there is now an internationally recognised bill of rights, and seeing rights as a closed book, a neat narrative, or a forgone conclusion ignores the way that they are continually changing. The later introduction of 'third generation rights', and the growing number of specific bills suggests that what rights are and what they protect against is still in development. Third generation rights are those loosely associated with group and environmental rights (Orend 2002:30), rather than those covered by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) or the socio-economic rights of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and they therefore represent a relatively new way of thinking of rights. Third generation rights are now campaigned for by major rights organisations such as Amnesty International, who launched the Poverty and Human Rights Campaign in 2010 to campaign for environmental and group rights. These rights are themselves not without criticism and debate (Alston 1982). Therefore we must view rights not as fixed, but rather as part of a process of negotiation which takes place in Euro-American contexts as it does further afield. In the following section I discuss how anthropology has contributed and can contribute to understanding this process.

Anthropology and Rights

Anthropology has been described as having a 'turbulent' (Engel 2001) and 'ambivalent' (Dembour 1996) relationship with human rights. A 1947 statement

---

8   The Commission on a Bill of Rights, tasked with looking into making the change were themselves unable to agree on how to proceed (see http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/about/cbr/uk-bill-rights-vol-1.pdf) and public opinion was divided with mainstream media representing differing positions on the issue.

issued by the American Anthropological Association rejected an international declaration of rights, on the basis of cultural and moral particularism, stating that:

> '...persons, living in terms of values not envisaged by a limited Declaration, will 'thus be excluded from the freedom of full participation in the only right and proper way of life that can be known to them' (AAA statement 1947).

A follow up statement was issued as late as 1999, which sees human rights as a useful means to protect indigenous rights, but in many respects it is similar to the original in its commitment to have: 'respect for human differences, both collective and individual, rather than the abstract legal uniformity of Western tradition.' (AAA Website accessed 17/5/2009). I would suggest that in the 1947 statement we see a precedent of relativism, echoed in the 1999 statement, which is still strongly present in anthropological approaches to rights, and which, when interrogated, reveals a dualistic approach between what are deemed to be 'our' rights, and the practices of 'others'.

Engel, in her analysis of the history of the AAA's approach to rights, states that 'neither the AAA's political commitments nor its understanding of culture have changed significantly since 1947' (Engel 2001:537). By this she means that despite a seemingly radical shift in approach, it is actually a faith in legal mechanisms which has changed, rather than the principles of anthropology (ibid). In this she may be right, however rather than seeing this as proof of a continued and inevitable road to commitment to rights that Engel, and to a lesser extent Messer (1993b) does, I suggest that this is in fact a symptom of a sub-field of anthropology still very much in development. Goodale's assertion that rather than creeping towards acceptance of rights, the academic field of anthropology ignored rights for the best part of fifty years (Goodale 2006:487), may be closer to the reality of anthropological approaches to right. He points out that no papers were published by the AAA with human rights in the title over this period, and there is little evidence of debate. Even now many of the key texts in the anthropology of rights come from the fields of philosophy and law rather than from within anthropology (see ibid: 489; Dembour 1996:22 for a discussion of this). While this statement does not acknowledge contributions made by anthropologists in areas tangential to human rights over the period, it cannot be

denied that there was little activity within anthropology until the late 1980s.

It is little wonder then, if the approaches taken do in some ways follow on where the 1947 document left off, with a focus on the 'imposition of hegemonic values on less powerful groups of people' (Goodale 2006:486), and a keen interest in the indigenous and group rights of other cultures. Offering a relativist critique of human rights, anthropologists have asked questions such as 'what is human?' 'is there a human nature?'(Messer 1993b; Ranciere 2004), and debated the ability of a universal doctrine to encompass vastly differing ideas of right and wrong around the world (Bell 1996; Nagengast 1997; Perry 1997). Anthropologists have been involved with providing ethnographic accounts which show different ideas of personhood and the individual (Brugger 1996:601), as well as providing examples of moral and ethical codes which, though not in keeping with the ideals of the UDHR are equally valid (Bell 1996:664). These approaches fit in with an early concern within the discipline for group and indigenous rights, sometimes seen in opposition to the individual rights posed in international law (Jones 1999; Kenrick & Lewis 2004; Gledhill 1997).These approaches often see international claims of human rights as an 'imposition' of western concepts of rights (Renteln 1990:2), offering what Cowan *et al* characterise as the 'rights versus culture' approach (Cowan *et al* 2001:4), or conversely the 'right to culture' approach (ibid:8), depending on what position the theorist is arguing from. Where rights are supported it has tended to be through critiques supporting the spread of human rights despite relativism (Donnelly 1999:60)[9], and through the use of international rights regimes to campaign for indigenous rights (Kenrick & Lewis 2004:5). While these studies are important and useful, for the field to develop we must open up avenues of research which go beyond this distinction.

To some extent this movement is already taking place. Anthropology has pulled itself out of the universalism/relativism debate to accept that rights are here, and we must understand how they work in practice, rather than focussing on their philosophical legitimacy (Cowan *et al* 2001:1). This approach has yielded interesting results focussed on legal pluralism, examining places where international law and local

---

9   Jack Donnelly is not an anthropologist by training, but is included in this discussion because of his
    influence on anthropological accounts of rights.

custom and law intersect (Wilson 2000; Demian 2011; Wastell 2007; Fuller 1994; Merry 1988). In studies of these kinds a certain acceptance of the proliferation of rights is assumed, and their local applications and understandings are the focus. Merry's various studies in this area (Merry 1996, 2006a, 2006b, 2007) provide detailed accounts of how rights are 'remade in the vernacular' (2006a: 55). For example her study of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement discusses how the movement draws from national, global and indigenous law to frame its demands (1997:29), in order to show how local law becomes globalised and vice versa (ibid: 46). Others focus on rights as they are experienced by those who have suffered rights abuses (Das 1994; Daniel 1994), to try and understand the repercussions of rights violations. These approaches, coupled with other studies that pay attention to the mechanisms of rights administrations (Riles 2006; Kelly 2009) have opened up a wider understanding of the process of rights, and show it to be more than a simple imposition of values on a disempowered other (see An-Na'im 2002). Yet despite this, the institutional bias which prefers the study of the other to the study of more familiar cultural settings, means that the field of human rights anthropology has developed in a somewhat lopsided manner. Human rights anthropology contains echoes of assumptions made in 1947 that human rights are relatively unproblematic in 'this culture'. That is to say that anthropologists have either actively, or through omission in the areas of study, bought into being an account of rights which situates them comfortably in the philosophy and practices of Euro-American settings.

Studies such as those mentioned above have an overt focus on rights as understood through the proliferation and integration of law and legal systems. This focus is re-enforced by approaches in anthropology that favour the study of rights through legal institutions and monitoring (e.g. Kelly 2009; Merry 2012) or legal language (Hastrup 2003), thus focussing on professional spheres and legal structures to mediate rights, rather than public or social experiences of rights. This means that when rights are looked at 'at home' they tend to be examined through a legal lens. These studies, while important to the field, do not cover the area of rights that interests me specifically- that of how rights come to be supported and contested outside of legal institutions or situations of abuse. There are some moves to address this area of rights. In medical anthropology, Kleinman looks at mediated images of rights abuses

as a form of violence (Kleinman & Kleinman 2000), thus moving the debate away from the legal to the publicly mediated sphere of engagement. Similarly other medical approaches question the rights that we have enshrined through showing the role that inequality plays in health and illness transmittance (Farmer 2001), and through recent studies that similarly focus on the cultural production of rights norms across transnational spaces (Levitt & Merry 2009). Therefore while the field is developing in new and interesting directions, it remains concerned largely with distant places and legal spaces.

For the field to continue to develop in a less lopsided way, more attention must be paid to how rights are imagined and constructed outwith legal institutions, and outwith the experience of different 'others'. This is an approach that borrows heavily from Cowan *et al*'s discussion of rights as a culture (Cowan *et al* 2001:12), yet while they base this approach on law as a function that shapes and reflects society (Geertz 1983), I use rights more broadly but with the same focus on rights as a possessing culture. Rather than legally shaped culture, I propose that the area of the cultural production of rights is a neglected one, and one where we can begin to understand the processes and practices that constitute rights culture. Through examining how those working in the field seek to promote rights, and the understandings of rights that support their commitment, a picture can be built of rights culture in Euro-American settings that is as diverse as it has been shown to be elsewhere (see Merry 1997). In demystifying the processes at work in Euro-American contexts as well as 'other' ones, we can start to see rights not as the product of all powerful nations, but as fractious and contested in these contexts too. In doing so we begin the process of a conception of rights which is global rather than dualistic. Such an approach is most clearly realised, I would suggest, in the growing field of network analysis of rights discussed in the previous chapter, and which I intend to expand upon through a mobile and networked approach to images of rights.

The point of this thesis is not to support or refute the Enlightenment origins of rights, and the agency which some countries have in the field of human rights. To do that would not only be to ignore an important power dynamic, but also would be to open up again the circuitous universalist/relativist debate which has been discussed at

length by others more qualified than myself. Rather I highlight this viewpoint to draw attention to the way that it creates a certain acceptance that rights are somehow 'natural' and 'inevitable' in the Euro-American context. It is this acceptance which this thesis will address, not simply by looking at rights as the moral export of 'the west', but rather by looking also at the methods of construction and contestation that take place through rights public interaction with campaigning which suggests that even in this setting rights are a shifting and developing concept, rather than an absolute. This approach to understanding how rights play out and are debated and constructed is reflected best in sociological studies of mediated rights (see Nash 2010; Philo & Berry 2004; Freedman & Thussu 2011). Anthropological ethnographic approaches to how rights ideas and practice are produced 'at home' in non legal arenas are needed to appreciate the full range of issues that play out in the day to day production of rights (McLagan 2006). If, as Merry and Levitt suggest, rights are a language with many dialects (2009:451), it is important that we do not view those spoken in Euro-American contexts as the standardised form of that language. Rather I hope to show that there are dialects of rights in these contexts. In doing so I hope to move the focus away from a dynamic which places rights in the hands of certain countries and traditions, to consider that here too rights are contested and appropriated.

The Human Rights Process: Law and the role of NGOs

Originally stated in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948), enshrined in law through the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (999 UNTS 171; 6 ILM 368) and with socio-economic rights of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966 (993 UNTS 5; 6 ILM 361), rights are protected specifically through individual bills, for example the Covenant on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1981 (1249 UNTS 13; 19 ILM 33). Documents are designed to be open enough to allow for local interpretation (Chayes & Chayes 1993:184; Scott 2004:7). This openness is currently under closer scrutiny with concern from campaigners that the international treaties are being used to push other agendas (Chayes & Chayes 1993:187). The presentation of rights is therefore a variable and contested issue, even in the seemingly stable arena of law.

Rights are protected by international law though UN treaties, and monitored through reports made to the UN by Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which inform the recommendations made by the UN to countries regarding action needed to be taken to comply with their treaty commitments (UN Website, accessed 7/4/13). Countries who have ratified bills are in theory accountable to meet those obligations entailed, however there are rarely legal or fiscal repercussions for countries who do not meet their requirements (Boyle 1980; Kennedy 1987), and there are those who question the effectiveness of international human rights law (Keith 1999; Donnelly, 1989; Oberleitner 2007). Much of international law is soft law, and therefore not enforceable by threat of penal action. In simplified form the idea is that it is in the best interest of a country to comply with these recommendations for their international reputation and standing, and for reciprocity from other governments (Scott 2004:43; Keith 1999:95; Kennedy 1987:11). Countries therefore respond to pressure from other governments, and public pressure, when acting on their commitments under international law. The growth in human rights has gone hand in hand with a huge growth in the number and scope of NGOs concerned with protecting those rights (Carroll 1992; Clarke 1993). These organisations fulfil the role of monitoring, and ultimately of providing the surveillance culture which is hoped will prevent countries from abusing rights (Keenan 2004; Gaer 2003). NGOs therefore play an important role in the process of human rights law. Among the largest, and arguably the most influential organisations working in this field is Amnesty International.

As well as reporting to the UN, Amnesty International and other rights organisations lobby governments and act as intermediaries between the international processes and practices of human rights and the public, through their campaigns. Campaigns are crucial to the process of human rights, as international reputations and the shaming of abusers depend on public outrage and awareness. Organizations such as Amnesty International[10], Human Rights Watch[11], Liberty[12], and many other organizations

---

10 www.amnesty.org

11 www.hrw.org

12 www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk

attempt to communicate rights issues and to encourage the public to take action by writing to their Members of Parliament or governments abroad to demand change in the international arena. Thus the process is at once a distant international legal one, working at very high levels, but underpinned by and essentially depending on a large scale grassroots marketing campaign. Public participation in campaigns is therefore not only a way to influence opinion at government level, it is also an integral aspect of mobilising compliance for international human rights soft law.

Despite the role that campaigns play in constructing and communicating rights, few studies have been conducted into the internal processes that make up campaign design (exceptions include Korey 1998; Watson 2004), and of these none have managed to go much beyond an organizational chart model favoured by political science[13]. There is therefore a certain level of mystery surrounding how campaigns are devised. It is in part a response to this mystique that I opted to focus my study on a human rights organisation, rather than other producers of rights images such as news media. As key players in the arena of rights they are not only an important site for the production of reports of rights, but are also responsible for determining much about how rights are presented and redeemed in the public sphere through campaigns.

As discussed in the Introduction chapter, images are a central part of the process through which rights are claimed, as evidence-making and awareness raising. They are used in report writing by the UN, by Amnesty International, and other organisations who report on the compliance of countries with their responsibilities under ratified rights treaties. They play the role of providing evidence showing that which is hidden and in doing so bring it into the light where it can be interrogated and judged. This allows countries to be 'shamed' (Kennan 2004:435) into ensuring that problems are corrected. They are therefore instrumental in the process of international human rights law. However rights images do more than just provide evidence of violations- they themselves contribute to the construction of ideas about what constitutes a violation (McLagan 2006:223). In a sense a photographer is in part

---

13 Hopgood's 2006 book Keepers of The Flame is a notable exception to this, providing an in depth ethnographic account of Amnesty IS. However this book is focussed on internal organisational culture, and the vast range of work taken on by the IS mean that campaign design is not a notable feature of the account.

responsible for this, by deciding where to point the camera and who is worthy of our attention, whilst those who seek to expose rights abuses are also complicit in the preference of some over others. At AIUK one of the commonest reasons for the public to contact the organisation was to report a situation they were aware of, that they thought deserved Amnesty's attention. Amnesty, like all other organisations involved in rights, make decisions about which cases to work on. Often these are worked out at the IS level, where diplomatic ties, cultural and social practices, and other factors are taken into account to decide what campaigns are viable and which sections can run them. However beyond these sorts of decisions, and the value of images for their evidential properties, they play another role in determining how we understand rights violations.

Images have a role in the process of rights that is beyond providing evidence. I use the term 'bearing witness' to describe this role because it captures the spectatorship element of this role which rights images fulfil. Beyond just showing abuses, images used by NGOs are used with an expectation of a particular response, one that I argue is an emotional rather than an evidential one. Images have been used to demand social change since the camera was invented, but the types of claims which they can and do make are quite specific. Photos used in this way are of course not the only approaches to photography; for some photographers the camera has been used primarily to record and document (for example see Santer 1986). However as the following section will demonstrate, there is a long tradition of the use of images in social change. I offer a selective history of this phenomenon to illustrate the mechanisms of the process. It is not intended to be an exhaustive account of all images that have been used for social change. I suggest that there exists a compassionate activism rooted in images, that can be described as 'bearing witness', of which rights images are a part, that relies on images of suffering to provoke public responses. It is in this tradition of image use that I argue Amnesty visual culture exists, and it is an important background for understanding choices made by staff that are in part responses to this tradition.

Pictures of Pain: Claims for Change
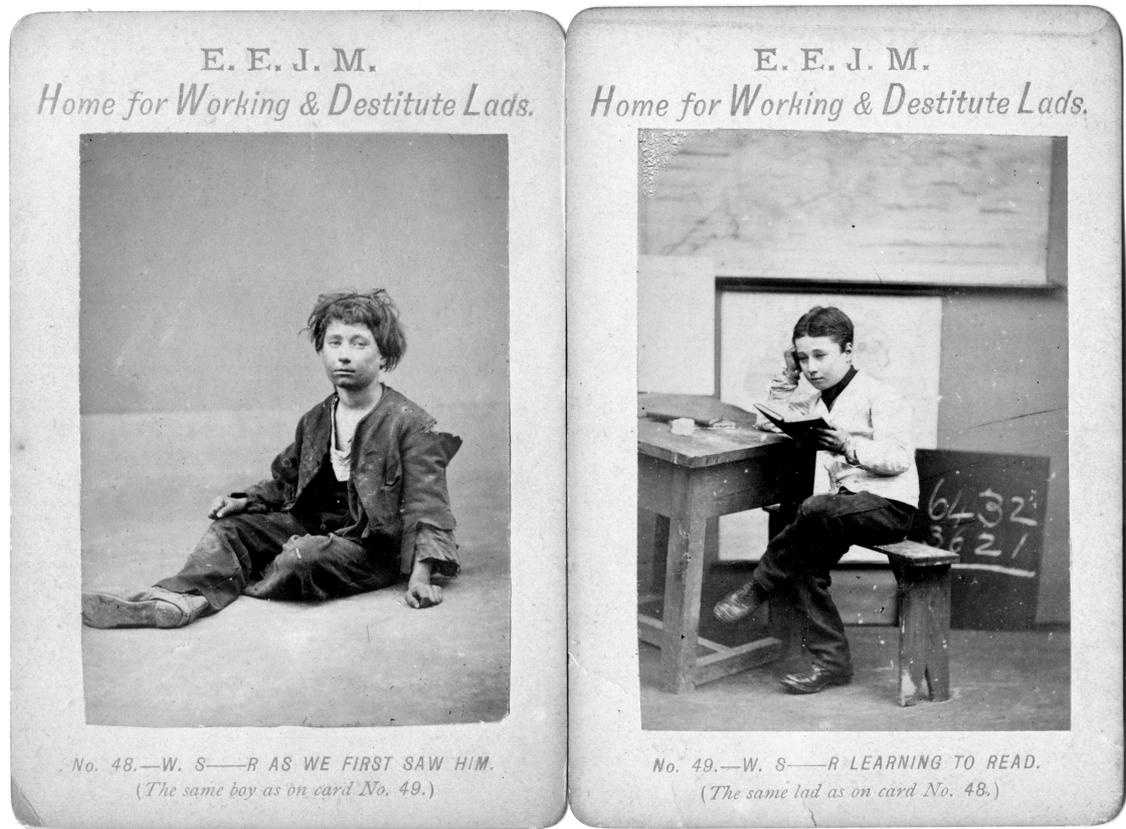
Figure 3a: Barnardos Advertisement images no 48 & 49, used with permission from Barnardos. The boy in this picture (name unknown) had been dressed and styled in both images to highlight the difference between before and after.

Many early claims to social justice have been presented in the form of photographs (Ovenden 1997:89; Becker 2007:190). Famously Barnardos used photographs of boys in the 1870s 'before and after' their placement in a Barnardos orphanage. The 'before' pictures showed boys dressed 'in rags' and often looking emaciated, compared to 'after' photographs which showed the same boys looking healthy and well dressed. The images were used to raise funds for Dr Barnardo's work, however they can also be seen as an early example of visual claims for rights. Through showing 'before' pictures of boys in need, the claim is made that this is not how it should be (Ash 2008:180), therefore images have a history of being instrumental in calling for social change. In this approach to images we see echoes of photojournalistic style. The use of images to convey something which is unknown and seen as unacceptable, and in

doing so asks the viewer to recognise the need to change it, is the model with which photojournalism is most associated (Linfield 2012:37). In the famous early images of Capa, Riis, and other photojournalists we can see records of war, poverty, and political upheaval which while documenting, are also exposing, shining a light on faraway places. It is no accident that the obituary of photojournalist Tim Hetherington that appeared in the Guardian, is couched in language so similar to that of rights: 'The troubled corners of the world into which he shed the light of his lens are brighter because of him; the work he leaves is a candle by which those who choose to look, might see' (Brabazon 2011). This is not so different from Amnesty's imagery of a candle and its remit to 'shine a light'[14]. Photojournalism and rights both seek to illuminate in order to change.

While not all photojournalism can be seen as producing rights images, rights images traditionally tend to come largely from photojournalists. The process of exposure and documentation used by rights organisations lend themselves to the practice which the Barnardos example highlights, of showing what is wrong in order to create awareness and public intervention to create change. Since the invention of the camera there have existed images which have exposed hidden situations. War, previously unknown to those not fighting or living through it, was suddenly and graphically rendered through the work of photojournalists such as Roger Fenton, John Robertson and Matthew Brady[15]. The latter, whose *The Dead of Antietam* portrayed war corpses, caused public dismay, as this reviewer summed up:

> 'Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our door-yards and along streets, he has done something very like it' (NYT 1862:1).

This suggests something of the potential that photography can have, that of rendering real and immediate that which was distant and obscure (Trachtenberg 1985:12). However it was not simply the photographs themselves that caused such public outcry over the war, it was the means of their dissemination (Marien 2006:108).

---

14 Shine a Light is the name of a 2011 Amnesty campaign based on the Benenson quote 'Better to light a candle than curse the darkness' (Benenson 1961)

15 Roger Fenton's 1850s photographs of the Crimean war appeared in *the Times,* John Robertson's pictures of the same war were in circulation during the 1850s.

Recent technological innovations using stereograph photography for greater quality, and tintype photographs, developed on thin sheets of iron, and produced inexpensively to lightweight specifications, made it possible for Brady's photographs to be mass produced and widely circulated with a level of detail and resolution previously unknown (ibid; Trachtenberg 1985:11). The New York Times reported that 'These pictures have a terrible distinctness. By the aid of the magnifying glass, the very creatures of the slain may be distinguished' (NYT 1862:2). The level of what some members of the public described as 'disgust', caused many people to turn against or rethink war (Trachtenberg 1985:8).


Figure 3b: Image from Mathew Brady's *The Dead of Antietam* 1862. Many of these pictures featured corpses, shown in detail and clarity previously not available in mass produced copies. It is unknown which images from the collection Brady took himself and which were taken by his assistants. Image used courtesy of the Library of Congress image archive.

Two interesting points emerge from this example. The first is that photographs had to be seen to cause the public outpouring of opinion that could lead to change. The second, that I will return to later in this chapter, is that it was a response of shock that so moved people to act. In the process of photojournalism we begin to see what I have earlier described as the circuit. For images to provoke change, a particular

response is required from those looking at images. Without response, images would be mere recordings of events, unable to do more than attest to something. Social change relies on a response from spectators.

Photography was at its most explicit as a tool for social change in the hands of certain photojournalists, who took the recording and provoking potential of photography and turned it to specific instances of social suffering in order to bring about social change. Jacob Riis was among the first photojournalists to pursue an agenda for social change, and he did this by photographing the living conditions of the poor in New York's lower east side. His photographs famously depict people living in abject poverty, in overcrowded conditions, and often seen to be sleeping rough. This project was followed closely by others such as Hine's, whose documentation of working conditions in the America's post industrialisation, showing young children in often dangerous factory settings, earned him the description of 'crusader' (Trachtenberg 1981:238). Other projects such as Jack London's documentation of East London slums (London 1903), and John Thompson's 'gritty' portrayal of London's poor (1878), all pursued social change visually (Marien 2006:163).

In these examples images are used to call for change. As Rosler puts it:

> 'in contrast to the pure sensationalism of much of the journalistic attention to working class, immigrant and slum life, the meliorism of Riis, Lewis Hine and others involved in social-work propagandising argued, through the presentation of images...for the rectification of wrongs.' (Rosler 2006:175).

Public outcry over Riis' *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) is credited with leading to the New York State Tenement House Act of 1901 (Marien 2006:205; Trachtenberg 1981:237), therefore suggesting that through images, agendas of social change were pursued[16]. This is still an on-going practice, as the recent use of camera phone photography to ignite support worldwide during the Arab Spring can attest (Allagui

---

16 There are many accounts that credit Riis with this social change, including politicians involved in passing the bill (see Marien 2006, Trachtenberg 1977, Rosler 2006), however he was a conservative figure who wanted change to come about through charity rather than reform. For a full discussion of the political views of Riis see Stein 1983.

& Kuebler 2011; Khondker 2011). From the early example of photojournalism to citizen photojournalism today, the pictorial rendering of events have exposed situations, and in doing so brought the attention required to lead to change. However, as mentioned, the jump from photograph to change hinges on an appropriate response from those viewing the images. Just as the process of human rights itself relies on wrongs being seen, so too does photography rely on viewership to produce change.

Figure 3c: Jacob Riis: Boys sleeping rough Mulberry Street, Manhattan 1880. Riis took his pictures using the newly developed flash technology, to which some attribute the scared and startled expressions in his subjects' faces (Marien 2006:205).

There is therefore an inbuilt reliance on audience response to this process of claiming change through images. Specifically there must be wide visibility and a type of response that renders pictures more than mere documents in order for them to work effectively to produce social change. This response takes viewers from simply seeing, to witnessing, with all the weight of responsibility which that term implies. I would suggest that the creation of this responsibility is intimately bound up with the types of wrongs which images show, and with the emotional response it is hoped is elicited by them. Riis and Hine share with each other, and with those who followed them, a focus on suffering as the means by which the wrong is highlighted. Photographs are of course depictions of people's physical person above all else, depicting as they do visual reproductions of what a person looks like (Elkins 1996:130). Therefore the call to social justice often takes the form of physical suffering, because it is rooted in the

body.

The practice of using images of suffering is deeply interwoven with images calling for social change, where compassion rather than legal recognition is the means of effecting that social change (Bleiker & Kay 2007:140; Marien 2006:206). The catalogue of images of suffering is formidable, as is the body of literature which accompanies it. War, famine, poverty, torture, and violence have been photographed, and the fall out of suffering and pain captured, to try and command social outcry and prevent these events happening again. Famous photographs such as Nick Uti's photograph of the child Phan Thi Kim Phuc running naked and burnt remains possibly the best known war photos in history[17], and is credited for igniting passion against the Vietnam War in North Americans (Hariman & Lucaites 2007:172). While the effect of images of suffering bringing about social change is of course impossible to measure, and subjectivity of response means that even where photographers intend an agenda for change we cannot be sure of cause an effect, there is nevertheless a strong tradition in Euro-American social history of using images of people suffering, as attested to by the number of images available, and the vast scholarship on the issue (for example Sontag 2003; Eisenman 2007; Taylor 1998; Berger 1980)[18]. Images of suffering suggest that evidence is not the only reason for use of images in claims for social justice. If this was the case then pictures of conditions rather than people would be sufficient and Riis would not have needed to photograph human subjects, where pictures of dark and cramped tenement conditions would have sufficed. Images of suffering suggest that there is a further importance of images in eliciting emotion.

NGOs have picked up where photojournalists began in using images to create social change, but NGOs are more explicit in using images as more than evidence. The increasing number of staff photographers working for NGOs is testament to the importance placed on visuals by these organisations. Pictures such as Salgado's work with *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) documenting famine *Sahel: Man in Distress* (1986) draws these two strands together, being at once a work explicit in its focus on

---

17 This picture appeared as part of the 1973 collection 'The Terror of War' and won a Pulitzer Prize.
18 Discussed throughout the thesis in more depth, especially Chapters 6, 9 and 10.

'distress', and its positioned agenda for MSF. Rights organisations and other charitable bodies have historically relied on images of suffering for much of their visual material (see Benthall 2003). For aid organisations especially, the alleviation of immediate distress is their central remit, therefore this process of showing what is wrong is quite straightforward. Many organisations which work to alleviate physical suffering such as the Red Cross or MSF, do so relatively indiscriminately, without passing comment on the wider social situations of their work[19]. Indeed this is often a prerequisite for gaining access during conflict situations. However for development and rights organisations, the goal is to achieve long term institutional or social change, rather than the immediate alleviation of suffering.
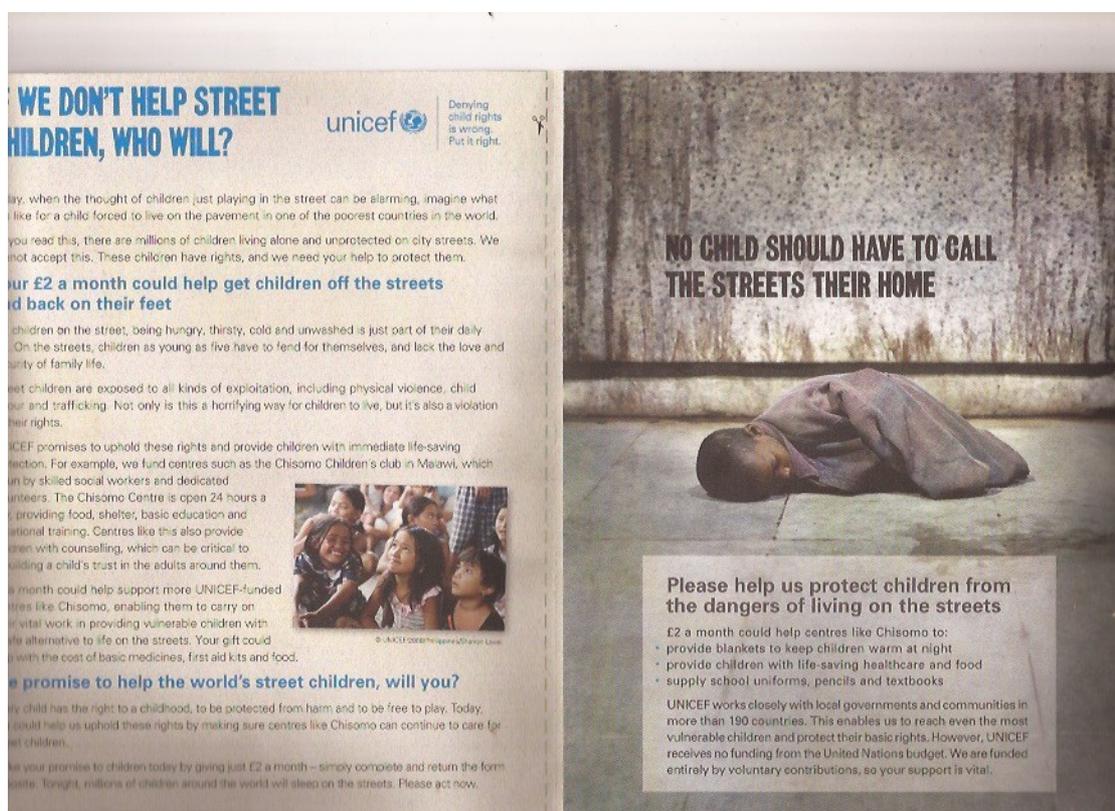
Figure 3d: UNICEF fundraising advertisement 2010, issued in UK newspapers.

Therefore the claim for a rights model of photojournalistic imagery which I set out above provides some problems. How for example can you show government corruption, or unequal access to resources visually? Evidential images would seem to pose problems for rights organisations, yet images remain a central feature of campaigning. The central role of images in rights practice discussed in the

---

19 MSF broke a tradition of silent witnessing in 1985 to speak out against the Ethiopian government. Since then there has been public debate from within the organisation about how this should be managed.

introduction means that for rights organisations to shine a light on human rights abuses, and the increasing role of visual in media (Levin 1993:3), there is often an expectation within organisations that images will play some central role in expressing the situation which requires change (Fisher 1997:445). For most organisations this has traditionally involved the use of images of suffering in order to claim rights. Archival research at Amnesty International IS in London suggests that photographs and other graphics have featured in Amnesty reports since the first report was launched, both photographically and in terms of artwork and video campaigns devised by AIIS. Of these pictures there are at least as many pictures of physical suffering as there are other types of rights images. This is surprising given the nature of Amnesty's work as traditionally concerned with protecting civil rights. While it might be expected of a disaster relief organisation, in a rights organisation one might expect to find that pictures reflected a number of different social and political issues. Amnesty's well known 'newspaper' campaigns paired shocking headlines, text, and photographic depictions:

Figure 3e & f: Amnesty International IS newspaper campaigns from the 1980s

Current visual practice has changed somewhat since the adverts above were run in the 1980s, in the wake of awareness of issues of representation, but there are echoes of this 'shock' approach in more recent campaigns. In 2008 the French section commissioned a campaign against rights abuses in the run up to the Beijing

Olympics, which circulated online and caused a stir for its explicit approach to torture,while more recently Amnesty IS in the UK ran pictures of victims of political violence in Sri Lanka. These images, viewed in the context of factual reports and removal of context through legal language that is prevalent in the rights industry, discussed in the previous chapter, can be seen as both counter to, and a reflection of, this practice of decontextualisation. Images of suffering, while veering away from 'factual' accounts, especially when staged, are just as de-contextualising and stripped down as legal language has been shown to be by providing little in the way of context or subjective or personal narrative (Wilson 1997). The images used by the IS and by other Amnesty sections show a very different visual approach than that undertaken by AIUK, as will be demonstrated in Part I of this thesis. It is important to see the work of AIUK in the context of not only a wider visual culture used to create social change, but also specifically within the wider visual context of the organisation.

Figure 3g: 'After the Olympic Games' by TBWA Advertising for Amnesty France, 2008. These images were withdrawn by Amnesty France for being 'too explicit', despite the fact that they feature actors.
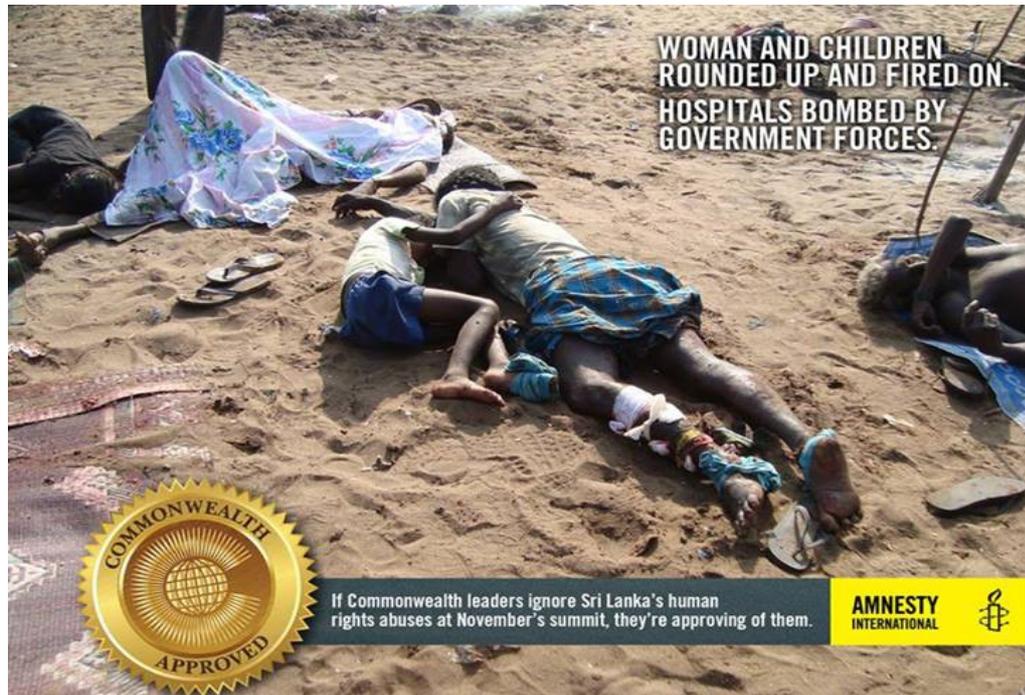
 Figure 3h: Amnesty International IS web image featuring what look like dead bodies and injured people in Sri Lanka. Appeared on facebook October 2013.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) similarly uses photographs of suffering as a central part of their visual practice. While HRW visuals tend to be contained within their 'publications', and are the result of specially commissioned, embedded photojournalists, they too have more images of torture than of other abuses. For example the HRW 2011 Burma report 'Dead Men Walking'[20] on refugees contains nine photos, of which six are pictures of torture or physical suffering. Therefore despite the variety of rights issues which organisations work on, many organisations show a visual bias towards showing certain abuses, suggesting that evidence is not the only use that pictures have. The practice of staging photographs illustrated by Amnesty France's picture further suggests this. Staff at AIUK, though reluctant to show images of suffering in general (Chapter 6), were willing to use staged images of torture in one of their campaigns (Chapter 6: Figure 6d). While these visuals were produced at the IS, they were used by AIUK. Amnesty is open about the staged nature of images, and indeed for staff at AIUK it is a matter of principle not to use real victims in images of suffering (Chapter 6). The staging of photographs of course completely removes any value that they might have had as evidence. At most they can be considered illustrative, demonstrating a situation in order to increase audience

20 This report is now available online at http://www.hrw.org/reports/2011/07/12/dead-men-walking-0

understanding of it.

Therefore there exists a tradition of visual activism which is based on pictures of people in pain, which can be seen as a backdrop against which staff and the public in this thesis work. In many ways, we can see in rights campaign visuals a legacy of early claims to rights such as those of Barnardos and other charity appeals since then which use pictures of people in distress to demand change. This places rights images in the tradition of activism based on images which is outlined above. However it suggests that visuals demonstrate a different model to claims for rights, which are not based in law, but rather in recognition of suffering. This therefore suggests that between visual and other rhetorics there are significant differences in how rights are conceived. I would suggest that images are early indicators of a conception of humanity grounded in shared physical pain, where rights are claimed through the demonstration of that pain.

Sharing Pain

The use of photographs therefore is often credited with evidential and documentary properties which make pictures work as proof of a situation (Marien 2006:160; Meskin & Cohen 2008:70; Walton 1984:246), indeed the quality of 'truth' of 'proof' is often used to justify the use of images of atrocity (Gidley 2012:38), especially in Human Rights organisations where truth is the major currency (Hopgood 2006:74). While it is tempting to think of the early belief that the 'camera never lies' as a result of mysticism around a device to which few had access, even shortly after its invention there were well publicised cases of visual forgery. Dr Barnardo himself was charged with using models styled in rags rather than boys as he had found them 'before'. This was a relatively large case which drew press coverage (Koven 1997:10), suggesting that the potential of the camera to lie has always been recognised, yet its importance remains. Even now, when people have their own cameras, and home access to Photoshop®, not to mention daily interaction with doctored and altered images, the importance of photographs in claiming social change continues. The recent, and well documented, release of photographs of abuses in Abu Ghraib prison is one such example. The conditions in Abu Ghraib were under scrutiny in the USA

after formal reports of abuse made by several parties were made public, but these charges received little or no media attention until the photographs depicting the abuse were taken and made public (Andén-Papadopoulos 2008:12). After that the story was carried by all major media outlets. The Amnesty use of 'staged' images also suggests that evidence is not necessarily the main goal of images. Despite general knowledge of the potential for lies, a camera still has a tremendous amount of power over public engagement with requests for change.

How then can we account for the dominance of the visual in rights practice sketched above? If cameras are known to be deceptive, then why is it that making things visible in the tangible sense of photographs and videos is considered so effective a way to campaign for change in the sphere of human rights? This is a question that I hope to address in more detail throughout this thesis by looking at the uses and interactions of images in campaigning. However, looking specifically at the history sketched out in this chapter so far of using human subjects, often in positions and situations of bodily suffering, it can be considered that it is the emotional response to images that is required to complete the circuit of exposing and action. The emotional response that is elicited is a subject of debate among scholars, with some claiming shock (Sontag 1977), or guilt and shame (Keenan 2004; Anvi 2006; Sontag 2004), and others claiming solidarity and responsibility (Linfield 2010), however it remains that images, especially photographs, are considered by scholars to be highly emotional items. The ability of photographs to produce emotional responses is well recoded, and as will be discussed later in this section, heavily critiqued (Benjamin 2009; Sontag 1977; Barthes 1981; Berger 1980). However for some theorists dealing with 'images of atrocity' and rights images, it is the ability to provoke an emotional response that makes images effective, particularly an ability to render recognisable the pain of others (Linfield 2010). I would suggest then that a close examination of the role of pain in images reveals them to rely on a combination of the aforementioned emotional responses in order to provoke action.

Barthes, when looking at a photo exhibition in Paris, judged them lacking because they failed to shock him and make him shudder (Barthes 1997:71). He did not judge them by their ability to convey facts or evidence about the situation, he judged them

by their ability to make him feel something, and in that area rather than others found them wanting. Barthes is not alone in his judgement of image claims by their ability to shock and upset. While I discuss this concern in more detail in the next section, the point I make here is that Barthes held an expectation that the way images work was bound up with responses of a particular sort. Shock is certainly a part of it, but Barthes' telling observation that the problem with these images was that 'someone has shuddered for us' (Barthes 1997:71) suggests again the need for an emotional engagement with the images on a personal emotional, rather than purely intellectual level. It is not enough for him to recognise the situation of horror to be able to care about it (ibid:72). I would suggest that shock therefore does not describe the process which Barthes seeks. What he seeks is that the image should make him care about those depicted; literal photos can allow one to experience 'the scandal of horror, not the horror itself' (ibid:73-74), implying that one must feel something of horror to care, not just the scandal or shock. This would seem to be borne out by the wide range of images used in social change. Riis and Hine, while exposing some hidden aspects of society were not shocking in all their images. For many New Yorkers, homeless people sleeping rough was a well-known and often-seen phenomenon. This suggests that where images are concerned there are some expectations about how and what type of information they convey, as suggested by the judgements passed upon them by Barthes[21]. Certainly there is an expectation that you will 'feel something'.

In the following discussion I link the Enlightenment notions that rights are said to be founded on, with the process of generating feeling though images as Barthes describes, to suggest that use of pictures to claim rights is deeply entwined with the foundational Euro-American ideas about why we care about others. I look to these theories for explanation because of their prominence in the development of rights, existing as they do in a similar tradition of individualism and morality. However this is not to foreclose rights practice or visual cultures of rights in this particular tradition; there are of course many cultures of rights images around the world, and many approaches to images. Rather it is to provide a background necessary for

21 Debate about the relation between text and image is a substantial field in its own right (see Mitchell 1986 for a definitive discussion). While the relation imagined by subjects of this project is reflected on at various points throughout the thesis, the point I make at this early stage in the paper is that images have a perceived function as carriers of emotional currency.

understanding the implications of the findings in the thesis, grounded as they are in an organisation and context that does share this history. Throughout this thesis I reflect on the novel image-practices undertaken at AIUK and by local groups to suggest that a rethink of these ideas about how images can be used, and how we care about distant others, is being undertaken by many of those involved in rights activism.

For many philosophers the ability to care about others is rooted in a shared capacity for pain (Hume 1978 (1740); Smith 2011 (1759)). Hume most famously described the feeling of another's pain when seeing an operation as the basis for recognising others' rights through a process whereby one mirrors another's pain when seeing it (Hume 1978:576). This mirroring is most effective, according to Hume, when we have 'sight of the object' (ibid:318),by which Hume means a personal encounter, but that may very easily be translated into today's experiences as a picture, taking sight as literally as it was intended. For Hume, as for many others, the condition for care was the acknowledgement of pain. It is this acknowledgement that I would suggest rights images have been involved in providing historically, however not to shock only, rather to foster a feeling of closeness and sympathy, based on shared pain.

Language is considered by many to be insufficient for the task of communicating pain. Henry James famously wrote in a 1915 New York Times article that about the First World War: 'one finds it in the midst of all this, as hard to apply one's words as to endure one's thoughts' (NYT 1915 12th March). Indeed, in anthropological studies of pain this is echoed. Pain is seen to break down communication so fully that it destroys language: 'Physical pain does not simply resist language, but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human makes before language is learned' (Scarry 1985:4). Pain, it has been suggested, resists communication because it is 'so radically individualised and rendered unshareable' (Daniel 1994: 238). Yet where words fail, images can be seen to convey the 'sight of the object' that Hume mentions, by providing not only a visual of the person, but a visual of their pain. Images convey physical reactions in much the same way as Hume describes his feelings at an operation- that of discomfort when confronted with another's pain so that the watcher

too feels pain.

People react to images, especially those of people, in physical ways (Freedberg 1989:1; Elkins 1996:138), and images of pain have a particularly strong effect (Elkins 1996:109). In his well- known book on how people look at images, Elkins describes pictures of pain as having the potential to convey that pain (Elkins 1996:110). He describes a series of photographs of an execution of a woman in China charged with adultery: 'the pain in those scenes is enough to cause physical changes in my body, and when I have shown these images in lectures, I have seen viewers wince, rub their arms, and blanch' (ibid)[22]. In fact many pictures are themselves considered 'too painful to look at' and are subject to censorship (Freedberg 1989:352), suggesting that there is a conveyance of pain visually (Philips 2002:10). Images then can be seen to be central to human rights because they facilitate the sharing of pain, allowing people to care about others because they identify with their pain. This in turn facilitates the recognition of humanity which Rorty suggests is the real crux of human rights (Rorty 1999:74-75)[23]. For anthropologists this sounds like a risky universalisation of something which is certainly culturally shaped and constructed in different ways. However it is not its universality or lack thereof which is of note, rather it is the belief, fostered in Enlightenment sentimentalism and continued through visual practice, that our moral obligations to others can be found in our mutual ability to feel pain. Therefore images can be seen as having been used in the field of rights primarily to appeal not to the reasoned upholding of rights, but rather to a shared humanity rooted in a capacity for suffering, and as such represent a means by which rights are claimed which is not based on legal entitlement.

Pictures therefore, as they are used in this particular field of activism, can be seen to contribute to an understanding of rights which is rooted in suffering, sympathy and pity, and therefore emanating from a very specific branch of the philosophy of rights. Rather than a modern phenomenon, images have been used in the media and by organisations in a quite specific way, akin to the Enlightenment approach to rights

---

22 The implications of this embodied response to pain are discussed in greater depth in Chapters 9 & 10 of this thesis.
23 This is the subject of Chapter 4, where the role of universal ideas of humanity in relation to human rights are discussed in depth.

and care for others. The claims that images transcend culturally specific boundaries to convey humanity may still hold weight, but the version of humanity they have been used to convey is very specific. While rights are seen to be appropriated and understood in many different ways, and coming from a tradition of debate and contestation, why then are images of rights so particularly rooted in one version of a recognition of humanity and consequently of rights?

Suffering Bodies: Biomedical Claims for Rights

Imagery of pain and suffering which characterises early photojournalism and NGO practice has therefore been shown to be rooted in a belief in the shared capacity for pain, and the effective communication of another's pain by proxy. The prevalence of pictures of suffering has received criticism over the past twenty years (see Benthall 1993:177-190; Berger 1980; Sontag 2003, 1977), and more recently it has seen a return to favour in some academic circles (Tylor 1998; Linfield 2010). Criticism is centred on several concerns. Depiction of suffering others is criticised as othering and exploitative, creating and reinforcing stereotypes (Campbell 2003; Campbell 2002), giving the impression that this is what it is like 'over there', and thus normalising the suffering of distant others while reinforcing the position of Euro-American strength (Perlmutter 1998; Boltanski 1993; Ignateiff 1998). This is compounded by an awareness that there is an inbuilt inequality in photography between those who make and those who are represented in images (Price 1997:58). Studies are concerned with the representational aspect of NGO images, and highlight the use of certain tropes such as the well-known Oxfam Child of the 1960s which still persist in current NGO materials (Benthall 1993:178). Other critiques focus on the way in which visual depiction can render people silent (Malkki 1996:386) and reduce people, through regularity of visual portrayal which shows certain countries and ethnic groups only ever in distress, to 'raw humanity' (ibid 379), or in the case of refugees to indiscriminate masses (ibid). The ultimate result then of portraying people in pain regularly is that those portrayed are not considered agents of their own situations, but are rather disempowered by their depiction as helpless victims, or 'suffering bodies'.

In presenting people in this way, it can be argued that viewers are not given the means to engage with them as equals (Ignatieff 1998:290) and that the claim for change which photojournalism relies on is not a recognition of rights, but an experience of pity. In this way images of suffering are simultaneously making connections which recognise people through pain, and using the same pain to establish a power dynamic of inequality. To use a famous example we might turn to Dorothea Lange's best known work 'Migrant Mother'. This image showing a mother and her children looking ragged and pensive was run in a San Francisco newspaper under the title 'Ragged, Hungry, Broke, Harvest Workers Live in Squaller.' (San Francisco News March 10, 1936). It was accompanied by information on the conditions in the migrant workers camp. After the article ran there were thousands of calls to the newspaper asking how people could help, and the government sent aid to the camp immediately (Curtis 1986:23). In some ways this suggests the model circuit for photography aiming at social change: the problem was identified, and relief made available. However investigations into the circumstance of the photograph (Hariman & Lucaites. 2007), and interviews with Florence Owens Thompson years on (LA Times 1978) suggest that while the circuit may appear to be working, it is far from unproblematic. In actual fact Florence Owens Thompson was still living in poverty for the rest of her life, and had received none of the royalties from her famous picture,suggesting that conditions that led to the picture being taken in the first place are not so different 30 years on. She is quoted in the LA Times article as saying:

> 'I wish she [Lange] hadn't taken my picture. I can't get a penny out of it. She didn't ask my name. She said she wouldn't sell the pictures. She said she'd send me a copy. She never did...what good's it doing me?'

This begs the question of how well this circuit works to alleviate the suffering it portrays. Hariman & Lucaites point to editing of the picture, and the selective portrayal of Thompson that excluded her husband, to create more sympathy from the viewer (Hariman & Lucaites. 2007:50). They suggest that the picture and its treatment by the media used 'generalized sympathy and state action to alleviate the symptoms rather than the causes of inequity' (ibid:51), thus showing that the circuit of illumination and response that is based on emotional response, in this case, allows for a sympathetic reaction and short term solution, rather than the sort of sustained rigorous critique that leads to understanding.
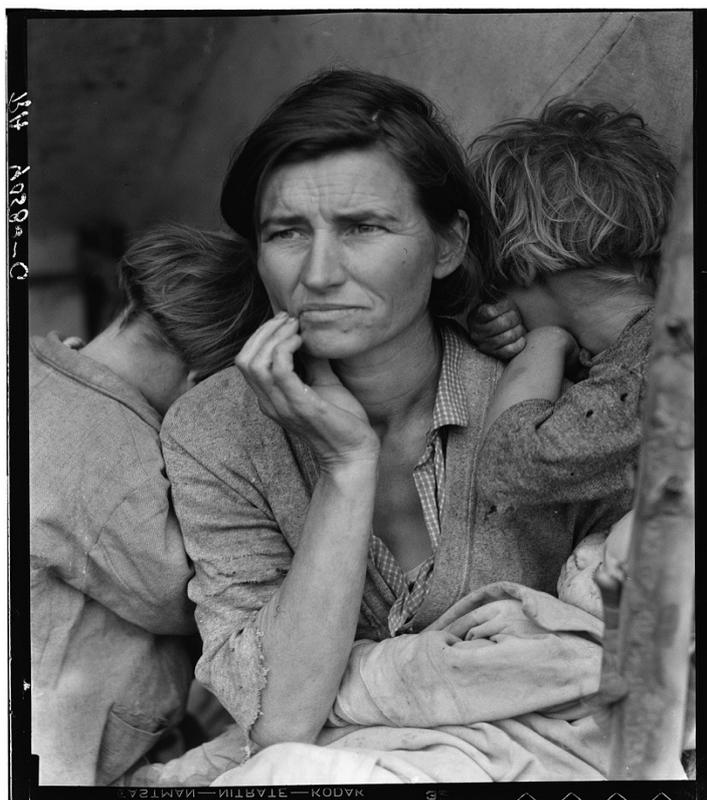
Figure 3i: 'Migrant Mother' featuring Florence Owens Thompson by Dorothea Lang. 1936. Image from http://www.loc.gov/pictures/

The focus on visual portrayals of suffering is critiqued not only for its negative depictions of others, but also for a focus on physical suffering at the expense of other more embedded forms of suffering (Sontag 2003:198). This is a criticism which has been lobbied at photojournalism for a long time, because of an inbuilt selectivity in framing a photograph which naturally leads to the omission of a wider frame of reference or context (Jacobson 2002:10) thus leaving the viewer with limited information. Photographs then, can be accused of limiting this view to one of physical suffering, most accessible to the eye. Increasingly theorists suggest that there is a shift in approaches to rights which preferences alleviation of physical suffering over other ways of understanding. This 'biomedicalisation' of rights, especially noted in asylum claims (see Fassin 2008; Ticktin 2006; Brown 1995) entails a discourse and practice of claiming rights which is based on physical illness at the expense of other types of distress (Fassin 2008:532). Ticktin's analysis of asylum claims suggests that in France, asylum is granted most easily in cases of illness rather than political persecution (Ticktin 2006:34). These cases seem to suggest that pictures of suffering fit into a broader narrative about rights which understands people in physical terms, and through pain and healing, rather than through justice and responsibility. This

suggests a universalising of particular understandings of pain based on physical discomfort (discussed in Chapter 6), and preferences a particular conception of the human rooted in biomedical understandings (discussed in Chapter 4).

Critiques of the representational qualities of images used by charities have been in circulation since the mid-1980s when Oxfam created a photo policy which advocated using empowering images in campaigns. Many NGOs make considerable efforts to change the face of charity advertising, and are acutely aware of these criticisms and debates. For example, Wateraid hired a photoeditor in 2010, the first time that role has formally existed in an NGO[24], who is working on collaborative projects with in-country photographers[25]. This comes alongside increased numbers of forums and panel discussions on photographic representation by charities[26], a growth in the number of organizations set up to facilitate photography which avoids representational pitfalls[27], and a number of newspaper articles bringing these discussions into the public sphere[28]. There is clearly a public interest and certainly a renewed NGO interest in the depiction of others. Speaking at the Third Frame, Rachel Palmer of Save the Children discussed getting a balance between 'giving people the truth, which is often so horrific, and not scaring people away, or horrifying them so they look away, they need something to care about' (Palmer 10/3/10). Human rights organisations therefore are involved in an awareness of the pitfalls of representation, being one of the major targets for public outrage regarding images, and because their aims demand them to be ethically minded about representation. They are therefore working within a situation of compromise and difficult decisions.

However, despite this level of interest and debate, the prevailing visual practice remains one associated with suffering and others. Oxfam recently undertook an independent audit of their materials and were 'shocked' to find that images of women

---

24 Communications departments and managers are usually responsible for photographic editing

25 www.wateraid.com/

26 For example: The Third Frame http://open-i.ning.com/xn/detail/3429868:Event:7649?xg_source=activity

27 For example: Autograph, Duckrabbit, Photovoice, Proof. All based in London

28 For example: Russell, Ruby. War Photography: Why We Don't Want to See It. Daily Telegraph. 11 Oct 2008

and children in need made up over 70% of their visual materials[29]. Recent studies such as Dogra's on the use of images by humanitarian organisations, which involved a large scale analysis of materials produced by several charities, suggests that the motif of pain and suffering remains a dominant one, even if this is not the case for all organisations (Dogra 2012:31). Rachel Palmer of Save the Children spoke at a conference on the dangers of relying too heavily on disempowering tropes[30], but just a week later the organisation launched a new television appeal which depicted children in states of starvation. When asked about this, a charity representative cited 'market pressures' (Sam Turner, via email November 2010). That is to say that, put simply, these campaigns produce funds. Visual practice which favours a visual depiction of suffering in order to call for social and political change is therefore persistent in the face of considerable opposition, because it is considered effective in producing an appropriate response. Therefore for organisations working in this field, the use of visuals is far from straight forward, and can result in big questions about what the ultimate goals of their work are, and how they identify themselves.

This wider examination of the field of rights suggests that visual narratives are in fact not as far removed from legal ones as might be expected. Both exist in a field broadly dominated by the alleviation of physical suffering which was previously the remit of humanitarian aid organisations. Rather than activating ideas of justice, rights practitioners are mobilising compassionate sympathy in order to attract support. In this sense, recognition of the rights of others can be seen to be based not only in recognition of a shared capacity to feel pain, but also in hoping to elicit a reaction to that pain. The concerns raised about the power dynamics of images of suffering, particularly the concern about creating pity rather than entitlement, can be seen to extend beyond the sphere of images into the very mechanisms of rights practice. Compassionate pity is not suggestive of entitlement to rights, but rather implies an unequal power dynamic. Therefore basing rights claims in this manner raises some concerns.

---

29 Oxfam branding study, presented at 'International NGOs: Representations of Global Poverty and
   Development' conference, Goldsmiths 8th September 2011
30 'Does the Camera Never Lie?' Amnesty UK, 23rd Nov 2010

The Limits of Compassion

If, as I have argued, images have been used to claim the rights of others through appeals to shared pain, what then does this mean for rights? Sontag sets the stage for this type of critique of images of suffering with her original *On Photography*, where she calls for 'an ecology of images' (Sontag 1979:180) to limit the dulling effects of over exposure to images of suffering (ibid). In *Regarding the Pain of Others* (Sontag 2004) many of these same issues are discussed, however here Sontag focusses not on the removal of images of suffering, but rather on the role of framing and response in contributing to the way in which images are understood. She pre-empts recent approaches to rights images which focus on reading and context as crucial factors in determining how they work, or could work, to produce productive engagement (Azoulay 2008; Linfield 2010; Batchen et al 2012). Specifically, Sontag questions the role of compassion in motivating action, calling it an 'unstable emotion' (Sontag 2004:91) which can easily turn to apathy in the face of over exposure to images of pain where no clear course of action for the viewer is available (ibid).

In *On Photography*, and to some extent *Regarding the Pain of Others* Sontag is engaging with debates on the issue of what some call 'compassion fatigue' (Moeller 1999), demonstrating that even when arguing for a more nuanced understanding of how images of suffering work on people, as she does in her later work, the issue of our ability to sustain emotion for others remains a lurking presence. 'Compassion fatigue' can be characterised as a concern with the ability of viewers to maintain concerned emotional engagement, when images of suffering become routine. While there are a number of different names and terms used to describe the process, there is a relatively coherent conclusion about how it works in dulling emotional concern for others when faced with too much pain. An updated and more keenly argued version of this phenomenon is provided by Kleinman & Kleinman who liken it to a form of structural violence whereby we are coached to accept the suffering of others:

> 'Viewers are overwhelmed by the sheer number of atrocities. There is too much to see, and there appears to be too much to do anything about. Thus, our epoch's dominating sense that complex problems can be neither understood nor fixed works with the massive globalization of images of

suffering to produce moral fatigue, exhaustion of empathy, and political despair' (Kleinman &Kleinman 1996:9).

In this conception not only are viewers limited in their capacity to feel care for those suffering when faced with too much pain, but they are also encouraged by this process to accept suffering as unfixable, a *status quo* which is applied only to distant others. Concern with the role of images in producing this state of what Feldman calls 'cultural anaesthesia' (1994:407) has dominated discussions about the use of images for decades, to relatively little effect. Little evidence of this phenomenon has been produced, yet the persistence of the debate is testament to the way in which it taps into a concern at the heart of the practice of claiming rights through compassionate sympathy.

The persistence of this concern is applied not only where images are concerned, and in fact it can be seen as inherent to the process of compassion itself. Moyn suggests that rather than seeing this compassion fatigue as a feature of a modern media process, an historical account suggests that basing humanitarian sentiment on emotional attachment has always been treated with concern. Whether the exact mechanism or terminology is described as compassion, sympathy, empathy or violence, all descriptions share a concern that emotion based on shared pain has a limit. A good example is Butler, a prominent sentimentalist of the seventeenth century, whose concerns about the limits of sympathy suggest that 'compassion fatigue is one of its permanent structural components and constitutive problems' (Moyn 2006:403). Seen in this light, the problem highlighted by scholars of the visual can be perceived not as an issue with the style or number of images, but rather with the underlying process behind the use of images, that of compassionate sympathy as a form of political engagement.

Criticism of emotional engagement with others based on pain, as a tool for political engagement, has not been limited to the field of visuals. As discussed above, this process of claiming rights through physical pain can now be seen not only as the method for making claims through pictures, but also as a part of legal practice which favours pain over civil and political claims for rights. This process receives criticism

from many quarters. Famously, Arendt has described compassion as incompatible with politics (1990:86) because it implies a personal connection with one person where engagement with a class or situation is required (ibid:89). The 'awkwardness with words' (ibid:42) which she highlights as coming with feelings reflects the sentiments of others that emotions, especially pain, are incommunicable. However for Arendt this is a reason to distrust them, rather than to seek approximations such as images. Politics in Arendt's account should be debatable and understood, rather than simply experienced. To base politics on compassion is to invite pity, which for Arendt is the natural by-product of compassion, and is set up by the distinction between those who suffer and those who do not, and constitutes inherent power inequality (Arendt 2006:51). Primo Levi similarly sees pity as a product of emotional identification with suffering, and distrusts pity because we are encouraged to relate to an individual through pity, at the expense of understanding a regime:

> 'There is no proportion between the pity we feel and the extent of the pain by which the pity is aroused: a single Anne Frank excites more emotion than the myriads who suffered as she did but whose image has remained in the shadows' (2000:39).

Ticktin is critical of a similar sort of compassion based on suffering as a means by which to claim rights. Her study of 'regimes of care' in the asylum process suggest that when illness is used to cross borders, the political and regimental systems which are behind immigration are permitted to continue relatively unchallenged, thus stifling change and challenge (Ticktin 2011). For many theorists therefore. compassion is a problem not only because of concerns with its limitations in producing consistent feeling, but also for the introduction of a politics based on feeling rather than engagement.

In many critiques of compassionate engagement we see the juxtaposition of compassionate emotional engagement, with intellectual engagement (for example Barthes 1997, Sontag 2004) to the detriment of understanding. This juxtaposition is reflected in recent studies of images which either call for (Linfield 2012; Batchen et al 2012) or against (Azoulay 2008) an engagement with distant others based on the emotional response provoked by images. This approach as applied to images is based on a belief that images must create an emotional response of shock and horror to be

effective, for example Barthes' criticism of images which failed to make him shudder as being ineffective (Barthes 1997:76-77). Yet critics suggest that to do that, images often remove the wider contextual framework needed to understand a situation, in favour of portraying atrocity (Azoulay 1998:291). Critiques of this sort seem to suggest that emotional engagement actively prevents an intellectual one. This thesis suggests that in fact the relation between the two is not exclusive, and for activists working in the field of human rights emotional engagement is facilitated by a knowledge of wider frameworks which are causing abuses of rights.

Critiques of this sort, and those of 'compassion fatigue' are similarly concerned with the failure of the type of emotional response to produce change or action, either by apathy or by a shallow or limited engagement, and seek other ways to engage with rights to combat this. While theorists use the terms compassion, sympathy, and pity with a certain slipperiness, they are most conflated when dealing with the emotional responses to another's pain. The critics mentioned above may call this emotional response by different names, and illustrate some differences between pity, sympathy and compassion, but ultimately they share a concern with emotional responses to pain as a means to recognise rights. However, Rorty suggests that to recognise rights, one must first recognise the humanity of another (Rorty 2002:75). In asking for a humanitarian politics which is not based on compassion as it is understood by theorists above, we are really being asked to imagine a humanity which is connected not in shared pain, but in some other way. In this thesis I do not attempt to argue for the existence of a shared humanity or indeed against it. Rather, I hope to show how in human rights campaigns, an appeal is being made which is rooted in a practice of empathising seen to have a long history in both images and rights. In looking at the conscious construction of imaginative engagement, as well as the many forms that this takes in practice, I hope to show that the relations which people make with distant others which create moral proximity are at once more complex than critiques of compassion suggest, and also deeply involved with these expectations.

Conclusion

I have therefore sketched out what McLagan describes as a 'circuit of suffering'

(McLagan 2005), by which images come to be used in certain ways to claim rights. I have described a system of international law, originating from a particular cultural and historical setting that relies on exposure to maintain compliance from national states. Exposure has been shown to be enacted largely through rights organisations, whose campaigning work plays a huge role in creating the exposure needed to shame offenders, and the pressure needed to create social change. Use of images in demanding social change works on a similar model of exposure and public response that creates public pressure to change a situation, and this similarity in goal may go some way to explaining the importance of images in human rights movements. This process, from violation, documentation, exposure, public response, and pressure to change, is therefore the circuit in brief. It is not only a means by which rights images circulate, it is the system through which rights are protected.

McLagan's description of the circuit as one of suffering is apt. I have shown a preference in the practice of rights images for the use of photographs of people suffering. While I suggest that this is in part a feature of the nature of photography as physically biassed, it has been placed in a wider framework of rights both historically, with reference especially to Hume (1978), and recently with reference to Ticktin (2006), that recognises rights through biomedical notions such as ill health, suffering and pain. Seen in this light, the use of images of suffering as a means by which to elicit change fits more broadly into particular notions of rights and humanity, which will be picked up in the next chapter.

Throughout the chapter I have drawn attention to the focus on creating emotional responses through pictures, showing how evidence is not necessarily the primary goal of rights images. I would suggest that this emotional response is itself similar to the idea of empathy discussed in the introduction, at least in so far as it seeks to create a connection between people who are remote geographically, socially or culturally. However, the connection between people seen to be formed through images of suffering is one based on shared capacity for pain, and a desire to alleviate the suffering of another because you can relate to them through this pain. As the following chapter will show, AIUK staff are attempting to subvert this expectation that care comes through the alleviation of pain by grounding empathy not in

sympathy, as these pictures have been suggested to do, but in similarity. Ethnographic analysis of staff planning and disseminating campaign materials suggests that there are priorities and techniques that are in defiance of the accepted norms of rights images, as well as contradictions and disagreements within this defiance. In examining rights images in this way, through close ethnographic attention to the practices around them, I attempt to subvert expectations myself, expectations that this chapter has set up about where anthropologists should look for rights, and how rights are produced in Euro-American settings. The sometimes surprising approaches and opinions of staff at Amnesty suggest that while rights and image use for rights may have come out of a particular history, that history is still being written, and rights are still up for debate.

Part I
Producing Rights Images

Chapter 4: People Like Us

Figure 4a: Freed prisoner of conscience Htein writes the name of fellow prisoner Zarganar on his hand in solidarity. Photo By James MacKay.
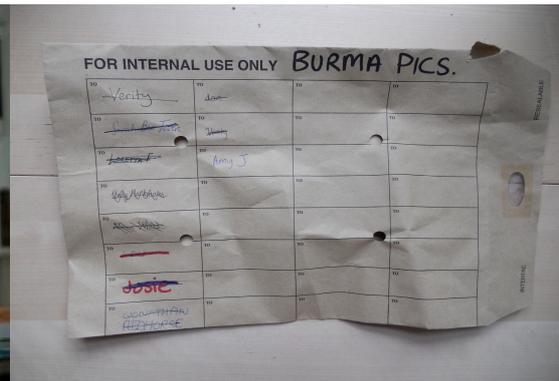
Figure 4b: Internal mail envelope.

This chapter introduces a broad remit within AIUK staff attitudes that seeks to 'humanise' human rights through the use of images. Rorty suggests that the recognition of the rights of others is dependent on first recognising the humanity of others (Rorty 1999:75). He points out that rights movements have traditionally gone hand in hand with the recognition of humanity in the persecuted groups by those persecuting them. He points to the abolishment of slavery in the US as a journey towards recognising the humanity of black slaves by white Americans (ibid). This chapter explores what humanity looks like at AIUK, and how its staff seek to represent and foster a universal humanity. For many organisations and theorists, universal humanity has been rooted in the shared capacity for physical pain as described in the previous chapter. I focus on the planning stages of the AIUK Burma campaign presence at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2010. A process is described whereby staff reimagine some of the norms of NGO imagery (discussed in Chapter 3) by grounding that humanity in cultural and social similarity, rather than on the notion of physical bodies. Thus staff call on what they term 'empathy', a term that I illustrate throughout this chapter as being based largely on identification with another through recognition of similarity, as a recognition of humanity and consequently the rights of others. In doing so, staff reveal certain beliefs about what it means to be human, and how this plays into empathising. I begin by describing the process by which ideas of humanity emerge and are deployed in campaign construction, including the compromises and limits to these productions. Through this I show that humanity for staff is rooted in similarity that will lead to empathy. I then describe the process by

which staff themselves undertake imaginative identification with distant others through images that ultimately justify their work and recognise the rights of others. This suggests that imaginative identification that recognises the humanity of others must be actively undertaken, even by staff, rather than occurring organically or naturally.

Picturing Humanity

The above envelope (4b) containing Image 4a and a selection of other images by James MacKay arrived in my pigeon hole one morning with a meeting request inviting me to 'talk about some pictures' for AIUK's summer actions, leading up to the elections in Burma. MacKay is now a well known photographer who works largely on Burma. The pictures were his portrait collection 'Even Though I am Free I am Not'[31] which featured former prisoners of conscience bearing the name of prisoners yet to be released. His work has been shown in the Guardian and the Independent newspapers, among other publications. However at this point MacKay's work was relatively unknown in the mainstream press, and was published largely on his website and in publications for the movement to free Burma. Unlike most images used by AIUK which come via the design team and the head of design Margaret's discerning eye, these pictures had come through campaign manager Valerie's acquaintance with James whom she knew from Free Burma Events in London. Within the Events Team this caused some ripples. Events are based with Design under the umbrella of Brand and Events, and a clan mentality between different teams was perhaps at work, but more pressingly was a concern over how they would look and whether they would be 'on message' with AIUK's visuals. The term 'on message' is used a lot in Amnesty, especially in the Brand and Design teams, and though sometimes sounding like meaningless corporate-speak, it transpired that for staff it has quite concrete applications. The photographs were passed around the office via the internal mail system, and everywhere they went they created a buzz of excitement unlike any that I had previously encountered over pictures. Staff were talking about the pictures and showing them to each other. I struggled to understand what was more 'on message' about these particular photographs than others which had crossed our path.

---

31 The collection is now a book entitled *Abhaya: Burma's Fearlessness.*

In fact I was surprised that they were considered so appropriate when they seemed like simple portraits and not necessarily about Amnesty's work on Burma or human rights explicitly. I put this to Laura and she laughed and told me '*well what you think makes them not human rights is exactly why they're perfect pictures for this campaign. It's all about the human element Amy, and these have it*' (Laura, in conversation, January 2010). The 'message' then can be seen as in some way relating to the idea of being human and having a 'human element'. In Laura's statement she separates human rights and the human element. Over my time at Amnesty it became clear that AIUK staff often see their remit as different from the 'keepers of the flame' approach which Hopgood found at the International Secretariat (Hopgood 2006). In his meticulous account of the IS's internal 'ethos' Hopgood highlights a focus on maintaining a kind of moral authority through detachment in report writing (ibid:74). AIUK staff often spoke to me about their role as '*telling the stories, showing you the people, putting the human back into human rights' (*Lucy Dunn (designer), interview, April 2011)*. For AIUK staff the IS '*do vital work, sure they do, we couldn't do what we do without their reports, but at the end of the day it's our job to make the reports come alive, it's how we get people engaged and we're good at our job*' (Charlotte (campaigns), interview, July 2011). In reality AIUK staff and IS staff may work for the same organisation, but their remits are different, and it is not unusual for there to be disagreements between the two about the presentation of Amnesty campaigns. Since the UK section is one of the largest, its staff are given a large degree of freedom to work on their own campaign presentation without interference. This is not the case with other smaller sections who rely on the IS to design their campaign material, as discussed in Chapter 2. The UK section therefore is able to pursue this 'human' agenda in ways which are unique to it, and through workplace practices norms are established and learnt that impact on this agenda.

While working on the Summer Actions for Burma in 2010 this 'human element' was a frequently discussed aspect, and was always related back to the photographs, but in an unspecific way. It was more clearly articulated during a conversation between three of us who were putting together visuals for an image selection meeting. Two of us, being volunteers and relatively new, were corrected in our assumptions about the pictures by a member of staff. Meghan, a new volunteer and a photographer herself

passed over one of the James MacKay photographs because '*it was a bit boring*', and I agreed. The picture was of a man standing in an office. We were corrected by the staff member working with us and told that:

> '*I do see what you're saying I just think the office is ordinary in a good way, if you see what I mean, it's somewhere people here go, and evidently people in Burma go too, so you can see actually that people are the same where ever, doing the same things, just being people'* (Mikey, in conversation, January 2010)

The human element then was defined for us as being focussed on mobilising some idea of universals, of similarity between distant others through the still rather vague notion of 'being people'.

The idea of universal humanity, an assumed category by Amnesty staff over the time I was there, was often mentioned but never explicitly described or interrogated. AIUK use the strapline 'Protect the Human' on almost all of their merchandise[32] and frequently make reference to the fact that 'we're all human after all' or express similar sentiments, the shared universal humanity being the grounding prerequisite for human rights. As the above example begins to show, staff see their role as telling stories about people that convey this humanity. During interviews I was able to explore this idea further with staff and found that people struggled to quantify what it meant to be human, but nevertheless maintained its importance. Thus they engaged with one of the most frequently debated aspects underpinning human rights and exposed the difficulty with this assumption of what exactly links people together universally in ways which qualify them for rights. My point here is not to reopen debates about the universality of rights or humanity, but rather to examine how these ideas are used and dealt with by staff in the construction of campaigns, and in other ways in the workplace. I suggest that for staff, the idea of universal humanity which underpins much of their work is complex, problematic and knowingly constructed and deployed. In the following chapter I hope to demonstrate the way in which humanity is consciously and unconsciously imagined and produced by staff to close gaps with distant others. I examine the limits to this humanity, and suggest that it is a product of institutional practices which determine and influence the 'Human' in

---

32 Protect the Human was the strapline at the time of writing. It has since been announced internally that it will be gradually rolled back.

Amnesty's Human rights.

The Category of Human and Human Rights

That universal humanity is a core belief underpinning universal human rights almost goes without saying. As one member of staff told me, 'it's in the name' meaning of course that you can't have human rights without a concept of human. The 'human family' which the UDHR descries includes people regardless of 'race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status' (G.A. Res 217A (III) U.N. Doc A/810 at 70 Art 2 (1948)) suggesting that to be a human is something beyond the cultural, geographic or physical specificities set out above, in short it is something universal, essential and pre-cultural. It is on the basis of this humanity that rights are claimed, and more importantly that we care about the welfare of distant others, at least nominally.

Extending moral responsibility beyond those in one's immediate family or vicinity has been a central question of rights since people first began conceiving of such a thing as rights, and there are have been many attempts to answer this in moral philosophy. These have normally been anchored in demonstrating that the similarities between people outweigh the differences. This traditionally focused on the shared faculty for reason held by all humans as described by Plato, and developed by Kant. However, as Rorty points out, it is not necessarily rational to extend your moral community in this way:

> 'Most people are simply unable to understand why membership in a biological species is supposed to suffice for membership in a moral community...because it would be just too risky...to let one's sense of moral community stretch beyond one's family, clan or tribe' (Rorty 1999:75)

Other theorists have also pointed to this contradiction inherent in a rationality explanation for the extension of right. Adorno suggests that we have a biological predisposition towards 'coldness' when faced with strangers which allows us to protect ourselves (2012:274). Where then can the recognition of rights be found if not in reason? Rorty goes on to suggest that the problem of extending the moral

community is not about allowing people to overcome their differences as people, rather it is the much larger task of recognising humanity in others (Rorty 1999:75). He points to the way that the category of human has been a sliding one, whereby until recently most white people did not consider black people human; though they may have been able to appreciate rationality in their actions, they were still not human (ibid). Human rights, in Rorty's conception, are not about recognising rights, but about recognising those whose rights have been violated as human. I would suggest that it is this element of rights which Amnesty staff see their role as facilitating, this process of widening the scope of humanity to produce care for distant others, and they do that using images.

The concept of humanity and the related but differentiated category of person has long been debated by anthropologists and shown to be relative and shifting (see Carrithers, Colins & Lukes 1985), and the assumptions and exclusions of the Euro-American context of liberal politics leading to rights are well known (Mehta 1990; Ong 2006), and have been critiqued in postcolonial discourse for their potential to replicate existing power dynamics under the naturalisation that the concept human implies (for example see Fanon 1963; Chatterjee 1993:18). Therefore how the category of human is imagined is a highly political issue. While more attention is given in anthropology to the concept of 'personhood' and to the various social imaginings of the individual and the self socially across cultures (White & Kirkpatrick 1985), the cross-cultural category of human has received less attention. This is perhaps because anthropology's traditional focus on the local precludes universals, however in the case of AIUK, local practices seek to produce universals which brings them firmly within the traditional boundaries of anthropology. Tsing points out that the study of the deployment of universals by different actors and agencies with different perspectives and agendas is an interesting and important way in to studying the field of globalisation (Tsing 2006:267).

As Ticktin and Feldman point out, the concept of human is most visible in anthropology where it is least stable (Feldman & Ticktin 2010:11). In many recent approaches the boundaries between humans and other entities have been blurred, making clear where prior academic assumptions lie about what constitutes human. Haraway's concept of the cyborg questions beliefs about where technology and

humanity end (Haraway 1991), as also does Derrida's discussion on animals and humans (Derrida 1997). Studies which place human agency in the hands of objects through networks (Latour 2005) or in images through their use (Gell 1998; Mitchell 2005) also reveal slippage and blurring which disestablishes the human as a discreet and measurable category, discussed in Chapter 1. Nevertheless for staff at AIUK its existence is viewed and created as discreet and bounded.. This is true even while they seek to produce it at the campaign level, which would seem to suggests a certain inbuilt unnaturalness to the concept which is invisible to staff. Yet despite critiques, the idea of universal humanity continues to be evocative and important for human rights and other global organisations as is evidenced by its persistent use in various campaigns. Oxfam and Amnesty International are two of the highest earning charities in the UK[33], have high visibility, and both include the word human in their straplines.

Figure 4c: Oxfam: Be Humankind

Figure 4d: Amnesty International: Protect the Human

NGOs and Human Rights organisations are seen as 'crucial in helping [to]constitute humanity as a real category of central importance' (Feldman & Ticktin 2010:14). The field of international agencies therefore is a locale where the term 'human' is often used with agendas and real political implications. As discussed in Chapter 3, recent literature on humanitarian agencies critiques their use of the term human as a largely biomedical category. This is constructed through the way in which organisational organisations target support and define need through physical discomfort (ibid). Increasingly, rights discourse and law is shot through with references to bodily integrity both in terms of defining torture (Kelly 2012:72) and demanding asylum (Ticktin 2006:36).

This can be seen as having its roots in Enlightenment sentimentalism which places

---

33 The annual income of Amnesty is £21,901,000 compared to Oxfam's £294,800,000 Source: Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). This places both within the top 50 highest earners in the UK charity sector.

'sympathy, compassion, and pity as its honorific concepts and emotions' (Moyn 2006:399). In this concept of why people care about others made popular by thinkers such as Hume and Rousseau, the ability to relate to others is described as being rooted in a shared knowledge of pain, which allows us to sympathise with other people despite the inaccessibility of their individual feelings, and the apparent conflict with rationality. As touched upon in the previous chapter, David Hume, one of the leading proponents of sentimentalism, describes a process whereby people mirror each other, feeling pain vicariously:

> 'Were I present at any of the more terrible operations of surgery, 'tis certain, that even before it begun, the preparation of the instruments, the laying of the bandages in order, the heating of the irons, with all the signs of anxiety and concern in the patient and assistants, wou'd have a great effect upon my mind, and excite the strongest sentiments of pity and terror.' (Hume 1978:576).

He explains that despite not being the object of this surgery, this excitement of the sentiment of pity spreads by contagion, that is, by mirroring the feelings of others that we observe from outward cues (ibid:605). In this sense we see in sentimentalism a rationale which places care about others in experiences of pain, thereby suggesting, as others have since Hume, that people are united through a shared capacity to suffer pain (Fassin 2005:372).

The sourcing of humanity in pain is not unique to Hume, though he is its earliest best known theorist. Pain has long been used and discussed as a justification for the universality of rights. Amnesty International called it the 'common human denominator' (1973:17). Douzinas suggests that there exists a history of rights in which 'human rights are not based on the *a priori* free will of the subject, but on her a priori pain and suffering' (Douzinas 2000:354). It is into this tradition of recognising the rights of others through 'the recognition of other people's misery and suffering as one's own responsibility' (Bauman 1997:63) that Amnesty campaigns fit, albeit somewhat uncomfortably. I hope to show throughout this chapter that AIUK attempts to source 'humanity' not in pain, but in other ways, and in doing so staff attempt to subvert expectations about what links human beings.

Closing the Gap: Pictures of People

> '*Sometimes it's easy to be kinda disconnected and think 'that's just what it's like over there' but we want to show that they're just people like us, trying to get on with their lives, with jobs and interests and families. The pictures show people as people not as statistics or a vague idea, but as real people. The pictures close the gap and make you feel close to them*'
> Lucy Dunn (Senior Graphic Designer AIUK March 2010)

Pictures of people, it seems, have been entwined with Amnesty campaigning since the very first campaign in 1961. The popular perception of Amnesty as a letter-writing organization is only half the picture, the other half is in fact pictures. 'The Forgotten Prisoners' (Peter Benenson 1961:1) which was the newspaper article which launched Amnesty does not simply name its prisoners, it provides photographs of them.
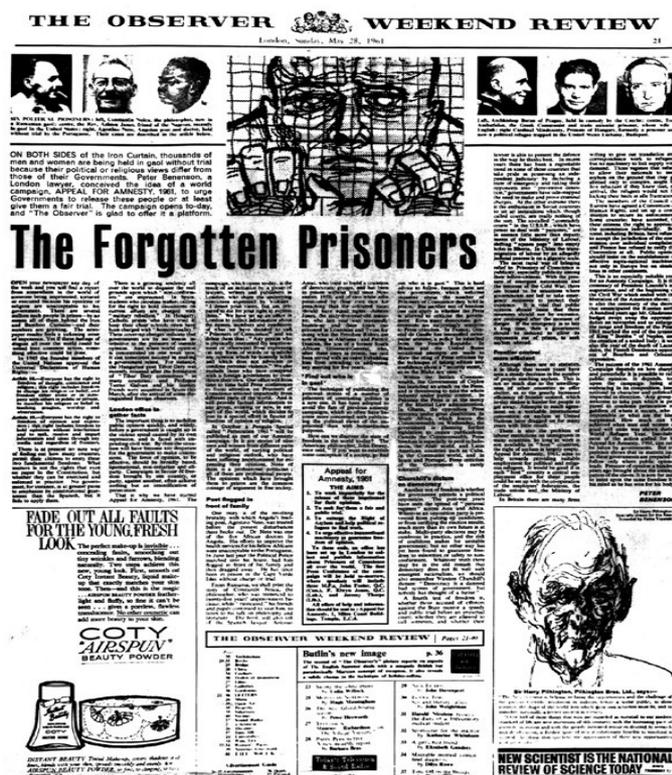
Figure 4e: Observer article May 1961

From the outset, pictures of the people Amnesty campaigned for were present and though often overlooked by the public as simply decoration, pictures of individuals

being campaigned for are seen by staff as playing a critical role in campaigning. The first letter appeal for South America in 1970s was followed closely by the first large scale picture appeal in 1979 by which Amnesty collected pictures of the Disappeared in South America[34] and displayed them extensively to local people, government and back in the UK in order to garner support. It was the biggest picture campaign ever undertaken by a charitable organization and was an early example of photo-based campaigns which Amnesty sections have run as a main part of campaign practice since then[35]. Photographs of people are thought to have a quality of humanness which other types of images do not. One of the first Amnesty campaigners involved in the Disappeared campaign describes their use thus:

> '*What Amnesty decided to do then was enormous campaign, campaign of photographs which was very important because a name, a number, a story, is not a person it's when you see the photograph this person is like you or like anyone else...it could happen to anyone*' (Virginia Shoppee, Amnesty Researcher, South America (October 2011 Amnesty When They are All Free).

This approach fits more widely into a campaign strategy which involves using individuals as a 'way in' for the public to engage with human rights through getting to know various prisoners of conscience. AI uses an Individuals at Risk team to campaign on behalf of particular people who members of the public can '*adopt*' and '*get to know'* and '*hopefully give a damn about a bit more than a random stranger because you can empathise with them*' (Mikey, in conversation, June 2011). The use of particular individuals suggests not only the individualised notion of humanity common to Euro-American concepts of human, but also instinctively jars with the idea of the universalism of humanity which human rights relies on. Individuals must therefore be at once individuals but also universal enough to maintain the rationale of universality on which rights discourse depends. Individuals chosen by Amnesty, and indeed all photographs used to campaign, are selected to be '*recognisable to the*

---

34 'the disappeared' are individuals that have gone missing and are suspected dead or imprisoned for political reasons. This term was originally coined by rights groups in relation to practices of kidnapping political activists in South American countries where the practice of enforced disappearance is widespread, but now is used in many other contexts as geographically diverse as Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka.
35 Examples include: Mexico Disappeared 1981, Control Arms Photo Petition 2007, Maternal Mortality Mother's Pictures 2009,

public as members of the same human race' (Mikey, in conversation, June 2011).

The approach Mikey suggests above, of humanising individuals, can be viewed as particularly significant in light of the wider field of rights practice that staff work in discussed in Chapter 2 whereby rights reports are produced that remove narrative in favour of 'facts' (Wilson 1997). Wilson demonstrates how the translation of crimes from complex and ambiguous, enmeshed in local specificity, class, and tradition, into the universal factual unambiguous accounts used in rights reports alters their potential meaning (ibid:150). Wilson singles out Amnesty's Urgent Actions (produced in the IS) as emblematic of this process for their scant information, normally containing only the name, category of victim and manner of murder (ibid: 143). He concludes that this removal of context ultimately leads to the same '...dehumanisation that justifies abuses...' (ibid:155). The 'humanising' of victims of rights abuses through images therefore represents a very different approach to representing victims. I will attempt to show throughout this chapter and the following chapters how staff at AIUK are engaged in practices that use images to re-subjectify victims of rights abuses, deviating from the expected practice of a rights organisation, deviating even from their colleagues in Amnesty's IS. In doing so staff hope to provoke empathy form those viewing campaigns, but as this chapter will demonstrate, they also do the very thing Wilson's critique accuses them of doing- they construct human rights through representing them (ibid:134). In this case it is not through the reduction to facts, but rather through the construction of particular visions of humanity. In the following section I go back to the James MacKay picture shown at the start of this chapter to demonstrate how AIUK staff select and deploy individuals, the characteristics that are considered desirable and acceptable in a universal person and how these are ultimately related to the likelihood of the public empathising with them.

People Like Us

The James MacKay photographs mentioned at the beginning of this chapter were discussed by staff in a project group meeting in March 2010. We met for the first meeting of the project group in the 'creative room', so called because it is colourful

and filled with toys and objects to 'stimulate creativity'. In actual fact the room was chosen because it was going to be a long meeting and the sofas were more comfortable than the plastic uprights in other rooms. A small group consisting of Valerie and Amy S (both from campaigns) and Laura, Sally B-T and myself from events, met initially to discuss how these pictures might be used to form an action. The action was to be rolled out at summer festivals and to local groups to undertake on behalf of Amnesty. The group was a mix of three senior members of staff – Sally, Laura and Valerie – who were to lead the discussion, and myself and the other Amy were to record and take on a more administrative role. Despite having different focusses the two teams agreed on much about what the actions were to be and why, which struck me as unusual, since often the different priorities of different teams mean that considerable time is spent defining objectives and balancing agendas. Because summer campaigns are annual it seemed that a method and wider objective had been decided in the past and had now been assimilated into Amnesty's campaign canon. It was understood that we had to find someone or a subset of people from among these images who '*people would like*' to campaign for, and that we would use this person or these people to form an action which would be participatory in some way.

To prepare for the meeting I was asked to affix print outs of the photographs to the walls and provide a crib sheet detailing who the people in them were. I was asked to put down the following details:

    iii) name

    iv) job

    v) family

    vi) where the photo was taken for example whether it was in Burma itself or whether it was of a refugee in Thailand.

    vii) Name and job of prisoner being campaigned for.

These elements, having been highlighted as the important facts about the subjects of the photographs through their inclusion on the crib sheet, then became the main criteria for evaluation when talking about the pictures and may be seen to represent the attributes seen as relevant by staff. It was understood between staff that we were using the pictures, but that we would not be able to use many. The reason for this was not discussed during the meeting, but it was explained to me later that too many faces

to remember makes people less likely to connect and empathise with them. What was interesting about this meeting was no't the tacit understanding that individuals make the best campaign tools, which is fairly explicitly dealt with in Amnesty handbooks and briefings, but the decisions about what attributes these individuals should have. This element of campaign construction, the question as to who makes a good recipient of Amnesty's attention, was not covered in handbooks. In this case it was a physical list which showed the priorities at work, but the question was also crucially worked out at the level of the meeting where the rationale behind these priorities was able to emerge.

Eventually the choice was made to focus on Zarganar as a political prisoner to campaign for, and this was based on several things. He is a comedian and Htein, who bears his name on his palm and whose image would feature in the campaign (figure 4a), is an artist. The recognisable jobs of the two men were a main appeal:

> Sally: *I think we should go with Zarganar. The comedian thing works-there's a link to Edinburgh and he's such a normal guy, people will respond to that*
>
> Amy: *Yeah I agree and Htein's an artist, there're loads of arty people at these festivals, they'll like that, easier to empathise with.*

In the above interaction between Amy S and Sally not only is the crucial element of audience present, but a further assumption about empathy is put forward, namely that you relate to people like you. During the preparation for the meeting, and throughout the course of it, the focus remained on picking pictures which show a person who is recognisable through their familiar cultural characteristics. Their job, clothes, and the setting of the picture were all discussed. Htein was also chosen because '*the studio is a great backdrop for it*' because '*it really brings home that he's not living a totally different life, only the Junta makes it different*' (Sally BT, in conversation, March 2010). By the same token, pictures were rejected for being '*too rural*' or '*too local*'.
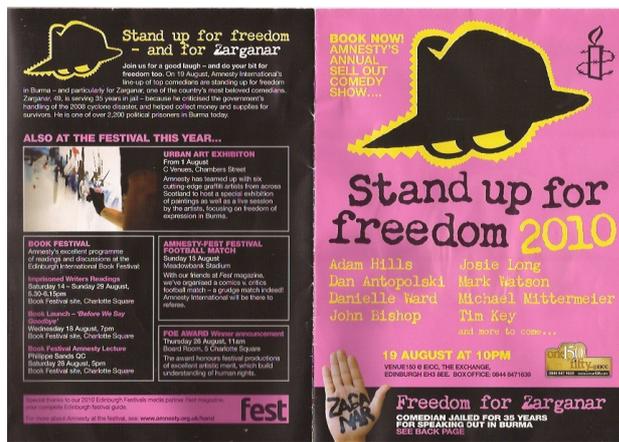
Figure 4f: Cover and back page of Zarganar campaign leaflet

Figure 4g: Pages inside campaign leaflet showing Htein on the right.

Figure 4h: Zarganar, from Individuals At Risk campaign archives, AIUK.

When Amy spoke to me in an interview about the final choice, she used a term that I often heard during the planning of campaigns, that of 'empathy'. It was a word used by many others during the planning of this campaign and others, and from its use seemed to be intimately tied to the idea of communicating humanity. Staff would talk to me about *'putting the human into human rights' (*Lucy, interview, July 2011) and similar sentiments in the same breath as talking about empathising with prisoners. Amy did not qualify this term with an explanation, but based on observations during

the meeting, and the focus on recognition and similarity, I took it to refer to the process highlighted in Chapter 1 that Kelly describes as 'imaginative identification' (Kelly 2012a:754). Through emphasising certain similarities, staff hoped to allow people to identify with those depicted, rather than 'sympathise' with them. Depicting humanity therefore has at its heart the aim to produce empathy between the audience and prisoners of conscience such as Htein. In this light, the focus on what was similar and recognisable visually makes sense as an attempt to forge empathy. The rationale behind the avoidance of sympathy is a subject of a later chapter, but is deeply entwined with the call for empathy based on similarity, rather than sympathy based on pain, which staff do not value. Of course this identification will always be imagined since they are based not on actual relations with a person, but rather are mediated by images.

The focus on similarity as crucial in the creation of care for distant others has been a feature of philosophical approaches to understanding morality since the enlightenment. Hume puts it thus: 'We sympathize more with persons contiguous to us than with persons remote to us: with our acquaintance, than with strangers; With our countrymen, than with foreigners.' (Hume 1978: 227). It is perhaps no great surprise then that staff seek similarity in their humanity, although the version of similarity is not as Hume describes, based on a contagion of pain and a shared capacity to suffer. Staff at the IS believe pain to be the uniting feature between people (Hopgood 2006:73), but for staff at AIUK people are being visually imagined as similar in quite different ways. In putting forward a version of similarity based on cultural and social tropes, staff can be seen as employing a very different notion of the shared basis of humanity. Rather than basing humanity on the 'sympathy' that I describe in the previous chapter as underpinning most accounts of shared humanity, staff here are attempting to subvert that norm by relying not on shared pain, but rather on a shared point of view. This distinction Moyn describes as follows:

> 'Sympathy, of course, implies in Greek what compassion implies in Latin, suffering others' situations along with them. Empathy suggests a more internalised identification with such people's states, seeing things from their point of view or 'in their shoes" (Moyn 2006:399).

Staff therefore are undertaking a particular shift from the model of sympathy discussed in Chapter 3, that roots shared humanity in pain, towards a way of caring

for others that is not based on pain, but on similarity.

The idea of similarity between AIUK staff, and their perceived audience[36] with Htein was paramount, but it was not the only way in which staff imagined that a human connection of empathy could be made. '*It's not just about making a person seem like us*' Amy S told me after the meeting:

> '*it's more about showing that the person is part of the world we all inhabit, it's not such a great divide in how you live your life- we all have family, but um, we're all part of this thing that maybe you could call globalisation but I don't mean it with a stigma I mean that the world is not such a big place really anymore and people share so much common ground now that they didn't, it's like, there's no excuse for some people being oppressed and others not*'. (Amy S, in conversation January 2010)

What Amy S is talking about here is a form of cosmopolitanism (Hannerz 2007) and an assumption that people participate in a global society rather than simply a national one. However what AIUK is involved in through using images in this way is a deployment and active creation of the sort of global civil society that it uses to explain why people should care. Amnesty is therefore subscribing to and creating it simultaneously. As the following example will show, the desire to create this, and the projection of this kind of global human, is not without limiting factors, and the reality of the type of human amnesty put forward is the result of compromises at the level of production and 'friction' (Tsing 2006).

Compromises

During the meeting the need for similarity was tempered with a perceived need to '*show it's still Burma*'. Images to add to a second 'montage' poster were selected to show the occasional picture which showed Burma so that '*people will trust it*'. Comments such as '*how about this one, it's how you imagine Burma*' described the image below.

---

36 The audience is discussed in more depth in chapter 5

Figure 4i: By James MacKay

Visually then, images must be at once familiar and at the same time contain an element of the exotic sufficient to make them appealing and 'real'. In the above image, compared to image 4a of Htein in his studio surrounded by artwork, we can see a more rural setting, with bamboo buildings and therefore figure 4i is more clearly marked as 'different'. Both images were used together with others in much of the campaign material to provide both difference and similarity. This is a difficult balance to strike and one that is familiar to anthropologists who share many of the same representational dilemmas. The balance between similarity and difference and the need to show difference without making it too exotic are certainly challenges which most anthropologists will have encountered. However unlike anthropologists, Amnesty staff are balancing the extra dimension of appeal. Staff in general see their job as educational, as telling the world about different situations and highlighting similarities to make us care, but there is also an element of conforming to what they see the audience as requiring to respond appropriately.

> *'people are freaked out when you give them something too unexpected, they expect the mud huts and starving babies and we can't completely avoid that or people think these guys Amnesty are campaigning for don't really need help as much as these other Oxfam guys, so we throw in a bit so that they know people are needing help, but we don't do a lot cause it's not fair' (Sam (Brand and Events), interview, August 2011)*

The idea of people needing help is very telling here. That some people need help is a crucial but undiscussed limit to the universal ideal of all people as equal which images seek to communicate, since the campaigning work which Amnesty does is based on people from 'here' acting on behalf of people 'there'.

The task of AIUK campaigns is not simply the academic delivery of information about a situation, it is also to push an agenda and for this sometimes the 'Amnesty style' of pictures must conform to a wider context of NGO advertising. For this reason the desired style must be adjusted, however in doing so reluctantly, staff yet again make clear the distinction they see between their organization and that of other organizations, and highlight the conflicting intentions and desires which go into the final product of human rights images. This sort of compromise as a result of what staff see as external pressures demonstrates that 'abstract claims about the globe can only be studied as they operate in the world' (Tsing 2006:6). In this case the desire for global humanity, which staff wish to put forward and claim to believe in, cannot be realised. In practice universal ideals are tempered by local concerns, and in this case a concern that people will be '*freaked out*'. This is an example of what Tsing calls the 'sticky materiality of practical encounters' (ibid:1), and it acts as a limit to the spread of universals. It has been claimed that there is an inequality inherent in human rights which must be managed, that of the difference between the 'protector and protectee' (Ticktin 2011:261). For Amnesty this is clearly being worked out at some level through the need to maintain distance and limit the complete universalising of people. If we were all the same then there would be no need to protect others. Difference must therefore remain an element, and the vision of universal humanity must include this difference. The search for balance between similarity and difference is ongoing and is a feature not only of the production of campaigns, but also of the reception of campaigns by the public. It is discussed at length in Part Two of the thesis.

Being Human and Acting Humane

Figure 4j: Members of the public at Lovebox, taken by Simone. Used with permission.

The meeting having decided the type of person to be featured in the summer campaign the next step was to plan the 'Action' which would go with the pictures. Actions which form the basis of Amnesty's practice are a modern equivalent of the letter writing upon which AI was founded. They are tailored to each campaign but usually involve supporters signing a postcard, sending a text or email, or increasingly taking a photograph, all acting as a sort of petition to show numbers of supporters. Actions are usually taken on behalf of individuals, but often reference a law, government, or national situation. In this campaign a 'visual petition' was used which involved members of the public taking pictures of themselves to show solidarity (see images above). The images were to be presented to the meeting of The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the hope being that '*seeing the supporters is harder to ignore than just seeing a signature*' (Valerie, interview, April 2010). Pictures were collected by local groups and Amnesty staff and uploaded onto a shared Flickr account where they could be viewed on the internet by the public. As well as collecting members of the public's pictures, AIUK staff artist liaison Lindsay was brought in to collect visual signatures from celebrities to 'increase identification' between the public and pictures. Once again the underpinning assumption that seeing a picture of a person makes them more real than written or other testimony is behind

this action, this time in lobbying governments. Something about the way you look is thought to be engaging in a way that your name or signature is not. I hope to demonstrate that the way activists look is important to staff because of its role in creating imagined identification.

The visual petition was devised by Laura and involved people standing in poses similar to those of the people in the original pictures who were holding up their palms bearing the name of Zarganar. The idea behind having members of the public in similar poses was to '*show solidarity, and show we're in it together*' (Laura, interview, June 2010). Another sort of visual gap-closing is at work here. While the image of Htein was chosen to be similar to the audience, now the audience are being made to appear similar to the pictures which AIUK have chosen, literally mimicking the images. This technique was used in other campaigns and was not unique to the Burma campaign. Masks and sign-holding have also been used by AIUK to create links between the public and the people being campaigned for. In the photograph below students were asked by staff to pose with the masks and signs for promotional material, a further example of the mimicry at work in staff campaign design (see figure 4k below). The example below is more explicit in its intention to minimise differences between people. The signs say 'we are Rita', suggesting the idea of universal humanity. We are all potentially Rita. The merging of onlooker and person depicted in the image is a central feature of campaign practice, and will be discussed in greater depth in subsequent chapters where I look at 'corpothetics' (Pinney 2004:193) and human rights practice. However for now I focus my attention on what this merging means to staff in their imagining of humanity.

Figure 4k. Students pose for publicity shots at the 2009 'Festive Open House'. As part of the Greetings Card Campaign Christmas cards were sent to Rita Mahato in Nepal, a human rights defender working on woman's rights.

Not only are members of the public part of the same humanity, here they are looking the same. '*It helps with the idea that we're all the same when it comes down to it because it shows very clearly everyone together*' (Hillary, in conversation, Dec 2010). The action focusses on similarity, but it also changes the focus from the individual to the collective. The original image of Htein is no longer unique, it is one of many pictures when viewed with the members of the public in figure 4j. In this way the public and the pictures are consciously brought together to form a wider representation, one which recognises them all as participating in a global humanity. The collage which was eventually made demonstrated this AIUK notion of individuals making up the wider whole. The clothes and settings for images were diverse, but the pose was the same, as were the names on people's hands and the cause - to free Burmese prisoners of conscience.

In Amnesty's visual practice, photographs of activists are a key aspect, and as I discuss in Chapter 6, images of people undertaking activist activities in countries with rights violations are held in high esteem by staff. James MacKay, whose images

were behind the Burma action, complained to me that he was uncomfortable with the way that making visual connections suggested that those '*braving real danger in Burma just seem the same as people who just got their photo taken at a music festival' (*James MacKay, interview, April 2011). It could also be tempting to think of this as serving to elevate those taking action to the status of saviour, a common critique of media and NGO representation (Ignatieff 1999:288). Indeed images such as the one below which was sent to me after I had cancelled my subscription to Amnesty, with the aim of trying to win me back[37], would suggest that visual practice is 'as much about imagining us as it is them' (ibid). However, having spoken to staff at length about these issues, I would suggest that while it is about imagining us and them, it is not to elevate those taking actions, but rather another aspect of imagining what universal humanity should look like through how it should act towards others.

Figure 4l. Leaflet sent to members who have cancelled their subscription to encourage rejoining Amnesty.

I spoke to Laura about the logic behind visual actions like this and she told me that:

> '*there's an element of showing off I suppose, you do something good like Amnesty and you want to be seen to be doing it, and it helps us to show lots of people doing good and taking action ,it shows that it's as much a part of Amnesty as the prisoners, we depend on people joining in and, well, doing the right thing*'. (Laura, interview June 2010)

---

37 I have been a member of Amnesty for over 10 years. I cancelled my membership at one point to see what the organisation's response to outgoing members was. I have since reinstated my membership.

People are therefore united both in how they look similar, and also in their actions being humane and caring through 'doing the right thing'. The recognition of this version of universal humanity has at its core a prescriptive element which recognises humane actions as a crucial part of this imagined humanity. For staff, the notion that activists who undertake work on behalf of others are 'doing good' and 'doing the right thing' is a powerful motivator. Those I worked with regularly spoke about the importance of taking action to make the world better. Humane actions, for staff, are those that show care towards other humans, such as campaigning on their behalf.

Laqueur suggests an increasing link between ideas of human being mobilised by the Euro-American narrative of humanism and ideas of the humane (Laqueur 2009:43). His notion of 'humanity as sentiment' is based on the joining of these two ideas to the extent that they are indistinguishable (Laqueur 1989). While he focusses on suffering and written narratives to produce this connection, the visual work of Amnesty images is producing the same assumption through similarity being coupled with a veneration of caring about others. A member of staff told me that she found activists 'inspirational' because '*that's how it should be, not just looking out for yourself, that's the only way the world is going to change'* (Lucy, interview, January 2010). Therefore visual similarity is not only about the removal of difference, it is also part of a process whereby staff imagine qualities that are desirable in this universal humanity.

In Amnesty practice we see a belief that to recognise someone's humanity is to care for them, expressed by staff repeatedly to me in interviews and in day to day interactions. We also see a campaign strategy which seeks to increase this care by streamlining humanity into something similar, something which will elicit empathy and increase closeness. Through actions this is taken even further, as people are reminded visually of their shared humanity and their shared capacity to care simultaneously. The people in photos are like those being campaigned for and are taking an action of care. The illuminating symbolism of the candle has always been thought to illuminate rights abuses, but here we see a different illumination, that of supporters who are marked out visually and discursively as 'doing good'. Rather than naming and shaming abusers, the traditional fare of campaigns, those who are acting correctly are displayed and in displaying them AIUK express the assumption that to be human is intimately connected with being humane as represented by taking action.

Talking To Pictures

Staff at Amnesty consider pictures of people to be an important tool for endowing humanity and closing the gap between their supporters and the people being campaigned for. They consciously select pictures which show humanity through similar attributes, and in doing so value certain ways of understanding what it means to be human, based on looking human and acting humanely. A particular relationship is assumed between the visual representation of a person and the response which an audience member is hoped to have - one of empathy. However this undertaking, which staff see as a means to engage less committed members of the public, is in fact taking place within the office between staff and images. In the case of Htein, his image was appropriated as culturally 'like us' in ways which would never become public, but were just as important. Staff therefore must undergo the same process of imagined identification that they plan into campaigns, at the micro level of the office. This suggests that while AIUK staff frequently spoke to me in meetings about all of us being human, in fact they must actively produce and learn 'empathy' through social practices. In the following section I discuss how Amnesty staff work to close the gap with distant others, and what this reveals about working in the field of global moralism. I also address the issue of gap-closing through pictures, and question what this means for the identification with distant others.

The image of Htein then, was selected for Summer campaigns, especially the Edinburgh Festival Fringe which is AIUK's largest Summer activity. This period of preparation was undertaken largely by the Design and Events teams which are based in the same corner of the open plan office. Despite other projects being worked on at the same time, much of the office conversation was focussed on Zarganar and Htein possibly because of the range of staff involved. Leaflets and posters were being designed, information being circulated to Amnesty representatives, and overlooking us all during this period was the first draft of the poster of Htein which was hanging in the centre of the wall 'for inspiration'. It is very common for Amnesty staff to put up inspirational pictures. The media team have a framed collection of hard hitting newspaper articles on their wall, individuals at risk have their individual pictures on a

map of the world, and most teams have at least one picture of Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK). The Amnesty office is a very visual environment, and even though it is rare for people from outside the organization to visit staff areas, the advertising and branding of Amnesty is still very much in evidence for the purpose of '*fostering team spirit*' (Mikey, in conversation, October 2010) and because Amnesty staff like it. '*The picture's a reminder of what we're doing, and it brightens up my desk*' (Laura talking about her picture of ASSK). Most of the images chosen by staff are of prisoners freed, or those yet to be freed, suggesting that the importance of pictures of people symbolises more than advertising, it is also about motivation.

We had Htein's picture up on the wall, and while we were working on preparation for action it became common practice to nod or gesture towards the poster when talking about him. Staff started to talk about him as if he was there in the room, sometimes talking seriously about his campaign, sometimes jokingly asking what to get him for lunch. The leaflets once printed were discussed in a similar manner '*we'll put him in the Filmhouse, he'll like it there'* (Mikey, May 2010) meaning that leaflets would be distributed there. This often quite jokey and affectionate way of referring to the images as people, and attributing personality to them '*he's an artist, he'll want to visit the galleries*' (Jesse, May 2010) is interesting because it continues the ideas which emerged at the meeting to discuss the Burma image selection but seemingly this time unconsciously. Staff were not trying to appeal to a public here, but rather the same principles applied to the selection of visual materials are internalised into day to day interactions between staff. When I asked about it I was told '*didn't even realise I was doing it*' (Amanda, June 2010) and '*it helps to remember that we're doing it for real people*' (Jesse, May 2010). The same need to close the distance that Amnesty attribute to the public, is being undertaken in the office by staff. Like interaction between the public and the images of people, staff also are working on a version of Htein which is 'like them'- a member of the team and an eater of Pret[38] sandwiches. In doing so they have formed a relation with the picture which not only than demonstrates a belief in a shared humanity rooted in images, but also infuses the image with this same humanity.

---

38 Pret is an international sandwich shop chain. There is a branch on Curtain Road where staff often
    buy their lunch.

Htein was not the only image that staff spoke to. Though not quite a daily occurrence, the practice of talking to pictures, especially those of prisoners or inspirational figures, was one that I noticed throughout my time at Amnesty. Sometimes this was as simple as members of design team talking to pictures on their screens and asking if they were 'happy' after a picture edit, as though it was a make-over given to a person. At other times it was more in depth, as with Htein, when staff would seem to form relationships with the pictures. One of the meeting rooms contained a display of photographs of trade union leaders. On several occasions I was in meetings where favourite trade union leaders' pictures would be asked for advice on a tricky problem or decision, in a joking manner. The conversations in these instances could go on for quite a long time. While it was only a few members of staff who I ever saw initiating these conversations, everyone in the room tended to join in offering their own version of what opinions the picture might have on a given subject. In the case of the trade union leaders, the pictures were not all of distant others. In fact a member of staff's picture hung in the collection with others from around the world. This was not only a practice of connecting with distant others, though in the instance of Htein it did that, it was also about inspiration.

Initially I found the practice of talking to images in the office confusing because staff who were engaged and knowledgeable about human rights surely did not need to be reminded that they had an obligation to distant others. They knew about it, they planned campaigns around it and they used techniques to engage others with precision and self-awareness. It also seemed quite irrational to talk to a picture that quite clearly was not able to talk back. David Morgan, in his study of the use of religious images in American households, recounts a similar surprise at the use of images. In his study he suggests that in the American mid-West. Roman Catholics and Protestants seem to distinguish themselves by the former's use of religious images and the latter's aversion to it. In practice however religious images are used just as widely in the homes of Protestant Christians as in Catholics' homes (Morgan 1998:152). He suggests that there are significant social and performative elements to the experience of religion and religious images (ibid:24). For now I will deal largely with the social element, although the performative and physical elements emerge in Chapters 8 & 10. Morgan describes how people display Jesus in their living rooms to make him, as one respondent told him, 'part of our home and family' (ibid:165). They

act in certain ways towards these religious images that allow them to practice their faith on a domestic level, as a family (ibid). While Amnesty staff's attention to images takes place in an office, rather than the home, there are some similarities in what is being achieved through these practices. They too are undertaking a social interaction with images at an everyday level, but rather than doing so to support their faith in their God, staff undertake these conversations with images to support their faith in their work.

The practice made more sense in light of later interviews with members of staff when we were able to talk with more candour than in the office, when some of the difficulties of working in the field of human rights were made obvious. Many staff expressed to me a frustration with being 'stuck here' doing campaign work rather than being out in the field. Jonathan explained: '*Working on cases of people you don't know and for results which are hard to measure is hard work, sometimes I just think I wish I was doing something more hands on'*(Jonathan, interview, August 2011). He went on to describe a feeling of guilt:' *I'm in one of the richest places in the world asking people to care about someone in prison and I half expect people to be like hey man why should I listen to you, and why should they, it's not like I've been to half the places'* (Jonathan, interview, August 2011). During more intimate discussions staff confessed to doubts about the effect their work was having, and a need to have faith and believe in the work.

Working for Amnesty is in many ways like working for any large corporation. Much of the work is the repetitive- events, advertising, raising money. Yet the staff's own image of the charity is very important to them as I discuss in Chapters 5 & 6. In some ways it is more important for staff to close this gap between themselves and the people on whose behalf they work, than it is to do the same with the public. Staff need to '*keep in mind why we're here*' (Jesse, in conversation, June 2011) in an environment where the daily concerns of running a business threaten to overtake the concerns important to staff, that of human rights. The inspirational images are a self-confessed part of this process of keeping wider concerns in the forefront. I would suggest that talking to these pictures serves a similar purpose. A member of staff described the process of chatting to trade unionists, when asked, as '*a bit of fun with colleagues*', suggesting that the social element is important. I never saw anyone

talking to pictures when they were alone in meeting rooms or break- out areas, though it would have been clear to see since the open plan and glass-heavy office leave few places to hide.

In talking to images staff not only close the gap for themselves, they also perform that gap-closing and engage other members of staff in the process. In asking for Htein's opinion they forge a link with the person they are campaigning for, and in doing so go some way towards alleviating the anxiety which Jonathan discussed above about being geographically absent from much of their work. They help others in the room to do the same by making these connections conversationally, making it a social undertaking. This suggests not only an awareness of the need to construct and produce identification with and care for others, but also demonstrates that while staff believe themselves to be outside of the need for these projects, their unique role in working in global spheres but with a very local remit makes it even more important for them to close the gap.

While staff use images to forge connections with distant others, the medium of this connection is photographs and staff have little or no interaction with the people themselves. Staff therefore project these emotions and desires onto photographs. Mitchell encountered a similar relation between art historians and the pictures they study whereby despite knowing them to be paintings, the historians 'frequently talk and act as if the pictures had feeling, will, agency and desire' (Mitchell 2005:31). Staff at AIUK can be seen to do this too, but with the added caveat that while Mitchell's historians presumably know that a painting is a painting, to Amnesty staff the line between photographic pictures and people is much less clear: the 'stigmata of personhood' (ibid:30) makes staff interact differently to how they do with pictures of landscapes or inanimate objects, or with paintings and other non-photographic portraits. The fact that the people represented do exist makes this relationship even more charged with emotions. The outcome of this is that images used by Amnesty can be seen to have agency in as much as they are producing action and emotion in the public through their place in networks of intention and signification generally.

An expansion of the work that images do is needed to account for this human type of agency which staff project onto photographs of people in their office interactions.

Here images are not simply active in social life: as Gell suggests, images can be displaced through human agency (Gell 1998:12), and they are treated as living breathing people. Mitchell's term 'animism' captures something of this process: he suggests that we see some pictures as possessing personhood, rather than just agency, through relations which people have with them (ibid:32). In this case Amnesty staff, through their production of a universal humanity, have expanded this category to include pictures. In the office, pictures are allowed to take part in office interactions and are active in constituting relationships and giving meaning to their international work through their role as animated and 'human'.

This suggests that in thinking about visual narratives which feature photographs of people we must consider the special status that photographs of people have. Rather than seeing them as simply visual representations, or conflating them with those they represent, pictures of people must be understood as something else. They are used in social ways, which give their narratives particular potency, through their 'animism'. When planning this Burma campaign, Amnesty staff imagined that people would relate to and empathise with distant others through images by imaginatively identifying with their similarity exemplified in images containing visually familiar cues. They had little thought of their own experiences of relating to the images used. However it transpired that staff too undertook imaginative relations with the photographs on this campaign and other pictures around the workplace. Rather than simply having empathy as staff imagined, that is, recognising universal humanity by seeing the world from the point of view of another, staff actually spoke to the photographs, creating a social space for bringing their collective imagined version of that person into being through the images. Therefore empathy as staff imagine it when planning campaigns does not account for the social nature of interacting with pictures, and relating to distant others, that takes place in their own practice.

It is important to emphasise the imagined nature of this version. Staff may have felt closer to Htein by talking to him, but if anything they were closer to the photograph. Htein remained in Burma and not contactable, and it remains very much an imagined identification. Throughout the process of campaign design I have shown how staff relationships with images, and the way in which these images are used serves to blur the distinction between people and pictures of people. Staff plan campaigns as if

there is no gap between the representation and the represented, and the result is that the gap between people and images closes in their approaches to imaginatively identifying. The closeness that staff hope to achieve between the public and distant others is also taking place between people and pictures. This blurring is present in the way that staff talk about pictures when selecting them in terms of the image rather than the person behind it, and it is present in the actions which demand intimacy with the image.However it is most clearly present in the social office practices whereby staff talk to and about images as if the latter were conscious. This way of relating to images may not be unique to Amnesty staff because there are examples throughout visual ethnographies of a blurring between people and pictures (see Pinney 2004; Morgan 1998; Mitchell 2005). However to put it down to something innate to images of people is to devalue its social significance in this particular workplace, where maintaining an experience of globalism in the midst of local practices is clearly important to staff. In later chapters, the types of experiences which members of local groups and the public have with images are explored and suggest that while the same blurring between people and images occurs in these different settings, and appears to be a feature of how people imaginatively identify with others through images, it takes different forms and to different ends (see Part II of the thesis).

Conclusion

Throughout this campaign, staff were working on the assumption that there is a need to forge a link with distant others in order to provoke action from the public. Rather than using more obvious methods of suffering and guilt, staff at Amnesty describe an 'amnesty style' which I have shown can be traced back to Amnesty's first appeals, rooted in individuals and the use of portrait-like photography. The belief that showing a person's picture is a key aspect of communicating their humanness to the public is unquestioned and forms an important aspect of campaign design, as the Burma summer campaign shows. While it is true that to be able to communicate, humanness staff believe a picture is needed, it is not simply physical characteristics that make up this humanity. Staff on this project selected images which conveyed cultural characteristics recognisable to their audience and by extension to themselves. In this way, Amnesty imagery subverts expectations of physical determinism normally associated with photographs of people and represent a notable shift away from

grounding humanity in shared pain, discussed in the previous chapter, towards what they call empathy. However in doing so, staff run the risk of reducing complex stories and biographies to a set of visual and cultural tropes, thus defining humanness in these limited terms. The actions which were used in this campaign expand the concept of humanity somewhat. Though remaining focussed on visual similarity between supporters and prisoners, staff also introduce, through the use of images of activism, a prescriptive element to humanity. Humanity, in this version, is linked through a shared capacity to care for one another.

Despite this quite detailed approach to planning campaigns and related actions to produce appropriate empathy, in practice staff related with people in the pictures through just that, their status as pictures. In this way staff constructed the personality of the person depicted based not just on how the image looks, as staff planned, but also through social interactions around the physical image, particularly by talking to the picture. This suggests that the process of empathy that staff hope to achieve through pictures is in fact deeply shaped by the material fact of the image itself and the social practices that surround it, an issue that is picked up in more detail in Chapter 9 where performances of images are discussed. This is relevant not only for understanding how images work on people, but also suggests that the concept of empathy needs to be opened up to account for the role of the social in producing experiences of others. Throughout the remainder of this thesis these ideas are explored and teased out in more detail in order to produce a clearer account not only of how images work in human rights campaigns to support and create types of empathy, but also to reveal how imagined identification can lead to the recognition of the rights of others. The next chapter picks up these ideas of imagined identification to describe the ways in which 'the public' who the campaigns are intended for are imagined and produced by staff. While staff pick people who are 'like us' to feature in campaigns, they have a complex notion of what that 'us' entails. Therefore as well as imaginatively identifying with distant others, staff undertake other imaginative leaps into the lives of others in terms of their audience, and try to guess how they will respond to the individuals selected for campaigns.

Chapter 5: Imagining Audience

From: Amanda.willis@amnesty.org.uk
To: amy.johnstone@amnesty.org.uk
10/2/10
Subject: International Women's Day Exhibition
Hi Amy,
Can you begin to put together a list of images we can use for the exhibition of women in the human rights field we discussed earlier. Have a look through our pictures and try to pick pictures of women people will know and find inspiring.
Thanks,
Al x

From: amy.johnstone@amnesty.org.uk
To: Amanda.willis@amnesty.org.uk
Subject: Re: International Women's Day Exhibition
Hi ----
Yes that's fine. I'm not sure what you mean by 'women people will know' though. Is it just the people coming here who need to know them, cause I doubt that will be a problem. They know more than me! Shall I try Margaret for a list of pics?
A x

From: Amanda.willis@amnesty.org.uk
To: amy.johnstone@amnesty.org.uk
Subject: International Women's Day Exhibition
The people coming in here (staff, other organizations using the auditorium), but try to imagine what the public will recognise as well – the caring not committed. Sometimes regional offices and local groups like to show these exhibitions- means we get our money's worth :) Try Margaret, and try Lyn as well for the placard pictures- think we have some already printed. Let me see the long list when you have it and we can talk about it.
Al x

The above emails are part of a chain of correspondence used with permission.

The above email was from my manager about an exhibition for International Women's Day (IWD), the first exhibition that I had led on, and I was keen to make a good impression and hit the right tone for the images that I chose. For this reason, and also because of my position as a researcher, I was keen to pin point exactly what 'the public' mentioned above entailed. I had heard the term 'caring not committed' several times but was unsure what it meant and where it came from. Knowing that Amnesty UK has on-going market research (a fact that is reasonably well known in the NGO circles) I expected there to be documents and sophisticated strategies for identifying and reaching the appropriate 'public' for my display. Rather what I found was that despite these documents existing, I was advised against using them. As Amanda put it, '*all that stuff is fine, but it's so much to get through- it's easier if we just have a chat about the sort of people we want to come and what they respond to*' (Amanda, February 2010). It is this institutionally-held knowledge, which rests with individuals rather than on documents, that Amnesty relied on to explain and imagine audiences for their work. This works against and with market research. By adding to

each other and sometimes contradicting one and other, policy and practice at AIUK have a confusing relationship. It culminates in particular assumptions and practices around imagining audiences that impact on all elements of campaign design.

Having discussed in the previous chapter an approach to humanity that seeks to ground it in 'empathy' based on cultural and social similarity, this chapter fleshes out the 'us' who are mobilised in 'People Like Us'. Staff work with specific ideas of who their desired audience is, and in a sense undertake the same imaginative process to 'get inside the head' of the audience they target as they hope to mobilise action from that audience. This chapter deals specifically with the interplay between top down ideas of 'new audiences', and staff's own ideas about audience, which play out through ingrained practices and dialogues between staff. I use the example of the International Women's Day exhibition to suggest that alongside a genuine move towards making content 'accessible' and 'relate-able' to non-traditional Amnesty audiences there is still a practice of planning campaigns around audiences who are 'people like us'. Through looking at the limits to the AIUK's imagination of audiences, I show that staff limit potential audiences through assumptions about who is interested in 'doing good', and therefore who can participate in the moral economy of Human Rights Campaigning.

The chapter is in four sections. It begins by describing a conflict between 'real' researched audiences and the one discussed in meetings. It then goes on to show a further form of audience that exist in embedded institutional practices. The chapter reflects on the limitations which this places on the public who can potentially engage with campaigns. Section three deals with some of the reasons for this conflict between audience policy and practice, and specifically how AIUK staff conceive of 'doing good', and places Amnesty's approach in a wider context of changes in how charities are expected to operate. Finally I reflect on some of the repercussions of imagining audiences, and specifically how this functions in AIUK's practice to block potential engagement and limit those who can participate.

Imagining New Audiences

Audience is notoriously difficult to plan for and to define, however in everything we do we work with an audience in mind. Whether it is me writing field notes for no audience other than myself, or someone planning a large scale concert with press, celebrities, and ticket holders in attendance, imagining an audience is impossible to get away from. Looking at what these audiences that we hold in mind are can give us valuable insight into the aims and approaches behind any production. In human rights organizations this is also the case. Sam Gregory of Witness[39] even went as far as to suggest that human rights campaigns are '...created for audiences as much as about topic' (Gregory 2006:198). This rather extreme suggestion did indeed feel like the reality for my exhibition on Women Human Rights Defenders. Working at AIUK I had access to images of hundreds of women human rights defenders through the ADAM database- the IS's collection of images from all sections- and also from AIUK's own collection of people who have been photographed for the bi-monthly Amnesty Magazine. To limit this seemingly endless list, the criterion used was mainly one of audience. Since the images themselves had been used previously and had therefore passed the other criteria of aesthetics and 'newsworthy' content, we were thinking largely about how they would be received. It is therefore a useful example of an event where audience became one of the key issues in its creation.

Due to pre-empting who the audience were, and trying to guess what they would relate to, it was hard to even put together a list of 20 women (the minimum required to fill the space) from the vast collection. This was because of considerations about whether audiences would recognise and empathise with people '*so unknown in the mainstream*' (Lindsay, February 2010). At the same time however, I was being encouraged not to lose the legitimacy of the campaign, or pander to mass appeal over substance, with my choices of images. These two positions form the basis of AIUK's imagined audience. Staff are in the difficult position of having to appeal more widely and therefore cater to different knowledge levels from those that they had worked with in the past, while at the same time maintaining the level of rights authority for which the organisation is known (Hopgood 2006:73). As the following account will highlight, it has not happened completely harmoniously.

On the 4th February 2009 I presented the following list to a project group made up of

---

39 Witness are a major human rights advocacy organization www.witness.com

Amanda (HRAC Events), Sally B-T(Events Manager), Lindsay (Talent Liaison), Margaret (Head of Design), Laura (Events), and Mary (Campaigns). The list included these names:

Aung San Suu Kyi

Gil Won Ok & Ellen van der Ploeg

Jenni Williams (WOZA)

Martina Davis-Correia (Troy Davis' sister)

Jung Chang

Dina Meza (Journalist)

Nawal El Saadawi

Sunny Jacobs (death row survivor)

Yakin Erturk (UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women)

Wai Hnin Pwint Thon (Daughter of Mya Aye)

Rebiya Kadeer (Business Woman, former POC)

Monika Borgmann (film maker)

Anna Politkovskaya (journalist)

The list was my first attempt to put together visuals for the exhibition. The group of people at the meeting represented a rather uneven cross section of the various departments, but was fairly representative of the range of departments usually involved with public campaign events. The campaigns team in this case requested the assistance of the events team to come up with a 'public encounter strategy' (i.e. an event) to support a campaign objective, and the creatives from the design team were there to manage the look of materials and events. In this case the campaign context was very well known to the project group members, being an annual celebration of women's rights held over the week of International Women's Day (8th March 2010).The group had worked together on previous years' IWD campaign events. IWD is therefore one of what Amnesty call their 'calender days'- days that they celebrate every year such as anniversaries (ASSK's birthday, the opening of Guantanamo Bay Detention Centre) and UN observed days such as Human Rights Day (10th December). IWD is, as the name suggests, observed internationally and takes many forms but is usually associated with 'women's freedoms and rights' (IWD website 9/3/12), and this is the role it plays in AIUK. It is seen as a chance to celebrate women rights defenders, and a vessel to communicate some of Amnesty's own gender-related campaign objectives. In this case leaflets about 'Maternal

Mortality', a cross-organizational call for more attention to the high death rate during childbirth in many countries, would be circulated at the events. This year, as the initial email above suggests, there was an internal focus on accessing a wider public. IWD was seen as a good opportunity for this because of the '*uncontroversial and accessible*' (Mary, in conversation, February 2010) nature of women's rights to a British public. However as the meeting got underway it became apparent that while the idea behind IWD events may seem uncontroversial, the introduction of 'new audiences' was anything but that for Amnesty staff. The transition between what was done in previous years and what was being attempted this year was not a smooth one, but was one which is very revealing about how AIUK staff see the organisation and its audience.

The push towards wider audiences was described to me as happening '*gradually then suddenly*' (Amanda, interview, March 2010). By this I understand her to mean that while the research on widening audiences had been going on for years (8 years, as I later learned) and had been a topic of conversation during that period, it was only since the internal circulation of the results of this research that it had actively entered the practices and policies of Amnesty's work. The results took the form of an Audience Policy Document produced by Adam Hackman's Brand Team and circulated by upper management through meetings, online, and in presentations. It came with the clear objective for 2009 that staff would be expected to build on these findings and access new audiences. The Policy Document was the result of a massive project undertaken by the Brand team with the help of external market research companies 2CV and SHAW over 8 years. Unfortunately the document and the full findings of the project cannot be reproduced in full because of issues of confidentiality. I have been given permission to make reference to it and to reproduce material in summary. The work undertaken on the project involved building a database of AIUK's membership through interviews over the phone, and focus groups. This was to create a profile of members. This was then compared with potential members, who were selected through random sampling techniques, and interviewed to create a profile of potential audiences. The focus was on knowledge and motivations, and the aim was to identify people who might be interested in Amnesty, but were not yet members. It was also to devise techniques to access these audiences based on their profiles. Specifically the document identified a category of

potential members it called 'caring not committed' (CNC). These were described as educated, professional, 18-30 years old who had relatively little interest in politics and little knowledge of Amnesty, but were financially stable enough, and 'caring' enough to be likely to sign up for Amnesty if more informed about it. Despite this specific demographic profile in the research, this category came to be used by many staff in a different way, to mean the 'new audience' generally which, as opposed to the old audience, meant everybody not already involved with Amnesty. I however, being new and an outsider took the documents as writ and used them as a guide when producing the list above. I did this because I was keen to 'get it right', but also because the audience research and resulting Audience Policy were very much in the current vernacular of AIUK when I began work there in late 2009, and indeed still were when I left in 2011. I therefore focussed my research on women who had made significant contributions to human rights, and with whom we had had some contact in the past and so were likely to have their images on file already.

AIUK had no central filing system at the time of my research, so finding images involved searching databases created by various teams for various reasons. These reasons included events, publicity, and where I found most of my images- magazine files. I was also given temporary access to the highly organized ADAM database of images run by the IS which is a collection of images from all the sections organized by country and campaign headings for use by Amnesty staff for their publications. These images together make up a rather disorganized canon which perhaps quite accurately reflects some of the differences within the organization. The ADAM images, though generally professionally-taken images were very journalistic and in the end through collaboration with my manager, it was decided that they just 'didn't fit' with AIUK's much more portrait style photographs. The images which AIUK staff routinely use are taken either by regularly-used contracted freelance photographers, or by members of staff themselves. Therefore they tend to be quite similar in style, which made it easier to find images that 'matched' well enough to be used in an exhibition. Of course the use of AIUK's own images limited the selections to only those woman human rights defenders (WHRDs) with whom Amnesty were directly involved a lack of resources for funding photography meant that there was an inbuilt contradiction to the project because the aim of reaching new audiences had to be met using materials which were produced for different audiences and for different

objectives. This contradiction, or limiting factor, which I discuss in more depth at a later point in this chapter, is one of the key ways that the audience is limited in its potential to be as diverse as staff hope. The images on file had all been vetted and decided as suitable for use by others in the organization, and therefore met the criteria put forward in Amnesty's Photo Policy which will be discussed in Chapter 6. For the purposes of my display I was to be selecting largely on the category of audience, with of course consideration of the topic, that of women human rights defenders. The produced list was a product of the limited material available, meaning that most of AIUK's images were of serious, but relatively unknown WHRDs and of my own consultation with the audience policy which suggested that the caring not committed (CNC) would have a university level of education and a basic knowledge of world affairs and would therefore be able to interpret to some degree what the notable activities of the people depicted meant in their global and local contexts.
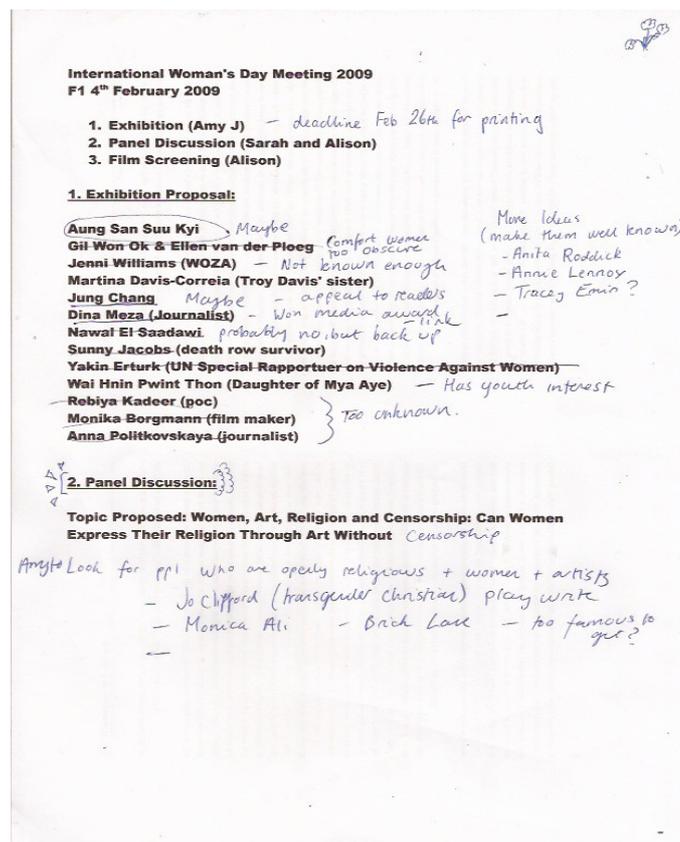

Figure 5a: Agendas were printed for each attendee at the meeting. My agendas tended to have few notes on them detailing different individuals' responsibilities for tasks. This level of note taken was high greater than usual, and reflect the level of debate in the meeting.

The first meeting of the project group took place in F2, one of the glass-sided meeting rooms in the HRAC. As mentioned, the group was one largely made up of staff from the events team with input from other teams, and I therefore knew everyone there beforehand, a rare thing for me only three months into my time at Amnesty. I entered the meeting fairly confident that the list produced fitted in with the objectives of the IWD events, the new audiences especially. However it was not long into the meeting before my notes looked like figure 5a. The journey to this scrawled and scored paper was an enlightening one in revealing how exactly AIUK imagines and relates to its audience. The list included human rights defenders from all over the world, such as Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK). She seemed a perfect choice to me, someone that the educated public would recognise due to regular news articles during the previous year, and who was heavy weight enough make the exhibition still appealing to the core membership. However the list that I devised was not the list which staff felt the 'caring not committed' would respond to, and this came down to a fundamentally different idea of the audience being catered for. On my first list, half of the names were rejected as 'too unknown'. Sally opened by suggesting that: '*if people don't regularly follow news they won't know who they are*' (Sally, February 2010). Staff were positive about the list though, and generally liked the names on it, but just were unconvinced that they would be suitable for the audience. It was hardly surprising that they would like the names, considering that they were all Amnesty supporters, and people with whom the organisation had contact. However it was more surprising that the audience imagined was seen as so different in tastes to the staff: '*yeah but would your average Joe working in Tesco really care about a woman he's never heard of in Africa'* (Lindsay, February 2010). The rest of the room seemed to be in agreement with these statements, which as far as I could tell were based on some secret version of audience to which I was not privy. They certainly did not meet my expectations from the Audience Policy, which called not for your 'average Joe', but for university-educated young professionals, with no particular background in rights, but a knowledge of world affairs, in other words a fairly specific category, compared to the 'average Joe'.

As the meeting progressed, and the version of audience discussed was increasingly forming in a very general and vague way, people nodded and suggestions were made:

'I'm trying to think about myself before I got involved with Amnesty and what I would be interested in... probably put some of the big names in- Anita Roddick, Annie Lennox' (Lindsay, February 2010). The audience being put forward was not the one from which I took my cue on the report, but rather the staff interpretation of what the basic term 'caring not committed' might mean, namely uninformed and uninterested in unknown human rights defenders. The belief that people would not be interested in people like Jenni Williams, a tireless campaigner for rights in Zimbabwe, suggested that staff imagined their audience to be 'not committed' in a very full sense. The choices made suggested that the person whom staff imagined attending would have no knowledge about international affairs at all, and no interest in encountering new information. This was clearly not the Audience Policy description, yet staff were totally in agreement with each other. It was interesting to me that the team generally agreed on the audience, yet I could not see where this version was coming from.

Staff decided which people were appropriate human rights defenders based on what they thought was most appropriate to an imagined audience's frame of reference, in order to increase potential empathy, yet there was also reluctance: '*I suppose we'd better cut out the first woman in trade unions- but I really hate to*' (Amanda, February 2010). Staff acknowledged that there was an audience to consider, and that this audience had different points of reference to themselves, but they were not keen on having to change the content to take that into account, as one staffer said to me about changing her campaign content:

> *I know we have to think about what the public will like as well, at the end of the day we need them to think this is important- these are people I care about or respect or whatever, but I hate when we don't tell the full story just because other people don't want to know.* (Laura, in conversation, February 2010)

Staff therefore equated new audiences with a lessening of campaign content. They had created an audience that they thought 'didn't want to know', and reluctantly made adjustments to their content accordingly. However I as I have tried to suggest, this 'dumbing down' as one staff member called it, was not what was being asked for.

As the meeting went on I started to understand where these opinions were coming from that seemed at odds with the official policy, and at odds with the 'usual

audience' for Amnesty. They were only very slightly a response to previous events. Mention was made during the meeting of previously used celebrities and images, and how people reacted to them in terms of atmosphere on the day, and of feedback which people gave online through the Supported Care Team, and discussions of previous international women's days, and other related events. But this was less important because the move towards new audiences was just that: new. Comments like Sally's highlight that the audience was considered new:

> *Last year we had Wei Hnin (daughter of a prisoner of conscience) speak at the conference and she was great, people really listened to her. But that was a different sort of thing, it was for members not for the general public.* (Sally, February 2010)

To Sally it was not possible to use the same people as had been worked with previously because this was the general public, whereas previously it had been members. Therefore staff were unable to rely on their previous tactics because they considered this audience such as new thing that it needed a new approach. As I discuss later in this chapter, few staff had actually read the audience policy documents. Instead, information had filtered along the grapevine, meaning that words like 'new' had been passed along, but their exact meaning in this context was not. Staff had created, in their attempt to make things new, a version of audience that was not just a little new to Amnesty, but also was new to everything surrounding Amnesty's work. Audience was largely based on a shared assumption of what staff thought the 'new audience' to be, different to official documents and the 'target audience' we had put down, it now seemed nominally, on the project proposal. The imagined audience was one which due to its lack of previous involvement with Amnesty was thought to have no knowledge about campaigns or world events. For example there was an assumption that non-members who did not know about WOZA (Women of Zimbabwe Arise) would not want to see a picture of the WOZA's leader.

AIUK's relationship with audience is complex, with on the one hand a desire to reach out and involve new audiences, a desire which is pushed by Audience Policy mandates, while on the other hand a lack of understanding and resistance of these policies among staff, meaning that policies are not always read. This leads to a confused image of the audience they are in fact aiming at and to their belief that they are being asked to dumb down campaigns to the imagined disengaged, which

understandably causes resentment. What we are left with is a composite audience based vaguely on 'real' data of research and experience, but tempered and shaped by staff to form an imagined audience. It is this imagined audience that shapes the eventual attendees and viewers.

Audience is a concern at every level of campaign planning both overtly and in subtle ways. Every campaign action has to be approved by management through the application of a PIP (project implementation plan) and on this form staff are asked to define their target audience, the number of people targeted, and how they are expected to take action on behalf of Amnesty. I was involved in writing several PIPs during my time at AIUK and in general was advised to '*just put the sort of people who will come*' and '*put caring not committed, they love that*'. Some AIUK staff therefore see their completion of the form as an afterthought. Audience is to some extent considered by events staff to be built into the sort of event, rather than the reason for having the event, and as such is added in to the form casually after the event has been planned. However this is not exactly how all staff see it. When talking about campaigns people regularly anticipate responses such as those that I demonstrated with the IWD exhibition. This was also the case for other events such as music festivals chosen to reach particular kinds of people and where the actions chosen are selected with these people in mind. It is more an aversion to perceived corporatisation implied by standardised PIPs and audience categories that makes staff avoid using and accessing them, and makes them appear as an afterthought. The use of an audience therefore happens outside of that formal process, through discussions in meetings like the one above, and through institutional practices which have at their heart an idea about the sort of people AIUK appeals to and should be engaging with. The imagined audience that results is a very different and confused one. The following section looks at the way in which staff ignore their own imagined audience in practice, to illuminate what the 'old audience' looked like.

Institutional Audiences

The audience that Amnesty imagines above- one which will not have any background knowledge on rights, is present in planning meetings. It influences content, but only

in so far as staff are willing to acknowledge that this audience, the imagined disengaged, might be viewing completed campaigns. However after the content production the planned audience was less visible and more problematic. There we see the input of what I would loosely call the 'institutional audience', institutional in that it is a feature not of the imagination, but of a practice which shows bias towards certain publics. The IWD exhibition was put up in the hall of the HRAC in Shoreditch. It was up during the IWD events and was advertised in the Amnesty Magazine (received only by members), the 'What's on at Amnesty' Mail-out (subscriber based), and the Amnesty Website. This is standard practice for advertising most HRAC events. The decision to publicise in these areas was not taken in a meeting but by the project lead, and no one mentioned anything further. What was interesting to me was that despite us having put considerable effort into pitching our images to a wide audience, little or no effort was put into reaching out to this audience through channels different from those used for previous audiences. In fact, as I discuss later in this chapter, the people viewing the exhibition had very little resemblance to the audience discussed in the planning meeting. Was the discussion in meetings merely lip service? Could I have used my initial list rather than changing it again and again? I do not think so. It is more the case that Amnesty advertised in familiar avenues because that is what has been done before. It is '*the way we've always done it*'. Even though the idea of new audiences had permeated into the vernacular and some stages of planning, it had not yet entered the practice at every level.

At some levels Amnesty still practise campaign design with an underlying assumption that their audience will be people very much like themselves- people who get the magazine, check the website, and enjoy certain pastimes, as their old imagined audience was. The very decision to have a photographic exhibition assumes a certain level of interest in photography and/or human rights. The images used came from a canon of Amnesty's own images which were created for the 'old audience', the one with which staff are familiar. The target audience has changed but the habits and tools of campaigning have not. At a fundamental level, Amnesty staff still act with assumptions about what makes an enjoyable event, and what methods we can use to reach out. Obviously this varies among staff, and different staff members have nuanced ideas of audience. Younger members might be more inclined to use the

internet, whilst certain teams are more comfortable with new social media technologies. However what I am talking about is institutionalised through its invisibility to Amnesty staff, through the networks of advertising, and through the choice of events.

This invisible assumption of audience interest based on staff's own interest is a crucial part of the traditional Amnesty practice of catering to their own fan base- '*preaching to the choir*' (Hillary, in conversation, June 2010), as one staff member told me, was fundamentally the problem identified in the audience research. I spoke to many members of staff about what they had done before the introduction of the Audience Policy in 2009, and the answers were surprisingly similar. Staff had used themselves as a template for audience, and planned campaigns around their interests.

> *Well it used to be all about getting a real commitment out of our members, rather than joining up loads of new people. Then we didn't have to think that much about what they would like, we just knew, it was the same things anyone here would like.* (Dan, April 2010)

The decisions made about where to circulate advertisement for the exhibition clearly reflects this approach. Staff themselves generally read the Amnesty magazine, check the Amnesty *What's On*, and read the publications used to promote an exhibition. This approach to circulating information is reflective of the approach mentioned in Dan's quote above, that of inspiring and retaining committed members rather than going for mass appeal. In practice, therefore, staff work to this old audience that is in fact themselves.

According to the internal Audience Policy Document, audiences regarded Amnesty as alienating through being part of an intellectual elite. For example its relationships with certain key newspapers are deeply ingrained. At one point during my time there, an entry came in from the UK based Daily Mail newspaper for the media awards, and a staff member came up to check with me that I'd logged it correctly because apparently the idea of the Daily Mail being involved with Human Rights was so unthinkable. Expectations about the sort of people who would be involved in 'do gooder' activities such as charity are still believed to be people with a similar background to staff. The table below is a very crude account of the demographic of Amnesty members, although it accurately reflects many of the decisions made about

campaign mode and circulation at the practical level. The interests and preferred newspapers are still very much part of the strategy for planning and distributing materials and events. Amnesty membership data defines the demographic thus:

Education Nearly half of Amnesty members have been educated to University/Higher Degree level 49% University/Higher Degree 33% Postgraduates16% Secondary/Sixth Form 2% Elementary/Primary
Preferred Newspapers / Periodicals Nearly half of Amnesty members read 49% The Guardian 34% The Observer 31% The Independent 26% Radio Times
Interests 75% Reading 41% Cycling / running / swimming / walking 46% Overseas Travel 73% Classical Music 53% Cinema 30% Environmental concerns 66% Gardening

Figure 5b: Statistics except from Amnesty Market Research 2009, used with permission

Despite the focus on other audiences identified, AIUK still create campaigns towards their own member base through ingrained practice. This member base is shown above statistically, but known to AIUK staff instinctively through years of experience. It is there in the reluctance to change images to fit other audiences, it is there in the vagueness of the new audience being described as the 'caring not committed' which though defined on paper, is little understood in practice. The newspaper that AIUK works closely with is the Guardian, and the choice of events fit in with those experienced by university education lectures and exhibitions. In the case of my exhibition the content was moderated, but AIUK has not fully accepted the need for changing everything, because practices are so institutionalised. What occurs is a mixture of imagined audiences: the mysterious 'everyman' who AIUK does not really know how to imagine, and the familiar Amnesty member audience. The result is an unhappy union and an audience with severe limitations in its imagining. There is to some degree an underlying class element to these distinctions which cannot be ignored. However to call it elitism would be an unfair account of how staff operate. Social distinctions that operate in the lives of staff outside Amnesty, like their choice of leisure activities or newspaper, mean that they have a relatively closed sphere of experience, and so are left to imagine audiences with little personal experiences to back them up. This is discussed later in this chapter where I speculate on the reasons

for staff assuming that new audiences are completely disengaged ones.

I witnessed the result of this unhappy union between imagined and institutional audiences through the exhibition I had worked on. Being anxious to see how it was received, I spent a considerable amount of time in the exhibition space talking to people and watching people. The reality was that the people who viewed it most were staff. Reception staff keep a count of people in and out of the space and gave me the visitor numbers, which revealed that at least 90% of people visiting were staff. Many members of staff sought me out to say how much they liked it, but also to ask why I had not used their particular favourite WHRDs. Often their suggestions were the very ones that I had removed from my original list. One member of staff told me: *I love the idea, but did you think about Yakin Erturk, she'd be great in something like this, sometimes it's worth digging a little deeper, there are some great women out there* (Eulette, in conversation, March 2010). Perhaps that proves that the original list was essentially an Amnesty List, but the lack of any other significant audiences for the exhibition suggests this might have been the right approach. I asked the visitors (the few that there were) if they were Amnesty members, and all replied they were. This was typical of the response I got:

> *Oh yes I always come to the Amnesty's events they're always so interesting, and while I'm here I can buy something from the shop, but I do wish you didn't use these famous radio and TV people- they aren't really helping human rights.*

This visitor's comment suggests that despite all of our work to make the exhibition appealing more generally, the failure to make sure that those people heard about it resulted in the exhibition being attended mainly by existing fans of Amnesty's work, many of whom did not actually like the changes we had made to the type of people featured.

Of course the exhibition was to be used by other regional offices and so perhaps it is unfair to consider it only in this context, but the regional offices are still Amnesty offices, with shared staff and practices. It was clear to me however that people were coming to the exhibition because they had heard about the event through AIUK's traditional channels and were not responsive in the way staff hoped they would be to the recognisability of the people chosen. In fact the very aspect they had hoped would

be inclusive was the very thing that the real flesh and blood audience found alienating. This shows that there may be two ways in which the process of imagining audience limits its potential. The removal of unknown images was limiting to the real audience, hampering enjoyment and potential for greater engagement, and the institutional practices embedded within the organization limited the potential audience to only people most likely to have the above response. This was hidden from staff because the system for measuring effectiveness is largely limited to counting the number of people taking part in a campaign action or attending an event. Exhibitions are the exception to the collecting of numbers, because they are in a public place and it cannot be determined where attendance at other events in the foyer overlap with exhibitions, and because their impact is also imagined to be on people using the building for meetings and external events. Therefore my own attention to the attendance was much greater than that of other staff, and allowed me to observe the limited attendance and demographic of visitors.

Therefore by imagining audiences, both the conscious and practice based ones, the potential for that audience is limited. In creating a template of what a person will respond to and catering to it you limit appeal elsewhere. In choosing to create a photo exhibition Amnesty have already limited their potential audience to those interested in photo exhibitions. In imagining what an audience will respond to in terms of content, Amnesty is again placing limits on the potential audience. This occurs too by imagining that audiences will only be interested in mainstream celebrity human rights defenders and only exposing the audiences to those. Furthermore, little can be done to evaluate whether people will indeed be put off by the more heavy weight human rights information because people are not given it in the first place. In this way both the assumptions about what people are interested in, and the institutionalised practices of advertising lead to a limiting of the potential of audience.

'Doing Good'- Attributing Morality

Where then was Amnesty's elusive audience coming from? Why did it say one thing in reports and do another in practice? The audience research project carried out over

8 years by 2CV was a major undertaking. It involved systematic interviewing of a representative core of Amnesty's member base, as well as focus groups with non-members. Its aim was to identify and categorise audiences and potential audiences. The term 'Caring but not Committed' was coined by the 2CV study and was used to describe the very group I thought I was catering to. It was a widely used phrase in Amnesty at the time. Everyone talked about accessing the 'caring not committed'. This was the audience identified through research based on qualitative and quantitative studies: a real life group of people. Yet the IWD project was being aimed at somewhere else entirely. It was being imagined for 'the average Joe in Tesco', who did not fit that profile, and was nowhere to be found in the data. One answer came to this question at a later date when in conversation with Lindsay after the meeting. In replying to my question about why we were pitching the images so generally when we had been aiming for the 'caring not committed' she replied:

> *People who aren't involved with Amnesty don't always know very much about human rights, we have to make it accessible so we don't exclude people. I used to be easier when we could just think about what would interest us and our friends and family. Now we have to try and think like all sorts of people- it's not easy.* (Lindsay, interview, May 2010)

The use of themselves as a template was something that I remembered from my previous work with Amnesty in 2007 as a volunteer, and is similar to the discussion about the importance of similarity in Chapter 4. I asked other long serving members of staff about this 'old way' of campaigning, to try and understand why the new audience policy was such a departure. I was told:

> *Yes it did used to be very different. It wasn't all about all this popular stuff, we knew lots of people who were members, certainly from the London groups, we knew what they wanted because we could talk to them, we were friends'* (Dan, interview May 2010)

Therefore previously staff had not really needed any idea of audience, because they 'were friends with' those they hoped to attract, and indeed were their own demographic, and were already very familiar with it. It seemed that in trying to imagine what it would be like not to be involved with Amnesty, staff were imagining that they would have to be disengaged in other ways too. Staff imagined disengagement quite widely to include not reading the news, or recognise ASSK.

There is an assumption among staff that that is the only reason you would not be involved with Amnesty, because you just did not know about the issues.

The lifestyle and background of many Amnesty members which I encountered during life history interviews might account for this assumption. Most Amnesty staff had a 'key story', a life experience, which brought them to Amnesty. For Margaret it was growing up in apartheid South Africa, for Laura it was an experience of the poverty among aboriginal Australians:

> *I suppose I knew I had to work in something like this from when I was 11 years old. My dad became principal of a school in a very aboriginal area- there was only me and one other white girl and I understood for the first time how some people have much more than others for no right reason. Little things like the holes in their shoes, if they had any at all, compared to my shiny shoes. I was ashamed and I stopped wearing shoes.*

Most of the staff were involved with Amnesty from their student days or earlier, and most staff are highly educated (at least to undergraduate level according to staff survey 2010). It is conceivable that they just do not know many people beyond this world, and for that reason when they imagine not being part of it they move from one extreme to another. Laura explained to me in a later interview when I asked her about people she knew who did not know about human rights: *Most of my friends work in Amnesty or other charities, it just happens, you share interests and you work together on such intense projects- I don't know anyone who doesn't know about human rights* (Laura, interview May 2010). Obviously staff have friends outside Amnesty as well but the point here is that staff assume that it is not people they know that are these 'new audiences', even though I am sure that many of the people they know do not regularly take action for Amnesty or are not members. The assumption is that the new audiences are different, and from a different background. Amnesty staff have a strong sense of their own identity as members of Amnesty, and the new audience is imagined in opposition to that. The new audience is imagined as everything that the old audience is not. As one staff member told me: '*It's impossible to hear these stories and not be moved. Once we can tell people the stories, once they know, they have to act'* (Mary, in conversation, July 2010). The assumption here is that if you are not involved it is because you do not know about it, and it is based on the rather

narrow social world that staff members live in.

Another feature of the fuzzy understanding and implementation of audience policy is to be found in the quite frankly overwhelming volume of research produced. Over 8 years of research a mountain of paper can accumulate, and in the case of Amnesty's Audience Policy this was certainly the case. Even though the research when you finally get into it is clearly thorough, and has much useful information, for example suggested methods for reaching people, the things that put people off Amnesty (an image of snobbishness, high demands on time) and the things that they prefer (online participation), it is too dense to absorb for most busy working people. I spoke to my manager about the apparent lack of attention which staff paid to the policy details and she told me: *I always tell myself I'll get on top of the material when I have time, but that's just it, when do I ever have the time?* (Amanda, interview, May 2010). Another member of staff described the hope that staff would read the document as '*wishful thinking*' on the part of the team behind it (Gary, in conversation, May 2010). The result is that things get buried in administration, and a general idea comes out through conversation between staff members rather than through the document. I asked Amanda what she knew about the document and she told me that most of what she knew came through Laura. When I spoke to Laura she had not actually read the document 'fully' herself, but had had a long conversation with Adam about it, and had been to the briefing. Even just in this small section of the office we see a transmission of information between staff, getting more distant from the original document.

The introduction of new audiences represents a fundamental shift in Amnesty's approach to campaigning. Hopgood's ethnography of Amnesty's research office in London highlights a difficult tension between the way in which staff see themselves as a moral authority, and the techniques of advertising and the competition between charities in a field flooded with charitable options (Hopgood 2006:17). I experienced this same tension, in this case expressed through uncertainty about the document when it was launched, and the above unwillingness to fully integrate ideas from the report into a daily practice of imagining audience. Staff I worked with expressed a distrust of the shift towards commercial marketing which they saw the document as representing:

> *It's fine doing these studies, I know it's useful, but I don't think we should*

> *drop everything just because Adam says do this or do that to get new*
> *people. We know our jobs, we work for a charity not for a bank, it's not*
> *all about the bottom line getting people to sign up (Josie, interview, April*
> *2010)*

This is probably linked to Amnesty's perception of itself as more 'good' than other organizations, and less likely to employ 'tricks' of marketing. From discussions with staff it was clear that there is a considerable pride associated with working for Amnesty:

> *I used to work for a private company doing marketing, it was by*
> *accident, it was just what I did when I was done with uni and didn't know*
> *what to do next. Then Amnesty took us on for the Small Worlds Tour to*
> *do some collaborative work and I realized I didn't want to be doing what*
> *I did, I wanted to be doing something worthwhile, I wanted to be working*
> *for Amnesty* (Lindsay, interview, January 2011)

Other organizations are often seen in this way as being less moral than Amnesty, in a perspective which conflates the goal of an organization with its practices. It is assumed that because Amnesty aims to do charitable 'good' things with its money then its means will reflect this. This is not totally untrue of course, but one assumption does not necessarily follow the other, and certainly it does not prevent Amnesty from using many of the marketing techniques employed by other sectors. Despite having a marketing department, there is still a reluctance to admit to being involved in marketing as it is seen as deceptive and manipulative, whereas Amnesty prides itself on truth. I had several long discussions about this with informants which suggested that while they were happy that happened, they would not admit to it themselves. *That's something for Adam* (head of Brand and Events) *and Margaret* (head of design and publishing) *to think about, we just do the work and they do the marketing* (Emma, interview, May 2010) when of course all elements of campaign involve marketing, and thinking about audience is routine. However it has to happen off paper in discussions for people to accept it, so that it can avoid the stigma of marketing, and consequent concerns with manipulation.

Recognition and Audience

The audience that staff imagine and use as their basis for campaign design combines with the practices already in place which favour a different audience, namely the audience in Amnesty's image. Having discussed the coming together of these versions of audience and the effect on a particular exhibition, I now turn to the things which these different versions of audience have in common. Throughout the experience of planning the IWD exhibition, the issue of recognition was constantly at stake. This occurred more subtly in Amnesty's recognition of different people as potential audiences, and their lack of recognition for others as discussed above. There was also a more overt reference to recognition whereby Amnesty staff equate recognition of a person as being a crucial part of a wider process of relating to and acting with or for someone. The assumption that people would be able to identify with celebrities and people whose names and faces they knew, even though in all likelihood they have little in common with them, can be seen as showing that staff view their audience whether it is new or old, as unlikely to relate to people they do not know, or who are from a less recognisable cultural background. This is a reflection of the planning techniques that were present in the Burma meeting discussed in the previous chapter. In that instance, recognition was also at stake, but it was the recognition of similarity based on 'normal' looks and activities. In both cases an assessment of the ability of people to empathise with others is being made. The outcome of this is a focus on similarity and familiarity rather than difference, the implication being that empathy is essentially an experience of recognition.

It also assumes that the audiences are unlikely to want to learn new things and so the information is tailored to be in line very much with what or who they already know. The images chosen seem to display people that are already known, and settings that are familiar. This approach to audience is quite surprising considering the nature of Amnesty's work as primarily about disseminating information. I would suggest that this apparent contradiction is undermined when one considers the relationship between text and images, and that it reveals something fundamental about the approach of Amnesty staff to images. The campaign content which accompanied the images in the form of the information boards around the room, and the plaques which went with each image were discussed in a very different way to the images. They

were written by the editorial staff in the design team, and though I was not personally involved with the process I was present for many of the face to face discussions where the text was treated as something rather sacred that could not be 'dumbed down' in the same way that the images were seen to have been.

Conversations suggested that the integrity of the written words and them having an educational quality *'you must tell people about'* and *'don't shy away from that, even if it's unsavoury'* were quite unlike the conversations about what people would know and what people would like. I asked Margaret about this later:

> *The pictures have to be recognisable because they are seen, and we want them to be noticed. You notice familiar things. They are the first thing people see and they have to be appealing to lure people in. Once they've come over and had a look we can give them more hard hitting information.* (Margaret, in conversation, April 2010)

Images therefore are seen here by Margaret as being a means not of transmitting information, but of catching one's eye. Images then are like a honey trap, and have to be kept sweet, which to Amnesty means recognisable celebrities. The role of images is therefore not seen as necessarily an informative one, rather they are to be appealing. This makes sense in light of the ways in which staff spoke about photographs of people discussed in the previous chapter. Staff spoke of images as 'humanising' and 'making it personal'. I asked designer Lucy about it in more detail and she explained to me that the images used by AIUK are primarily photographs because:

> *'...they make you pause, make you care, they give the emotional connection. Sometimes we use info graphics and often artwork, and they do the same to grab attention...but there's nothing like seeing someone for making you care about them'* (Lucy, interview, March 2010)

This suggests that rather than seeing images as a lesser form of communication, as might first be suspected from staff attitudes to them and to text, images are seen as doing different work to text. Both forms must be eye catching, but only pictures of people have the potential to provoke emotion, to create empathy. This goes some way towards explaining the use of familiar people. Staff imagine that similarity is behind caring about others, therefore they want to ensure that this caring is not lost in names and faces that are new.

The Audience and Producer

Dornfield suggests that considering the importance of audiences in production can be a way of:

> 'rethinking and bridging the theoretical dichotomy between producers and consumption, between producers' intentional meaning and audience members' interpreted meanings and between production studies and reception studies' (Dornfield 1998:12-13).

In Amnesty's case I would suggest that we can see a blurring of the lines of distinction between the organisation and its audience. Despite a top down pressure to 'bring in new audiences', Amnesty staff are reluctant to familiarise themselves with the literature and cannot fully imagine these new audiences. This reluctance, I have suggested, is symptomatic of underlying assumptions about who is likely to be interested in being involved with human rights, which Amnesty staff see as part of 'doing good' where good is assumed to be accessible through knowledge about international affairs. The outcome of this reluctance and these assumptions are that the audience which Amnesty staff are imagining are really people very much like themselves. The channels which they use to communicate to audiences are those to which they themselves relate.

Studies of production have tended to focus on the difference between producer and audience. For example Hall's seminal work on *Encoding and Decoding* suggests that there are two discreet groups involved, one encoding and one decoding (Hall 2006:196). In this conception, producers encode meaning into their product, to be decoded by a separate group who receive the material and who decide its eventual meaning (ibid). However what we have seen with Amnesty is that even when trying to imagine different audiences, staff fall back on practices which favour a certain audience- that of themselves, the people they know. To a certain extent this is inevitable. Anthropologists, more than anyone, know about the difficulties of getting out of one's own world view and entering into another's, and this is all the harder when done through imagination rather than participant observation. This idea is picked up in greater detail in Chapter 7. For now I am interested in how studies that

favour a producer/consumer model like Hall's might overvalue audience. Fiske points to Hall's model as separating text and reception, so that those decoding the text are given all of the agency in determining its meaning (Fiske, 1987:64). Audiences are increasingly seen as of key importance in determining the meaning of cultural products. While I do not argue that more attention needs to be paid to the interpretive contexts as well as to the production of media and cultural artefacts, I wish to highlight below some of the hidden ways in which this is limited. This is especially relevant when considering Part II of this thesis where the focus is on local groups' uses of images.

In a number of well-known accounts of the production of media, audience is a central criterion in determining choices made regarding production (Ang 1994:368; Bignell 2004:263), suggesting once again that the audience is in a powerful position. To some degree this is what AIUK staff exhibit. Staff did after all change the content of the IWD exhibition to meet perceived audience demands, demonstrating the concern with tailoring campaigns to audience as Ang and Bignell suggest. However in this case we saw that the audience that attended the exhibition were members of Amnesty, not the imagined audience. Underlying assumptions held by staff also created unintended limits to who could access the material. Therefore suggesting that while interpretation by audiences might be a key way that meaning is made, there are limits placed on them before that stage that curtail their power. While audiences may have an important role in interpreting and giving their own meanings to campaigns, and ideas of audience are used by those planning campaigns, it is important not to overestimate the power of audiences. In the case of AIUK, the power which Hall attributes to audience was limited by the version of audience used, and the version used was limited by practices in the organisation. In reality staff paid little attention to the real audience that attended the event, suggesting that actual audiences have less power than might be imagined. The second part of this thesis is concerned with these 'real audiences' and offers insight into how these issues of audience interpretation play out in practical settings.

This use of imagined audience, impacted upon by institutional practices, as a limiting factor on potential audiences is in many ways not surprising. Other studies have shown how creating audience can be self-fulfilling. Hayden shows how in trying to

locate authentic indigenous audiences this category is created and the producer finds what they are looking for (Hayden 2003:128). This is much like how Amnesty staff, in imagining and practising different types of audience, produce an eventual exhibition that is limited in both who attends, and how they encounter it. The use of imagined audiences is inevitable when you cannot have access to those people you are targeting through direct interaction, and much like Anderson's imagined communities they will always be collections of generalisations because of this lack of first hand knowledge (Anderson 1983). While AIUK have resources which they can use to inform their imagination, these resources have been shown to be unappealing and inaccessible to many staff. However saying that this process is inevitable is not helpful, because it does have real world consequences which are made all the more notable by their moral implications. The limited imagined audience is putting up blocks to potential participants in a moral activity. Amnesty staff are imagining who is likely to be interested in what they describe as 'moral work' but they are restricting access to that moral work. In thinking that people are unlikely to be interested in the work of Amnesty, they assure that they will not develop that interest. There are exclusions at the level of campaign planning that keep human rights in a certain social setting.

Conclusion

I know that staff at Amnesty would be horrified to think that they are keeping human rights in the family, so to speak. The job of campaigning organizations is to spread awareness, and Amnesty's latest mandate is to spread it wide. However Amnesty staff are limited by the resources at their disposal and the pressure for results in a competitive NGO market means that people do not have time to develop new practices. Many of the staff care passionately about rights and do not want to be held to ransom by a mainstream agenda, and so they continue to work in the way which has had best results in the past. The point I make here is not that Amnesty staff are making mistakes, but that there are difficulties in processing new ideas about audience which is having effects on potential real life audiences.

Rights campaigns therefore are based, to a large degree on imagination. The imagined

identification with distant others that rights are based on, itself hinges on imagined identification between staff and audience. Staff imagine how people will empathise, based on similarity and recognition, and in doing so reveal interesting ideas about why we care for distant others. This chapter highlights, however, that the way staff want a campaign to work is not necessarily an accurate representation of how campaigns are run. Their ability to identify with others is impacted by various conflicting practices and policies inherent to life in a large organisation. Therefore while the previous chapter dealt mainly with staff intentions and aspirations for campaigns, in this chapter we have seen described some of the practical aspects of working on rights. The next chapter attempts to bring these ideas together through attention to omissions in campaign visuals by design and in unconscious ways, to suggest that beyond grounding humanity in similarity, Amnesty seeks to remove certain violent types of suffering from visual narratives.

Chapter 6: Gaps and Silences

While Chapter 4 dealt with pictures selected by AIUK to create ideas of universal humanity, this chapter focusses on those people and places conspicuous by their absence in campaign material. Chapter 4 linked a practice of using portraiture and individuals with a move away from a style of humanitarian photography that focusses on physical bodies and biomedical claims for rights. In this chapter I focus more explicitly on what and why staff exclude that results in producing this 'Amnesty style' of visual culture. Specifically, I highlight the example of the topic of rape as 'too far', to show a broad practice that seeks to remove images considered 'too violent' or painful from a majority of AIUK material. Staff cite 'dignity' as the reason behind their omissions of violent or painful images, and in doing so put forward a certain vision of what kind of violence is less dignified and more appropriate. The dignity of those represented is shown to be part of a wider set of concerns linked to issues of audience recognition and limits to empathy, both of which impact on the removal of images of suffering from visual practice. Visual narratives put forward by AIUK campaign materials therefore sanction particular ways of relating to others, as well as revealing assumptions about violence and victimhood, and enshrining those assumptions in visual practice.

I begin with the example of a campaign for women's rights that featured no pictures of women. The campaign, La Mariposa, juxtaposed ideas such as rape and abortion with positive imagery of butterflies. This is used as a starting point to examine absences in campaign materials more generally. Through attention to archives and policy documents, a picture emerges of campaign design which focusses on ideas of dignity, defined as an absence of suffering and the avoidance of showing graphic images of human rights violations. I balance this 'official line' with participant observation which suggests that alongside this line a largely unacknowledged fear of 'compassion fatigue' drives campaign design. Ideas about limits to what the public will relate to, and empathise with, impact on campaign design as much as adherence to the ideals of dignity. This suggests that ideas of dignity and empathy are in fact very closely related for staff. These concerns are also behind further examples of gaps particularly the lack of pictures of perpetrators. I finish with an example of a set of

images depicting suffering which were used as an exhibition, focussing on the surprisingly positive response of staff to the images. I use this to discuss tensions which staff experience between policy and practice on the one hand, and concerns of truth and censorship on the other. I use these concerns to draw conclusions about staff self- image which emerges through the contrast between idealised practice and actual practice.

Hay Festival: a 'Tropical Paradise'

Figure 6a: Members of the public make butterflies at the Hay stall. June 2011

In May 2010 I was rather unhappily running the Amnesty stall at the Hay festival. I was unhappy on the one hand because it was my birthday and I was spending it on my own in Wales, but a larger part of my discontent was due to an altercation with an angry member of the public that morning which went something like this:

> Me: *Hi are you interested in learning more about Amnesty or our current campaign for women's rights in Nicaragua?*
> Man: *Yes I know all about that I've been a member for years. The Nicaraguan campaign is to change the laws surrounding abortion after rape because of the very high numbers of rape and sexual exploitation tolerated. What I want to know is why on earth are you here making butterflies- it looks like a tropical paradise in here- where does rape come into this?*

His criticism was not the first of its kind, nor would it be the last. Over my two weeks at the Amnesty stall at the Hay Literary Festival in Wales I counted over thirty people who were unhappy about the use of such a 'vague' symbol to tackle such a serious

issue. Thirty people out of over three thousand visitors is not a particularly high number, but since I was running the stall difficult inquiries were sent to me, and therefore I got very used to these conversations. I explained repeatedly and in a mantra-like way the rationale for the action: the family nature of the Hay Book Festival, the symbolic currency of butterflies as freedom in Nicaraguan tradition, the importance of sending something to support women in a large scale protest which would be arresting visually and so on, all of which I had been briefed on at Amnesty UK back in London. The gentleman in question listened to me and then left apparently still disgruntled saying '*well I don't know why you have to make it look so nice- it's a horrible thing, it really is, and there's no point hiding the truth*' (member of the public, in conversation May 2011). After he left, one of the stall volunteers came over to me and said '*god, you think it'd be obvious why we aren't going make a stand full of rape and abortion*' (Rita, in conversation May 2011). At the time I agreed, but the conversation stayed with me, and I began to wonder why it seemed so obvious to us that we would not go about it like that. The campaign was about those issues after all, and even if the law protects the anonymity of victims of sexual abuse[40], there are many women human rights defenders working in Nicaragua who are prisoners of conscience on related issues of women's rights. Looking around the stall that I had helped to create, it struck me as quite significant that we were not showing the usual pictures of individuals, and that we were filling a room with butterflies for a campaign against sexual exploitation. Even more significant was that we had all assumed that there was a logic to campaigning in this way.

I got involved with planning the Hay stall fairly far on in its development. It was AIUK's first year having a stall at Hay-on-Wye, a small village in Wales with a well-known annual book festival which attracted over 200 000 visitors in 2010. The campaign itself, that of Nicaraguan women's rights, was an IS priority for the year. It was passed on to the UK section because the theme of abortion made it difficult to campaign on in other sections, where abortion has a different legal and social status. I was told that the decision was made at AIUK to launch it at Hay because the context, that of a literary festival, was thought to be appropriately serious for the content of the campaign. The butterfly theme too had been given to AIUK by the IS, and had

---

40 Victims of rape in England and Wales are entitled to anonymity under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992

been a suggestion from a women's group in Nicaragua, though privately staff in AIUK questioned how much prompting from the IS might have been involved. My role was to manage the running of the stall, and I was present for the planning meetings where the shape of the stall and consequently the butterfly campaign it was launching was discussed and finalised. I was aware therefore of the relative freedom which the UK section had to develop the butterfly theme as they wished. Butterflies were being asked for, but how they were procured was open to AIUK creativity. I was aware also that there were individuals whose details were sitting with the IAR team from Nicaragua who might have been used. However, the suggestion that we might use those individuals in this campaign was not raised at any of the meetings. This was the only campaign that I worked on over my two years at Amnesty which had an action not centred on an individual or individuals, yet the choice to work in this way was never discussed. This suggests something of the accepted nature of omissions in campaign design, that they are not so much intentional omissions, as much as part of a culture and practice within the organisation that does not allow for their inclusion. My own complicity in the omissions suggests also that staff become used to or socialised into these practices.

Discussions mainly focussed on the logistics of getting butterflies made and sent out to Nicaragua, and the appropriate size, format (e-butterflies were also used)[41], and method of display on the stall. At the time I did not question this approach, assuming, as the staff I spoke to afterwards also did, that '*we can't show rape victims, it's not fair, legal, and anyway what would we show?*' (Amanda, interview, June 2011), and not wondering why a women's rights campaign featured no women. Even the website, which was not connected to Hay, but was for the wider launch of the butterfly campaign, was without photographs and displayed an unusually positive imagery, even for Amnesty. This assumption of appropriateness underpinned AIUK's work on this campaign without ever really being openly discussed. Unlike during previous meetings and projects where images and approaches were cast aside after extensive discussion as those pictures described in previous chapters had been, in this case the pictures or individuals were simply not sought out in the first place. The decision to exclude them was taken early on but was never given voice, and in this way was itself

---

41 An e-butterfly was a template that could be decorated online and emailed directly to Nicaragua. This was an attempt to get around the logistical difficulty of posting such a large amount of campaign material without it being intercepted.

a silence. Not only were women absent visually, but the reasons behind their omission were themselves absent. This double silence in campaign etiquette needs to be unpicked in order to understand AIUK practice.
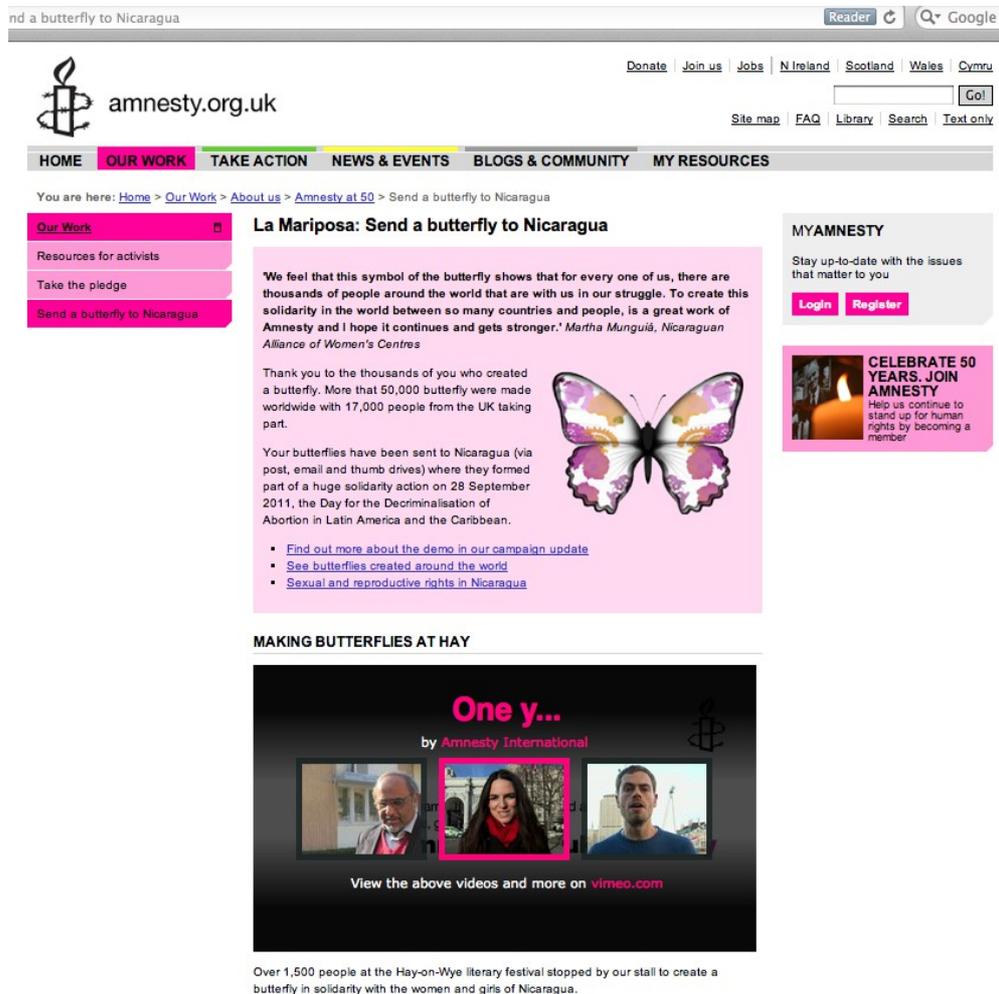
Figure 6b: The La Mariposa Butterfly Campaign Web Page.

Defining Dignity: Amnesty's Photo Policy and the Images of Pain

I was aware that Amnesty had a Photo Policy document, but had never consulted it in my capacity as a volunteer at Amnesty. Speaking to other staff I found that few of them had actively consulted it, but most '*had it somewhere*'. In fact it is given to all new staff in their induction packs upon starting work at Amnesty, but like many

documents produced by AIUK and the IS, was lost to most staff among the multitude of information documents available to staff. Nevertheless I was keen to consult it as it might have some information about why certain things were appropriate to use photographs for and others not. When I found the document it was very short, and I was told by the archivist Jonathan that '*it's pretty obvious stuff, mostly it's just used by staff to give photographers, freelance designers and all that*' (Jonathan, July 2011). The implication here that staff know this information already, or intuitively, once again a reference to the silence around this sort of decision- making. Interestingly when I did read the document I agreed that it was something most staff would not have to be told: it was the bare bones of the approach to images which I had seen over the past two years, and it echoed my own assumptions when constructing the Hay campaign. This suggests that staff and volunteers, like myself, become used to a certain approach to visual practice by seeing it regularly.

General Principles on use of photographs in Amnesty International Materials

We strive to uphold certain standards in our use of images of individuals, groups and practices in all AI materials (e.g.; documents, reports, publications, websites, campaign, action, recruitment and fundraising materials).

These can be summarised as follows:

1.1   The overall balance of photographic content (in any AI report, document, website, etc,) should portray human dignity and positive action in the face of human rights violations.

1.2   The reality of the effects of human rights violations should be depicted where it is appropriate (e.g.; to the aims of the particular Campaign / Action) and does not infringe the rights or dignity of the subjects. There should be no photos included purely to shock or disturb.

1.3   The security and rights of individuals portrayed in photographs should be protected and up held by all concerned (e.g.; the photographer, researchers and users of the image)

1.4   Every effort will be made to ensure that photographs of individuals are not published without their knowledge and consent.

1.   Every effort will be made to ensure that individuals in photographs are identified, or not, according to their expressed wishes.

2.   Content will not be manipulated in images used or published by AI, although images may be cropped and rescaled for editorial and design purposes.

Figure 6c: General Principles of Photography document used by the IS and AIUK.

In this policy the largest and most acknowledged gap in Amnesty's visual practice is rationalised in a few short sentences. The 'reality of human rights abuses' is to be shown only when it is appropriate and 'does not infringe on the rights or dignity of the subjects'. I had rarely seen explicit images during my time at Amnesty, especially not used by AIUK. I looked through all the campaigns on-going over the two years I was at AIUK and found only one instance of explicit imagery. The 'Terrorism and Human Rights' campaign used videos of simulated torture featuring actors to demonstrate the tools used by interrogators in facilities like Guantanamo Bay. In this instance it was of key importance to staff that they were actors, so '*it's not the same as using someone who is a victim*' (Mikey, interview, July 2011). It was also pointed out to me that in the 1.30 minute video of water boarding, only 30 seconds of it actually featured a person, the rest was water. In no other of the ten campaigns during this period did images of the 'reality of human rights abuses feature'. All other campaigns used a mixture of AIUK's preferred pictures of people, and occasional other illustrations and photographs.

Waterboarding ad - The Stuff of Life - Amnesty - Cert 15

Figure 6d: Screenshot of Waterboarding Ad. Taken from www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?
CategoryID=10228

Jonathan described the policy as 'familiar' and 'not necessary for staff ' because the terminology used is so integrated into daily practice at Amnesty. Buzz words such as dignity and empowerment are so common in the staff vernacular that until reading the document I had not really considered their specific meanings, which are as absent from staff discussion as they are from the document itself. Like the exclusion of pictures from Hay, these words are assumed knowledge for staff, and remain

undiscussed and silent in meaning. Their meaning comes out of office dialogue, which links the ideas of 'human dignity' and 'positive imagery' with particular types of images. Rather than a definition of human dignity, there exists a visual depiction of what staff think dignity should look like, broadly linked to the types of imagery characterised in Chapter 4 depicting individuals who are visually similar to their audience. The absence of hard and fast rules or discussion means that the picture that emerges is not interrogated by staff as other ideas are.

As Rosen points out in his recent book *Dignity: it's History and Meaning,* dignity has been neglected in philosophical studies of human rights despite its seemingly central position in the field (2012:4). The UDHR opens with the claim in Article 1 that 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and in rights' (1948), yet like in the case of Amnesty's use of the term, a definition is sorely lacking. Rosen suggests that the concept of dignity has 'no coherent meaning of its own' but is 'merely a receptacle' for contents supplied by other convictions (Rosen 2012:6). This would seem to be supported by the wealth of definitions that exist in social and political theory (see Rosen 2012 for an account of these). Recent well known approaches to defining dignity such as Dworkin's account of dignity as 'living well' (Dworkin 2011:13), and Waldron's approach to dignity as coming from rank, and increased numbers of 'high class' people (Waldron 2012:15), are not so much at odds with each other as they are musing on completely different approaches to reconciling dignity and morality. Yet the continued importance of this founding feature of rights is evident not only in its inclusion in legislation (see Rosen 2012:63-90), but also its regular deployment by rights organisations[42]. For Amnesty, dignity appears not just in policy documents like the one above, but also in campaigns such as Demand Dignity, and is a regular feature of the language used in materials. In the following section I hope to highlight a working definition of rights that emerges as visual practice accompanying use of the word.

During interviews with staff the idea of dignity was regularly brought up by them in relation to Amnesty's images. People often brought pictures to show me which they felt summed up Amnesty's approach to visuals and labelled them 'dignified', but when

---

42 For example: Human Rights Watch reports 'Denied Dignity' 2009, 'Dignity on Trial' 2010, 'Dying for Dignity' 2014; Amnesty International campaign 'Demand Dignity'.

pressed often did not have specific qualities in mind. More often they said that the images gave the '*feel of dignity*' (Rachel, interview, January 2011). Jonathan, a friend from the Knowledge Management team, brought the picture below which shows people protesting with the Hay butterflies, as an example of the 'right' sort of picture for Amnesty to use.

Figure 6e: Protest in Nicaragua using Amnesty Butterflies.

Jon: *When I saw this I thought hey save that for Amy! It's just the sort of picture we should use.*

Me: *Oh yeah, how come this picture?*

Jon: *Well it's got it all hasn't it? It shows people in Nicaragua protesting, standing up for themselves, that's what Amnesty's all about right? And in the picture you see the butterflies our supporters made all round the world and sent out there, it's like, you can see all at once, how human rights should work- us with the resources helping people to do it for themselves.*

The same approach to images took place in practice during selection for campaigns. The word dignity is used in connection with certain images so often that without proper explanation they become the epitome of dignified simply through practice. These images are relatively diverse in appearance. The portraits of trade unionists from around the world that hang in one meeting room were often described as dignified, as were pictures of women holding 'healthy happy' babies used for the Maternal Mortality campaign; prisoners' pictures were considered dignified when they were in portrait style, but one of the favourite types of pictures to be described in this way were images like the one which Jonathan highlighted above, pictures of activism. Dignity in this way was visually and discursively linked with the same pictures that staff had discussed in relation to empathy. When I questioned staff

further about how these two might be connected I was told that '*well you empathise more with dignified images because they remind you that there is a person not just an abuse*' (Mikey, interview, July 2011). During interviews that I conducted about Hay preparation, the expression '*it's more dignified*' was often used to explain the butterfly imagery used for the display. This suggests, as Mikey does above, that not only is there something undignified about being seen in a situation of violence, but also that it is undignified to show it. Certain styles of image therefore become linked with these words through a combination of discussion and practice.In this way, the idea of dignity persists and becomes linked with some styles of imagery but still remains a relatively undefined concept.

The definition of dignity comes most to the fore when it is seen to be threatened, in other words the times when images or approaches are considered by staff not to fit the criteria, and here a clearer picture emerges of how staff conceive of dignity. Dignity was most often discussed in relation to the pictures which were considered not suitable, and to some extent come out not as a positively constructed narrative like the ones above, but rather through the removal of the undignified from AIUK's visual practice. Most glaringly this involves removing images of suffering and pain as I am suggesting. It is glaring because these images are most commonly associated with the work of INGOs through the campaigns devised largely by humanitarian organisations discussed in Chapter 3. It was this area which more than any other aspect of visual practice was assumed knowledge among staff. Regularly during my time the images of suffering were cast aside from the images submitted for being 'victimising' or 'disempowering', but most commonly these ideas presented themselves when staff discussed images in the media and those used by other organisations. During one conversation, staff discussed a TV advertising campaign by Save the Children in which a baby called Aisha is shown starving, then at the end of the advert is shown healthy with a call for more funds to help 'vulnerable children like Aisha'. The advert sparked much discussion around the idea of dignity among Amnesty staff. One such conversation took place over lunch:

> Ellie*: Has anyone seen the new STC advert, it was on last night? Absolutely disgusting the way they show people like that just to get money.*
> Charlotte*: yeah I saw that, I dunno at least it has the baby well again at*

the end, that's a step up surely, bit much though, I agree

Ellie: *Yeah but to show someone obviously in so much pain, it's just not right, it's so undignified, it's like as long as there's money coming in who cares about showing the people who get it respect*

This conversation mentions a crucial issue for staff when thinking about dignity, that of suffering and specifically pain. A close examination of AIUK materials reveals that few images of visible physical pain or suffering have been used over the past ten years, despite the issues campaigned for often being closely interlinked with torture and physical harm. Lucy who works in design explained to me in an interview that: '*We try to avoid violent pictures and things that are too painful, it's not that we're hiding anything we just want people to be shown in ways which are empowered rather than in their most vulnerable moment'* (Lucy, interview, June 2010) and she went on to tell me that she had never used an image of violence or pain in her three years at Amnesty. Lucy also told me about submissions that she had recently rejected from use in campaign material. They had been submitted by a coalition of which AIUK was a part, and on whose behalf AIUK were producing materials. She told me that the worst of the pictures included dead babies, and many of the pictures were showing people in distress and obvious physical pain. She showed me some of them, but for reasons of confidentiality they cannot be reproduced here, and efforts have been made to disguise the individual and organisation involved (Lucy, summary of material from interview June 2010). However Lucy's rejection of these pictures, and her characterisation of the '*obvious pain*' of the people featured, highlights the sort of images omitted.

Viewing someone as a victim, it was explained to me by staff, is a problem because it leads to pity, and therefore inequality (Mikey, interview, July 2011). As Rachel put it '*it's not dignified to be a victim is it? It makes people seem desperate and unable to help themselves, that's not the kind of human rights defenders I think of, I think of all the ways people are still dignified in the face of all of that*' (Rachel, in conversation, June 2011). This aversion to showing people who are vulnerable is itself a move to try and manage the sort of imagined identification that is produced. During my time at Amnesty I often heard the word pity used with disgust or distaste. Pity was considered the epitome of the unequal relationship with others, and a word often used

to describe the sort of advertising campaigns like STC used above. Staff very clearly associated violence images and images of suffering with a likelihood of producing this sort of response, as was evidenced in comments like that of Ellie above, where she links the showing of people in pain to a lack of respect. In many ways, the removal of violent images can be seen as an attempt to remove the relationship of pity from campaigns. In this light we can see the project to forge recognition, discussed in the previous two chapters, as in fact part of an attempt to create imagined identification in a way that staff see as equal and dignified. However this attempt to control the sort of relation formed by the removal of violence, comes with its own set of inbuilt hierarchies that, while avoiding pity, create new and limited ways of relating to others.

During interviews with staff they explicitly linked the absence of suffering and violence to their approach to images. Like the tag of dignity, these unwanted images are themselves tagged with terms like 'undignified,' but most tellingly with expressions like 'too violent', 'too painful' or simply 'not appropriate'. In branding certain images as not appropriate, staff at AIUK are involved inadvertently in creating a hierarchy of pain and victimhood which betrays ideas about suffering and its role in society. Anthropologists generally identify at least four types of violence: direct political, structural, symbolic, and everyday (Bourgios 2001:6). Where direct political refers to violence administered by authorities or those opposing them, structural is historical political-economic repression such as social inequality (see Galtung 1969; Farmer 2001), symbolic is normalisation of inequality such as racism or sexism, and everyday refers to interpersonal and domestic expressions of violence (see Scheper-Hughes 1992). It is generally considered by academics that these types of violence are not mutually exclusive, and are not exclusively physical acts of violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:162). In these ethnographic approaches to violence we find methods and attitudes which legitimise or normalise different types of violence, shaping its meaning and practice (Kleinman & Kleinman 1996:2). Suffering is not only physical, and physical suffering is not always a result of physical violence, and suffering as anthropologists conceive of it is not universal but socially and personally specific (Das 1994; Kleinman 1988; Morris 1991).

When staff at Amnesty labelled images as 'too violent' they spoke only of physical

bodily violence of the direct political sort which is an image of violence very specific to the social context in which Amnesty works. Staff link 'too painful' almost exclusively with physical discomfort, and while many of the images used by AIUK very clearly evidence other types of violence such as the structural violence of disenfranchisement and poverty, in fact these images are celebrated for their ability to '*show the situation without compromising people*' (James, in conversation, August 2011). The 'Poverty and Human Rights' campaign used a selection of still images and videos that were explicit in showing the poverty and conditions in which people live as a result of businesses such as Shell destroying economic resources, as well as cultural and spiritual ones. These images are in many ways images of suffering showing people suffering poverty and discomfort and the violence done to them by businesses. Despite this they were celebrated by staff who so often told me that they wished not to show images of suffering or violence. For staff, certain types of violence are more appropriate than others, just as certain suffering is more palatable. Specifically violence of a physical nature and images that depict people in physical discomfort are considered less appropriate than violence that is structural, whose symptoms are more visible in an environment than on people's bodies.

Most broadly AIUK therefore removes bodily suffering and considers violations to the body to be the most undignified, suggesting western liberal notions of bodily integrity as important (as discussed in Chapter 3). While AIUK's policy of 'humanising images' and the associated removal of undignified suffering can be seen as a departure from other NGO's physical determinism, in fixating on and removing this type of suffering they leave it conspicuous, and ensure its continuing importance in how staff conceive of suffering.

Exceptional Violence: 'Rape is too far'

Within the conception of violence and suffering that AIUK image policy condones (physical violence) and ignores (structural and symbolic violence) there are further specificities of appropriateness suggested by the silences in images. They also emerge through gaps and the discussion around them. Discussions with staff about the Hay materials afterwards suggested that '*it's too sensitive*' and that '*it's not right*' to show

pictures of women in a campaign about abuse of women because '*you instantly think whoever you see has been a victim of it even if they haven't so you don't see them as empowered*' (Mikey interview, July 2011). This suggests that seeing women who you think have been raped or abused is likely to make you view them as victims, in a way that seeing torture victims does not. In the case of torture campaigns, there is rarely any visual evidence of torture in materials, the victims are shown after the fact, and are a central tool of 'humanising campaigns' as discussed in the previous chapter. The implication here is that some forms of victims are more vulnerable than others, and some less dignified. In effect this creates some violences, specifically rape, as an exception, marked as outside the acceptable limits of what might be shown, and in a category of their own. In her recent piece on the role of rape in humanitarian campaigns Miriam Ticktin talks about discussions held by MSF around the question 'should women be treated as special categories of victim who need more protection?' (Ticktin 2011:259). In Amnesty this debate is reflected in the decision not to include any photographic materials with the Nicaragua campaign. It is a separate category, separated by its visual omission.

The existence of debates about which Ticktin writes suggests that the category of rape as a form of violence is considered an exception not just within Amnesty, but that it is also part of a broader attitude to violence and acceptability. Certainly the omission of images of rape is shared across NGOs and media publications within Euro-American contexts of production. Azoulay provides a history of images of atrocity in which she found '...one image was absent from the various sites-newspapers, photo albums, television programs- in which images of horror are shown: the image of rape' (Azoulay 2008:217). While much is known about instances of rape for example the Bosnian rape camps are widely documented (see Allen 1996, Salzman 1998), there are no pictures of the act as there are photographic documents showing torture. Rape is therefore a violence of visual exception, in almost direct contrast to the way that it has been increasingly brought into other discourse (see Azoulay 2008:217-222 for a history of this), and it remains relatively hidden visually.

We may ask then what is it about this form of violence which makes it exceptional. Violences that have sexual elements, such as in Abu Ghraib, are not censored, and there is little debate about the potential for them to be titillating or to exacerbate

interest in this sort of abuse. These are the issues often cited in regards to images of rape. For Azoulay the lack of images of rape represents a taboo which prevents it from being a common reference, a condition she describes as essential to 'mustering agreement on the need to prevent and stop it' (Azoulay 2008:269) which she sees as directly related to the singling out of women as different (ibid:281). She calls for rape to be returned to visual discourse in order to redress this taboo which separates it from torture and other rights violations and makes it a women's issue (ibid:281). This is quite reflective of the debates Ticktin discusses, which suggests a strong movement in the NGO world to give rape a place within other physical violences rather than separate from it. Certainly for staff who I questioned on the issue of rape there was an exclusive focus on women as victims of rape, and Amnesty as an organisation have produced comparatively little material about male rape. In fact, as Stemple points out, male rape has received almost no attention in the field of human rights despite it being widespread as an act of war (Stemple 2009:606) which she suggests creates and maintains an impression of women as victims and men as perpetrators (ibid 612). The issue of rape viewed in this light therefore is actually an issue of the creation and acceptance of certain gendered victimhoods.

Therefore we can see Amnesty staff's decisions and practices around the use of images in the Hay campaign to be a reflection of a conscious project to remove certain types of 'undignified' violence from the visual narrative of their organisation. However it is also an exception within that. While torture victims are shown as individuals, rape victims are rarely shown even after the fact because there exists an unconscious acceptance that rape is a violence that is less dignified than others. That it renders less dignity, and requires more protection in its victims, comes out through discussions about the omission. Therefore the omission is a reflection of pre-conceived ideas about the nature of violence and victims, which are in a sense perpetuated by its removal. The desire to protect victims of rape is itself ensuring that the category of rape is exceptional, and its removal, as Azoulay suggests, reinforces its exceptional status. This is compounded by a practice concerning rape that focusses on the rape of women, therefore suggesting further separation from violence more generally into the category of 'violence against women', but also reinforcing a notion that female victims are more vulnerable than males ones. It is important not to point to AIUK staff as the cause of this, but rather to see their approach to the

representation of rape as part of a wider social phenomenon that entails certain expectations about the nature of gender and violence.

Overwhelming Images and Limits to Empathy

At the end of the day you see something horrible and you look away. We don't want people to look away do we?
(Jesse, in conversation, April 2011)

When Ellie spoke out against STC's advertising earlier in this chapter she was not alone in her harsh criticism of the marketing techniques of mass media and most especially of other NGOs, specifically those working in development. Every morning a volunteer in the media team looks through all the major newspapers and major online sources of news and picks out articles relevant to Amnesty's work which then get posted on the intranet for staff to read. I was told by Rachel, one of these volunteers, that the collecting of articles was '*to keep staff informed on debates and news which will impact their campaigning*' (Rachel, in conversation, January 2010). They also served to provide fodder for many a conversation over the coffee machine during staff breaks, and while more often these conversations were about the content of the articles, there was also a strong tradition of critically assessing the journalism and presentation of rights issues in the mass media. While critiques varied widely, the harshest criticism seemed to be reserved for 'shock tactics' of physical suffering and images of vulnerable people in short, the same aspects which are not present in AIUK materials. Other NGOs were subject to yet harsher criticism because '*they should know better*' (Gian, in conversation, September 2010). The complaint that staff made was not simply about the content of the images being undignified, but also the volume of these types of images and their ubiquity. Comments like '*this again'* when looking at a UNICEF flyer, and of the same flyer '*wasn't this the picture they used last year*' (Charlotte, in conversation, March 2011) suggests that as well as the content of the images, staff take issue with their over-use. In these conversations a further narrative emerged which was related to but separate from the issues of dignity so often put forward, which was concern over the effect of these images not on the subjects but on the public. For staff there was an ever present worry about the public

being '*overwhelmed*' with so many harrowing images that their effect would be deadened and people would be less moved by them. This concern seemed to feed directly into AIUK's image policy which is a backlash against this type of advertising, but is also a response to it on a much more strategic level.

I found that in practice, staff attitudes to dignity and empowerment often came in second to worries about reaching an audience and eliciting a response, specifically in the context of a market already over-saturated with images of suffering. The quote from Jesse at the start of this section is from a discussion amongst a group of us taking down an exhibition of human rights photo journalism, which had been up in a meeting room for media awards judging. It was the first time that I had heard that particular argument put forward about an image, but it would not be the last. The image in question was a particularly explicit image from Robin Hammond's 'Lost Souls Sudan' which showed a mental health patient naked and shackled[43]. Whilst taking down the pictures the four of us involved were discussing their merits. When it came to this picture everyone agreed that it was '*very important*' but '*we could never use something like that, it's too upsetting for the general public*' (Mikey, in conversation, April 2011). It was decided by those present that it was fine for a newspaper (it had been featured in The Times on 9/1/11) but that:

> Mikey: *it's different, people are reading it anyway, if it's an ad for a campaign people just turn away from something like that.*
> Jesse: *yeah totally, maybe if the newspapers weren't always showing pictures like this then we could but what can you do? At the end of the day you see something horrible and you look away...*

Mikey and Jesse disapprove of images not in general, but specifically because of a visual context of which they think leads to 'compassion fatigue' on the part of the viewer, which normalises violence and suffering through the use of images and diminishes people's ability to care. This phenomenon is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, as a continuing concern associated with politics based on emotion. This attitude never found its way into interviews or meetings where dignity and empowerment were discussed. It suggests that dignity and image policy are in fact deeply involved with marketing pressures which staff are put under due to the visual landscape they work in. These pressures are specifically the perceived limits which

---

43 This picture could not be reproduced in the thesis due to copyright issues but is available at http://www.robinhammond.co.uk/mental-health/project/south-sudan/south-sudan-slideshow/

an overabundance of images of pain places on the audience's ability to empathise with images of suffering.

In Chapter 3 I highlighted that many theorists are concerned with the same issues of so called 'compassion fatigue', and that these theories suggest that a process of desensitisation is at work when people are faced with repeated images of suffering (Feldman 1994; Kleinman & Kleinman 1996; Sontag 2004). Staff at Amnesty are shown above to have concerns similar to those theorists, namely that the lack of dignity in these pictures can be attributed to their being shown too much and normalised. However as I have tried to show throughout this thesis, there is little knowledge among staff about how campaigns are received. Even the very audience that staff work towards is imagined and sometimes deeply at odds with the audiences that turn out for campaign encounters. Neither do staff themselves exhibit any signs of losing their ability to care about others, though they are faced daily with images from various news sources on the intranet, often containing pictures of pain. Staff are therefore not basing these concerns on research into the reception of images, or on experience of themselves. They are once again imagining their audience, and judging the audience's ability to empathise. In Part II of this thesis I reflect on the relations that those involved with Amnesty campaigns form, and their responses to the suggestion that 'compassion fatigue', while not being a myth as some have claimed (Campbell 2012), is a simplistic notion of the way in which people interact with pain, pictures, and distant others. In fact many of those involved with taking action found pain and suffering to be important components of the process of recognising the rights of others.

During my own campaign work I was advised to remove a picture from a leaflet advertising a short film because it showed American soldiers in the Guantanamo Bay detention centre. I was told that it would 'confuse' people to see American guards who inflict torture on prisoners, because there is some support for soldiers in the UK, and they would not be able to connect to the detainees with such sympathetic perpetrators visible. Images used by Amnesty rarely show the perpetrators of human rights abuses. Perpetrators are silent figures to be imagined by the audience, or ignored altogether. Academics have accused some NGO campaigning of depoliticising human rights situations by failing to represent the complex international and national situations

which lead to abuses, in favour of simple narratives of pity/suffering without any attributed cause (Azoulay 2008:291), thus making it seem inevitable that some countries have these problems. The removal of perpetrators would seem to be a removal of context and cause in campaigns, but I believe that it is in fact part of a process of managing imagined identification that staff see as crucial to the project of rights campaigning.

Rather than simply wanting people to forget that there are real human actors and political motivations for abuses, staff are managing a much more complex set of potential problems with empathy. These are the changing roles of human rights perpetrators and the resulting problems which that causes for issues of empathy. Kristyan who manages the Israel/Palestine campaign explained that:

> *'...narrative is everything, our job is to control the narrative, make it make sense, it can't just be this group is wrong, this group is right, it's the actions which we judge not the people because next week those same people could also be suffering violations of rights abuses and how can people sympathise with them if they see them as baddies'*. (Kristyan, presentation, May 2010)

This is another example of perceived limits to empathy. The public are once again imagined to have a limited capacity for empathy,in this case limited by the idea that some people might not be deserving of empathy because of their prior actions. In such cases the same priority is given to words to present the more complex relation that was seen in the last two chapters. The text which went alongside the Guantanamo image assigned some measure of blame in its explanation of who was in Guantanamo Bay detention centre and why. While it was alright for the text to explain the role of the American military in Guantanamo, the pictures were not appropriate because they are seen to produce empathy of the wrong sort, that of identification with the perpetrators.

The gaps and silences, then, can be viewed as both an attempt to reduce the effects of continual use of disempowering tropes of victims and suffering, and an attempt to market effectively in the face of this growing apathy. While staff may use the term violence relatively narrowly, this first use of the photo policy can be seen as a way of reducing what Kleinman refers to as 'social violence' (Kleinman 2000:231) which is

the effect socially of overexposure to images of suffering at a distance (ibid:3). Some academics suggest that there is a process of desensitisation which overexposure to images facilitates, and which normalises the suffering of distant others and reduces politics to disengaged pity (Boltanski 1999:3; Ignatieff 1998:293). Amnesty staff make similar claims about the effects of images. The concerns about making people appear as victims, and about compassion fatigue, can be viewed as a response to social violence even if it is not framed in those terms. Because of the entrenched association of violence with pain, staff do not use those terms, yet their goals are the same.

Seen in this way, the links between the practice highlighted in Chapter 4 of 'humanising' rights victims, and creating empathy, begin to emerge more clearly. If, as I have claimed, staff are reacting to concerns about the effect of representing people in the undignified situation of pain or suffering, then we can view the focus on humanising in this light, as a further response to these concerns. Specifically, it is a move to return people to the position of being human and therefore empathetic through visual practice, after the indignity of violence and abuse threatens that status. In an interview about dignity I was told by Rachel, a member of the campaigns team, that: '*I don't think images of people in pain are dignified because you can forget that they are still people, you look away and feel horror and you don't see them really'* (Rachel, interview, August 2011). Her succinct comments on this matter reflect what other staff told me in conversations and interviews, and what is being suggested throughout this chapter. Physical pain is viewed as essentially undignified because it is dehumanising and precludes empathy. Empathy therefore remains at the heart of this practice of silencing visual depictions of violence.

What appears to be a concern with the vague idea of dignity is in fact a more precise concern with not only the compassion fatigue mentioned above, but also something more fundamental. It is a concern with violence as dehumanising, and an effort to return to humanity and consequently to render people recognisable in a way that pain cannot. Arendt suggests that when a person is in a position that requires them to claim rights, they are equally in a position that destroys their humanity:

> 'The paradox involved in human rights is that such a loss coincidences
> with the instant when a person becomes a human being in general -

without a profession, without citizenship, without an opinion, without deed by which to identify himself...[and]loses all significance.' (Arendt 1990:302)

Her claims seem to reflect the opinions and practice of staff at AIUK who also view the abuse of rights as dehumanising, though only where this pertains to physical abuse and discomfort. Arendt also pre-empts some of the visual aspects that staff focussed on in Chapter 4, such as occupation and place in the world. This suggests that staff hope to rehabilitate those aspects of humanity which Arendt describes as lost through rights abuse, through their visual practice.

Therefore the characterisation of concern with compassion fatigue among staff as simply a marketing worry, is not an entirely fair account of the motivations of staff. There is a more philosophical endeavour at work that is concerned with restoring humanity in the wake of pain. It would not be accurate to suggest, however, that marketing played no part in these practices. As the previous two chapters have highlighted, the goal of empathy is balanced carefully between a desire to be fair and empowering in their representation of victims of rights abuses, and a desire to create campaigns that appeal to the public. Both these aspects are important to staff and are certainly not mutually exclusive but they do sit in a difficult relationship to each other because of the apparent conflict between empowering subjects, and using images of those subjects for the purposes of marketing.

When Gaps are Filled: Exceptions to the Photo Policy

Every year AIUK is involved in Photomonth, an East London based festival of photography. The AIUK Photomonth events follow roughly the same format every year. There are two panel discussions on current themes in human rights photojournalism and two exhibitions in same building, one of media award winners from the photojournalism category and one to tie in with current campaigns. In the 2010 Media Awards, Giles Duly's portraits of acid burn survivors, as one of the runners up, automatically qualified them for the Photomonth exhibition (below).

Figure 6f & 6g: Giles Duley, Acid Burn Survivors. Amnesty Media Awards runner up 2010.

I knew from participation in the judging meeting that these photos had generated strong opinions among the judges, only one of whom came from within AIUK. The others were Carlos Reyes-Manzo (photographer), Rebecca McClelland (New Statesman Picture Editor), Simon Bainbridge (BJP Editor), and Camilla Brown (Photographers Gallery). I was interested to know how they would be received by the rest of the staff. The pictures (figures 6g & 6f) show survivors of acid burns, often disfigured, in black and white portrait-style photographs. Such images were certainly not the norm in the AIUK exhibition space which Amanda and I curated well within the guidelines of the photo policy, and with an awareness that staff work there and see pictures every day. For that reason there was an emphasis on Amnesty's favoured 'positive pictures' of human rights defenders, campaigners, and success stories. I had expected that the pictures would generate as much debate as they had in the judging meeting, even possibly some complaints because of the interview emphasis on empowered individuals rather than suffering bodies. However I was surprised to find that among staff and the public there was great interest in and enthusiasm for these images, more so in fact than for the Robin Hammond 'Toxic Jeans' series which actually won the awards. There were obviously exceptions and nuances to the picture approach, of which I had previously been unaware, that allow gaps to be filled in certain circumstances.

The exhibition involved very little in the way of planning, because the judges having selected the winners and runners up we were bound to show the pictures they selected, which is why the content was different from usual. While the exhibition was up (14th Sep- 2nd Oct) it was therefore quite a talking point among staff who are used to seeing particular styles of images, often from their own campaign archives. I received emails from several members of staff saying how important they thought the Duly images were, and how it was '*good to see something hard hitting*' (Claire, email, September 2010). I observed other staff members taking more time to look at the Duly images than the rest of the exhibition and was party to several conversations about how they '*really catch your eye*', and they '*make you stop and think*' (staff members in conversation, September 2010). The issue of scars and pain did not seem to come up. Eulette from the media team was particularly supportive of the pictures and her reasoning is as follows:

> *I think we should be showing pictures like this. We can't coddle people*
> *just because they don't want to see something we have to really wake*
> *people up- this is real, this is what happens, this is what we're up against.*
> (Eulette, in conversation, September, 2011)

In some ways her opinions seem in direct conflict with the policy which explicitly condemns shocking viewers and with opinions of staff in interviews who brought me pictures of protests. I would have considered Eulette as a minority counter to the mainstream opinions had there not been such widespread support and interest in these pictures among staff.

This positive response by some staff to the use of these images suggests that there is a more complex relation between images of suffering and photography, one which hinges not on the content as dignified, but on the way images are expected to be consumed and on concerns about the public reaction to them. Staff found it '*a relief almost*' to see pictures so explicitly portraying the harsh realities of human rights in the form of physical mutilation. I asked Veronica why she thought there was such a disconnection between normal practice and this exhibition, and she suggested that:

> '*it's not that staff always want to show only the positive side of human*
> *rights, sometimes I think we all find that difficult, trying to find a positive*
> *angle to horrible situations, but in this case it's a one off, it's ok, there's a*

> *reason to show these pictures and it's a relief almost...*' (Veronica, interview, October 2010)

This suggests that while staff defend and believe in the photo policy, it is not the only consideration. Rather it is seen as a duty by staff to deliver the right visual practice which is positive and dignified.

The assertion by Salil Shetty that Amnesty International is the 'world's conscience' comes with certain responsibilities. For staff at AIUK there is a moral imperative to construct a narrative which is at once dignified for subjects, and a campaign style which is dignified. Staff are interested not simply in Amnesty looking good, but see it as their responsibility to '*set an example*' (Allen, May 2011) to other organisations about what ethical imagery looks like in an attempt to construct a version of what they see as an ethical discourse on rights. Lucy spoke about this in more depth to me during an interview and while she was speaking more broadly about campaigns, her sentiment could easily be seen in the picture policy.

> *Well it's because we're so famous that we have to be careful about how we campaign- we have a lot of visibility and if we, a human rights organisation, can't even stick to our principles what hope is there. If I start using cheap tricks to get support we lose our credibility but worse we condone that sort of thing.* (Lucy, interview, July 2011)

Dignity is something which is worked at, even if the practices appear natural, and are so ingrained that staff act unconsciously, the intent behind them is as much about Amnesty's dignity as it is about the dignity of those being represented. This was reiterated to me in an interview with a senior member of staff. She told me that *'we just don't see ourselves as that sort of organisation. We try to do the right thing. It's not just our outcomes that matter, it's how we get there...'* (Sandra, interview, June 2011).

Amnesty's dignity is important because of the responsibility they see themselves as holding. This responsibility is tied to a self-image of being important, and of being good. As discussed in previous chapters, this self- image is important for staff identity and morale. The narrative of compassion fatigue, and marketing advantages involved in the image policy, are not discussed in those terms because they are a threat to that self-image. I would speculate that this is because it seems too calculated and seems to

be putting the audience's desire not to be upset by brutal images over breakfast above the broadcasting of 'harsh realities' as a form of censorship. I found that staff on the whole preferred not to talk about the practical decisions about getting a campaign noticed.

When I asked my supervisor if she thought that audience sensibilities were important in planning the Hay festival and the lack of pictures she said '*you make it sound so seedy, it's not Mad Men or anything*' (Amanda, in conversation, August 2010), making a connection to the very corporate world portrayed in the series Mad Men. I answered that it was 'all advertising of a sort'. Her reply that '*but we're not selling human rights are we*' seems surprisingly naïve, and reveals the level of disdain with which techniques of marketing are discussed, despite being used regularly. For staff at Amnesty, the idea of marketing is closely linked to the idea of manipulation, and when it comes to absences from campaigns this manipulation amounts to censorship in the eyes of staff. Dignity is a much more desirable way to present these ideas: it does not interfere with staff identity because it retains the notion of 'doing good', yet it allows for certain removals that might be otherwise classed as censorship by staff.

Dignity therefore has very many levels within the organisation, from the desire to restore people to dignity in the face of abuse, to the dignity of the organisational practice. There is a balance to be struck between the priority of a dignified representational approach, and the fear that by thinking explicitly in terms of appeal, staff are not making this their priority. I would suggest however that one does not cancel out the other, and that it is possible to think simultaneously about appeal, and about a fair and dignified campaign approach. Indeed this is how staff tend to operate, balancing the two with consideration. However this fear of marketing prevents staff from acknowledging this. They continue to see marketing as undignified and are not keen to acknowledge that some decisions to use or remove images are taken with this in mind. This suggests some of the difficulties facing charitable organisations where means and ends are deeply intertwined.

Dignity and Rights

Dignity, as I have suggested, is often seen as a key component of human rights- both as they exist legally, and through the sort of public campaign constructions of rights as an idea that this thesis is concerned with. For staff at AIUK it was sited as the reason behind many of the decisions made about campaign images specifically. As this section has attempted to demonstrate, the version of dignity that staff speak of- that which is concerned with agency and empowerment, seems to suggest the version of dignity put forward by many well known philosophers in support of rights that equates it with respect and autonomy (see Rosen 2012; Dworkin 2011), setting it apart from other humanitarian ventures, that are less concerned with empowering representations (see Chapter 1). The visual practices around the concept suggest further nuances to this- namely that for staff agency and empowerment are impeded by physical suffering more so than any other representation that may be associated with rights. In the case of the Hay festival staff structured the campaign around rape and abortion, but excluded these from the visual elements of the campaign materials. In this way staff hoped to distinguish themselves from humanitarian organisations such as Save the Children, who they did not consider to have a dignified approach to campaign visuals. In doing so staff members suggest that there is in fact some distinction between a rights based visual practice that is concerned with empowering representation and a humanitarian one where physical suffering plays a key role.

However, a close examination of the practices around selecting and designating images as dignified suggests that there is in fact more than the dignity of those depicted at stake, and that in fact the distinction between rights based visual practice and humanitarian is actually less clear than might be imagined. The strong focus on empathy that staff displayed in Chapters 4 & 5 is evident behind the gaps and silences discussed in this chapter. As I have outlined above, an important feature of the practice of using 'empowering' 'dignified' images is actually related to a visual strategy that allows for forming connections of empathy with distant others. The removal of pain and suffering is not only about dignity, it is also about making the victims of rights abuses relate-able and appealing to a viewing public. Staff concerns with compassion fatigue and limits to empathy suggest that empathising with people is in fact contingent on them having dignity. To be able to empathise with someone we must view them as dignified full human beings, and staff members suggest that the pity and alienation that pain entails inhibits this. This has clear links to attempts to

construct humanity discussed in Chapter 4. Seen in light of the 'humanising' project, we can view the removal of pain as at least in part an attempt to make people more 'like us' and relate-able.

To see this as the only concern staff have would be unfair. Discussions referenced throughout this chapter however show that there is considerable slippage between ideas of being a rights organisation with the need for empowerment and dignity that entails, and the practice of constructing campaigns that mobilise people to action through empathy. Rather than trumping empathy, dignity has been folded into the concept, through staff claims that people can't relate to undignified images. This is particularly relevant when considered in light of the position Amnesty occupy as a rights organisation. If humanitarian campaigns are to be differentiated by a focus on 'tugging at the heart strings', as I have suggested in Chapter 1, then the emotional appeals made by visuals at AIUK are not so far removed. While empathy is distinct from sympathy in many ways, not least in the ways that staff emphasis in this chapter in their discussions about pity, both are appeals based on identification of slightly different sorts. This is quite markedly different to the context of rights work described by Wilson discussed in Chapter 2 that emphasises rights as a legal construct of facts and unemotional calls for justice (1997). Rights campaigns, framed in the way AIUK frame theirs clearly deviate from this and align themselves much more closely with the emotional appeals that may be expected from humanitarian or charity organisations.

How then can we account for this blurring of campaign practices towards the humanitarian within an organisation that is so famously and explicitly concerned with rights? Firstly to question the expectation that in fact AIUK are as concerned with rights as their mandate suggests. While staff members take pride in the dignity of their organisation, as discussed earlier in this chapter, they rarely refer explicitly to rights as their mandate refers to them- in a legal sense. During my time at AIUK I rarely heard staff discussing rights, except in the most general sense. Staff members in AIUK are rarely legally trained, and in fact most staff members have professional backgrounds outside of rights. My supervisor worked for Oxfam prior to her appointment at AIUK, and already knew several members of staff from her time working there. Lisa, from HR, told me that in hiring they look for experience

working in campaigns across the not for profit sector rather than knowledge about rights per se (Lisa, Interview, October 2010). It is perhaps inevitable then that there is some overlap between the approach of Amnesty and that of other organisations not concerned with rights. Amnesty are unique in that they are a rights organisation employing the techniques of identification normally associated with humanitarian approaches, however, as Part 1 of this thesis has shown, their approach is not an appeal for identification based on sympathy as is the case for many humanitarian organisations. Rather, AIUK staff members have blurred the lines to produce a novel style of campaign imagery that is humanitarian in some senses through its appeal to identification, but applies empathy rather than sympathy to this, thus distinguishing it from many humanitarian organisations. In part two of this thesis I will reflect on how successful staff members have been in carving out the campaign niche of empathetic engagement.

Conclusion

I have identified several gaps and silences which are created through Amnesty's approach to pictures, including the absence of violence and images of suffering, the absence of images of people in campaigns deemed 'too sensitive' such as the Nicaraguan Women's Rights campaign, and the absence of images of perpetrators. I focussed on these gaps and silences because they are prominent and most revealing about AIUK staff attitudes and motivations. There are of course many gaps and silences which I have not discussed. I have used AIUK's photo policy and formal interviews to suggest that the sanctioned and ideal approach to photos as seen by staff makes dignity paramount, and I have also discussed the assumptions about violence suffering and their relation to dignity. Campaign preparation suggests that in reality, ideas of compassion fatigue play a much bigger role in decision- making than staff acknowledge, and that concerns about audience reception are inextricably linked to decisions to use positive imagery, rather than simply decisions based on dignity. Rare occasions when these campaign 'rules' are broken and gaps are filled, suggest that staff harbour concerns that they are 'sugar coating' campaign images. Tension therefore exists between empowering images and the idea of truth. The narrative of dignity allows these less desirable aspects of campaign to be discussed and presented as more palatable. While they are of course an aspect of Amnesty's moral

undertaking, they also cover the concerns of compassion fatigue with a gloss which does not threaten the self-view of staff. Part of the reason therefore, for dignity being relatively undefined within AIUK is the plethora of interests and concerns which the terms cover and the tension between disparate ideas behind the gaps and silences in AIUK's work.

That concludes Part I of this thesis. In this part I have put forward an account of how images are conceived of and work in AIUK, to argue that images are the product of both assumptions and intentions during the planning stage, which shape the ultimate outcome. A visual practice has been described that staff see as 'Amnesty style', that has been shown to have a focus on positive imagery of individuals, and the removal of pain and suffering from visual material. I have attempted to show how this fits into a broader goal of creating a particular type of empathy between audience and prisoners that is rooted in similarity and identification. Part II looks at how these campaign expectations play out in new contexts of engagement after campaigns have been launched. I was particularly interested in the imaginative relations that members of the public formed with distant others through images, as this was a central issue of image use by staff in Amnesty. I begin by reflecting on the processes of circulation to explain how and where images move, and I destabilise the categories of production and reception to show that in fact images are constantly under production. This paves the way for a discussion about interactions with images that suggests that they are used and act in ways very different to those imaged by staff during the planning stage.

Part II

Circulation & Reception

Chapter 7: On the Campaign Trail
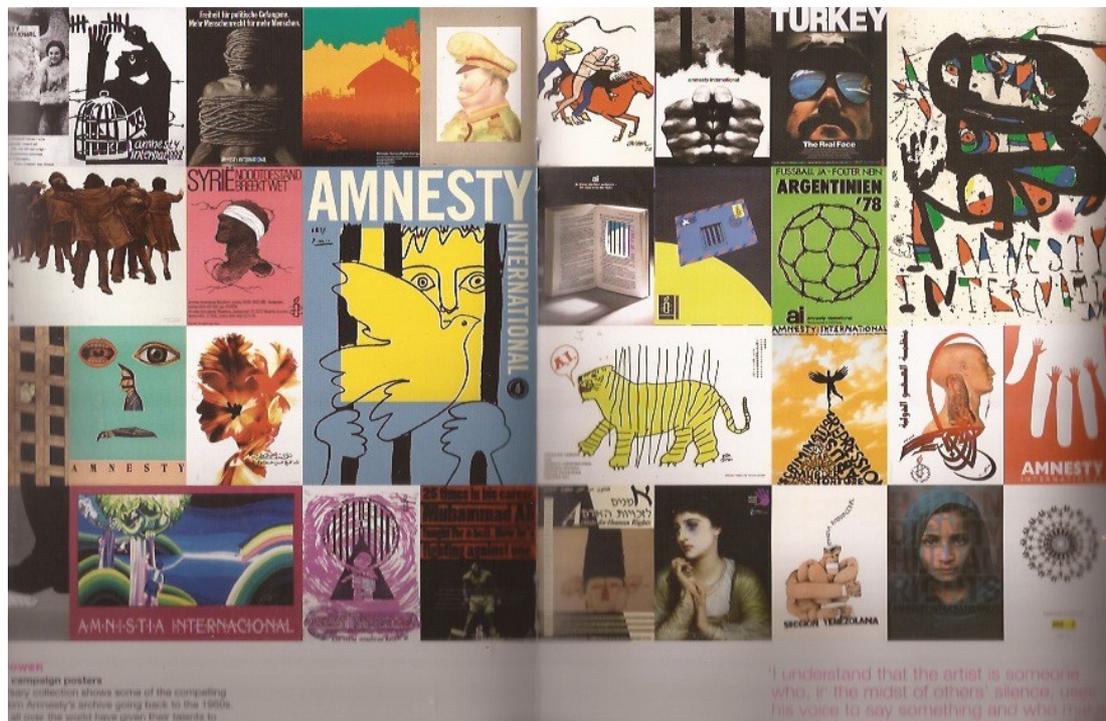
Figure 7a: Inside Poster Power flyer featuring images used in the exhibition designed by artists for Amnesty sections around the world, over the past 50 years. A full slideshow of images is available at http://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2011/apr/03/amnesty-international-posters-in-pictures.

Amnesty's 50th anniversary 'AI @ 50' (28th May 2011) brought with it a new set of campaign objectives. Rather than focussing on a specific region or issue the AI @ 50 objectives were centred on 'raising the profile of AI' and increasing membership. Local and student groups were encouraged to arrange events and activities which demonstrated 'the legacy of AI' and to choose from current campaigns such as La Mariposa, the Death Penalty or Corporate Accountability for campaign actions. The AI @ 50 campaign was therefore unique in its focus purely on 'getting the word out' about Amnesty, and meant that activities were not centred on content, but rather on visibility for the organisation. To launch the campaign the IS collected and collated copies of historical and contemporary Amnesty posters from around the world to produce an exhibition called 'Poster Power'. Despite the fact that all posters had been designed for Amnesty International there were issues of copyright associated with some of the images which prevented their use, meaning that posters were selected largely by availability as well as to *'provide a broad geographical and artistic*

spectrum' (Margaret, in conversation, June 2011) and to be shown by AI offices around the world. The exhibition was reproduced at AIUK for use by UK-based local groups and was printed and mounted for exhibition at the HRAC in Shoreditch, where it was to begin its journey. After that the exhibition was packaged up and sent to groups who requested it, and was shown in different venues by different groups throughout the UK.

I use this exhibition as a way of charting and understanding campaign distribution and circulation. As a physical set of materials that I was able to travel with through distribution in different contexts throughout the UK, the Poster Power exhibition provides a way in to the complex processes of circulation and distribution of campaign materials by AIUK. The blueprint devised by AIUK for the exhibition's distribution suggests some of the expectations and methods used more generally for distributing materials, such as the role of local groups, the organisation's move towards the use of online social networks, and the 'right type' of media attention. I highlight an approach at AIUK that seeks to homogenise and unify through circulation, often at the expense of internal differences in opinion. This desire for unity and homogeneity is in contrast to the actual practices and avenues of circulation which I observed in practice, both internally and within local groups. The actual distribution and circulation as shown by following the exhibition suggests that distributive context and the agency of distributors has the potential to change and alter campaigns, so that campaigns 'in practice' are very different from campaigns in planning. Distribution is therefore an important and overlooked aspect of campaign production, or rather re-production. The result of these divergent visions of circulation is that campaigns are diverse undertakings, with many different meanings and agendas working simultaneously. These are compared to ethnographic examples from Law (2002) and Tsing (2005), who demonstrate very different outcomes to projects with diverse interests and goals, one failed and one successful. I suggest that ultimately the disconnection between AIUK and local groups is what allows for the campaign to be successful.

The new members that are attracted to Poster Power, and eventually join up to Amnesty are not necessarily those the original plan hoped for. Instead we see social

'networks' [44] that form around images. In looking at the actual methods of circulation and audiences attracted by local groups at Poster Power exhibitions and events I would suggest a pattern emerges in which communities of interest form around AI activities. Thus AIUK campaign materials move in particular spheres much like Nash's description of 'cyber bubbles', where online communities form around interests between like minded people (Nash 2010:4). Groups form of similarly interested people through the techniques of marketing employed by local groups to suit their contexts. However despite seeming to limit potential join ups, they also allow the expansion of the organisation into untapped territory within them, and thus fulfil the criteria of Poster Power, albeit not as staff had planned.

Planning and Promoting 'Poster Power'

Figure 7b: Poster Power exhibited.

The exhibition ran at the HRAC from the 6th - 31st May 2011, and from the 4th - 11th April 2011at the Guardian offices, also in London. Before the artwork even arrived at the HRAC it was already the centre of a flurry of marketing activity. AI @ 50 was a

---

44 While the term network has obvious connotations with actor network theory in light of the premise of this thesis, use of social network to describe events here is a deliberate choice to pre-empt discussion later in this chapter about the different roles of actors in networks, and the different types of agency possible.

confusing campaign for many staff who were more used to 'issues based' work with a clear objective of changing policy or practice at home or abroad. While AI @ 50 organisation was situated in the campaigns section, I was told privately by a member of that team that it was 'better suited to marketing'. That is not to say that staff were unhappy about the campaign. On the contrary, the fiftieth birthday of Amnesty was for most staff a time of pride and accomplishment, but the focus on 'bigging up' Amnesty was for some staff quite difficult to work with. For that reason and because of excitement generally about Amnesty's 50th anniversary, when the exhibition was proposed it was very popular among staff and became the focus of much energy and planning among the teams making up the working project: Campaigns, Events, and Design. For the design team this involved changing the layout and look of the images to look 'more AIUK and less AIIS', an objective discussed previously which runs through the relationship between the design team at the IS and the one at AIUK and reflects the desire in AIUK for a unique and centralised version of themselves and their campaigns. For the Events team it involved planning the launch of the exhibition, and the right 'feel' for the 'celebratory nature' as compared to other campaigns, and finally and most importantly all teams were involved in promoting the event through their 'own channels'. The choices of promotion and the outcome of this planning determined that a particular audience attended the exhibition in much the same way that promotion of the IWD exhibition did, however in this case the objective of self-promotion and wider audiences meant that rather than AIUK's own staff being the only ones to enjoy the exhibition, it was promoted and planned in ways which attracted a different clientele.

Usually when an exhibition opens at AIUK the marketing is minimal[45] and the opening itself usually 'piggy backs' onto another event such as a panel discussion or film screening. The Poster Power exhibition was different because rather than promoting a further campaign such as the exhibition of Palestinian Wall Art which was hanging prior to Poster Power, this exhibition was an end to the campaign objective of raising AIUK's profile and celebrating the legacy, and so the opening itself was the event and attendance the objective. The number of people in the space however is limited by fire regulations, and because the event is based in East London

---

45 Please see 'Imagined Audience' chapter for a discussion about AIUK methods for advertising exhibitions.

for a set length of time (determined by the exhibition program for the year). That meant that while AIUK staff in the various teams involved had a general remit to attract attention to the organisation widely, there were limits to this in practice as far as the exhibition went. For that reason the plan was to use the exhibition at the HRAC as a 'springboard' to attract wider 'well placed' coverage which could spread and generate interest for the exhibition as it travelled around the country. The exhibition therefore was to act as a smaller version of an AIUK model for campaign distribution which starts with AIUK events to support and launch campaigns which are then promoted regionally by local groups. After a meeting between key members of staff from the teams involved, the following strategy for promotion was devised. The intended audience of the exhibition was to be 'high brow' 'London types' because of the limitations of space and location, but also because of the relative influence of this audience on the public. In this way staff at AIUK see certain people as gatekeepers, with access to wider publics from which they themselves are excluded.

I was told that to 'start small and selective' could often yield the widest campaign result. This audience was different from both the 'new audiences' of the Audience Policy, and the imagined audience staff worked with in the past which was based on their own social circles. 'Arts and Media types' however were not a new area for staff to work with. AIUK regularly collaborate with local personalities, newspapers, and other arts outlets and companies in London to host and create events programs.

In this case a key relationship with the Observer, the newspaper which first ran Peter Benenson's letter effectively creating Amnesty as we know it, was utilised to promote the exhibition. A full colour supplement was published containing images from the exhibition and a history of AI. Other key distributive areas were very similar to AIUK's usual avenues for HRAC events promotion discussed in Chapter 5. A feature article was placed in the Amnesty UK Magazine, AIUK social media including Twitter and Facebook were used to create online 'events', it was placed on the AIUK website, and in What's On local events sections in publications such as TimeOut and listings in London press, 'what's on' sites generally, and arts specific sites. However as the following examples will show, even familiar distributive practices are not as streamlined as they seem. There is always an element of inspiration and interpretation to campaign dissemination, even at the first stage in AIUK.

Staff designed a '*high brow*' opening event for the exhibition and had a target audience of '*arts and media types*'. This was reflected not only in the planning and outlined audience discussed, but most noticeably in the choice of promotional activities and the event for the opening night as they played out in practice. The exhibition opened with a private view wine reception, to which some high profile stake holders and many members of the press were invited. The hope was that the latter and the local celebrities would write about and blog about the event. In that way the private view was considered to fit the remit well: it bolstered support among members (albeit a select number) and it attracted wider audiences through press coverage. This suggests a very particular view of how campaigns are to circulate, one that values wide circulation, and sees the process as filtering outwards from influential gatekeepers.

The private view appeared on the AIUK website despite it being a closed event. When I asked the Event Manager Amanda why, she said that she did not know, and directed me to the web team. The web team sit in a different part of the building to the rest of the marketing team, and are seen as quite independent least because of their '*technical wizardry*' (Amanda, in conversation, May 2011). Emerson told me that the event had been put up because they had been asked to make the exhibition 'high brow', and he thought that publicising the exclusive event would generate some curiosity among those who had not been invited, making it seem more 'exclusive' and therefore desirable. Amanda had thought that having an event on the website which people could not attend would have the opposite effect, that of making people feel alienated from the organisation because they were doing '*exclusive things*', however '*at the end of the day the web stuff is his domain, I'm sure he knows what he's doing*' (Amanda, in conversation, May 2011). This suggests that within the broad unity of AIUK staff, there are hidden elements of diversity in opinion. Despite different ideas about how to enact a campaign, there is an understanding among staff that unity is important, and so concessions are made to the broad common goals.

This example of different ideas about how to realise shared distributive goals was not the only time that staff took different directions with campaigns. During the La Mariposa campaign, two staff came into friction about using churches as an outlet for

campaign materials because of the campaign theme of abortion. One member of staff made a decision not to contact a church group she had worked with because of the 'sensitive nature' of the campaign, which was later overturned by the another member of staff. While there are strategies about campaign practice, these are reimagined by individual staff and teams such as Emerson in the web team and because they reinterpreted the remit at each stage of advertising. The logic and practice of distributing information and campaigns is therefore not a coherent system, it involves interpretation and creativity and can have different meanings in different parts of the AIUK building which determines how they are carried out in practice. There is, in effect, a constant reimagining and reproduction of campaigns. So while staff are keen to unify and create coherence, the different perspectives and practices within the building betray a range of differing versions of the same campaign. Like Law's account of aircraft building as made of many stories, all about a seemingly different aircraft (Law 2002:5), a campaign, even within AIUK constitutes many differing versions of what it is.

The private view and subsequent during which the exhibition hung in the foyer attracted much more attention than previous exhibitions I had been involved with, suggesting that the model AIUK had devised for attracting attention through highly placed members of the media and arts industry had been successful in widening interest in the art exhibition. During the duration of the exhibition, over 600 people viewed the images hanging in the HRAC gallery space in the foyer. This was a significantly higher number than other exhibitions. The private view itself was considered by staff to be a 'big success' both in terms of turn out on the night, with most people who had been invited actually attending, and also in terms of coverage after the night with five blog articles, celebrity tweets and a number of local press articles about AI and the exhibition. I was present at the private view and it was my job to pour wine, give out canapés, and answer questions about AI's work and the artwork being displayed. Most people seemed informed about Amnesty's work more generally and this certainly was not a 'new audience' but that was not the intended audience for that event. The 'high brow' as it was conceived of vaguely by staff in practice consisted of cheese from a superstore's garage and wine from a local store round the corner from the HRAC, but people were happy to mingle with each other and indeed many seemed to know each other already.

I overheard one conversation between two people whom I did not recognise discussing various arts events 'on the calendar' for that month and both seemed to be invited to many of the same events. Of course the closed nature of invitees to the private view was never in question, however in the following weeks I spoke to many visitors in the foyer and found that they were either Amnesty supporters already and were interested to see the posters because of that, or they had prior knowledge of Amnesty which seeing the publicity for the event had 'rekindled'. One man told me that

> *'I've always kept my eye on what Amnesty are doing, but never made the effort to really engage, if you see what I mean, but I thought 50 years is really something and these show that beautifully. If you have any information about joining you can give me...'*. (member of the public, in conversation, May 2011)

In this instance and in others during that month the attendees were not entirely new to Amnesty, but rather 'on the fence' as staff would say. The exhibition therefore attracted those who already had an interest in Amnesty's work in ways which other events at the HRAC had. When I asked Amanda about this she told me that '*Each event has a different audience in mind, the HRAC Events rely on people coming to us, so normally those events have a bias towards people who know Amnesty, it's important to solidify existing interest as well as attract new interest*' (Amanda, in conversation, May 2011). I was told by Amanda that reaching out into new communities was 'notoriously difficult' and always being worked on, as testified by the huge amount of work that staff put into the audience policy. I was told by a number of staff members that the groups do it better:

> *'...local groups do most of that, though there's more we can do ourselves now that we have online actions, the meetings and events run by local groups are still vital to how word gets out, without their efforts getting into local papers, holding fund raisers and doing all the street work to get signatures and email addresses we wouldn't be able to function*' (Bina, interview, January 2010)

In the UK there are 270 local groups and 128 student groups which staff see as '*our main resource for spreading campaigns- however much we do here will be nothing*

compared to what the thousands of people in groups can do to raise awareness' (Bina, interview, January 2010). They are often considered the best way into new communities because '*they all bring with them their own connections- in schools, churches, universities- communities we can't really access from London*' (Bina, interview, January 2010). This reflects in some ways the idea of gatekeepers mentioned earlier in this chapter. In both cases staff see others as able to reach beyond their own access, however rather than celebrity, values for large scale of reach, these groups are valued for diversity in reach. There is a hope therefore that if staff put in the groundwork at the HRAC by compiling appealing campaigns and publicity, generating widespread media coverage, and providing resources, then groups will be able to take campaigns to new places and to new people outside of the staff's range of access, thus expanding the reach of AIUK materials and campaigns. The imagined relationship between the two is relatively undefined, with a vague notion that local activities will be able to function better and become more noticeable if supported by gatekeeper activities such as articles in mainstream media and celebrity endorsement. The reality of local group activities discussed in the following section suggests that in fact there is little correlation between this groundwork and the way in which groups operate.

Reproducing Campaigns: Local Groups and Circulation

At the HRAC I took down the exhibition finally at the end of its run and carefully packaged the pictures in bubble wrap for its storage and eventual transportation to local groups. When I packed it up it was still in pristine condition having been untouched on the wall since its arrival at the HRAC. When I next encountered the exhibition it was several months later when I was visiting a friend in Belfast and offered to help out at his university group's exhibition of the posters. I arrived at the university where the exhibition was to be shown before the pictures themselves had been hung. They were noticeably worse for wear since I had last seen them with folds and fraying around the corners bearing the marks of its journeys around the country. I almost could not recognise the exhibition that I had packed up so carefully a few months ago. As well as physically changing through its travels the exhibition also seemed different in this new context because of how the local group had approached

the exhibition.

Here the exhibition was part of an arts festival but rather than the glossy adverts that AIUK had produced, and the wine and cheese approach, this group had presented the exhibition as a birthday celebration with balloons of different colours and cake, and those attending were all bejeaned students from the university. I interviewed member of the society Chris about his group's approach and he told me that '*yeah we saw pictures of the exhibition in London but that's just not very us*' (Chris, interview, October 2011). This concept of what is 'us' for a local group I found to be very important to how they construct and imagine the campaigns that AIUK produce. In the student and local groups I did work with, as with this university group in Belfast, the idea that campaigns must be changed to reflect the group's interest and identity was paramount, suggesting that while AIUK produce campaigns to be distributed by local groups they are in fact re-appropriated in ways which remake them, and therefore distribution of campaigns can be seen as another stage in their production.

In his account of the failed attempt to build the aircraft TSR2, Law discusses how there was never in fact one version of the aircraft. Instead everyone involved was working on quite different versions of the plane (Law 2002:5). He uses the example of a pinboard to suggest that the relation things have with each other is not linear, like a story, but assembled and overlapping (ibid:189). Eventually these differences could not be reconciled and the attempt to build the plane was abandoned. This is in direct contrast to a similarly factitious attempt to make holistic a diverse set of interests, exemplified in Tsing's account of environmental activities in Indonesia. In this account we see different groups brought together over a community-managed forest (Tsing 2005:246). Despite their often contradictory differences in opinion about why the forest needed protection, their collaboration was productive (ibid). In both cases, there was only a loose central object. In practice it was networks formed around a loose set of goals that constituted the final outcome. Some degree of unity was required, that held everything together in what Law describes as 'fractious coherence' (Law 2002:2), and what Tsing describes as 'collaboration with friction at its heart' (Tsing 2005:246). For Tsing it was this combination of unity and friction that allowed the movement its success. They had a common cause, but it was the existence of multiple stances that gave the movement wide appeal- there was something for

everyone (ibid:252). I suggest that something similar takes place with AIUK campaigns and local group interpretations.

Campaign circulation at AIUK can be viewed as a similarly diverse set of interests and intentions, brought together under the loose goal of increasing awareness and membership to AIUK. The remainder of this chapter discusses how these divergent approaches under this loose shared goal are able to function, like Tsing's environmentalists, productively to circulate campaigns. I focus on the importance of local specificity, and appropriation in order to put forward the notion that campaigns are in fact very diverse and constantly reproduced, and it is this ability to adapt to local circumstances that in fact gives them the wide appeal that has allowed the organisation to grow over the last 50 years. However this appeal is not without its limits, as will be discussed later in this chapter, however I would suggest that these limits are the very things that allow campaigns their circulation and popularity.

Local groups with whom I worked re-appropriated campaigns in many different ways including the visual and material look and feel of a campaign through the use of homemade posters, badges, and visual displays like demonstrations. These took the focus away from AIUK's 'too corporate' or 'generic' materials to campaign foci which used local situations such as Glasgow's focus on local asylum cases and speakers from the local immigrant population, or new approaches to current campaigns which re-imagined their intention through the eyes of local groups with local interests. The need to change a campaign ran across the groups. In a conversation I had one evening with members of the Goldsmiths University Amnesty group, the group at my local university which I occasionally attend, they explained that for them, changing campaigns and taking ownership was about '*asserting ourselves*' and '*feeling like it's really ours so that we care about it more*' (Ros, in conversation, September 2010). For Amnesty group members who are not being paid to campaign, motivation is of key importance, and this was often mentioned in the same breath as an ability to take control over campaign materials. Of course often groups were not even aware that they were making changes to the original intended dissemination of campaigns because there often was not enough knowledge of AIUK's intentions and practices for groups to see their own interpretations as just that- interpretations. This suggests that in part, groups were able to function in locally practical ways because of a

disconnection between them and AIUK.

There are also practical elements to changing campaigns such as appealing to a different set of people than AIUK designed the campaign to appeal to, which was the case with the Belfast group. The exhibition ran as part of the arts festival *Feile an Phobail* (community festival) and was advertised in the student press and through the student union, the arts festival's own advertising materials and through an afternoon of poster-making by the group who handmade posters to be hung around campus, each one unique. The posters used elements of the AIUK poster template and guidelines they contained the logo, and used AIUK's trademark **Ariel Black** font, as well as images from the website and flyers provided by AIUK. They were unified in a broad sense, but were local versions. The posters were versions of the original documents provided by AIUK but taken apart and put back together to create something new, the way groups take apart campaigns and create new directions and forms for them.
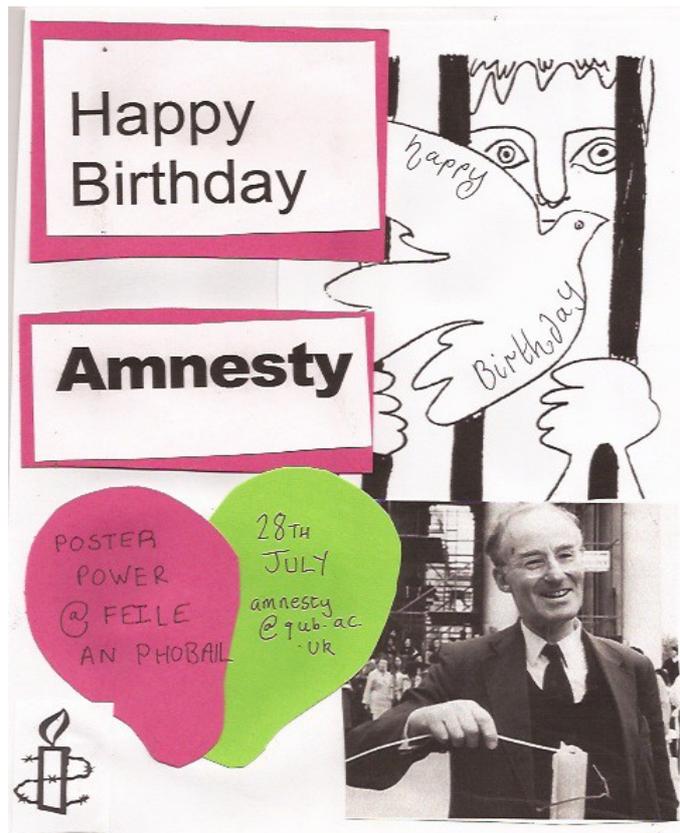

Figure 7c: Example of a poster used to promote the event in Belfast.

In this case the original remit of celebrating Amnesty's 50th anniversary was

interpreted by students as an occasion warranting a party which took place after the opening in a nearby bar. While so similar to AIUK's wine reception, in some ways the event could not have been more different in terms of feel and audience. The exhibition space was filled with colourful balloons and streamers and there was music playing through a stereo, the attendees were students and the focus was on dancing rather than conversation. I asked Chris about this approach and he said '*it's just a case of what people will be willing to come to, I think most people respond to the idea of a party more than they do to an exhibition, by combining the two we can attract people and still get the message across*' (Chris, interview, July 2011). His assessment of what people will like is of course based on a different idea of who will come to Amnesty activities than that at AIUK, therefore mobilising imagined audiences once again, but different ones. In this way Chris and the others in the group do exactly what AIUK hope and that is to attract different people to Amnesty campaigns, and the number of people who attended as well as the number of new members to the organisation suggests that it was a successful method, however the way they do it is by making significant changes to the look and feel of campaign materials.

The same exhibition was also run in Hull where I was able to visit and compare the approach taken by the Hull group with that of Belfast. Once again the group had individualised the campaign with their own flyers and advertisements consisting of black and white text documents. I was told by a member of the group that '*no one's that good at all that creative stuff*' (Enid, in conversation, December 2011). The group is relatively new and closely associated with churches in Hull, and for that reason the event, which was an exhibition held in the Hull Historical centre, was attended by many church members. The exhibition itself saw the posters attached to boards put up around the room because they could not be directly affixed to the large glass walls. The day I attended, most of the other attendees had either heard about it through their churches or were visiting the historical centre for something else and had just '*stopped to see what was on*'. The exhibition was the same as used by AIUK at the HRAC and Belfast but once again felt completely different and had a very different audience. The Belfast group had added information to their pictures about the work done by Amnesty in the countries which the posters were from, giving a broad overview of Amnesty, while in Hull the group had used an individual at risk

(IAR) and made the campaign focus on controlling the arms trade. One of the group members who I spoke to told me that '*it just didn't seem like there would be any substance if we didn't have an individual and a campaign to direct people to- it shows the sort of thing Amnesty do if nothing else*' (Peter, interview, December 2011). The whole focus of the exhibition was therefore changed by decisions made about how to run it at group level. People attending the Belfast party would not have recognised, and would probably not have appreciated, the exhibition had they seen it in the Hull Historical Centre, however Hull had a very successful joining rate for their event.

This seems to support the opinion that the means of distribution is as important as the original site of production, although studies on distributive contexts for media and cultural materials are still few in number (see Mahon 2002:460; Ginsberg 1999:309). Studies such as Himpele's on film distribution point to the way in which the imagination and control that film distributors exert ultimately plays an important role in the way films are received and the meanings which they are given (Himpele 1996). Production and reception can therefore be thought of not as separate, but as engaged in an on-going dialectic whereby the site of distribution for campaign images is itself a site of production. Texts are continually being produced and received. The model of production and consumption made popular by studies such as Hall's, which imagines a seamless encoding of ideas in the stage of production which are then decoded afterwards by the audience (Hall 2001:164), albeit in sometime subversive ways (Hall 2001:176), does not fully account for the way that images in this instance, indeed whole campaign outputs, are not simply decoded subversively by the audience. They are actually re-produced by the audience in new ways, for a secondary audience, who in turn input their own production to this process (discussed below). Therefore the dichotomy set up between producer and consumer in this instance is inaccurate, pointing to a more fluid interpretation of this process, whereby media texts are seen as similar to Dornfield's characterisation of them as 'emergent' (Dornfield 1998:29) through their reproductions and the consequent slippage between production, distribution and consumption.

Viewing and Reproducing: Social Media and Images

Local groups therefore reproduce campaigns based on their own criteria, context, and intended audiences. This suggests that while Amnesty see themselves as producing the campaign, the production or a re-production of the same material in different ways can be seen to be undertaken by local groups as well, thus destabilising the notion of production as a discreet category in campaign and image life cycle. However this process of reproduction does not stop with local group members' campaign activities. During the exhibition in Belfast I observed many people taking pictures and 'tweeting' them, and in Hull a newspaper article was written about the event. The very nature of campaigning is geared around pictures, and pictures are easy to reproduce if you have a camera or a computer, or if you are more creative a couple of cans of spray paint. In fact images used by Amnesty do not remain under its control, and that is in part the response that staff are looking for when they talk about campaigns 'going viral'. They want the reproduction of campaigns. They want people to click 'share' on the pictures they put on Facebook, to tag them on Twitter, and to spread their flyers in person and through mass 'papering' projects. Campaigns such as the Burma campaign are designed to encourage this through their focus on pictures of supporters, and by allowing people to be seen to be doing good by taking pictures of themselves taking action (discussed in Chapter 4). However these activities are all similar to local groups, yet another reproduction through which campaigns are altered from what Amnesty originally planned.

In a sense then, we cannot draw a line between production and audience. The audience are producers of campaigns through their social media activities, at the same time as being an audience for their own and other reproductions. Therefore the process of imaginative identification taking place between Amnesty and their perceived audience, as well as their expectations about audience identification with those depicted in the original images, is further complicated by the existence of multiple productions and unintended audiences. The reproduction of campaigns by these secondary audiences- those encountering reworked versions of materials- represent the addition of a further layer of motivation and interpretation that campaign images are subjected to. In addition the reproduction thoroughly complicated the processes of imaginative identification by throwing into question

who exactly audiences are identifying with in terms of how much their identifications are with the individuals at risk whom Amnesty chose for campaigns, and in those ways AIUK planned, and how much they are identifying with each other or with heavily altered versions of the IAR. Of course for the AI @ 50 poster campaign, few of the posters featured named individuals, they were rather works of art. However this has major implications for photographic images, the terms and conditions of which are carefully and legally formalised through contracts with people who agreed to their photos being used by Amnesty in certain ways and places. The process of reproduction, the inclusion of secondary, unknown, or unintended audiences, means that once images are 'out there', staff have little control over them, and by extension those who took or are featured in these images have little control over their image and their stories.

During my time at Amnesty there were several disagreements over images which had been 'reused' in ways that those featured were unhappy about. The first one featured photographs of asylum seekers in a joint publication made by Amnesty and other organisations, who after successful applications for asylum wanted their images removed from these materials so that they could 'start afresh'. While the legal agreement which they had signed stipulated that Amnesty had full rights to images, staff agreed to remove the images. Removing them proved highly problematic however because once they had been put onto the internet they were impossible to track down. The tags on Twitter and Facebook were removed so that the images would not be easily discovered, but the images still exist. As well as negating images which were tagged with Amnesty's account, images which have been copied and not tagged still exist and are impossible to track down. Therefore control over even the images is never absolute, let alone control over how people use and interpret them. In a well-known case in Burma a woman was tracked down and arrested because her picture was being shared on social media as an 'inspiration'. An unintended audience in this case was the military who were using activist networks to track down protesters. Therefore, because of the processes of re-production which can lead to unintended audiences and uses, images are never truly the product of one organisation or agenda.

Communities of Interest

However I suggest that the process of distribution discussed above which allows images and campaigns to be circulated in unintended ways, is potentially over estimated by those working in the non-profit industry. While it is clear that in terms of control over production and reception there is in fact little centralised consensus, in my experience in the field the campaigns and images were subject to processes of self-regulation through their circulation within communities of interest. It is in fact these communities of interest that circulate campaigns and extend membership, so while new audiences are the goal at AIUK, they are not the goal with local groups.

The above examples from Belfast and Hull show how groups individualise campaigns and campaign materials through interpretation and contextual necessity, creating very different campaigns from the same original brief and materials. It seems to suggest that AIUK's objectives for signing up new members through the AI @ 50 campaign and using local group knowledge to transmit that campaign had been successfully met, and indeed they were by most evaluations of the outcome. All three screenings of the exhibition visited seem to be very different from each other in look, approach and eventual realisation, however closer discussions with the groups about their methods of distribution suggest that there are in fact many similarities in approach. This leaves significant gaps in the potential scope of campaigns to circulate as widely as AIUK hope when they talk about their hope for campaigns to 'go viral'.

Throughout the screenings of the exhibitions, new members joined Amnesty, a process which usually involves agreeing to subscribe by direct debit payment. The members who were signing up at first seemed to be from very disparate communities: those at the AIUK screening were typically young professionals, those at Belfast students, and those in Hull were largely retired members of the community. However a pattern began to emerge while I was signing people up which came out through conversations such as the following:

> Man: So tell me how do I join Amnesty?
> Me: That's great. Do you know much about Amnesty's work and how Amnesty membership contributes?
> Man: Oh yes, my brother is very involved with the group here, he's been

pestering me for years about joining up, and now that I'm here I think it's about bloody time I do.

Me: I have a flyer right here- you just fill in your contact details here, and your bank details on the back and give it back to me.

This man, like many others, had a story about joining up that was not based exclusively on Amnesty's work, and he did not hear about Amnesty through posters and flyers. Instead he had a personal relationship which motivated him to join: he knew someone else involved. I found that many of the 'new joiners' were in fact not new to Amnesty at all but had been involved either in the past personally through a subscription or local group, or through friends and family members.

Motivating those 'on the fence' was of course an important and useful goal as far as staff were concerned, but the hope that campaigns would reach new audiences, as expressed in the audience policy and in staff discussions about 'going viral', were especially relevant to the AI@50 campaign because its remit was to increase awareness of Amnesty and encourage new membership. People I talked to at AI@50 events in general were not totally new to Amnesty and did not resemble the 'caring not committed' profile discussed in Chapter 5 because they had prior experience of Amnesty and were part of a social community for which joining Amnesty was 'normal'. As one student told me '*all my friends are in Amnesty, I can't get away with not joining*' implying that there was a social expectation among her friends that she join Amnesty. This is of course a very limited analysis of how new members come to Amnesty, based on a talking with people at selected group activities, and it in no way represents a comprehensive account of the influence and reasons behind joining up more generally. What it does suggest however, is that people who I spoke to at these events wished at least to appear already part of Amnesty and Amnesty related activities, suggesting that the approaches taken by groups that seek to campaign within existing activist frameworks are in fact quite appropriate, because members of the public attending sought to situate themselves in these frameworks by claiming association.

New members to Amnesty therefore come through particular social connections, and are not as new as they seem. Amnesty staff have only the number of members at their disposal rather than the face to face information about members' motivations and

paths towards joining. In the AI@50 campaign there were coded joining up leaflets which told staff where the leaflet had been picked up - for example the Guardian join up leaflets had a specific code. In addition staff make some efforts to categorise where leaflets have come from and the reasons for joining up via tick boxes on the leaflet itself. However while leaflets ask potential members where they picked them up, there is no space for information about why they were attending AI events, or what was their deeper motivation for joining. For this reason, staff imagine that campaigns spread widely, despite having little information about if they do or not. When faced with increased numbers there is an assumption that these numbers are largely made up of 'new' members when in fact local group recruitment activities such as the AI@50 exhibitions are limited in their scope to recruit members from outside of their own social networks. The viral spread of the campaign is therefore limited by those who are susceptible to infection and those who are exposed, but these limits are hidden from AIUK.

I would suggest that it is the combination of the hidden nature of much of what groups do, and the idea of unity that comes about through things like shared fonts, images, and overall objectives that allows campaigns to function successfully. Like Tsing's environmentalists, activists in this case need friction to make wide-ranging links and appeal possible (Tsing 2005:247). The 'broad common cause' (ibid) was in this case the idea of unity, carefully preserved by a level of disconnection between those at AIUK, and those working in different groups. This allowed groups to function as they needed to, creating appeal in very locally specific ways, seemingly limiting the audiences by going through their own channels. In fact the new recruits may not have the diverse social backgrounds that AIUK imagined, but they were still technically new members, who added to the collective number of people taking action for Amnesty. So while it was not an endless viral connection reaching everyone, there was expansion in this network of members, even though the expansion happened in limited arenas.

Exposure to the AI@50 campaign was limited not only by the networked circulation through social groups but also by strategies of distribution which rely heavily on these social connections. As well as the motivation to attend and join up coming through largely personal connections with AIUK the modes of distribution also

closed off potential routes. This was most clearly the case in the use of 'activist networks' to promote local group activities which meant that new attendees came from 'related' organisations. Groups speculate on who is likely to want to attend their events and issue invitations and publicity based on that. An early event with the Edinburgh group I worked with was a pavement stall at the east end of Princes Street to collect signatures. This particular area often has stalls set up by activist groups for many different causes such as anti-animal testing, the Socialist Worker Party, and other groups normally considered left wing. Amnesty had not had a stand there before but the group had agreed that this was an appropriate place because *'people know about the stalls at the west end so will stop to check it out*' (Jean, in conversation, May 2010). When I asked if they thought that that might put off people who would associate Amnesty with left wing activists I was told '*but that's what we are, we want people to make that connection*' (Jean, in conversation, May 2010).

Having been exposed to so much brand training at AIUK, where the focus was on moving away from the idea of '*left wing hippies*' as staff put it, I was struck by the local group's approach which was not accidentally activating these ideas, but was seeking to make associations with other activist groups such as testing on animals, and socialism. The same process was at work in the publicity put together by the groups for the Poster Power exhibition. When asked where they had advertised, the Belfast group told me 'all the usual places' and while initially this sounded quite widespread for example posters, emails, and notices in local newsletters, it transpired that the places selected for posters were in fact chosen specifically to appeal to their idea of 'Amnesty people'. The posters were put up in a church with a large amnesty group, in vegetarian restaurants, published in allotment newsletters, and with other university societies who are 'concerned with social and political issues' such as People and the Planet, Student Action For Refugees, and Oxfam. In the same way that staff at Amnesty worked with ideas about what Amnesty people might be like, so did local groups, except that these ideas did not entirely match up.

The process here was not to seek out new audiences but to generate support through groups of activists with a very loose association with social issues. While the stall set up in Edinburgh was in the very public place of the main shopping street, it was not hoping to attract a general public. Local groups seem to circulate campaigns widely,

but in fact use tactics that ensure that they stay within certain groups, yet these tactics are very successful in generating support. The stall in Edinburgh required people to come up and inquire about AI's work in order to gain information about what was happening and depended on an interest in looking into the street's east end activism stalls to do that. A seemingly very public event therefore quickly becomes quite a narrow one as the audience selects itself and is motivated through pre-existing ideas about the space on Princes street and its associations locally. During my time slot on the stall I found that many people who came up already knew not only about Amnesty's work, but also members of the Edinburgh group through other political and activist engagements that they mutually attended. Relying on audience enquiry here was combined with expectations about the space to create a bounded audience within a relatively unbounded surrounding.

Therefore circulation is not necessarily endless, rather it is organised by the limits in social lives and expectations held by those who are active in undertaking it. In practice what emerged were practices in local groups that sought these limits through choices they made about who to target and how to campaign. While this information is of course accessible more widely than these limits suggest- it is possible for anyone passing the stall in Edinburgh to visit it- there are social and practical barriers such as where advertising happens, and what events take place and where that might make this less likely. These are known in sociology as 'communities of interest', that is the communities that form around certain activities, objects, and hobbies (Brown & Duguid 1991; Uimonen 2001). Communities of interest potentially prevent the viral spread of campaign materials, and suggest barriers in the circulation of images. While the actual circulation of influence of campaign materials is clearly beyond the scope of this project to ascertain, the interesting point is not where their influence starts and stops, but rather the active and passive ways local groups seek to funnel this influence through their decisions about how to market for AIUK. It is not that campaigns categorically do not circulate outside these channels, but rather than groups do not want them to. This is counter to the expectations that AIUK have about how groups work.

Decisions made by groups that target particular people and avenues through preexisting acquaintance are not necessarily limited to campaigning by local groups.

Online communities can themselves be immune from the 'virus'. Increasingly there are concerns about how the internet creates 'communities' of interest, giving the illusion of a World Wide Web when in fact there are severe limits to how information actually reaches people on the net through search engines which learn your preferences, through targeted advertising, and through the way that closed social circles circulate information between themselves (Brown & Duguid 2000:29). These concerns can be found too in the way AIUK that campaigns circulate. The social side discussed above which prompts people to join in because of friends or expectations do not vanish when transferred into the internet.

Social networking websites are in many ways organised by the networks people allow to form around them. Through the 'acceptance' of friends, the 'following' of people networks form, and information is spread when people in those networks 'share' or 'like' things with in their network. Therefore someone who is not a follower of Amnesty cannot access or share the information on Amnesty's site. Followers of Amnesty on a site can share content with their own followers and so on, but limits still exist in the virtual arena such as who you know and include in your network, as well as what you choose to interact with. The local group members I knew told me that they would happily 'delete' people on Facebook who were saying things that they considered racist or inappropriate, suggesting that social networks can be socially regulated. Similarly those who 'liked' the pictures circulated by groups were inevitably members of the groups and of their friends.

So while online social networks clearly offer great potential for information to spread and move quickly, they are not completely free moving and are regulated in similar ways to the face to face practices of Amnesty volunteers and staff, by the formation around human rights activities of 'communities of interest' (Brown & Duguid 1991; Uimonen 2001). Nash describes the circulation of rights media online: 'Far from forming a global public sphere in which rigorous debate over facts and values takes place, the internet tends to be made up of cyber bubbles in which contributions of like-minded people circulate' (Nash 2010:4). The so-called 'global village' (McLuhen & Powers 1989) of the internet is therefore like a real village, with friendships and alliances that determine who talks to whom. However a more accurate description might be that of a global town, with suburbs and areas that one might never have

cause to visit or access to. Communities of interest that exist socially in 'real life' are therefore often reflected in the virtual world too, suggesting that dividing the two is not helpful in this instance (Agre 1999:3-4; Wilson & Peterson 2002:456). Rather we can see particular groups of activists online and in person who encounter and experience campaigns.

Limiting Circulation

There exist relatively narrow distributive avenues employed by local groups to circulate campaigns, suggesting that the model of free-flowing information that AIUK staff hope to achieve is not necessarily realised in practice. This has some implications if we consider the local group distribution of campaign materials as itself part of a campaign 'network'[46]. While ANT often describes a relatively free flowing network, in practice there are ways to limit this. In *The Network Inside Out* Riles describes the networking process in which Fijian bureaucrats and activists participated in preparation for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) (Riles 2001). Riles points out anthropologists studying networks will inevitably encounter people who are similarly 'networking' (Riles 2001:68-69). This is true on a number of levels in the case of Amnesty campaigns. It is true from a methodological point of view in terms of my own research. The type of connections that I talk about in this section is by no means a network in the sense that it is used in network analysis, where a complete network is charted and mapped (ref). As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the network encountered here can be best described as part of a network, and is more akin to what Riles describes when she talks about studies of networks because it consists of people who are actively seeking involvement in the campaigning work of Amnesty. The wider implications and connections that campaign images may have are not charted.

However the limitation that Riles draws our attention to is useful also when considering not just the researcher's position, but also the position of those who are

---

46 The circulation of materials by local groups does not represent a whole 'network' in the sense the term is used in network analysis or ANT. It can however be seen as a small part of a network in that it deals with the flow of information through different distributive channels.

'networking' around campaign images themselves. They too are subject to the constraints of encountering other networkers, and this is a potential limit to how they understand campaign circulation and who they interact with. Riles describes participants who were sometimes reluctant to share information, and used methods such as a resistance to translation to withhold information, or the hiding of information in filing systems (2001:51). Participants in these networks imagined that the 'community' were their audience, but in reality they ended up largely talking to themselves, because of the self fulfilling nature of networking (ibid). There are clear parallels here between Riles' networks and Amnesty's circulation. In both cases there are limits to the spread of information that largely come from tactics employed by those within. In both cases the planned 'community' or in Amnesty's case 'audience' is not always reached.

This is a useful observation to apply to the processes of circulation at work through local groups. What becomes clear when looking at group activities is that they facilitate circulation through connections formed independently of AIUK, and ones that in many ways reflect those which Riles describes in Fiji. Like Fijian activits, those who are encountered by local groups are also part of a process of networking. This networking can be found in the alliances between different 'social issues' groups, church involvement, and other 'connections' that local groups see as important to make, and it is through the formation of connections of this semi-formal sort that circulation of Amnesty images comes to reflect practices described by Riles. In this way, networks that form around circulation are examples of the self-fulfilling nature of networks. While they exist seemingly to transmit knowledge (about rights), in fact are regulated themselves in the passing on of this knowledge. Rather than the furthering of rights, information is flowing only in certain channels.

This is not to suggest that the circulation of campaigns and the social relations that facilitate them are sealed. Certainly Amnesty International as an organisation has grown in membership steadily since its conception. It is not that circulation and participation in Amnesty activities is unable to expand, rather what I am pointing out here is that this expansion is not a free flowing movement that can expand in any direction. Exposure to campaigns is channelled in certain ways. This channelling is

hidden from staff because they only look at numbers, showing an expansion, but attention to circulation shows that it is not a blanket expansion. This is contrary to what staff aim to do, as discussed in Chapter 5 and earlier in this chapter, because it does not attract entirely new audiences to the organisation. However it does allow for an increase in the organisation's membership so therefore 'works' in practice. Throughout Part II of this thesis there is a common theme running through chapters that examines how members of the public are able to respond 'successfully' or 'unsuccessfully' to campaigns, as measured by AIUK's overall objectives. I demonstrate that taking action for human rights through Amnesty campaigns is a process that requires some socialisation for people taking part. With this in mind, the social relations governing campaign circulation can be seen as channelling information to those who possess the socialisation, in terms of knowledge and beliefs, in order to take action, and are therefore potentially maximising the numbers and commitment of potential activists. This is speculative of course, but the point remains that this method is productive, and staff remain happy with the outcome of the work of local groups, despite, or because of the gap in knowledge about what is actually happening 'on the ground'.

In his discussion about the GM agricultural company Monsanto, Crook describes a process whereby Monsanto manage their public image by presenting themselves as sections of a chain, dependent on a whole, and as a series of individual employees (Crook 2000:10). In doing this, Monsanto manage to offload responsibility as something like 'pollen carried on the breeze' (ibid). In this way the network of people and issues surrounding GM cropping is limited, 'like rubbing one's hand over the barbs of an open pine-cone, flows in one direction are allowed, but flows in the other direction are blocked' (ibid). In fact networks can be controlled to flow in certain ways, as Amnesty's campaigns show us. While for Crook this was a directional flow, in the case of Amnesty it is more of a circular one. However both share a concern with, and limiting of, responsibility. In the former this is a desire to offload it, while in the latter it is a desire to forge it. However while AIUK staff plan campaigns to increase responsibility and care for distant others, campaign circulation practices mean that campaigns are not accessible to all. Therefore on the one hand campaigns 'work' because those who engage with them generally take action, but on the other hand they limit the potential for others to participate in the moral economy of rights,

so to some degree suggesting potential failures in the system.

This limiting of the network has further implications for considering networks in general. The framework of Latourian actor network theory (ANT) has to some extent been employed throughout this chapter to emphasise connections between different actors including non-human (primarily images, also conditions and environment) and human actors (both activist and not). However I have intentionally avoided wholly embracing this approach because I remain unconvinced that all actors in a network truly have the same type and scope of agency. Critics of Latour often point to his presentation of all actors in a network as equal (Latour 2005:63) as a simplistic characterisation that excludes the pre-existing political frameworks that constitute power inequality (Whittle & Spicer, 2008:612). While all things in the network (objects, people, etc) may be considered actors, it is not sufficiently proven therefore that all actors have the same amount of power to act, or are necessarily able to act in the same way (Winner 1993:366). In campaign circulation we have images transformed through their place in diverse contexts, or networks, but limitations in circulation suggest that there exist hierarchies of actors that predate circulation. Most specifically we have seen the disproportionate influence of social relations between human actors in determining campaign circulation. This suggests that while useful, ANT does not provide an adequate framework to account for campaign circulation that is limited in certain ways.

In the chapters that follow I describe in more detail some of the encounters with campaigns in which I participated. Over these chapters a level of coherency in response is described. The description above that shows Amnesty as being in the same 'social field' as its audience through being socially similar (Mukherjee 2006:599), as discussed in Chapter 5, can be furthered in the light of this chapter to suggest that Amnesty and its audience are one and the same. They are part of a relatively closed network of activists. The on-going process of production renders multiple producers, and Amnesty staff, group members, and 'the public' are in fact all audiences of sorts. This is compounded and created by a self-regulating network, both within the organisation as discussed in Chapter 5, and also continuing to regulate itself 'in public'. This suggests that while campaigns appear very public, engagement with those campaigns is in fact quite selective. What transpires is a

network that supports rather than extends itself through the very process of networking. It is the self-regulation of the network that I would suggest allows the development of coherent modes of response. The following chapters show that in imaginatively relating, there is a process of learning that is undertaken by those involved in rights networks. It is the closed nature of communities that form around rights that make this possible, allowing communities to form that facilitate learning how to do rights rightly.

Conclusions

The AI@50 campaign was planned by staff to attract new members and introduce people to the work of Amnesty. The flagship event for the campaign was the travelling poster exhibition Poster Power which was displayed by over 20 groups around the UK and Ireland. The campaign and the exhibition itself was hoped to travel widely and 'go viral' by staff at AIUK. Staff planned its circulation and exhibition at AIUK to be among a select group of influential press and local celebrities, who would hopefully be able to generate the right 'buzz' about the exhibition. It was imagined that once it passed into the hands of local groups to exhibit there would be enough interest to allow for big audiences and the spread of campaigns into a wider public thus generating new support for Amnesty.

A close examination of the actual realisation of the Poster Power campaign in different contexts suggests that local groups do not passively enact campaign objectives as AIUK staff imagine, but rather are active in reproducing and changing campaigns to fit local situations and to 'take ownership' of AIUK's campaign materials. Through passing from AIUK to their distributors in local groups, campaigns change focus, objectives, and materials. Therefore I have suggested that distributive contexts are in fact further contexts of production. Further to this, the reproduction of campaigns described themselves produce secondary audiences who are also implicated in the process of production through the use of things like social media. While this is not what staff imagine the campaigns are doing, I have tried to show that groups campaign successfully to increase numbers, and that a certain degree of disconnection and 'friction' is useful for circulating campaigns.

I have also suggested that there are limits to the reach and scope of these reproductions. In the case of the Poster Power exhibition, screenings of the campaign targeted their own audiences and used social and activist networks to promote campaigns. This meant that while it appeared to AIUK staff that their campaign had reached new audiences through local groups, groups had in fact sought out quite closed distributive contexts and focussed on reinforcing existing audiences rather than creating new ones. These communities, or networks, are actively sought by local groups because they are thought to provide the best way of communicating campaign materials, and the outcome of this communication is seen at satisfactory by staff at AIUK because numbers of membership do indeed increase. Because of the existence of these communities I have proposed that the categories of production, distribution and consumption be broken down in order to see Amnesty and their audiences as being simultaneously involved in producing and consuming campaigns.

With this in mind, the next chapter looks at the way in which images work in practice when they interact with specific publics at an event in East London. I return to the James MacKay images from Chapter 4, this time to examine how responses to the images play out when the audience is in person rather than imagined. I hope to show that within these communities there are certain socialised approaches to imaginative identification and interacting with images, facilitated in part by the limited networks, which allow for the formation of cohesive groups that are able to learn from each other and foster practices together.

Chapter 8: Too Much Empathy

The use of pictures by AIUK which convey an idea of shared humanity are based on the hope that the public viewing those images will relate to the images in ways which will be transformed into positive action for human rights, as discussed in the first part of this thesis. As discussed in the previous chapter however, campaign images are not simply encoded with ideas, they work very differently when reproduced in new contexts of engagement. The approach imagined by staff which places similarity and imagined closeness in a proportional relationship to responsibility can be seen in moral philosophy as far back as Hume (1978:226) and rests on the idea that to care about others, we must be able to undertake 'imaginative identification' (Foster 2001:66) and see the world through their eyes (Moyn 2006:399). It was hoped by AIUK staff that if this imaginative identification, or empathy in their own words, took place then action would naturally follow. However, while imagined identification can lead to compassion and intervention, it has also been shown in some cases to lead to doubt or hostility (Kelly 2012:755), or has been used to justify abuses through highlighting deviance within a group from majority behaviour (Crapanzano 2011:175).

While attending different campaign activities I encountered all manner of responses to AIUK campaigns, some of which have been discussed in preceding chapters. On some occasions there was outright hostility towards campaigns, but on a few occasions a response of inaction was not the result of hostility, but arose through identification with images to such a degree that those depicted came under closer scrutiny or were deemed not worthy of support. On these occasions, I would suggest, it is not a lack of identification which is the block to action but an abundance of it- where identification allows for an appreciation of agency leading to critique of that person's actions.

The following example, which occurred at a music festival in London, sees members of the public complaining that prisoners of conscience had made a choice to take political action that had resulted in imprisonment and therefore were not fully deserving of support. This chapter returns to the image of Htein and the plea for

Zarganar discussed in Chapter 4, to see how these images were received by members of the public. On this occasion these members of the public can be seen to be attributing agency to the person depicted in the images in ways which AIUK hoped for, by seeing him not as a passive victim but rather as an agent. However this did not translate into support for AIUK or the individual; instead it led to a more detailed critique of options and motives that may have been available to those depicted. Imagined identification therefore does not always lead to a feeling of moral responsibility or action on behalf of those depicted. I use counter examples of identification leading to action to suggest that in these cases, images are read inter-textually alongside knowledge from other sources of the political context and visual practices surrounding prisoners of conscience. However, without a background knowledge of Burmese politics and social problems surrounding Zarganar and Htein's imprisonment, the 'empowering' pictures produce a backlash in which people depicted are seen as too 'like us' to need support. This suggests a connection between difference and responsibility which AIUK had not accounted for, as well as further issues in reception caused by passive approaches to imagining audience. The assumed link between acknowledging humanity and responsibility in this instance is destabilised to suggest that empathy alone is not enough to motivate action, but rather empathy is informed and governed by what an audience knows or expects and ultimately by a decision about how that knowledge affects ideas of responsibility.

The reactions of festival goers suggests that recognising the rights of others is not only achieved, as moral philosophers have speculated, through recognising your likeness or similarity to distant others, and sympathising or empathising with their pain as your own (Hume 1978; Rorty 1999; Smith 2011). Hume is particularly associated with this approach to ethics, as discussed in Chapters 3 & 4, and remains one of the earliest and best known theories of why we care about others, though admittedly by no means the only one. His approach is particularly relevant because of the history sketched out in Chapter 3 of this thesis, that sees human rights theorists chart rights as part of a philosophical tradition with strong underpinnings in enlightenment philosophy. Staff at AIUK can in many ways be seen as working within this tradition, and employing a partially Humian model to eliciting support for distant others. By basing their campaign design on similarity, and having expectations about the type of ethical responsibility this will foster, staff seem to subscribe to

enlightenment based notions about how we relate to others, and therefore consequently how we recognise others as deserving rights. They particularly align themselves to the sentimentalism of Hume, and to a lesser extent Smith, rather than to other rationalists approaches to ethics. However as this chapter suggests, the connection between recognising similarity and ethical responsibility that Hume outlines is played out quite differently in practice. This suggests that even when this Enlightenment model is drawn upon, it does not fully account for the complex relations that underpin care for distant others, and consequently human rights.

For Hume, the recognition of the rights of distant others depends on an ability to 'place ourselves' in their circumstances (Hume 1978:582-603), that is, to consider the 'hypothetical pain or pleasure of hypothetical associates of the agent' (Mercer 1972:56). The 'principle of resemblance' explains why we are more concerned for those who share our language, manners, or professions (Hume 1978:318). We are therefore able to imagine ourselves in the position of another and empathise with them in ways which leads to a recognition of their rights. The common element in humanity which is so often sought in an ability to feel pain or experience trauma (Douzinas 2000:354) is not in this case the grounding principle. AIUK have attempted to create an appeal to the recognition of the rights of others which does not elicit sympathy, with all its controversial political connotations (see Nelson 2004; Arendt 1965). Instead, an appeal to empathy based on cultural similarity is the basis on which the public are being asked to recognise rights. This is similar to Rorty's sentimental education which calls for recognition of the 'little, superficial, similarities such as cherishing our parents' which unite people and obligate them (Rorty 1999:77).

Reactions to this appeal suggest that recognising the rights of others is not a simple, natural, or rational component of either similarity or empathising with pain. Members of the public who related to pictures in ways productive of action did so by imaginatively identifying with those depicted, but in ways which maintained difference. This suggests that in this case acknowledgement of difference in an important aspect of recognising the rights of others. Maintaining separation of the self and other, according to Levinas, is an important step in avoiding the damaging totalisation which comes from a recognition solely based in the imagination (Levinas 1991:52). In his approach, the other comes first precisely because of their otherness to

the self (Levinas 1993:116). During this music festival I would suggest that echoes of Levinas' approach can be seen in some of the reactions to pictures. Those people who maintained difference using contextual knowledge recognised the rights of others, while those who imaginatively related, to such a degree that difference was obliterated, were unable to acknowledge need or rights in others. Difference is often seen as a problem for human rights organisations, however difference in its many guises can be mobilised, and can contribute to, the recognition of the rights of others.

Planning for Summer

Earlier in this thesis the rationale for choosing images for the Burma summer campaign was discussed with reference to James MacKay's portraits of former prisoners of conscience and the criteria used for choosing individuals to feature in that campaign. In Chapter Four I highlighted the use of 'universal individuals' to try and close the gap with distant others, and the importance of using people who staff think the public will recognise and care about as 'like us' and therefore worthy of support. In Chapter Six this idea is further developed through the idea of dignity and how it informs Amnesty's portrayal of human rights victims as physically well, and 'not as victims' but as 'active' and 'empowered agents'. The importance of this approach to visualising rights goes to the very core of AIUK staff's self image and is heavily entwined with ethics as well as with an approach to gaining support which does not rely on pity. Staff have expectations that pictures which conform to these criteria of representation – bodily integrity and familiar universal humanism- which were discussed and decided in the office, will naturally provoke reactions from the public which will reflect well on this decision making. There is an imaginative identification happening on two levels: the relation between Amnesty and their audience discussed in Chapter Five, and the anticipated relation between the intended audience and the subjects of the pictures selected. It was therefore imagined during planning that the public would be able to 'empathise' with the people portrayed in the pictures and relate to them as fellow members of a globalised humanity, rather than as victims to be pitied and 'saved'. This has been discussed as the difference between mobilising compassion which suggests feeling another's pain, and mobilising empathy which suggests seeing from another's point of view (Moyn 2006:399-400).

As alluded to in Chapters 4 and 7, staff imagine audiences to be much like themselves, and focus on exposing people to campaigns widely believing that people's inaction is generally a result of lack of interaction with campaigns or rights discourse. There was an assumption that imagined empathy, once experienced by spectators, would lead to action on behalf of the individual because '*once you know the person you're obligated to them*' (Rachel, in conversation, May 2011). Therefore AIUK staff reflect the wider belief that moral obligation is enhanced by closeness, both geographical and cultural, and that by using images which enhance this imagined closeness or empathy (as staff label it) they can activate action in spectators. In this case the hope was that by presenting pictures of Burmese prisoners of conscience who look similar to AIUK's anticipated audience the latter would be able to identify imaginatively with these people and therefore take action for Amnesty. However as the following example shows, this assumption does not fully capture the complexity of identifying with another and realising one's responsibility to that other.

Lovebox

Figure 8a: Lovebox 2010 Poster

Figure 8b: Amnesty stall at Lovebox featuring placards used by volunteers to gather signatures.

Lovebox is a small East London music festival held in Victoria Park attracting 10 000 people every year. The festival was founded by Groove Armada as a club night in 93 Feat East on Brick Lane, and is known primarily for its dance music acts. AIUK asked local groups for volunteers to attend the festival in 2010 and to gather photographs for the visual petition for Burma discussed earlier. The volunteers were therefore a mixture of people from different local groups, who turned up on the day not knowing exactly what they would be doing. This prevented them filtering the campaign through their own criteria, as I have suggested local groups are wont to do, meaning that the campaign approach was delivered in the style as AIUK had imagined it in the office, or very close to that.

This was the first time that AIUK had a presence at Lovebox, and therefore little was known about the audience demographic or how Amnesty would be received in this context. However since festival attendance was a regular outlet for campaigns and 'new audiences' a priority, the local festival was considered an appropriate venue because its focus on dance music was a deviation from other festivals that AIUK had worked in, for example WOMAD and Glastonbury which have more of a family or alternative reputation. The hope was that the festival presence would act as a gateway for new members of the public to become involved with AIUK by participating in an 'easy' action requiring very little time on their behalf, getting their photo taken with a prisoner of conscience's name on their hand, and providing an email address for follow up with more detailed information at a later date. It was thought by staff that to ask too much of people on their first encounter with Amnesty, for example writing a letter or being faced with anything '*too extreme*', could '*put people off*' (Laura, in conversation, May 2010),whereas providing photographs which were recognisable and '*easy to relate to*' would be more likely to attract positive responses (Laura, in conversation, May 2010). The email address would be used to '*reel people in*' with a gradual trickle of information and requests for participation growing in scope and hopefully leading to membership and on-going engagement (Valerie, interview, September 2010). The action was therefore a small time commitment and designed to be appealing to people with little or no knowledge of Amnesty's work because of that.

There was a central stall which was manned by a member of AIUK staff or volunteers, which was surrounded by James MacKay's pictures printed and mounted

onto placards. This was to form a 'hub' which people could approach and then be directed to more detailed information. The local group volunteers and I were sent out to talk to people in the crowd and give information about AIUK's work on Burma. Our main remit was to collect photographs for a visual petition, deliver basic information on the campaign, and direct difficult questions or interested members of the public to the central stall. We were equipped with an information sheet detailing the campaign objectives and some background information. Some of us had one of the placards with James' pictures on it, others had a poster or leaflet showing the pictures of released prisoners of conscience. The aim was to gather pictures for the visual petition, but also to get email addresses of those people which could be used later, thereby using the campaign as a way of interesting people in joining Amnesty as well as achieving campaign objectives. This was one of the outputs of the campaign action devised by Laura and Valerie.

Having been present during the selection of pictures I knew the expectations which AIUK had about responses to these pictures.They hoped that in providing people with familiar cultural characteristics, they would be encouraged to recognise the humanity of those people and their right to protection from abuses, and more than that, they would relate to these people in a way which '*makes you care*' (Laura, in conversation, March 2010). So I was interested in the ways in which people imaginatively identified with the pictures, and if they worked as AIUK hoped, whether they would 'care'. I was paired with a local group member from a south London Amnesty group called Josephine and together we set out into a buzzing crowd of festival goers to talk to them about human rights in Burma.

'He Chose to Go To Prison'

The briefing at the beginning asked us 'not to get too heavy' but to 'convey the urgency' of the situation, so we took a hands off approach, allowing people to come and ask us what we were doing and we then gave them information which did not dwell as much on the pain and suffering of the prisoners as had previous group activities that I had attended. Because we were taking pictures and holding a large poster we attracted attention and many people came to talk to us. Most people were

interested and happy to have their picture taken by us to be uploaded onto the Flickr account and used for the campaign. However there were some people who, after finding out what we were campaigning for, took issue or disagreed with what AIUK were doing. One of these confrontations was particularly memorable because a group of four people, who disagreed with AIUK, not only touched more explicitly on some of the issues which others had skirted around, but also drew in other passers-by who agreed with them and supported their argument. I therefore consider it in some way representative of a minor trend in campaign responses. All comments and discussions took place in conversation over the 16th-18th July 2010 at Lovebox. The real names of members of the public have been used where requested, otherwise they have been changed.

Initially, this group seemed quite interested in AIUK's work and unlike some members of the public, they did not approach us with a hostile attitude. One person who introduced himself as Paul said he had seen Amnesty at '*a bunch of festivals*' and wondered '*what it was all about*', but after we had explained the situation in Burma and specifically why we were taking action for Zarganar, he seemed if anything less inclined to take action. His concerns, as he expressed them, suggested that like some members of the local groups he did not consider Burmese prisoners to be in a bad enough situation to need help: '*look at him he's an artist, he has that huge studio, I'd be happy if I had that*'. While the image is not actually of Zarganar himself but of Htein, another artist in Burma, it was unclear how much Paul took this into account, and there was significant conflation between himself, Htein and Zarganar, despite regular explanations from Josie. This implies that the identification that Paul made was even more imagined, as it was based on a hybrid of two men. The implication seemed to be that things were not that bad if people could practise art and live in conditions which were recognisable or comparable to our own. This was re-enforced by comments which likened the situation in Burma to Paul's own life here and judged the situation in Burma to be not sufficiently 'bad' to require intervention: '*it doesn't look so bad in Burma, so what there are some rules, there are loads of things that happen here which I didn't vote for and I still have to do them'.* This suggests that for Paul, identification with Zarganar and Htein was working against AIUK. He recognised what he saw in the picture as too similar to his own life to be truly in need of change. I spoke to him alone later to ask for permission to use his comments and he

told me that he was an artist himself specialising in illustration, so he said that he knew '*what artists can be like*' telling me that artists are always causing a stir to get attention for their work, and attributed this to both Htein and Zarganar. He also several times made comparisons between himself and his lack of studio space, to the image and the studio, and their shared plight as artists, putting himself in the same frame as Burmese artists. Recognition and identification were therefore a barrier to intervention in this case, and Paul's comments seem to support concerns that people need to be 'shocked' into action. Rather than increasing moral responsibility for the person depicted, the recognisable tropes and similarity made Paul question his responsibility for this person who appeared to have many of the same lifestyle elements as himself. In short, the relation of helper and victim had been destabilised because Paul did not see himself as being in a particularly privileged position.

These sentiments were not unusual, and during various group activities I encountered many people who did not rate situations as dire enough to warrant action. One man said to me, '*look at it, that guy has a pencil, he can't be that badly off*', in reference to campaign materials. However, what Paul's discussion highlights is the role of relating to people in forming these judgements. As well as creating closeness, relating to people can create scepticism about their need because if someone is 'like us' then it is unclear where the imperative to intervene lies, and responsibility in such cases is unclear.

As well as destabilising the relation requiring help, relating and acknowledging someone as similar has historical precedence as necessary for certain types of violence interventions, suggesting that similarity does not naturally lead to 'empathy' in the way that AIUK staff believe. In his recent account of the Harkis, Algerians who fought with the French in the Algerian War from 1954-1962, Crapanzano paints a picture of retaliations against Harkis who remained in Algeria as dependent on the categorization of them as traitors (Crapanzano 2011:74-75). Harkis returning to Algeria were subjected to torture, abuses, and slaughter (ibid:83), that was contingent on their being Algerian, and therefore traitors who deserve punishment (ibid:175). In this case it is not a lack of similarity, or a lack of recognition of humanity that causes a break down in empathy. It is the acknowledgment of similarity that makes the transgression all the worse. The awareness of another's actions and choices are under

review and categorised as wrong.

Commenting on Zarganar's status as a prisoner of conscience, Paul said, '*well if it's illegal he knew what he was doing, he chose to go to prison, now he's got to live with it*'. Of course Paul's claim about Zarganar's choice in protesting is linked to his assessment of the situation in Burma as not 'so bad', because that allows for in action to be a viable option. It is also a departure from ideas of compassion fatigue because it suggests that people living with human rights violations are not seen as passive victims, which is so often a concern (see Benthall 1993). The repeated return to Zarganar's choice in how he approached living under Junta rule led to a discussion between the assembled onlookers and Paul about what Zarganar's options were: either 'a quiet life, protest under the radar' or taking a stand out of necessity. Some people thought he should just leave the country and others suggested that there were 'laws and that' that could be appealed to at an international level. There were diverse opinions on this issue and it is not whether people agree or disagree with Zarganar's stance that is significant but rather the matter of agency of the person depicted. Paul's easy relation to the picture was based on this identification, much as AIUK staff had planned, but the jump between identification and taking action assumed by staff is not the only outcome of this relation. Instead, imaginative relating means looking at a person as having choices, potentially making mistakes and ultimately being responsible for their actions and the repercussions of these actions. Paul's reaction was similar to others that I experienced at Amnesty activities where members of the public, and sometimes even local groups, were able to pass judgement on a person and deem them less worthy of intervention than people they related less to.

During a local group meeting, a girl I had befriended expressed to me her private opinion that Amnesty, and the local group specifically, is '*too keen to help Hamas*'. This opinion is not unusual. Amnesty have often been criticised for their attempt at an even-handed approach to negotiations in disputed regions in the middle east. However her opinion was the more surprising because unlike most of the critics of the AI position on this issue that I had encountered, she was a practising Muslim from an Arab country, and during past conversations with me had expressed feelings of kinship with other Muslims she met here and abroad. She told me in interview that:

> '*...yes I want a free state of Palestine, without a doubt, but I do not like*

the way Hamas go about it. You might think there is no other option but there is too much sympathy here in this university for these methods. There are lots of other routes to peace.' (Zena, interview, February 2011)

Her implication during the interview was that people in the group were too keen to forgive actions because they did not really understand and could 'romanticise' Hamas, whereas she believed herself to have a real vested interest in the situation and a '*real understanding of what these people are and what they are doing'* (Zena, interview, February 2011). While her relation in this case is not mediated through visuals, it suggests that relating to people does not immediately lead to supporting them. In this case her judgement was far harsher than that of the rest of the group despite, or perhaps because of, her relation to the people in question. Her suggestion that it is easier to forgive a stranger than someone you know seems to be reflected to some degree in Paul's reaction to the Burma campaign. As the conversation went on and he drew more and more parallels between himself Zaraganar, and Htein, he began to question what he would do in a similar situation. This follow through of empathy may seem obvious, but to AIUK staff it never occurred to them that people would react in this way. The above reaction suggests that while identifying with people has the potential to create sympathy or compassion, is also has the potential to do the opposite, to allow for a more complex view of a person and situation which then invites scrutiny. The view from close up allow for more details than the broad brush strokes seen from afar.

Relating to pictures in ways which recognise people depicted as 'like us', allows members of the public to recognise also the agency of those people, and therefore to question their actions. In a recent ethnography of the assessment of torture for asylum purposes, Kelly suggests one way of understanding these processes of identification. The difficulty of defining and proving torture can lead to judgements about the character of a witness and their likelihood of having experienced torture (Kelly 2012a:763). Kelly argues that this is enabled by relating to witnesses and acknowledging the rationality of fabricating claims, thus implicitly appealing to their agency. Empathy in this case leads to doubt (ibid: 764). While Kelly's work is based on making legal determinations based on a person's behaviour and language, the process he describes of 'imaginative identification' (ibid: 754) can be seen as similar to that relation which is activated by images. The relation in the case of Zarganar and

Htein can be even more imaginative, because rather than having a person at their disposal, Paul and other spectators have their relation mediated through pictures, with their own set of signals and tropes, and which allow for no response from those depicted. Viewers of images are free to let their imaginative relation run wild. For Paul and other spectators of human rights campaigns, a mistrust of honesty is not at stake, but an acceptance of the agency of others comes with concerns about their choices and a judgement on their situation.

From Empathy to Action

If Paul provided an example of when accepting agency can cause problems for AIUK campaigns, there were no shortage of examples of the 'right' sort of response to this activity, one in which relating to images led to action and engagement with the campaign. As discussed by staff in the planning stages, there was a hope that '*the human element*' would make rights issues more pressing and close the distance between people, a distance which has always been associated with stifling the need for action. In the following example we see this process at work in much the way AIUK imagine it. That is people feel a need to take action because they relate to the people in the images and think '*I just think, that could be me, my husband, my daughter*' (member of the public, Lovebox, July 2010). The following is an example of taking part in the same action as was used at Lovebox, where members of the public expressed empathy in support of action. In this case, members of the public demonstrated the sort of response imagined by Amnesty staff when devising the action. When people responded in this way there was often a prior interest in or knowledge of Burma and human rights which was used discursively to frame empathy and make sense of the pictures. This suggests that while doubt and scrutiny are always a possibility, if they are foregrounded by a knowledge of difference then they are more likely to lead to action in the way that AIUK hope.

After the experience with Paul, which was one of a few less positive interactions, Josie suggested that '*no one is interested in what we have to say, they just want to party*' (Josie, in conversation, July 2010). In fact this was not the case. Throughout the afternoon a number of people approached us and asked to be involved. Some of these

interactions were brief, with people hardly seeming to want to talk to us, but apparently being keen to have their picture taken and to be seen to be doing something 'good'. In many cases people took their own pictures to tweet or upload, seeming to support the idea discussed in Chapter 4 that doing good is also about being seen to be good. But many Lovebox attendees were keen to ask questions about the pictures and the work which AIUK was doing in the area. In these cases there was almost always a background knowledge of Burma.

Cathy and Rose approached us with the opening statement, '*so what are you doing about the awful oppression in Burma?*' (at Lovebox, in conversation, July 2010). They went on to discuss between themselves and with us the situation in Burma in relation to the placards we were holding. When shown Htein, Cathy likened herself to him in much the same way that Paul had and AIUK had hoped, by responding to his occupation as an artist saying, '*It could just as easily be any one of us if we weren't so lucky to live here*'. Though not an artist herself, Cathy related to him using instances in her own life where she had caused controversy as a DJ and related to the '*repression of expression*'. She and Rose both biographised Htein's story, making links as Josie spoke to things they knew and had experienced, such as times when they had undertaken protests and civil disobedience against the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq. Rose said:

> '*it's so important to be able to change things politically and express your opinions, we were involved in protesting against the war – imagine we'd been stopped from doing that and arrested...He was right to try to stand up to them, anything we can do to help we should*'.

Here Rose makes links between herself and Htein which acknowledges his agency in protesting through his art. Her approach was like many others who came to speak to us in making a link between themselves and these distant others in the photographs through shared experiences and activities. Many times people would ask '*what if it were me? Or how would I feel if it was someone I knew?*' thus discursively closing the gap between themselves and people in Burma.

Rather than questioning prisoners' actions, Rose and Cathy suggest that decisions to protest against the Burmese regime through art or comedy is the very reason that we should support them. The difference in opinion about an appropriate response is not

based on a lack or abundance of empathy. In the case of Paul, Rose and Cathy, imaginatively identifying was not a problem for them, however changing empathy into action is not a necessary result of that experience, as Paul shows. Instead of encouraging support, Paul's relation to prisoners was the cause of his opinion that they were not deserving. While Paul was coming to the issues as a self-confessed 'newbie', Cathy and Rose had a good knowledge of Burmese politics and history which was informing their discussion. From their opening line, asking what we were doing about Burma, to references to specific incidents which had been reported in the news, Cathy and Rose based their relation in expectations about the suffering and discomfort of Zarganar and others living under Junta rule in Burma. Comments such as '*I heard from the UN report that men were being kept in cages meant for dogs and beaten daily*' suggested that behind the imagined identification was a knowledge of difference in circumstance, and that while they were able to protest without fear of reprisals, this was not the case in Burma. Rather than the imagined identification alone, most comments made by these young women which related 'us' and 'them' did so through the medium of how alike we were in so many ways but how different in circumstances. For example, in their comment that *'They're just ordinary people mostly I bet, just guys going about their business but they can't because of the country they live in, and so they have to do something'* there was a comparative difference, rather than anything else, which drove the perceived need to take action. These two different responses are informed by different ideas about where responsibility lies rather than different degrees of imaginative relating. While Paul had the same degree of imaginative relation as Cathy and Rose, he lacked a contextualising knowledge which transformed the nature of the relation into one of action on behalf of the individual depicted.

Muted Engagement

For AIUK staff preparing this campaign, the assumption was made that identification can lead to compassionate action. There is an assumption inherent in human rights discourse that recognising humanity produces a wider field of responsibility and protection. However as Kelly suggests, this same process of recognition can also lead to doubt (Kelly 2012:755). When this relation is mediated through photographs, there

are further limits placed upon the spectator. For Kelly the imagined identification was part of a process of working with ambiguities in judging torture (ibid:763), and the ambiguities which are suggested by a photograph are extensive. While legal judges have to contend with the open-ended nature of the concept of torture, as well as the inability to prove or disprove it, they are at least equipped with information. For members of the public approaching rights images, very different levels of information are available, depending on their knowledge and the knowledge of the local group member they encounter, and these determine how they understand and relate to people in the pictures. While my friend in the local group was critical of Amnesty's position on Palestine, she had an extensive knowledge of the situation from spending a year volunteering in Palestine and when I asked her why she volunteered for Amnesty and did not raise her concerns, she told me that '*something is needed, even if it is not how I would like it*' (Zena, in conversation March 2011). She told me about situations and encounters she had had while in the country which made her '*determined for peace*' and so she accepted the approach to Hamas with which she did not agree because she believed that the situation needed international intervention (Zena, in conversation March 2011). Her knowledge of the situation was therefore driving both her criticism of AI's stance on Hamas, and also her decision to suspend that criticism to a certain degree. For these spectators at Lovebox, there was no additional information with which to balance the criticism which identification had allowed. The limited resources available meant that agency existed alongside a version of Burma derived from images which were designed to be positive, and therefore this agency worked against those depicted because without a knowledge of the politics of Burma, the imperative for action was hidden.

When the pictures used for the Burma action first appeared they were posted on James's blog alongside a narrative or interview with the individual, and they have since been made into a book. James was unhappy about some of the ways that AIUK used his pictures, and for him one of the issues was the removal of the captions which accompanied the images. He told me that he felt the spirit of the project had been lost through AIUK's use of the pictures:

> *It was always about hearing and telling people's stories for me, which is probably what appealed to Amnesty, I can't help feeling that that got lost a bit in all this packaging. I understand that we're both trying to do*

something different but I was upset when I saw pictures without the words that went with them, and people like William Hague posing as well because I think that missed the point. (James MacKay, interview, October 2010)

For James, the photographs and the stories were the same work, they were not detachable. For many photojournalists I spoke to, the removal of words from pictures stripped pictures, even captions, of much of their meaning. Photographer Marcus Bleasedale, said to me at an AIUK event that '*to me it's as bad to change even a word of the photographer's caption as it is to alter the photo using photoshop*' (Marcus, November 2010). For Marcus, the problem was not that pictures have no meaning without words, but rather that if a photographer has given words, they are considered by him/her to be part of the picture. The photographers at the event spoke of things like the '*nakedness and vulnerability*' (Susan, November 2010) of their photos without these words. As Stellabrass points out, changes to the wording surrounding pictures can have a huge impact on their interpretation (Stallabrass 1997:144). For staff in the design team it was very important that pictures have their appropriate names and captions, and there was a focus on providing the artist's information to go alongside images. However as Lovebox demonstrates, this does not always happen in practice. While the placards had small captions in the corner, they did not have the narrative which either James' blog had or which other AIUK materials contained. Because AIUK staff relied on a verbal conveyance of this information from group members with varying levels of experience, they opened up the possibility for images to be removed from the context which gives them meaning. In the case of Josie and myself, where we had the information at our disposal, we were still not always believed by members of the public who wanted 'proof' and did not trust us because '*of course you would say that, you're trying to get me to be in this photo*' (member of the public, Lovebox, July 2010). Once again, an assessment of actions and motivations was responsible for judgement and distrust which led to a situation whereby spectators had limited information about the pictures.

Azoulay talks about how the imperative for action when viewing human rights images can be muted by the removal of context necessary for their reading (Azoulay 2008:291), and indeed there is ample work in academic and photojournalistic worlds

which deal with the problems associated with images which are removed from a context in which to understand the violence depicted. Azoulay's concept of a 'civil contract' of photography suggests that rights photographs entail responsibilities for all involved, a civil contract which for the viewer involves reading the photograph as an address from another person, a form of relation (ibid:18). While her focus is on images of atrocity, a similar process can be seen at work in images which are devoid of suffering, only in these cases far less critical attention has been paid to the way in which images without suffering can also be muted by their removal from a contextual framework. AIUK's images are similar to Azoulay's conception of images of atrocity in that they are a call for action and an address from another person, however rather than reading claims of emergency into photographs, those depicted are calling for recognition of their humanity in the face of atrocity which demands rights. The same criticism that pictures of suffering disconnected from a wider context can prevent engagement can be made of the use of James MacKay images, which are muted by a lack of knowledge about the conditions that stripped people of their humanity in the first place. In the case of Paul, it is not to say that the pictures were seen without context: their display at Lovebox by us and our narratives were a context of sort, but he gave them context through his own experiences, which did not include atrocity in Burma. As Becker suggests, 'If the work does not provide context...viewers will provide it, or not, from their own resources' (Becker 1995:8). For AIUK, this interpretive context is assumed to be the same as theirs. The audience they eventually work towards, discussed in Chapter 5, is of a similar disposition to themselves and has the necessary tools to interpret the picture as a call to action. It is on this basis that AIUK select their pictures. Lovebox was a new venue for campaign work, and an attempt to reach out to new audiences with what they believed to be an ethical visual narrative about human rights which would provoke action. However the diversity of knowledge and interest in human rights in this new venue prevented this desired interpretation, leaving agency intact but displaced from atrocity requiring action.

This lack of available information is also a lack of visible information. While Josephine was able to tell Paul about the conditions, history and situation in Burma, the impact of this information was weighed continually against the visible evidence of the photographs. Reference was made by Paul to how '*it doesn't look like it's that bad*' showing a prioritising of the picture above the verbal narrative. The nature of pictures

as conveying reality as proof was in this case working against the expectations of AIUK staff because the humane and empowering picture was so convincing that it left little room for narratives which countered that to be introduced.

Engagement, in the form of action or recognition of rights, was therefore muted by a lack of knowledge of the context. The lack of contextual knowledge, and the inability of those depicted to speak back, allowed people like Paul to identify to such a degree that they imposed their own selves and situations onto the image and therefore the person depicted, in this case Zarganar. Rather than reading pictures and relating to people in their own right, Paul biographised them to such a degree that Zarganar and Htein became him, taking on his characteristics and motivations. This process is reminiscent of Levinas' face to face encounter, except in this case the face encountered is rendered in photograph. For Levinas, 'The Other precisely reveals himself in his alterity not in a shock negating the I, but as the primordial phenomenon of gentleness'; proximity and distance are both felt and necessary for the appreciation of the rights of the other. For Paul the proximity was felt, but the distance was lacking. This is clearly a feature of the photographic rather than face to face encounter. The lack of voice and context to the photograph, in this case, renders it lacking and gaps are filled. The imposition of Paul's own characteristics and his own decision making, onto the image mean that he is unable to read the picture as a claim from another, and is unable to see urgency in it. As Levinas says, difference and proximity are needed in order to read a rights claim of another. For Levinas this was because the unconsumable otherness of the other conveys their sovereignty, and an encounter with another is productive of one's own subjectivity through the response to that encounter. Thus ethics and sociality are one and the same. The photographic encounter does not convey this same sociality, the difference and distance of the other are able to be compressed, leaving only similarity which ultimately loses the imperative derived from the difference between the self and the other. Difference in this case is compressed, in terms of both context requiring intervention, and agency in ways which assimilate and allow them to be dismissed.

Differing from Levinas and his emphasis on the face to face, responses from Cathy and Rose suggest that imaginative relating can be constitutive of a recognition of rights and action on behalf of that individual. In these cases difference was maintained

through knowledge of Burma, which prevented the blurring between self and other. Similarity was activated, but not as the sole criteria for judgement, thus maintaining Levinas' call for both alterity and proximity. In this case empathy was not the result of feeling another's pain with them, but an awareness of suffering was present. Cathy and Rose suggest that there are more complex relations than simply that of empathy as similarity, as AIUK hoped to activate, or empathy as shared pain. These ways of imaginative relating will be developed in the following chapter to suggest new possibilities for thinking about relating with distant others in human rights discourse.

Conclusions

It is commonly considered in moral philosophy that moral responsibility is related to distance. Geographical, cultural and interpersonal gaps must be closed in order to motivate action. This process is often discussed in terms of compassion, which is the response of feeling care for the suffering of distant others. AIUK, through their use of pictures, hope to subvert this process by relying not on compassion but by closing the gap through similarity portrayed through a pictorial representation that focusses on recognisable cultural tropes (discussed in Chapter 4). The aim therefore is to produce an empathic relation with distant others which does not rely on pain and suffering but is based on recognition of oneself in another. In practice however, I found that while people imaginatively related to distant others in ways which staff would describe as empathic, this did not necessarily lead to a response of action. Rather, relating to others allowed some spectators to attribute agency to those people depicted, which in turn allowed a more complex analysis of motivations and actions than AIUK expected. In these cases empathising alone was not a motivation for action because spectators required a knowledge of the situation in order to read and react to the image in the way that AIUK hoped. I found that members of the public who had prior knowledge of rights engaged discursively with the issues which AIUK had attempted to edit out, such as issues of suffering and ideas of justice and thus provided context themselves. For 'new' audiences the evidence of the image counted for more than the verbal dialogue which volunteers presented, and imaginative relations were formed based largely on the evidence provided by the picture. This suggests that empathy is indeed activated by pictures of people, but that this empathy becomes a force against

intervention if it is stronger than beliefs about the nature of the problem being campaigned about. Imaginative empathy is dependent on contextual and prior knowledge to shape and give it meaning, which ultimately can lead to action for distant others. In some ways this is a problem of old practices and new practices concerning audience. While the remit for who AIUK are targeting has changed, not all of the institutional practices have changed with it. In this case the focus on empathy with individuals is removed from the context of injustices against them, because for staff this knowledge is assumed. But for new audiences, empathy is displaced from this. Imaginative empathy therefore is not a straight forward process but is contextual and subjective in ways that can lead to criticism rather than action.

In the next chapter I look at the techniques and methods employed by local groups to imaginatively relate to those they are campaigning for. I suggest that while there are many similarities between the processes of imaginative relating which we have seen in AIUK, there are also extremely notable differences, mainly in the role that pain and suffering play in facilitating imaginative identifications.

Chapter 9: Imagining Suffering

Figure 9a: Hamish in the Cambridge cage.

'Is somebody in there?'

'yes'

'why?'

'we're spending 24 hours in a cage to raise awareness about prisoners of conscience for Amnesty'

'looks cold...don't envy you...!'

The above interaction was between student group member Hamish and a member of the public while Hamish and I were in a cage outside Kings College in Cambridge. We took turns sitting in the cold cage throughout the day and night. At night we lit candles for light and to draw the attention of passers by, which gave the impression of a vigil. Inside and around the cage, the students had put pictures of prisoners of conscience who were 'In cages this very minute in much worse conditions than these' (CUAI Poster). During my night in the cage there were many visitors both members of the student group and members of the wider student body and population of Cambridge, and like the respondent quoted above, people were keen to express sympathy or to make a comment about how uncomfortable the cage looked. It seemed to me, fresh from the Amnesty office, that local groups were hijacking the careful campaign planning to return to a simple model of suffering and sympathy.

Those campaign methods, which bypassed images of suffering, put suffering back in by having actual people demonstrating suffering by sitting in a cage all night. For members of this student group in the cage, they were not only showing it, but living in discomfort 'in solidarity'. The obvious discomfort of the people in the cage meant that discussion with the public was based largely on the discomfort of being in prison rather on justice or other possible narratives of human rights. Though the photographs remained the same nonviolent images, their performance by CUAI had changed their significance and revealed other understandings of them. This chapter focusses on the reintroduction of pain through discursive and embodied practices around AIUK materials by student groups and members of the public, and examines the mechanisms of this process of reintroduction. The chapter looks at what purpose pain serves in these contexts to suggest that uses of pain by local groups to create support and forge connections subverts AIUK expectations about the possible roles which pain can play in human rights narratives.

Performing Pictures: Reintroducing Pain

Images are looked at more and more for their places in networks of value and their materiality rather than their semiotic meaning, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis. This approach brings with it new questions about how we make meaning through photographs. In her essay on aboriginal Australian uses of photographs, Elizabeth Edwards suggests that to understand images we must understand the stories that people tell about them: 'photographs operate not simply as visual history but are performed...as a form of oral history linked to sound gesture and thus to the relationships in which and through which these practices are embedded' (Edwards 2005:29). Photographs, when they exist in the social world, are never seen in isolation, they become entangled with the physical fact of their existence.They can be adorned or embellished either literally by being put in a frame, poster or other container, (Batchen 1994:61) or by the stories that people tell, the gestures that go alongside these pictures which give them meaning. These entanglements- the materiality of the image as an object and the performance of it socially, Edwards suggests - give rise to sensory and thus embodied experiences of images (ibid 28). The CUAI cage can be seen in this light as the performance of AIUK images. While

the photographs and other pictures are the originals from Amnesty they are now entangled with their telling through the setting of the cage and their narration in this way by student members of CUAI, and the bodily experience of being in the cage. This section will look at AIUK images in their performative settings within local group activities to suggest that these performances are inseparable from experiences of AIUK images and that through these experiences of images, local groups and the public return pain to the fore. Performances in terms of spoken narratives and actions such as demonstrations and events like the cage discursively and visually restore the 'missing' pain to the images, through rendering it imaginatively, and literally in the case of the cage, providing embodied experiences of pain which local and student groups see as key to rights discourse.

Figure 9b: Demonstrators wear pictures of prisoners.

Not long in to my participant observation with the Edinburgh group, I was involved in a demonstration for Burmese prisoners of conscience. It was a small event which I had not helped to plan as it had been in the making since the previous term. I was therefore thrown into the event with little idea of what to expect. I had assumed that it

would be much like other demonstrations that I had been on: we would hold placards, shout chants, and walk our route. In many ways it was similar except that rather than holding placards we were wearing pictures of prisoners of conscience. Each member of the group had a picture of an individual and a sign spelling out the individual's name pinned to their shirt. I was Khun Kawrio a prisoner from Burma, and the group spoke to each other by their 'prisoner names' rather than their own names during the event. Possibly there was a practical element to this in that the whole group rarely meet and there were many new members in the new term such as myself. Practical or not, this naming added to the impression that we were in fact those people whose pictures we wore and quickly we got into the spirit of it, talking to members of the public as if we were these prisoners and answering their questions as best we could 'in character'. I was shy about this and felt awkward about it so looked to the other members for guidance about how to 'act' in this role. I overheard a particular friend of mine, called Siobhan normally, but called Ko Aye Aung today, talking with a woman watching the demonstration about the conditions in Burma.

> Woman: *what is it yer protesting?*
>
> Siobhan: *my name is Ko Aye Aung (pointing to the picture on her chest) and I'm in prison in Burma for merely making a joke about the junta. In Burma it's forbidden to question the military junta who are running the country if you do you could end up in jail like me. I've been kept in a cell which is smaller than your bathroom probably is for ten years- I have been beaten, and tortured and made to go hungry for days at a time. We're protesting that things like that can be allowed to happen.*
>
> Woman: *shit I dinnae even ken where aboots Burma is but that's just no right is it? I mind spending a day on one o they fasts and I felt sick to ma stomach fir days afterward. You cannae keep people like that, it's just no right...*
>
> (Siobhan and Member of the public, in conversation, September 2010)

In the interaction above Siobhan and a member of the public engage in a performance of the original Amnesty images. Siobhan introduces these pictures by wearing them and by starting a dialogue about their meaning to her, which is added to and expanded by the woman she is speaking to. The discussion has elements of AIUK's original

approach to the campaign in the focus on individuals and humanisation, similar to the planning that went into using James MacKay's photographs. However, in Edinburgh, this was being done through embodying the person in the image. The particular telling of these images in this way- embodied and with a focus on discomfort - gave the photographs new meaning. Siobhan talks about the physical discomfort of the prisoner through having to endure hunger and beatings. I also heard others talk more graphically about the experience of torture and the inhumane conditions of prison in Burma. This information was set against the very minor natures of the 'crimes' such as organising a meeting, or giving an opinion, to stoke indignation at the brutal nature of the punishment. In this example, pain is restored to the images through their telling in the same way that for Edwards, familial relations were restored through telling stories while sharing photographs (Edwards 2005:34). I learnt later that wearing prisoners' pictures was not unique to Edinburgh. I saw students and members of local groups doing variations on this same theme, by either holding pictures of people or wearing masks, in two other group settings. Indeed the Cambridge student group who I worked with, later did their own version of the Edinburgh demonstration, wearing pictures of prisoners. To ignore these discursive and phenomenological aspects of images would ignore this significant shift in their social meaning whereby pain has been added to the photos through the performance and social experience of interaction between local groups, the public, and the images.

For other groups, the performances around images were more explicit in linking pain and suffering to Amnesty's campaigns. During a visit to Newcastle's AI group for a meeting of Northern AI local groups, I took part in a large scale demonstration which was planned by AIUK but carried out independently. We were provided with orange jump suits by AIUK for our march through the centre of the city to demand the closure of Guantanamo Bay detention centre. The brief provided for us told us where we were to walk and how to behave (heads down, shuffling gait). What it did not explain, which was a surprise to those of us taking part, is that once we reached the main square two people dressed as prison guards enacted the beating of one of the 'detainees' to draw awareness to recent testimony of the mistreatment of detainees. This overt enactment of violence was part of the telling and performance of those campaign images. While this was taking place, flyers were being given out with action for people to take on them, and the assembled public were told that '*this is*

what happens to these people'.

Figure 9c &d: Newcastle demonstration against Guantanamo Bay detention centre.

While the images remain unchanged they have been embellished and altered by their narration in this way. Similar to CUAI's use of people in a cage mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the Newcastle group had introduced pain to the images through embodied performances of the discomfort of the experiences of prisoners. In Newcastle this was merely demonstrative, but in Cambridge the discomfort was experienced. In both cases for the onlooker and members of the local groups the performance of pain is something not simply added as oral narrative to the images, but something which is experienced through the senses: the sounds of pain could be heard in the screams in Newcastle, and the discomfort of Cambridge students in a cold cage was seen and felt. When images enter the public domain they do not come alone, they come with a whole range of attachments to hear, see and feel. In this way they are able to change and morph in ways which allow the addition of pain and suffering rendered in these ways imaginatively, discursively and most importantly experientially.

Competing Narratives: Local groups and AIUK

This introduction of pain is facilitated by practices which allow local groups and AIUK operate fairly autonomously, touched upon in Chapter 7. Local groups are managed by the Activism team which is responsible for sending out materials,

communicating directly with the groups when required, and correlating their activities to report back to AIUK at annual meetings. Student groups on the other hand are managed by the Education and Student team, which fulfils a similar role, their basic remit being to support and encourage activists, but is based in a different department. There are also regional offices in Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff where some of the information groups receive comes from, and where they are more likely to meet staff. For local groups, AIUK can feel like a distant and vague concept, and many of the members I spoke to had no clear idea of which section of AI they were involved with and where the organisation was based. There are organised meet ups such as the student conference, and regional conferences as well as occasional 'training days' when a new campaign is launched where local members are invited to conferences to be briefed on the campaign aims and objectives. Turn out at these events is relatively low compared to the numbers of subscribers and even to registered group member numbers, and staff turn out may also be low for everything but the annual general conference, which large number of staff attend. It was my experience that many staff at AIUK who were not in the activism team were disinclined to attend the events for local groups and considered it beyond their responsibility. There is therefore limited interaction and knowledge about local groups' activities outside of the Activism team. Lucy, who designs the materials which are sent out, complained to me that she felt more disconnected from the actual use of her designs with Amnesty than in any other organisation she worked for (Lucy, interview, June 2011). There is then a high degree of independence where AIUK staff in roles which make decisions about campaign visuals are not aware of how their visuals are being used in practice. AIUK are burdened by their own internal bureaucracies which create specialised but isolated areas of knowledge.

Despite this disconnect many of the practices used by local groups come from these materials, particularly the handbooks for campaigns which include suggestions for making 'spectacles' such as banners, skits, and even cages. These suggestions seem counter to the discussions about positive imagery which took place while I was working in New Inn Yard. I asked a media team representative involved with the production of the handbook and was told that:

> '*what's ok for local groups isn't always ok for us. What you've got to understand is that there's a difference between firstly showing photos of*

the victims themselves and doing cage re-enactments, and secondly between what can be produced and stamped with the official amnesty brand and what the local groups can do'. (Mike, in conversation, May 2011)

This statement seems to reiterate the idea that behind AIUK image policy is an ethical imperative driven by the perceived responsibilities of being Amnesty. It also further suggests the disconnect that I observed between AIUK and local groups. Despite Amnesty being a subscription-based organisation, not all of its staff consider members to be true representatives. Their isolated position from the majority of staff contributes to a feeling among these staff that they are not 'the same' as AIUK proper. I once heard the term civilian used, semi-jokingly, by a member of staff when discussing the public, conjuring up a rather disturbing image of AIUK as military, and members of the public as civilians.Perhaps in this image the local groups are a sort of home guard.

While staff are relatively unaware of the practices of local groups, it might be considered a wilful unawareness. The statement above suggests that while AIUK staff see themselves as creating the campaigns, they allow and even encourage the local groups the freedom to subvert and re-imagine campaign meaning because local groups lack the burden of responsibility and are free to reintroduce aspects of human rights which AIUK see themselves as morally obligated to remove. While AIUK are concerned with Amnesty's dignity and reputation, the separate and 'unofficial' branch of AIUK which the local groups represent is not seen as speaking for Amnesty in the same way. They have different responsibilities which shape their narratives. Ultimately the two narratives which appear at first to be competing are in fact complimentary, both of them answering different moral imperatives in the work of human rights campaigning. This relates directly to themes discussed in the last chapter, where I pointed to the difference in campaigning approaches between staff and local groups as creating a productive 'friction' (Tsing 2005), allowing groups to work in ways that produce results. In light of the above, we can speculate that for some staff at least, there is a tactic understanding that groups should be left to '*work their magic*' (Bina, in conversation, March 2010). This suggests that staff are in some way conscious of differences in approach and accept them as useful, though I would doubt whether they are aware of the degree of deviation, especially regarding

audience and the presentation of pain.

The reintroduction of pain after its careful removal by AIUK shows not only different narratives about rights, but also different ideas about the purpose and method of campaigning, and the responsibilities which these entail. Local group members often spoke to me about an imperative to show people the truth and make them take action, whereas for Amnesty their role as a large and respected NGO comes with additional responsibilities. I spoke to David, the Edinburgh group president, about the protest (see above) afterwards to better understand its planning and intention. I asked him if the group had a specific aim for the demonstration and he answered '*same as always, tell people about injustice in the world, hope they do something about it*' (David, in conversation September 2010). When pressed about the pictures of people pinned to the groups' t-shirts and embodying their image he said that the group *'thought it would look a bit different than all the usual stuff, be memorable*' (David, in conversation September 2010). This laid back attitude to campaigning I found to be the norm throughout my groups. Rather than concerning themselves too much with the method of communicating human rights abuses, groups were more interested in being memorable and noticeable because, as David put it to me, '*making people do something is what we're bothered about, making them listen*' (David, in conversation September 2010). Groups that I observed were worried rather about the practicalities of planning an event, obtaining permissions, having accurate information,and providing interesting 'hooks' for media and public attention.

They were unburdened by the weight of responsibility that I had observed in AIUK staff who see themselves as 'setting the narrative' , trying to create an ethical narrative and an approach to rights as a standard. For local groups this responsibility lay elsewhere and was little discussed. Their job was to get signatures and change minds, not to create grand narratives, even though through their activities they were creating narratives of their own which placed pain as central to human rights campaigning. The ethical imperatives being acted upon in groups were ones tied to ideas of truth, and the productivity of their campaigning was measured by its ability to communicate this truth widely. Groups did not see themselves as responsible for the meta narrative. Both AIUK staff and local group members act on what they believe are ethical considerations, but these considerations are not the same.

The notion among group members that they must show people 'the truth' betrays a belief that human rights without pain is somehow lacking. This may in part be a reflection of intervisual expectations created by media and NGO practices. Certainly the images cannot be stripped of this context, and regular reference was made by local groups and members of the public to knowledge gained from other sources. In the local and student meetings that I attended, members discussed newspaper articles and television reporting to add to the AI reports on countries. While I was undertaking fieldwork, a number of reports were discussed as being relevant to the group's work, such as one very graphic report on disappearances in Sri Lanka, including a video of an execution[47]. The articles most discussed are part of a journalism style which focussed on graphic revelations about regimes. It was also true that when interacting with the public, group members used intervisual references explicitly to add to and expand upon the information.

During the demonstration in Edinburgh I took part in many discussions with the public- some interested, some hostile, some confused. It was our job to talk to them whatever their opinion and to try to impart some information about the situation in Burma and options for getting involved in changing that. I discovered that I was not the only one with information to impart. People I spoke to also wanted to tell me what they knew of Burma, things that had recently been in the news, sometimes other issues which were human rights related which also had been in the news. The pictures from Abu Ghraib were mentioned more than once, because of the link with military malpractice in Burma, and inevitably the discussion brought out issues of torture and pain at the hands of the military. In this way people, draw on the practices which AIUK seek to subvert to create a new narrative one in which pictures of suffering are absent but performances of images reinstate its presence in narratives of human rights. Below is an example of this process:

> Lindsay: *Well basically the military Junta in Burma have complete control and the people of Burma have no freedoms- they can't contact the west, they can't even meet up in groups, and above all they can't criticise the*

47 'The End of Sri Lanka's War', Channel 4 News / ITN - Jonathan Miller, Nick Paton Walsh, Nevine Mabro, Bessie Du, Matt Jasper, Ben de Pear

regime or they risk imprisonment.

Woman: *yeah totally, just seems mental that these things can go on, like all I really know is you know those pictures of the monks being run down by the army and it was horrible. 10 people died or something...*

Lindsay: *I remember hearing about it on TV and they just said that the army had used 'extreme force' and we all know what that means-defenceless monks beaten up by thuggish police.*

David: *And that's barely scratching the surface, so much goes on there that you hardly hear about cause you know hard to get journalists in or whatever, but whenever there's a political refugee gets out they tell stories from prisons there and it's torture and starvation.*

Woman: *(shaking head) So what can I do?*

(Lindsay and a member of the public, September 2010)

However the importance of pain to local groups and the public is not simply a case of 'filling gaps' which AIUK create in their materials and which groups interpret through expectations set up through intervisual experiences of rights, though these expectations do play a role. For local groups introducing pain is as much an imperative as removing it is for Amnesty, hence its persistence. Hamish, from CUAI, told me regarding the cage: '*maybe if people see us having just a fraction of the horrible experience that is day to day life for prisoners it'll give them pause for thought*' (Hamish, in conversation, October 2010) thus suggesting that if anything there was a responsibility to make people aware of the pain inherent to political suppression. This importance for groups of pain in the narrative was not only visible through its introduction, but was also discussed at length in an interview with Hamish. During this interview, he told me that for him, conveying the '*harshness and hardship*' which people go through was *'terribly important*' because '*that's what will get people talking and doing actions*' (Hamish, interview, October 2010). For Hamish, the inclusion of pain comes with certain expectations from the viewer. Seeing pain is assumed to demand action from a viewer. In many ways this echoes Azoulay's argument that photography entails a civil contract of mutually known expectations from all parties (Azoulay 2008:157). She suggests that the practice of photographing atrocity 'presumes the existence of a civil space in which photographers, photographed subjects, and spectators share a recognition that what

they are witnessing is intolerable' (ibid:18). Rather than simply the act of photography, here this civil space is expanded by local groups to include pain in other manifestations. Discursive, performed, imagined pain is used by local groups to the same end as Azoulay's civil contract namely that knowledge, being addressed by someone's misfortune visually, draws the viewer into a social contract which demands action. Local group goals are different from Amnesty's in scale of undertaking but both believe in an ethical imperative: for AIUK it is to remove pain, and for local groups it is to make pain visible, make people informed about it, and produce action and increase understanding. These differing ideas of what is required of campaign ethics is then part of the creation of different discourses, but they also reveal the importance which Hamish and others place on understanding, and suggest that pain has a role in that process, and can be viewed as contributing to a social experiential undertaking.

A Night in the Cambridge Cage

During planning for the Cambridge cage event, one participant asked if she could bring a hot water bottle, if she kept it hidden. The answer from veteran group member Tim was *'well of course you could bring one, and I couldn't stop you, but to me that rather defeats the point'* (Tim, in conversation, October 2010). The girl did not bring her hot water bottle. The point which Tim refers to is not simply the ethical need to communicate the pain and suffering of rights violations to the public that I posit above. He is suggesting that there is a need not only to communicate about discomfort but for local group members to experience it during their night in the cage. Throughout planning meetings running up to the cage weekend regular references were made to the uncomfortable conditions with what seemed like anticipation. Tim told me later that it is good to put new recruits (like me) in the cage because it '*helps them get it*' (Tim, in conversation, October 2010). For the CUAI group there is an implication that understanding human rights is tangled up with the embodied experiences of using images and in this case the experience of being imprisoned and uncomfortable. While Chapter 4 deals with ways in which AIUK staff use personified images to close the gap between them and distant others, this section suggests other ways of dealing with this through the embodied experience of

pain.

The cage event ran from Friday until Sunday and volunteers did shifts in two hours blocks either at the table or in the cage itself. I did a shift in the cage during the night and spent a morning at and around the table. The cage itself is not as uncomfortable as suggested in the planning meeting. It is cold but students from the group and from Kings College were on hand to bring hot tea, and we were wrapped up warmly. After protests in Edinburgh in the rain and bitter cold it did not seem so bad. Being in the cage is quite an intimate experience for the two people in it because few members of the public talk to you directly and talk mostly to those at the table and you are left to your own devices. It was a good chance to talk to group members one on one. The conversation ranged widely but regularly returned to Amnesty and the cage and the reasons for being there. I had two different people with me during my shifts in the cage and both emphasised the importance of 'feeling something' when protesting. '*The thing I like about it is it's not passive. You feel a bit what it might be like and I think it makes you understand them better and care more*' (Pete, in conversation October 2010). This was similar to the sentiment expressed by Tim when he discouraged the hot water bottle idea. The cage, for the participants, was an experience rather than simply a performance for the audience. This was echoed by Chris, one of my cage partners when he said:

> '*before I did my first cage I, well I cared of course but I didn't really know, then one night in the cage, doing a double shift and I felt like I really cared, you know, it made it real for me that people were in cages like this all the time*'. (Chris, in conversation October 2010)

The implication is that knowledge about a particular situation can only make you care so much, but experience takes that connection to another level of involvement. While the experience between spending a cold night in a cage outside Kings College being brought refreshments, and that of being a prisoner of conscience in a Burmese prison is not comparable, the importance of having an experience and forging this link is important to group members. It suggests that not only returning suffering to the discourse about rights, but also having embodied experiences of it is an important component of campaigning for these students. Despite efforts to remove it at the planning level, pain proves itself to be irrepressible and inextricably linked with perceptions and motivations of and for rights campaigning.

Many people visited the cage that night, largely students and those working for the university because of its location so close to the campus. A full analysis of their responses was not possible because most passed by briefly, stopping to chat for only a few minutes, but the immediate responses of people who were there were observable and in many ways similar to the experiences of those in the cage- physical and embodied experiences based on the suffering which the cage suggested. This manifested often as a shiver, wince or other physical reaction. Most people who visited reacted in some way or another as if they themselves were suffering. One student who visited the cage spent the two or three minutes there rubbing her arms and looking tearful. Rather than speculate too much on the emotions behind these reactions, I merely wish to point out the physical nature of responses to suffering in the immediate point of contact. Some visitors were more forthcoming in conversation and added words to their physical responses. One memorable example was a man who himself had been in prison and said that seeing us in the cage '*takes me right back to it*', and other people also talked about experiences in their own past which the cage evoked for them. One visitor told us about how uncomfortable a night camping without a mat had been and drew parallels to the lack of beds in Burmese prisons. In all of these cases the initial embodied response to suffering is taken further and linked to the personal histories of the people talking. They are not only embodying the suffering, they are internalising and making sense of it through their own lives. In doing so, members of the public seek to make connections between themselves and distant others through the medium of suffering bodies. Pain and shared experiences of pain become, as they were for the group members, a means of creating intimacy in the way that staff at AIUK hoped they would not.

Pain has been described as an utterly alienating experience (Daniel 1994:230). The ethnography of pain suggests that it defies language and explanation because it is a bodily experience and cannot be rendered in linguistics (ibid). For this reason another's pain is inaccessible to you, unreal even. As Scarry puts it:

> 'When one hears about another person's physical pain , the events happening in the interior of that person's body may seem to have the remote character of a deep subterranean fact...has no reality because it has not yet manifested itself on the earth' (Scarry 1985:3).

The unreality of another's pain featured in discussions between informants in local groups in subtle ways, and facts from AIUK material about conditions abroad produced responses such as them being 'unbelievable' or 'I can't even imagine what that would be like'. When Scarry talks about pain in the public realm she discusses it purely in terms of language and its ability to communicate, or inability to communicate. Using AI as an example she says that the wording of their material 'must somehow convey to the reader the aversiveness being experienced inside the body of someone whose country may be far away' (Scarry 1985:9).

Rather than remote exotic locations or cultures being the barrier to understanding, these well- travelled students in Amnesty groups struggled with experiences of pain which were unknown to them. And as Heidfeld pointedly asks, 'can suffering...be understood without sensation?' (Herzfeld 2001:241), suggesting the bodily nature of suffering. It makes sense then that groups use their bodies as a means by which to connect with these ideas.

Csordas speaks of something similar in his work on charismatic Christian healing in North America (Csordas 1990). He suggests that speaking 'in tongues' is part of a ritual in charismatic Christian services that serves to transcend the limitations of language that is considered 'inadequate for communication with the divine' (ibid:24). Speaking in tongues, or glossolalia, is not about making sense in a linguistic way, but is about embodying non-verbal thought prior to mind/body distinctions (ibid:26). While the undertakings in the Cambridge cage are done knowingly in order to have a particular experience, there are some similarities that suggest that in both cases the ability to transcend language and have bodily experiences rather than intellectual ones is important. For Cambridge students who claim that knowing is different to feeling, there is a similar undertaking to experience something in a tangible and physical way in order to move beyond words. Scarry's focus on words fails to take into account the more embodied practices taking place in the cage. Local groups have found a way to convey the aversiveness of pain, through experiencing it. For the CUAI group, feeling pain is a form of embodied learning which is important to their understandings of rights, and an ability to imaginatively identify with others.

Pain is often considered the one experience which cannot be shared between two

people and while that is not being disputed, the way that imagining or invoking pain produces physical embodied responses makes it an experience which can cross boundaries and create perceived closeness and understanding. While other methods of communicating human rights issues have been used to great effect, the issue of pain keeps reappearing. My informants in the cage suggested that this is because knowing is different to feeling. Pain, and imagining pain, has the potential to motivate and create the intimacy which staff at AIUK sought in other ways- through social and cultural similarity. However while these experiences of pain and performances of pain certainly were a way to connect with distant others, they retained at their heart an acknowledgement of difference. Group members afterwards spoke of their horror that '*other people have to live like that*', and about being upset that '*things like this actually gone on*'. So while pain was used as a means to imaginatively relate to others it was done so with the same acknowledgement of difference seen in the previous chapter, however with the added viscerality which comes from embodied experiences. The embodied and biographic nature of experiences of pain make distant others accessible, and through experiencing pain the urgency of those in the photographs becomes something which is not theoretical and cannot be ignored. In this way, pain can be seen not only as isolating, and potentially disempowering but also as a means by which group members and members of the public are drawn into a relationship which demands action.

Embodied Learning

If, as I have suggested above, the introduction of pain is part of a process of embodied learning about and connecting with distant others, other practices and performances of images can be rethought as part of the same process of embodied learning. The consideration of the body and embodied experience in social life has a long history in anthropology. From Mary Douglas' *Natural Symbols'* revelation that the body is a social arena, as well as an individual one (Douglas 1970), to the expansion of this by Scheper-Hughes & Lock to include the third category of Body Politic (Scheper-Hughes & Lock 1987), anthropologists have been interested in how social life is understood and experienced through bodies, even if, as discussed in Chapter 4 the human body is itself in question and flux. This has been an important area of study in medical anthropology (e.g. Kleinman and Kleinman 1995b).

Approaches such as Counihan's that links gender to ideal body and food consumption (Counihan 1999) suggest something of what Von Wolputte identifies, in his summary of the field, as the body's potential to unlock 'a moral universe that often escapes social (symbolic) discourse' (Von Wolputte 2004:259). I would suggest that there is the same potential in the body to unlock moral discourse in its uses by Amnesty activists, through their uses of the body in creating and maintaining moral discourse through imagined identifications with others. Images themselves are experienced through the medium of the human body, and therefore imagined identification undertaken through images is also undoubtably a physical one.

I return to the demonstration held by Edinburgh participants discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The wearing of images of others, and in fact performing those others, can be viewed in the light of the Cambridge group's self-identified process, as another form of embodied connecting. That is a type of learning that uses embodied techniques to connect in ways that go beyond, but yet include pain, and are mediated through images. In his account of the use of chromolithographs in Bhatisuda village in Madhya Pradesh, Pinney suggests that we view Indian deity images not in the light of their aesthetics, but rather through what he calls 'corpothetics', described as 'sensory, corporeal, aesthetics' (Pinney 2004:193). This is differentiated from aesthetics by a desire among onlookers to fuse image and beholder, rather than the distance implied by the judgement of traditional aesthetics (ibid:194). In his account, images link deities to onlookers' own biographies through corporeal visceral encounters between images and onlookers (ibid:21). He describes how images are considered capable of providing 'barkat' (plentitude) (ibid:190) to the beholder through ritual and relations of exchange built up between picture and onlooker of which embodied experiences of images are at the heart (ibid:191). Pinney cautions readers not to assume that this embodied way of interacting with images is unique to India (ibid:193), and indeed very similar embodied practices can be seen at work in those who interact with these rights images, suggesting that corpothetics can be seen in Euro-American settings as well.

Edinburgh students wearing and performing individuals' pictures suggest this fusing of the image and the onlooker, in this case student activists, in a quite literal sense. They, briefly and through performances, 'became' the person in the image, and

afterwards spoke about '*when I was being Ko Aye Aung*' as if rather than acting they had actually been a different person for a short period. The connection which they sought to make was not one with gods, or for the achievement of *barkat*, but for fusing image and individual through physical performances and experiences of these images. I believe that this was undertaken to facilitate particular forms of imaginative relating. Afterwards in interviews, group members spoke of '*feeling connected*' to the person in the image, and being '*changed*' by having '*been another person*' (Richard, interview, November 2010). This experience was considered to have affected them more than reading about the person, or looking at their images passively.The act of performing images, as one group member eloquently put it, '*took me from thinking about a person to feeling something about them*' (Jane, interview, November 2010), suggesting that corpothetic relations transcend those based in the mind through their bodily, visceral nature. Much like Csordas' charismatic Christians' ability to transcend the perceived limitations of language, activists were able to transcend the limitations of separation by 'fusing' with the person via bodily experiences of images. Of course this relation remains imagined, but for the participants it had a powerful effect on this imagined relationship.

At other points in interactions between people and images in this thesis a similar embodied relation can be found. The reproduction of James MacKay's photographic style in campaign images featuring members of the public where members of the public are asked to 'copy' prisoners of conscience and produce their likeness mobilises similar ideas. As Taussig suggests, copying another is a form of learning that leaves the distinction between self and other flexible (Taussig 1993:xiii).It is also a type of embodied interaction (ibid:21) similar to that which Pinney highlights, or as Taussig puts it '...a palpable, sensuous, connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived' (ibid). In this case the flexibility between the self and other was sought actively by staff members through asking people to pose as the prisoners had, and the sensuous connection was the means by which this copy was achieved. Similarly, interacting with the picture of Htein in the office was itself part of a sensuous relation between picture and onlooker, a process of an acting out of a relationship which was important to staff. These encounters are sensory encounters between onlookers and images that facilitate imagined relating. Relating with others therefore, can be seen to take place through bodies as well as through the other

methods discussed earlier in this thesis.

The Body, Images and Agency

These observations about embodied practices among groups seem, in some ways, to point back to the physicalisation of rights that has been identified by Fassin, Ticktin and others (Fassin 2008; Ticktin 2006; Brown 1995). I am suggesting not only that pain is a crucial performance for activists, but also that activists relate to others through their bodies. However, I do not believe that this necessarily is the case, or at least not in the way that these authors describe. Rather, the practices observed between local groups, the public, and images of distant others, can be seen as part of a larger process at work, one that uses human rights images as a means to imaginatively identify with others, based on particular ways in which images mediate this relation. Images in this case are the ones that create this bodily interaction, and therefore images are responsible for the formation of the particular types of imaginative identification which take place among staff and volunteers working with Amnesty, and those on whose behalf they work. It is not therefore a belief in bodily supremacy in the field of rights, or biomedical determinism, which is at play. It is instead that experiences of images cannot be divorced from the bodies involved in those experiences.

Experiencing images, in this thesis, is an activity which cannot be accounted for with the cultural studies conceptions of 'decoding' or 'interpretation' (Hall 2006) since they do not go far enough in explaining a process which we have observed to be experiential in nature. Rather than reading images, people in this thesis have experienced them. This has been true not only of the examples above which pertain largely to pain, but also can be seen through the use of bodies and performances of both body and imagination which Siobhan and other members of the Edinburgh group exhibit by acting as those pictures they are wearing. Furthermore it is not a practice restricted to local groups. Staff at Amnesty can also be seen to use bodily and imaginative practices to interact with images of prisoners in the office. Therefore pain is part of a narrative of bodily encounters with images, rather than the thing that connects all people. Hans Belting talks about a process which he describes as a 'triangular interrelation between image, medium, and body (of the viewer)' (Belting

2005: 4) whereby images are animated. This can be seen as a continuation of ideas discussed in Chapter 4 about the process of 'animating images' as Mitchell posits (2005:30), but with consideration of the body in this process. Belting goes on to suggest that images 'only make sense when there are we who ask it, because we live in bodies in which we generate images of our own...and...play them out against images in the visible world' (Belting 2003:2). By this he not only describes the use of bodies in interacting with images, but also suggests that this is a process of production through which images come to be. Images viewed in this way then, as coming out of interactions which are grounded in bodily and imaginative encounters, offer a way to understand the important role that the body plays in staff and volunteer relations with images. It is then not simply a case that bodies are what connect people, but rather that bodies connect people and images, which fits much more with what we see in this thesis. People I spoke to over the course of my work spoke of distant others not as physical entities, but as people with social and emotional lives, and the addition of the body into this narrative therefore can be seen as coming from a literal and physical encounter with images.

This encounter described by Belting can go some way to accounting for the presence of the body in relations between staff and images, if we accept that to encounter an image we must do so through our physical and imaginative selves. However it does not fully account for the blurring of boundaries between pictures and people which we have seen throughout this thesis and indeed these embodied practices can be seen as continuations of this blurring. Therefore the process of performance which Edwards suggests, and the triangulation suggested by Belting, both amount to similar approaches albeit with differences, which emphasise the role of the social in images. However what we see above is more akin to the role of the image in people, because images are not only being produced by these interactions, but people are being produced as well. In this way, perhaps Elkin's notion that objects 'stare back' is useful, because it implies the two-way transformation (1999:35) much like Pinney describes corpothetic relations to be (Pinney 2004:193). By that I mean that when images are embodied in this way so as to allow the experience of the imagined pain of another, to form an imagined friendship with another, or most clearly, in the case of Edinburgh Amnesty group when you actually become temporarily the person depicted in the image, then we can see the boundaries between images and people so radically

destabilised as to suggest that perhaps imposing this distinction is false. Rather we must think of people not as separate from images, but look at the ways in which images can become one with people through these bodily and imaginative processes.

Strathern suggests something similar when she talks about objects in Melanesia as being real parts of people, rather than separate from them (Strathern 1988:161). By this she means that identity in her fieldwork was not centred on the individual and society, but was multiple and included both male and female as well as objects in an identification (ibid:171). The same can be seen in imagined identification, which in this case constituted the inclusion of images in the onlooker's identity in order to make the imaginative leap to distant others. In this way the dichotomy between subject and object can be seen as destabilised (Pinney 2005:269), opening up an interesting avenue for thought which places the image, and the person encountering the image, in a relation that both changes and is changed by it. This has a bearing on discussions mentioned early on in the thesis about what, if any agency we can attribute to images themselves. If images and people come together through embodied interactions then quite clearly images are implicated in the resulting transformation in the person, which clearly is an agency of sorts itself. However that does not answer the question about where this agency comes from in terms of Gellian agency through human investment, and Latourian agency as a product of networks.

As discussed, Gell primarily sees the agency of images as displaced human agency, made to seem unique by its position in a nexus of multiple human agencies (Gell 1998:12), while Latour sees objects as 'fully-fledged actors in collectives of activity that include humans and non-humans' (1999:174). I would suggest that embodied relations with images do not fit neatly into either of these theories. There is nothing to support the proposition that images have their own goals and desires as Latour suggests (ibid), and as discussed in Chapter 7, social relations between humans determine much of image use and circulation, showing a high degree of agency in the process. However there is ample evidence that images act outside of human intention through their fusion with people which is transformative of both person and image and therefore the product of neither. A possible answer can be found in Sansi-Roca's assertion that agency does not always have to go hand in hand with sentience: 'in certain cases, the agency of things does not derive from the abduction of a mind, the

attribution of thought, but it comes from the evidence of their physical presence and its dialectical relation with the human body' (Sansi-Roca 2005:150). Therefore things can act without thinking about it.

In *Thinking Through Things* (Hearne, Holbaard & Wastell 2006), the authors call for us to keep an open mind about the agency of objects because while many people in Euro-American contexts may make the distinction between objects and people, it does not necessarily follow that everyone else will. I therefore turn to my informants for the answer to this question of agency, and find that for them, objects fill the role of agent more neatly than they do Gell's notion of them as simply carriers of human agency. I say this because of the ways in which people talk about and talk to images, and embody and are transformed by them. If staff can talk about images as having 'the power to change' and can to talk to images as if they were equals, then it seems that the question of where this agency comes from can be answered best by them. If they locate agency in images then that is where it resides, at least in the context of this environment and these informants, regardless of the fact that these pictures have not displayed intentionality. As Sansi-Roca suggests, agency does not always manifest in intent. Therefore I offer not an answer to the question of where images gain agency generally, but rather put forward a suggestion that to answer this question we take our cues from the people we are working with, as we would for understanding any other aspect of social life.

Conclusion

Despite AIUK's attempts to construct a visual narrative about rights which is not based on physical pain through using images which are not of suffering bodies or violence, the image of pain finds its way back into campaigning in novel ways. Images are shaped by their performance when they enter the social world and it is through the performance of pain alongside the images that it persists. Pain is imaginatively rendered, physically embodied, and explicitly shown at student and local group events through interactions between members, images and the public. The mechanisms by which this is achieved have been discussed and shown through ethnographic examples. Explanations have been sought for how this disjuncture

between AIUK's intended narrative and actual uses of images came about, through looking at AIUK practice in terms of a lack of interaction with local group activities and a level of detachment which means that local groups are allowed or expected to do things differently from AIUK because of different responsibilities. While AIUK see their responsibility as an organisation to dislodge pain from their narrative, they accept different responsibilities from local groups who are focussed on a different set of campaign objectives.

The importance of pain for local groups has been discussed as both a response to wider media practices, and most importantly as a motivational tool in the form of embodied learning. I have suggested that for local groups, pain becomes important because of its ubiquity in media narratives and its disjuncture from 'normal life' but it remains unreal because of its individual and body-bound connotations. In order for groups to understand and relate to the people they campaign for, they undertake embodied learning through experiencing pain and conditions of discomfort or restraint. In doing this, group members said that they felt 'closer' to the people they campaign for, yet maintained a strong sense of difference expressed through the need to understand pain and the contexts that produced it. It is through the embodied techniques which recognise both similarity and difference that groups imaginatively identify with distant others in ways which produce and support their involvement in activist activities. In this way, I suggest that pain rather than being an intensely personal experience is being used as a social one as part of a wider process of embodied engagement which groups undertake and is not separate from other forms of imagined relation such as enlivening images and performances as victims.

In engaging in embodied ways with victims of human rights abuses, local groups are being transformed and are transforming the images in ways which make imaginative relating possible. I have suggested that the focus on pain and the body does not denote a form of physical determinism, but is a reflection of the way that images interact with people via bodies. The process of embodiment suggests that images and people are not so different that we can rule out images as agents, rather since those involved consider them as agents, that is how this thesis intends to define them. In the lights of these considerations, the next chapter will attempt to explain the process of imaginative relating that took place as something that is profoundly influenced by

these image-mediated embodied experiences of distant others to suggest that, in combination with other processes of identification, embodied experiences facilitate a relation with others that puts informants in a position of responsibility to act on behalf of others. In the following chapter I attempt to sum up the use of images in imaginative relating as they have transpired throughout this thesis to suggest that the consideration of how images act to mediate identification offers new and interesting ways to understand the process of the imagined identification of 'empathy' and its role in human rights.

Chapter 10: Beyond Empathy

I now return to the questions raised at the start of this thesis: what do human rights images do, and how can they enhance our understanding of rights as a social practice? The broadness of these questions precludes me from providing a final and comprehensive account of what human rights images do. Through narrowing the focus to specifically examining Amnesty International UK images, in the organisational and group contexts- that is to say, activist contexts- some themes have emerged which go some way to answering these questions. Throughout this thesis, images have emerged as being intimately bound up with ideas of humanity, empathy, and moral community. I have suggested that images have a history of being used as claims for rights through recognition of the humanity of those depicted suffering. Images as they have been used by staff at Amnesty are in some ways firmly within this tradition. Staff spoke of images as having a role in rights through conveying humanity, and planned campaigns accordingly in order to maximise imaginative identification with distant others. However rather than conveying this recognition of shared humanity through a shared capacity for pain, staff have consciously undertaken a visual approach to humanity which lies in what they call 'empathy' as the means of relating.

I have shown this to be distinct from sympathy through its focus on similarity to a particular audience, and an aversion to showing people in pain. I have discussed how staff hope to achieve this empathy, and I gave examples of how they undertake it themselves through forming relationships with pictures of prisoners of conscience which operate on the same principle of compressing space and difference to create moral closeness. While this seems in many ways to be a coherent project working much as staff imagine, when the images move into different contexts of engagement, for example with local groups and the audiences at events, images are related to and performed in ways which suggest that the process of imaginative relations undertaken are more complex than Amnesty's model suggests. We see that for members of the public to take action, imaginative relations have to be formed which involve both difference and similarity. People who related with only the representational similarity with which Amnesty attempted to encode images did not find enough to respond to

images as claims for change. It was only when suffering was returned to images, either through knowledge or performance, that people were able to relate in ways which prompted action. Groups used a knowledge of pain to form connections with distant others, which while allowing a relation of closeness, highlighted the difference in circumstances necessary to see distant others as needing intervention, thus creating responsibility.

In this section I discuss what images do then, in terms of facilitating imaginative relations which make images into rights claims, and how this relates to ideas of how empathy works, or can work to create moral responsibility. While the findings of this thesis are largely restricted to the uses of images by staff and activists, they suggest something of the potential for engaging with rights claims. Throughout the thesis imaginative identification has taken place socially, and is learnt by those involved with rights. Through this learning of how to identify, or how to 'empathise', those involved recognise themselves as having responsibility. It is also a learning process that takes part in relatively closed social groups, as the chapter on Distribution discusses. This suggests that for imaginative relating to be undertaken in this manner, certain conditions must be present. I suggest that imaginative identification which leads to action is at its most effective when facilitated through embodied relations with images which allow for both similarity and difference to be experienced, rather than simply to be seen. In this way I hope to suggest that what images do can be seen as far more than simply representing others, rather they allow for embodied relations which mean that claims for rights are not simply read, but experienced. It is the experience of another person's rights which means for staff and local groups that they cannot be ignored, thus facilitating action for human rights. The process of imagined identification called empathy, that staff perceive as unique, can be seen in fact as not so different from those of enlightenment thinkers discussed at the start of this thesis, suggesting that 'empathy' is not an entirely new phenomena in respect to Amnesty campaigns. This process, I hope to show, is informed by ethics, and at the same time creates ethical obligation.

Recognising the Rights of Others: Empathy and Distance

The version of imaginative relating through images which Amnesty staff hope to achieve, and that which emerges throughout this thesis through ethnographic attention to response and use of images, are clearly not the same. Imaginative relating which recognises the rights of others must have an awareness of difference in order to recognise the need of another for intervention. This was the case for members of the public like Paul in Chapter 8 whose imagined identification prevented him from acknowledging the rights of Zarganar. However the same process was also shown to be happening in reverse where staff and local group members were concerned.

Staff, who have an intimate knowledge of difference which they describe in terms such as lack of 'freedom', 'safety', and of course 'rights', there is a need in the office to create similarity through relating with images as fellow staff, with similar interests, as shown by their practice of talking to pictures. Staff work in an environment where facts and legal language about rights are regularly available to them through the mechanisms of the organisation (Wilson 1997), as discussed in Chapter 2, through intranet and reports. In this context the ability to relate to others was contingent on returning 'humanity' where it was perceived to have been lost in the knowledge of abuses and their rendering as facts and reports. Therefore the focus on cultural similarity and 'humanising images' can be seen as a response to a wider issue of how human rights are represented through the language used by those working in the field. For staff victims of abuses needed to be rendered similar through their humanity (as defined by them as similarity) because this was missing in staff experiences of rights claims. However for local groups, who were working in a different knowledge context, one not concerned with legal definitions of rights and reports written in a legalistic style, similarity was sought elsewhere.

Local groups are delivered material by AIUK which is based on Amnesty's own model of audience as people like themselves, discussed in Chapter 4, and which contains all the focus on similarity which they themselves require to recognise the need for their work. Local groups then actively undertake to return a knowledge of the situations of difference through performances of pictures which return contexts of pain and suffering. This is because while for Amnesty staff the context of rights abuses is defined by a clinical account of abuses obtained from reports, for local groups it is defined largely by Amnesty's own material. It is therefore lacking in this

context of abuse that allows difference to be understood. For groups seeking out pain can provide a knowledge of this difference, however it can also provide a concrete link for imaginatively identifying in ways that produce action.

It is therefore important for those working in activism for human rights to imaginatively relate in ways which recognise similarity and difference. Only when a knowledge of similarity and similar humanity, forged through being 'like us' socially, is coupled with a knowledge of inherent difference and otherness which has been achieved by an understanding of different circumstances, thus preventing identification from being all encompassing, are conditions achieved which allow activists to act. It is the inclusion of both similarity and otherness in experiences of what staff call 'empathy', which allow the recognition of the rights of others, because they are like us but live in inherently different positions. For activists working in rights then, empathy is experienced as a combination of a knowledge of conditions of exception and a knowledge of similarity. I would speculate that similar conditions must be met for those not working in rights or activism to empathise in ways that produce action, as exemplified through encounters with members of the public, such as Paul.

Groups display clearly the interplay between similarity and difference which is at the heart of activist imaginative relating. In local groups, unlike Amnesty, or disinterested members of public, both difference and similarity are actively sought. Groups are not subjected to a barrage of information about people in rights violations, but neither are they ignorant of it. Rather what take place are practices whereby local groups seek at times a framework in which to appreciate difference, by exploring contexts of violation using techniques of personification, and shared pain, to facilitate imagined intimacy.

I noticed during the demonstration in Edinburgh discussed in the previous chapter that embellishments were being added to people's 'characters' such as details about their lives about which we had no information and which were speculative. This included facts about their lives such as familial situations, stories about how they got involved in campaigning, and of course why freedom in Burma was important to them. At one point I overheard Siobhan telling a story about an altercation with a

military official in Burma over meeting up in a small group which was of course banned under the Junta. I asked Siobhan afterwards about these embellishments, or in her word 'stories', and she told me that:

> '*I don't know why I did it, I just started thinking about what this person might be like, you know, what their life might be like in Burma, the sort of things that happen to end in imprisonment like this, things I hadn't really though through or talked about before...I thought about things I'd seen and read I suppose as examples of that to get a general idea then started to fill it in*'.

This process is quite similar to that which Amnesty staff undertook with Htein, and reflects a similar desire for a relation which is based on intimacy, and which imagines details about prisoners which render them more 'human' in the sense that Amnesty imagined. However during the same demonstration, narratives of suffering and pain were added through her performance of pictures, discussed in the previous chapter. For Siobhan it was important to think through an imagined life history as well as thinking through the pain and suffering which that life history entailed. For members of local groups this creates a relation of both similarity and of inherent difference because this pain is for them not a way of life, even if they can imagine what that would be like.

This recognition of similarity and otherness can be seen as important in the forming of imaginative relations which facilitate a recognition of the humanity of others, and consequently recognising their claim not to suffer. Put in a different way, we can suggest that to recognise the rights of others we must not identify with an individual at the expense of the wider social context. Where one of these features is lacking, those working in the human rights industry have been shown to undertake social practices that restore the balance. This approach to empathy echoes Primo Levi's quote about Anne Frank, in Chapter 3 of this thesis, which criticises empathy as responsible for relations which focus on a single Anne Frank, rather than the wider situation of the holocaust (Levi 2000:40). For Levi, as for activists in this thesis, a balance must be sought between allowing yourself emotional responses, and an academic rigour which takes into account the wider situation. Neither should one remove the identification completely, which Levi sees as important, otherwise a person becomes merely an example (ibid). Levi uses his experiences of the Nazi

killing squad Special Squad to put forward the notion that one must blend emotional empathy and intellectual rigour in order to understand atrocity (ibid:139). Though he was talking of perpetrators of atrocity in this instance, we can see this same blend of rigour and identification in the identifications formed by those involved with activism, to understand situations and people who are suffering rights violations. Levi's approach then, can be coupled with Levinas' account of rights as recognised through recognising the otherness of others (Levinas 1993:116) discussed in Chapter 8, to suggest that the process at work here is blending rigour and emotion in ways which hold on to otherness in the face of similarity, thus allowing for the recognition of rights.

The importance of an awareness of difference for activist identifications with others answers concerns raised in Chapter 3 of this thesis that addressed the limits of compassion. In that section I discussed Arendt's position that emotional identification as a basis for politics has no longevity, and creates an unequal relationship (Arendt 2006:89). This was situated in relation to a visual practice that has traditionally sought emotional responses from onlookers in order to create change (Chapter 3), and suggested that used in this way, images were intended to create compassionate sympathy through depicting pain. In these critiques, I would suggest, an unnecessary division is created between emotional and intellectual engagement (for example in Arendt 2006; Barthes 1997; Sontag 2004). The ways in which local groups and staff blend emotional engagement with human rights victims, of quite an intimate nature, with research and rigorous readings of situations, suggests that there is room for both an emotional identification garnered through images, and a narrative and understanding of the context of injustice they come from. This feeds directly into the practice sketched out above of recognising difference and similarity. Activists sought emotional engagement with individuals through both pain and similarity, but tempered this with intellectual engagement that prevented a full merging of identity, and allowed understanding of the social and rights context to be maintained.

Similarly concerns about the effect of images of suffering can also be rethought in light of local group practices, to suggest new ways of thinking about the role of suffering and pain in forming relationships of empathy and recognising rights. As discussed, images of suffering have been criticised for creating the expectation that

for certain peoples and places, suffering is normal (Campbell 2002; Perlmutter 1998; Boltanski 1993). They have also been critiqued for making people into victims, thus creating an unequal power relationship (Malkki 1996; Ignateiff 1998), and for their role in jading the public who are over exposed to pain (Sontag 2003; Moeller 1999; Feldman 1994). In the use of suffering by groups, as discussed in the previous chapter, the role of pain has been reconsidered. Rather than pain being the unifying aspect of humanity, as Enlightenment thinkers suggest (Hume 1978; Smith 2011), pain has been used in novel ways to recognise both difference and similarity. Groups use pain to unite them with others, by having their own experiences of discomfort, and also use these experiences to create knowledge of difference in circumstances, thus suggesting that it is not inherently alienating (Scarry 1985) or the one unifying feature of humanity (Hume 1978). Groups are shown to persistently return pain to the narrative of rights, however in active and involved ways, through performances and practices of images, thus avoiding the fatiguing, disengaged exposure to images that is of concern. For groups, understanding pain is an important part of understanding rights, but pain is treated by activists as an exceptional state, rather than the norm, and because it is part of a dynamic that seeks also similarity, it is not othering or productive of unequal relationships, in the activist context. Informants offer alternative ways to understand the effect of pain and images of pain on a circuit of rights claims.

Imagined identification can be seen as a product of both identification with individuals, and recognition of their states of exception which render then different, largely realised through attention to contexts of pain and suffering. In many ways then, the staff- identified project of removing sympathetic relations from empathy has not been achieved. While the focus on seeing from another's point of view, rather than feeling their pain, at first seems novel and different, in practice we can see that pain persists in the narrative as a way to recognise potential similarity, and yet difference too through an absence of pain. However I would suggest that the process above does not fully account for the nuances of the relations being formed. To put it another way, it does not account for the empathy that was at work here. Rather than simply using pictures to form imaginative identifications, groups and staff based these relations on embodied experiences of distant others facilitated through images. It was through these embodied relations, which took imaginative relations beyond

those based on looking at an image to ones based on feeling and experiencing an image viscerally, which turned relations into imperatives for action. In other words embodied ways of experiencing images allowed those involved to feel responsible for distant others. Thus the relation can be seen to go beyond empathy, as Amnesty staff imagine it, or as thinkers such as Levi describe it, towards identification which appreciates this similarity/difference dynamic experientially and physically.

Embodied Empathy

The previous chapter discussed embodied experiences of pain as important for local groups to 'really understand' the situations of distant others. I discussed how this use of pain was a way of connecting with others as well as a way of appreciating difference. The Cambridge cage and local group skits were given as examples of times when having an actual experience of pain, or of being a prisoner, were crucial to their processes of imaginative relating. The same can be said for the practices of enlivening images that staff and local groups undertook. For staff this practice of treating a picture of a prisoner allowed them to experience the imagined identification with that prisoner in a practical sense, by acting and performing the relationship through talking to and gesturing to the image, thus experiencing it in a social, and indeed physical way. Local group situations like that in Edinburgh where activists wore pictures of prisoners, and performed them, allowed imaginative relations which understood the prisoners as 'alike' as Amnesty imagined.

Speaking to activists, I discovered a common theme in discussions about the embodied practices mentioned above. That is the relating of these experiences to an imperative to act. I would suggest that while imaginative relating allows one to recognise the rights of others, informants in this study used embodied relations to turn this recognition into responsibility. Activists experience, through embodied identifications, an imperative to act. They therefore ultimately read images in this way not simply as claims for rights, but as claims on the individual to act to secure these rights. Those in the Cambridge cage spoke afterwards of the experience of being in there as '*really bringing it home...I get it...I get why I need to be in Amnesty*' (Andrew, in conversation, November 2010). Others spoke of having similar

experiences with the cage which inspired them to '*do all I could so that no one has to live in a cage like that...*' (Rachel, interview, February 2011) implying that the experience of living in the cage had altered her perception of what it is to need rights to be protected. However it is not only the visceral experience of suffering that was mentioned alongside an increased imperative to act. When imaginative identification through similarity was embodied, the same imperative can be found. Siobhan spoke to me about her embodied experience of her prisoner of conscience and said, in a semi-joking way, that '*now I've been him I can hardly ignore him!'* (Siobhan, in conversation, September 2010). The flippancy of tone however was countered later in the conversation when she told me that since the demonstration she '*can't get him off my mind'* and '*I feel responsible somehow, like I really do know him*' (Siobhan, in conversation, September 2010). The word responsible speaks volumes. Versions of this word were often associated with these embodied experiences, words like obligated, which denote the same idea that there is an imperative to act.

This was most clearly explained to me by a local group member who I interviewed immediately after she spent her first night in the Cambridge cage. She told me that now she '*can't ignore these people*'. Further on in the interview she suggested that it was the immediacy of the experience in the cage which '*really affected*' her. She said that '*once you've done something like that, where you're actually feeling what it's like not just thinking about it*' that you '*get it*' (Rachel, interview, February 2011). I would suggest that Siobhan's experiences of imaginatively relating to a prisoner of conscience were similarly effective because she had embodied him and performed him. She had been working on this case for several months, however had only spoken of not being able to forget him after the demonstration. This suggests that it is after the embodied experiences 'bring it home' that another person is like you or in pain, and usually both, that they become impossible to ignore, thereby changing the relation from one which recognises others, to one which is responsible for them.

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, in many academic publications the role of empathy in human rights and humanitarian work is treated with scepticism (Arendt 1990; Ticktin 2006). Ticktin suggests that empathy is responsible for a simplification and depoliticisation of humanitarian action and issues through its focus on emotion and physical suffering, to the detriment of a knowledge of the background and

individuals involved (2006:35). This criticism is especially attached to images because of their role in facilitating these relations, as discussed in Chapter 3. The central concern of Azoulay's *Civil Contract of Photography* was to think 'beyond guilt and compassion- outside the...framework of empathy of regarding the pain of others- on the basis of civic duty' (Azoulay 2008:88-89). For Azoulay, as for others, relying on emotional empathy to motivate action is likely to lead to a fatigued, passive, desensitised spectatorship (ibid:165). It suggests that there is little place for emotional identifications with those in human rights situations, because it subsumes their ability to claim citizenship through images, and consequently rights based on justice (ibid:86). Rights must be read in images, and there must be space away from emotion to be able to achieve this (ibid:166).

Yet at the same time there are calls from other quarters for the 'return of emotion' (Linfield 2010:4; Batchen 2012) when using images of human rights for social change. Most famously there is Linfield's recent book which suggests that 'in showing a bad world photojournalists force us to imagine a better one' (ibid 39). In both Azoulay's and Linfield's approaches there is a concern with the ramifications of 'passive consumption' of suffering through images of distant others in situations of atrocity (Azoulay 2008:165; Linfield 2010:7), echoing the long term concerns with fatigue in the face of horror (Sontag 2003; Moeller 1999; Feldman 1994). Azoulay proposes 'rehabilitating the relation' which we have with images so that we read them rather than simply experience them (2008:166), and in doing so see them as claims which call upon us to act (ibid:197). Linfield suggests that passivity can be overcome with emotional engagement (2010:60). Both authors are calling for retraining and conscious endeavour to understand and respond to images of suffering in order to transform seeing into action (Linfield 2010:60; Azoulay 2008:169). This endeavour, I would suggest, is what has led activists to the form of empathy which they undertake.

This retraining can be seen as similar to the approach by Amnesty staff and local groups to engaging with images actively and in embodied ways. However the engagement that they undertake is neither a reading of the image, nor the embrace of the emotion of horror. Instead staff and local volunteers suggest a further way of undertaking active engagement which is through the embodied experiences of relating to others. In this way a relation is formed like the one Azoulay calls for,

which reads into pictures a need to respond and take action (Azoulay 2008:169). In the case of staff and volunteers involved with Amnesty, the immediacy of the embodied experiences of distant others, and the narrative practices around the images which involve both awareness of individuals and imaginatively relating to them, as well as the connections made with suffering and the situations of these people, in the words of one informant '*makes it real, so you know you have to do something*' (Bill, in conversation August 2011). For staff and volunteers therefore, building these embodied connections through images creates the moral responsibility which AIUK staff seek to foster, but not in the ways originally planned. Rather than empathy through similarity, staff and local groups go beyond empathy to read images by applying both the imaginative relation and the contextual knowledge to embodied experiences.

While staff and volunteers suggested to me that relating to individuals through images and other embodied practices were 'reminders' about what they were doing I would suggest that they serve a further purpose as well. They not only remind members of the need to act, they also create that need for them. When members had been in the Cambridge cage they spoke afterwards of '*not being able to ignore it*' and that they felt '*like, how can I go on as normal knowing that people have to live in these situations*' (Jamie, in conversation, December 2010). Similarly after the demonstration in Edinburgh a member of the group told me that '*I really feel like I'm kinda him you know, I don't just feel like him I feel like I am him or I could be if it was different*' (David, in conversation, September 2010). The immediacy of the physical experience which blurs boundaries for people with those they are campaigning for, is combined with a knowledge of the situation and expressions of pain and suffering. They work not only as reminders, but to make rights situations immediate for group members in a way that '*only actually feeling it can be*' (David, in conversation, September 2010). In doing so they create a relation to rights and distant others which they feel cannot be ignored. They are therefore constructing relations through images and image practice which demand their intervention, and therefore their work in human rights.

There have therefore been genuine departures from theories of empathy, compassion, and how they work to create responsibility for distant others, as there have been

apparent departures. I make this distinction because it is tempting to see the processes being undertaken by informants as new. However Amnesty's creation of campaigns based on empathy without pain, and groups' novel use of embodied experiences, go beyond the emotion versus reason debates that have been in existence since philosophy was in its early days. While these seem like new moves, they in fact echo things that have come before them, but with new twists and applications. Empathy, or imagined identification, has been shown to be a prerequisite for acknowledging rights, but not the only one. Knowledge of pain also has to be returned to the narrative, suggesting that it is not that different from campaigns that have gone before which focussed on pain. Equally, while embodied relations seem to break out of the mind-body dualism, they are not completely new to how we understand moral responsibility either.

Hume talks of the contagion of pain, of feeling physical discomfort when seeing another being operated on (Hume 1978:605). Adam Smith, equally, talks of something that is verging on embodiment:

> 'Though our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. We must place ourselves in his situation...and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them.' (Smith 2011:4).

Clearly there are some similarities here between what AIUK staff were undertaking with embodied and corpothetic relations with images. Smith speaks of becoming the same person, of a mimesis much like Taussig describes (Taussig 1994:19), that is not entirely different to what staff and other activists experienced. This suggests that while new and novel experiences of what it might mean to care about distant others in an age of globalism, through images, are rooted in a particular tradition, they have not completely escaped. It is the particular version of empathy that groups and staff form that is based on a blending of emotion, embodiment, and intellectual engagement that is productive of new relationships with distant others and with rights. However these aspects alone are not new, they are firmly rooted in a tradition, suggesting that it is not that groups completely reinvent the concept of empathy, but rather that they adapt it for their own uses, and in doing so reinvent it, allowing them

to move beyond empathy in the narrow sense which it has previously been used.

The Ethics of Seeing

If what images do can be broadly linked to the process of embodied identification and the consequent reading of images as claims for intervention, then this still begs the question of why informants undertook this type of identification. I would suggest that this way of relating to images and others is in fact a question of ethics, as created and revealed through practice, rather than of formalised systems. Participants in this project tended to view and talk about human rights as 'Moral Questions', while practices around images were seen as ways of behaving and acting in the day to day, unconnected to these large questions of morality. These day to day activities nevertheless reveal and create expectations and beliefs about right and wrong, and in fact constitute moral and ethical practice themselves. In this way the broader ethical considerations of human rights can be seen at many junctures to be informed by 'ordinary ethics', that is, the decisions about rights and wrong that are taken routinely every day (Lambek 2010:11). I have tried throughout the thesis to tease out some of the ways in which practical day to day decisions and ethics meet, such as how selection of images presupposes certain ideas about right and wrong representation, violence, and victimhood (discussed in Chapter 6). In the following section I address this relation more explicitly using Lambek's model of everyday ethics and drawing out an ethics of looking at images that is expressed in day to day practices (Lambek 2007; 2010). This is not meant to be a full account of ethics and the role of morality in human rights, but rather is an attempt to illuminate certain practices around images as ethical, and to look at the implications of this for understanding how informants act to produce identification that recognises responsibility.

Anthropologists have a relatively small, but growing, body of literature that deals with morality and ethics explicitly (see Csordas 2013). Traditionally ethics have tended to be based on the Durkheimian model of morals as a set of social practices rather than natural or legislated law, policed by social pressure, suggesting that morality and culture are congruent (Durkheim 1925, 1906, 1887). Alternatively they have been based on a Foucaultian concern with freedom and self-making in relation to ethical acts (Foucault 1997). However it has been pointed out that while these

approaches have gone far in widening concepts of morality, framing morality as societal can be limiting in that it makes it difficult to 'to analytically separate a moral realm for study' (Zigon 2007:132). While it is now widely accepted among anthropologists and social scientists morality can be understood through acts, it is these acts at a more local level, as varying within society, rather than shared across it, that anthropologists are increasingly interested in. In a recent essay on the growing interest in morality and ethics among anthropologists Csordas highlights four current approaches to morality within anthropology (Csordas 2013:524). These are: the study of anthropology as a moral cultural system, where morality is studied in terms of moral economy and social justice (see Fassin & Richman 2009); morality in the face of social change and enforced personal freedom (see Robbins 2007); local moral worlds, where a person's individual struggle with suffering is the focus (See Kleinman 2006); and finally the anthropology of ethics, which pays attention to language and action (see Lambek 2008). It is this latter approach that I believe offers a way in to understanding the ethical practice at work in relation to human rights images, because of its focus on language and the language used by informants themselves to describe and account for their moral practice (Lambek 2010:1), and because of its focus on matching these accounts to practice and action as observed in the field (ibid), rather than formal moral codes.

Morality was an issue inbuilt into human rights practice to some extent, with expectations that informants were working in a moral industry, and that they were 'doing the right thing' (see Chapter 5). Informants tended to speak of human rights broadly using the types of terminology that might fit into moral systems described above, for example, when asking why human rights were important to them, an interview question that I used often, answers tended to revolve around formal moral codes. Answers such as *'I wanted to do something that I really believed was morally right'* (John, interview, March 2011) or other answers that referred explicitly to upholding law, itself a formal code (e.g. Laura, interview, August 2010). However when it came to image practices, and specifically the practice of empathy, informants tended to speak not of morals in the more formal sense which they did when discussing rights. The practices around images and distant others were more associated with the right way of acting towards others in a day to day sense that informants did not identify as moral, yet were regularly discussed in terms of what

was right or appropriate, and which demonstrate beliefs about these judgements. In this sense I hope to highlight an ethical practice that is concerned with 'how we should live and what kind of person we want to *be*' (Lambek 2008: 134), rather than the larger questions that arise in relation to human rights. I will address three aspects of this daily ethical practice to suggest that human rights activism is underpinned by smaller daily decisions that make empathy possible. I begin by describing the relation to distant others as a feature of what one group-based informant described as 'courteous behaviour' (Natasha, in conversation, October 2010), itself a feature of how to live and interact with others. I then go on to describe the importance of appropriateness in representation as revealing further everyday ethics, before concluding by connecting the imagined audiences discussed in Chapter 5 as a feature of everyday ethics that allows for the formation of closed communities with relatively coherent ethical practices.

The interactions with images described throughout this thesis that facilitate imaginative identification, are themselves undertaken as part of a social practice that entails a 'right' way to act towards others, even those depicted in photographs, rather than as a moral imperative of the project of human rights. In interviews with group members and staff members, mention was made often of the importance of 'seeing from another's point of view' (Valerie, interview, May 2011) with regards to victims of human rights abuses, and other people such as fellow group members, and members of the public. This was an imperative that I witnessed in practice when groups interacted with images, where the importance of trying to understand the point of view or situation a person was in was a regular feature of social practice. Often, as discussed throughout this thesis, groups and staff spoke to and about photographs as if they were people, effectively exploring and building relationships with distant others through images. When asked about this, most interviewees did not identify it as a particularly moral approach, but used expressions such as 'just polite, isn't it?' (Hamish, interview, January 2011) and described it as 'showing a bit of common decency' (Pete, interview January 2011) when exploring the process of identifying with distant others. The 'decency' that Pete refers to was elaborated in the interview as the way he would 'treat anyone I came into contact with', and indeed the way that informants treated people in photographs was not unlike the way they treated each other. This was especially true in the case of staff communications with Htein's

picture, where staff spoke to him as if he were one of them. Informants therefore practise empathy as part of a wider set of ideas about how one should or should not act towards others, rather than a conscious move to practise human rights. While of course there are differences in these interactions, as photographs of people are removed from actual people, the blurring of people and pictures which this thesis has tried to elaborate suggests that similar social practices can exist around both. Therefore empathy, as we have seen it practised by groups and staff is in fact a product of local practices around how one should act in their day to day conduct, that have been extended to include images, because of the blurring of boundaries.

Similarly the production of image-based campaigns have themselves elements of both formalised codes of ethics (for example the photo guidelines discussed in Chapter 6), and informal ideas about what is right and wrong to show that emerge through practice (for example the showing of certain types of violence, and the removal of rape-related images). There emerge slightly different practices than those specified more formally by informants,in this case the practice of ethics, that I describe in Chapter 6 as unspoken and are more seen as a case of appropriateness than ethics for staff. However as Lambek points out, practices that reveal what is and is not appropriate are also revealing an ethical process (Lambek 2010:11). In these cases I would suggest that Lambek's distinction between extraordinary ethics, with freedom as the goal, and ordinary ethics, with happiness as the goal, associated with suitable lifestyles is a useful one (Lambek 2010:20). Lambek suggests that we use the term 'judgement' to describe these sorts of ethical actions, where judgement is understood to mean action and decisions within a framework (ibid:26). Judgement is an ability to assess not just a pure moral content of an action, but also to assess that action in context and decide if deviation from pure moral obligation is needed (ibid). The decision-making behind the choices of images in AIUK campaigns, and the right way of acting towards others, because they are relatively silent in discourse, can be viewed in this way. They are decisions taken because of ideas about right and wrong, but their silence suggests that they are also the product of a framework and frame of reference that means that they do not need to be acknowledged to be practised. Judgements made by staff are made not on a pure moral code, and the inconsistencies highlighted in Chapter 6 suggest as much, so then we can view informants' actions as judgements- reactions, and deviations from a moral code. Judgement is described as

requiring 'worldliness' and an 'interest in fellow human beings' (ibid), as opposed to thinking and following a moral code, which requires only steadfastness (ibid). This rings particularly true in the case of imagined identification, where an interest in fellow human beings guides an attitude towards them that entails certain action, namely the ability to imaginatively identify with them. In this way we can understand the images practices around rights images as ethical acts, not in a formal sense, but as judgements. This is an important distinction because it suggests the everyday aspect of these decisions, pertaining as they do to how to live in the right way.

The framework referred to by Lambek is described as the context in which one must live with others, and live with the consequences of their actions (ibid:26). I would suggest that a narrower framework exists in the case of AIUK images, at once determined by ideas about ethics as it is facilitating of certain ethical practice itself. This is the relatively narrow imagination of who is likely to want to undertake the Moral Practice of human rights, as described in Chapters 5 and 7. As described, this is becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy, with audiences limited by the limited imaginations of those planning campaigns and circulation. However the limited nature of audiences and those interacting with rights allows for the development of practices like those described above. While ethical judgements are, I have tried to suggest, judgements that can transcend a moral code to make ethical actions, they are also facilitated by certain expectations, that is a broad ethical context. In this case the limiting of campaigns to those who agree with rights in the sense of rights as extraordinary ethics, I would suggest allows for the establishment of everyday norms in the ethics of what is right and wrong when relating to photographs. This was most clearly visible to me when I noticed myself and other new recruits behaving in certain ways. When I first observed staff talking to pictures I did not do that myself, but eventually I did, and by the end I believed it to be a way of reaching out and behaving courteously, much as staff described it to me in later interviews. Similarly new members to groups like the Cambridge group learnt how to undertake the cage in ways that made embodied identification possible. I would suggest that everyday ethics must therefore be considered as locally learnt, and consequently developing. Perhaps this is the key distinction between morals in the more formalised sense participants discussed human rights, and those everyday ethics described by Lambek, in that because they emerge through practice, everyday ethics are more fluid than

those acknowledged as morals. Morals have an implication of being somehow permanent, certainly they did when informants spoke about them. However in reality the framework allowing care for distant others, on which these moral codes rest, is a socially constructed, dynamic, practice of everyday ethics. This returns us to the issue raised earlier in this thesis that rights are on the one hand presented as inalienable and absolute, but on the other are part of a process of change and development. The actions of informants around images suggests something of the way in which these two aspects can coexist.

Staff and volunteers can be seen to be participating in what can broadly be described as an ethical undertaking to look at pictures in ways which engage with them, so as to allow the forming of a knowledge-emotion nexus which in turn allows the pictures to be read as claims from another person for intervention. This process goes beyond empathy as staff conceived of it. It suggests also that there are dimensions of the ethics of human rights, specifically as related to images which are not directly connected to the broad ideological imperative of human rights. Ethics in this sense can be identified as the opinions about right and wrong held by those involved which emerge through practice, suggesting that the ideological implications of rights are more nuanced than those covered by legal and overarching philosophical conceptions, at a local level at least. Throughout this thesis we have seen that in constructing campaigns, staff actions are governed by ideas of right and wrong, both individually and as an organisation or group, which suggests that rights are constructive of and integrated into a broad range of ethical and social acts which are seemingly unconnected to rights as set out by the UDHR, but are nevertheless considered by those working in the field to be inseparable. Moving beyond empathy as a means by which to understand the relation which people form with distant others is to understand this move as part of a network of micro-ethics which have emerged throughout this thesis.

Conclusion

I have described therefore an approach to empathy that allows informants to identify with victims of rights abuses in ways which recognise their rights, and through

imagined and embodied identification facilitate an immediacy that creates responsibility. This approach to empathy has been analysed in the very narrow context of the human rights activism of Amnesty staff and local groups, and shows them to have specific and distinct needs when undertaking to recognise the rights of distant others. For staff the need was to create 'humanity' through similarity which was seen as lost through the factual rendering of rights abuses they encounter. This was not always the case for local groups, who were working with Amnesty's campaigns, and sought connections through the reintroduction of pain, alongside cultural similarity. Therefore it is not an account of the wider mechanisms of empathy in relation to human rights, but rather must be seen as a particular case study of how activists' practices allow them to relate to distant others. This is a process that I have suggested must be viewed as beyond empathy, because it is not merely about relating to another, it involves a rigorous approach to understanding the context of another, and a distancing of oneself from another. I have tried to account for this approach to empathy by looking at it as part of a practice of everyday ethics that involves certain ideas about how one ought to act towards others. I have therefore suggested that the practice of reading images as claims is itself an act of ethics. In this way, what I suggest is quite similar to Azoulay's call for people to undertake to look at human rights images correctly to read claims and citizenship in them (Azoulay 2008:169). However while she calls for a conscious retraining of one's critical faculties where rights images are concerned (ibid), I suggest that in practice those informants I worked with were involved in a practice of making judgements about how to conduct themselves more generally towards others and about appropriate behaviour, that allowed for the sort of reading of images that Azoulay describes. Therefore the ethical looking that Azoulay is calling for is itself produced by ethics, in a practical and local sense, and the wider moral beliefs and practices of human rights in fact rest on these everyday ethics undertaken by people at a local level.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

This thesis represents an original contribution to the field of human rights ethnography through the study of human rights images in terms of their social lives rather than for what they show. Out of this I have produced a novel account of the processes of 'maintenance' that visual media facilitates in relation to rights practices. Maintenance is present in undertakings to relate imaginatively to others in processes which create a recognition of rights and responsibilities undertaken by activists. However it is also present in the processes of campaign design and dissemination that have been shown as a balance of interests and objectives such as marketing, audience, and practical and personal considerations, rather than as a simple encoding of one idea. The production of campaign visuals and their use to maintain rights by activists therefore suggests that while in many ways they are the product of a Euro-American social and moral context, they are not innate and must be produced by activists working on them, even as they try to produce the same thing in the public. This account suggests a rethink of rights practice and the concept of 'empathy' in light of the way in which images act on people and are used by them. In this conclusion I will summarise briefly the main findings of the study before going on to locate these findings in a wider body of literature to situate my contribution to the academic field in terms of human rights literature, anthropological methods, and theories of empathy. I conclude by offering possible avenues for further research which have emerged from this thesis to suggest that through focussing ethnography on particular mobile elements of rights, we can access a broader picture of the processes of this transnational practice.

Summary of Main Findings

This thesis identifies early on a model in AIUK which sees images as tools to 'activate empathy' and takes this as a starting point. It attempts to situate the practice of AIUK visual production in a wider field of humanitarian campaigns and legal practice to suggest that this is in fact a relatively novel undertaking, because it attempts to create imaginative relations between people which do not rely on the

motif of shared physical bodies in pain as claims to rights, as has previously been popular. However staff practices suggest that there are underlying assumptions about how people empathise and with whom people empathise, as well as differences in practice from the process of empathy or, as I have called it, imaginative relating.

Amnesty Staff have been shown to use portrait photography to convey individuals who are part of their idea of humanity which is a 'universal humanity', demonstrating this by using visual cues such as clothing, occupation, and lifestyle which staff see as signifying similarity. The result of this is that AIUK seek to visually portray people suffering human rights abuses as 'like them', and importantly, like their supporters. Their supporters are constructed imaginatively by staff as 'the audience' and attempts are made to pre-empt their responses to campaigns. Through the construction of audience its potential is limited, as practices and campaign design use models and outlets which are narrow in scope. This, combined with visual techniques which represent supporters taking part in campaigns, construct a particular vision of why one does good, and what that looks like, a vision which is informed by AIUK's own self-image. Staff identity as 'good' both personally and as an organisation is shown to be a determining factor in their decisions about campaign practice. Ideas of what is 'dignified' both for victims of abuse, and for the organisation itself are given as reasons for the omission of violence and pain in visual narratives. This suggests that for staff, certain types of violence are less acceptable than others, and that they prioritise certain types of victimhood as less dignified. Therefore the undertaking to create 'empathy' through visual techniques betrays a number of beliefs about rights, and rights campaigning, which are held by those working in the organisation.

The process of socialisation into the institutionally-held approaches to campaign imagery have been discussed, leading to the suggestion that while AIUK appear coherent and unified in its approach, there is to some degree a conscious effort made by staff to 'fit in' and make sacrifices for organisational coherence. This is seen, among other issues, in the disagreement with the use of 'positive imagery' and also through disagreements about the best choice of candidate for support. In both instances the disagreements were privately held opinions kept quiet in deference to the organisational priorities as determined through a combination of policy documents, and institutional knowledge which manifests both socially and in

practice. At other times however, staff remain remarkably united in their approaches, for example the common approach to talking to pictures of prisoners suggests that despite differences, there are practices undertaken socially, as a group, which are important to staff working in the field of rights. This was most prominently the case when undertaking the act of imaginatively relating to both their audience, and to prisoners. In these cases staff produced surprisingly coherent accounts, which I have suggested may be the result of their production socially and publicly, and their necessity to staff motivation.

Local groups have been highlighted as a key area in the social lives of images as both the first site of reception outside of the office, as well as a new area of production where campaign images are re-appropriated. We see local groups using images as AIUK staff do, as tools to connect with distant others through imaginative relations, but in different ways from AIUK staff. Local groups are shown to prioritise the introduction of pain into the narrative. This provides a context for understanding the situations of rights violation, but more importantly allows local groups to form embodied connections with distant others which allow for the recognition of the rights of others. This embodied relation, I have suggested, is undertaken as a moral imperative to 'connect' and 'understand' by activists in and outside Amnesty. Embodied experiences with images allow groups to relate imaginatively in ways which combine knowledge and experience of both pain and individuality. In doing this, activists are able to read rights images as claims.

This difference within AIUK and between local groups suggests that in the process of human rights images, we must not consider the intentions of producers. At every stage there has been change, influence and mutability which suggests that in fact images gain their meaning through interactions with people. This has implications for concepts of human rights. It also opens up new ways of thinking about a) images as hybrid with people b) images as taking their meaning from people c) how we might make connections with distant others using this knowledge d) human rights as a varied narrative.

Contribution to the Field

I have suggested that anthropological approaches to rights which focus on distant locations as the setting for understanding rights, as discussed at the beginning of this thesis, reinforce the much criticised duality between rights as local practices, and rights as a transnational practice (See Goodale 2007). In fact this creates something more than a duality, it creates a myth that 'local' appropriations of rights are somehow the remit of non-Euro-American nations and cultures, while the transnational ideology and practice of rights are cast as a direct result of a specific morality from 'the west'. This clearly leaves little room for Euro-American countries to have their own appropriations and approaches to this transnational phenomena, and attributes a great deal of power and influence to these countries in the field of human rights. This thesis, with its focus on Euro-American production of rights images, has redressed this balance somewhat by adding to a small but developing literature within anthropology that focusses on rights in this context, and the mechanisms of producing and maintaining rights through the role of Euro-American and global institutions (e.g. Ticktin 2007; Riles 2007; Kelly 2012b). The focus of the thesis on images as they travel through an institution offers a 'way in' to the dense and complicated world of institutions, by providing a road map through AIUK that was created by institutional practices themselves. It answers a direct call from some areas of anthropology to understand better the role of visual media in campaigns (McLagan 2006:224) as one of many avenues through which rights are considered and represented. The findings of the thesis confirm that rights visuals and campaigns are equally products of various invested interests and appropriations in their seeming site of origin, just as they are in countries where there is no such tradition of rights. The tradition of rights here in the UK indeed could equally be categorised as being a tradition of conflict, with a history of rights debate in politics, policy and philosophy. This debate can be seen as continued into the present even within the relatively bounded site of this study. My attention to the way in which staff construct campaigns shows that campaigns are made not as if rights were a given, and how staff debate and put their own stamp on why we should be moved to care for others. At the same time staff are grappling with an industry, and social context, which is making demands through perceived expectations. This suggests that far from being a streamlined transnational institution, in this instance the version of rights produced by

staff and the public is the result of a very local set of concerns tailored and specific to their social environment.

As well as being locally specific to the context that AIUK works in on many levels, rights have been shown to be subjected to processes of maintenance by activists through imaginative relations formed with and through images. This process of imaginative relating has been shown to have a long history, but its particular manifestation in this instance is a divergence from that. It suggests that, as proposed by Enlightenment thinkers such as Hume, rights are not natural, but rather, a recognition of the rights of others must be sought through the formation of relations which recognise their humanity. This confirms that rights are maintained, and suggests that activism is supported by these processes of maintenance, undertaken as part of a set of ideas about appropriate behaviour.

Attention to this practice as a visual one opens it up and suggests that the way in which images act on people has an important role in creating types of relating. Rather than relations which imagine distant others, in this study images act in ways which can be broadly categorised as 'enlivened'. I have explained this to mean the ways in which images take on the characteristics of people. This contributes to debates about images as discussed in Chapter 3 which ask if they are agents (see Gell 1999), have desires, and can be considered as similar to people (see Latour 2005; Mitchell 2005) by suggesting that images in human rights play a proto-humanistic role through which they are able to act on people to produce reactions and relations. Most importantly, images, specifically images of people, were shown to be agents in the beliefs and practices of my informants. While this agency derived from the human look of the pictures, and a transference of ideas about people onto pictures of people, it was clear that as well as human intentionality, these responses were affected by webs of meaning and signification that gave them scope beyond the human intentions. In the context of this study this was significant because it facilitated particular ways of relating with images that were rooted in making embodied connections with distant others. In factoring in these techniques of embodiment, which are apparent through encounters with enlivened images, a new vision emerges of the imaginative relating which takes place to recognise rights.

In this refiguring of imaginative relating, many of the previous accounts of empathy and sympathy have been discussed. The process at work in this context have been linked to several accounts of how empathy works, specifically Levi's account of rigour and pity (Levi 2000), which I discussed in the previous chapter. I suggest that in order to recognise the rights of others, an awareness of the inherent difference of others is necessary, and this has been sought in a rigorous knowledge of their situations of exception. Activists relate to images in embodied ways, creating the intimacy needed for a relation of responsibility. This suggests new possibilities for how we understand imaginative identification and theories of responsibility, opened up by the inclusion of images in this phenomena. It suggests that increasingly popular notions in philosophy that the mind and the emotions are indistinguishable from the physical and bodily world (Clark and Chalmers 2008), and recent anthropological turns towards the sensory in ethnography (Pink 2007), can be usefully applied to rights ethnography, showing that embodied practices emerge in unforeseen scenarios and with surprising consequences. Embodied practices in relation to pain, for example, suggest that while pain may be inherently othering in some ways, it can also be used to connect with others when approached in 'rigorous' and embodied ways. Embodiment in this case goes beyond simply the incidental and tactile physicality of encounters with images, to suggest that performances and uses of images in physical ways are a form of learning for some activists.

However, importantly, it also suggests that studies of empathy and imaginative relating have not been multifaceted enough in the past. Keeping as they did largely to philosophy and politics, they underplayed the practice of embodiment in imaginative relating and its importance in so much as it allowed the feeling of another's pain, rather than allowing and facilitating intellectual engagement. In order to understand how these processes work in practice, one must undertake a study with practice at its core, and for that anthropology is exceptionally well suited. To me this speaks to a wider issue of how academics identify themselves in certain fields, sometimes to the detriment of the results produced by their inquiry.

In order to undertake a study on human rights media I had to look outside many traditional anthropological methodological routes. As discussed in the methods chapter of this thesis, the methodological approach which I took borrowed from

many aspects of media and cultural studies, anthropological participant observation, and sociological qualitative enquiry, and turned these approaches to an area of investigation often categorised as political or philosophical to produce new and interesting takes on human rights campaigns and imaginative relating. When looking at mobile and shifting phenomena such as rights campaigns and indeed rights themselves, a flexible field approach is needed which can move not just in multiple physical sites, but also can be used to navigate the simultaneous sites which exist in one place. In this study images were used to great effect not only as the subject of the study, but also as the means by which I was able to engage with a set of ideas and practices which move in physical and intangible space, shifting and changing as they move. The study therefore contributes to the growing field of discussion about how anthropological methods can accommodate global phenomena and changing boundaries (see Chapter 2) by offering an example of one such undertaking. By structuring the study around the movement of images, I was able to gain insight into a cross section of a phenomenon from the inside, both in terms of being inside an organisation, and being involved in its circulation.

I suggest that concerns about accessing phenomena, and to some extent institutions which are so central to something like human rights, can be addressed through structuring a study around their own practices and movements, which in this case were provided by images. Organisations have previously been marred with the difficulty of simultaneity and the struggles of being too situated in a particular place, whereas following images allowed me to get around by moving relatively organically within the organisation through the paths of images. It also meant that I was not confined to an organisation, which would have led to me missing how many of the practices and processes depend on and are integrated with things exterior to that site. The research approach thus provided a more complete picture of the phenomenon the organisation is dealing with and involved with, namely human rights visual campaigning. In some ways I would hope therefore that this study can provide one of many new examples of fieldwork style that can be utilised in the development of the ethnographic method. However problems did arise in the undertaking of this methodological approach which bear consideration. It was possible to follow images through many stages of their social lives, however often decisions had to be made about where to 'cut off' the following of things such as images that can potentially be

endlessly reproduced. In this way there is still a large degree of anthropologist control in defining the sphere of study. It was also true that I could not follow every image produced over that time by AIUK and local groups. I selected a cross section through following images I worked with in my volunteer role, in order not just to provide a life history of one image, but also to build up an idea of images and campaigning in general. This is obviously a bias, and other ways of selecting the objects of social lives could be considered to provide an even more cross cutting account. Therefore while this study is in many ways, I hope, a template, it is also one which can be added to and refined through attention to its limitations.

## Avenues for Future Research

While this thesis addresses one aspect of human rights campaign visuals, that is, their role in imaginative relations which support rights activism and the recognition of rights in others, it is by no means exhaustive. There were avenues not explored, for reasons discussed at the start of the thesis, as well as things worth considering in light of the findings of the thesis, that can provide interesting questions for future study. As a decision was made to focus on public engagement with rights, this thesis focussed on human rights campaigning, but images have many roles in rights, discussed at in the introduction to this thesis, which could be explored through methods of social life charting. How, for example, might the meaning and knowledge which we have about institutions such as the UNHRC be expanded by attention to the important roles which images play as both evidence and education on rights? How too might historical productions such as museums be examined in terms of their treatment of rights if this was done by charting the social lives of those artefacts and the images used? Images are present in so many aspects of rights practice, and these areas remain largely unexplored. Throughout this thesis an approach to imaginative relating has been developed which comes clearly from a particular socio-historical approach to others and the individual. It would be interesting to know what role imagined relating has in other cultures, if any, and what forms of it exist. While relating to others is not a novel direction for anthropological enquiry, the process of relating to those not in an immediate proximity to you is a distinctly globalized phenomena, and is only recently being addressed by academics. This process of

imaginative relating is in a sense at the heart of anthropology, whose mission it has always been to create relations with those seemingly distant from us. In a sense the anthropological project is itself a form of imaginative relating, if we accept that to some extent a leap of imagination is required to put oneself in another's shoes in the ethnographic field. It is an imaginative leap which has made the understanding of others possible, and anthropologists have to some extent reflected on this process as it pertains to themselves (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1991; Narayan 1998). It follows however that we can now begin to look outwards to understand the imaginative relations of others.

Appendix 1: Flowchart of the organisation of AIUK.
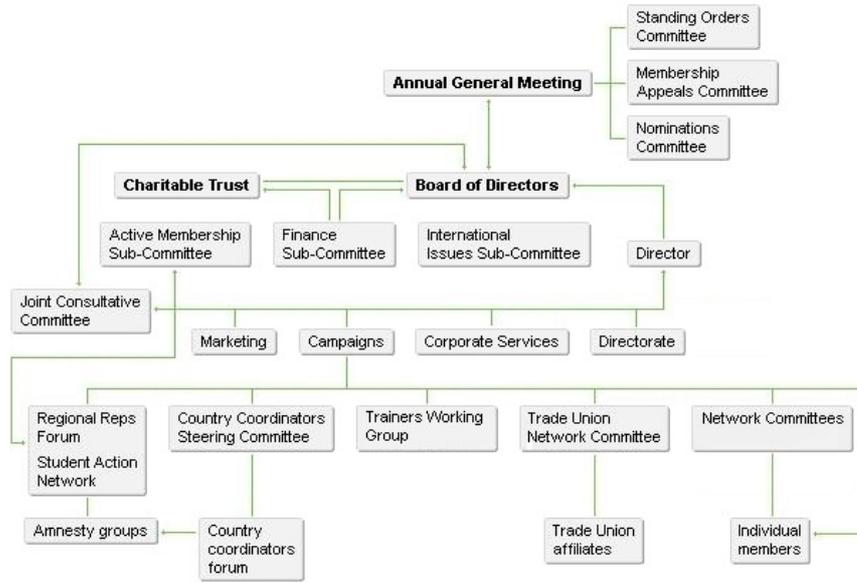
Appendix 2: Marketing Department Structure
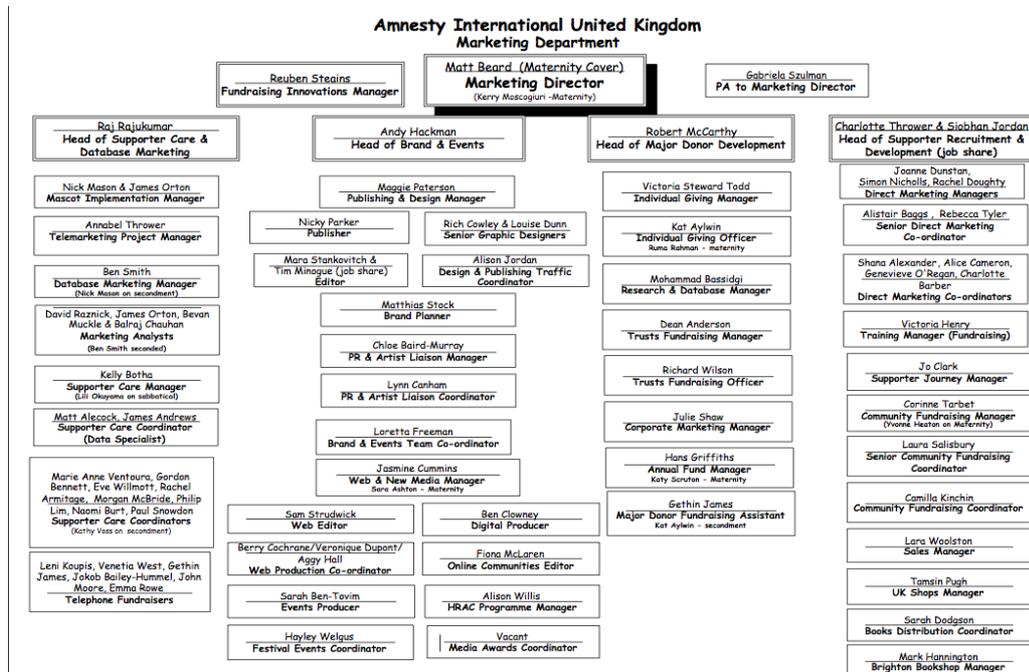
Appendix 3: Interview Structure

Introduce myself, thank them for coming, inform of the structure of interview and recording techniques. Discuss terms and allowances.

Personal/Background Questions:

1. What is your role in the organization?

2. How long have you been with the organization?

3. How did you first get involved with the organization/what did you do before?

Image Questions: produce images as an aide

4. How did you first come across the images?

5. Have you seen them anywhere else?

6. What do they think the scope of the images is?

7. What is the 'message' the photographer was trying to send?

8. What do you think about the people in the images?

9. Have you done any further research into the images since coming across them?

10. How did your organization use them?

11. What were your main considerations when devising this issue/report/publication etc.

12. How do you evaluate success or response?

13. What do you think is the main appeal of the Burma campaign?

14. How easy is it to promote Burma?

15. Does this country work fit in to your other work/wider strategy?

Organizational/Structural Questions:

16. Do you work with any other teams in this?

17. Do you share roles or work independently?

18. How many teams are involved?

19. What are your main criteria for making decisions?

Appendix 4: Semi Structured Interview Template

Introduce myself, thank them for coming, inform of the structure of interview and recording techniques. Discuss terms and allowances.

Themes For Discussion:

1. Their background/motivation

2. Their role in the organization (this question is normally good for rapport building chat)

3. Their relationship with the images/what they think of them

4. How they used the images and why

5. Have you seen them anywhere else

6. What do they think the scope of the images is?

7. What is the 'message' the photographer was trying to send?

8. What do you think about the people in the images?

9. Have you done any further research into the images since coming across them?

10. Who else worked with you on this?

11. What were your main considerations when devising this issue/report/publication etc.

12. How do you evaluate success or response?

List of Illustrations

Figure 1a: Student demonstrators, New Inn Yard, 21 March 2009.

Figure 1b: Student Demonstrators, Liverpool St, 21 March 2009.

Figure 1c: Amnesty International's Statute. http://www.amnesty.org/en/who-we-are/accountability/statute

Figure 1d: Oxfam Mission Statement. http://www.oxfam.org/en/about/what/purpose-and-beliefs

Figure 2a: The Human Rights Action Centre Entrance, Shoreditch, London, December 2009.

Figure 2b: My Staff Card, August 2011.

Figure 3a: Barnardos Advertisement photographs nos. 48 & 49, used with permission from Barnardos.

Figure 3b: From Mathew Brady's *The Dead of Antietam* 1862. Image used courtesy of the Library of Congress image archive.

Figure 3c: Jacob Riis: Boys sleeping rough Mulberry Street, Manhattan 1880. Image used courtesy of the Library of Congress image archive

Figure 3d: UNICEF fundraising advertisement 2010, issued in UK newspapers.

Figure 3e: 'You May Well be Tortured and Killed When You Return to Sri Lanka, but That's no Reason to Feel Persecuted' Newspaper campaign 1980s

Figure 3f: 'When Our Children Were Dying You Did Nothing to Help, Now Goad Help Your Children' Amnesty International IS newspaper campaigns from the 1980s

Figure 3g: 'After the Olympic Games' by TBWA Advertising for Amnesty France, 2008.

Figure 3h: Amnesty International IS web image featuring what look like dead bodies and injured people in Sri Lanka. From www.facebook.com/amnesty

Figure 3i: 'Migrant Mother' featuring Florence Owen's Thompson by Dorothea Lang. 1936. Image from http://www.loc.gov/pictures/

Figure 4a: Htein, 'Even Though I am Free I am Not' collection. By James MacKay, used with his permission.

Figure 4b: Internal mail envelope at AIUK. January 2010.

Figure 4c: Oxfam: Be Humankind. From www.oxfam.org.uk

Figure 4d: Amnesty UK: Protect the Human. From www.amnesty.org.uk

Figure 4e: 'The Forgotten Prisoners', Peter Benenson. Observer, 28th May 1961.

Figure 4f: Edinburgh Festival Fringe Flyer August 2010.

Figure 4g: Edinburgh Festival Fringe Flyer August 2010.

Figure 4h: Zarganar, from IAR campaign archives.

Figure 4i: Photo from 'Even Though I am Free I am Not' collection. By James MacKay, used

with his permission.

Figure 4j: Members of the public at Lovebox, taken by Simone. Used with permission.

Figure 4k: Students pose for publicity shots at the 'Festive Open House'. December 2009.

Figure 4l: Leaflet sent to members who have cancelled their subscription to encourage rejoining Amnesty, 2011.

Figure 5a: International Woman's Day meeting agenda, annotated. February 2010.

Figure 5b: Amnesty UK membership statistical data. From Amnesty Market Research 2009, used with permission.

Figure 6a: Members of the public make butterflies at the Hay stall. June 2011.

Figure 6b: The La Mariposa Butterfly Campaign Web Page. www.amnesty.org.uk/campaigns/reproductive-rights

Figure 6c: General Principles of Photography document used by the IS and AIUK.

Figure 6d: Screenshot of Waterboarding Ad. Taken from www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10228

Figure 6e: Protest in Nicaragua using Amnesty Butterflies.

Figure 6f: Giles Duley, 'Acid Burn Survivors'. Amnesty Media Awards runner up 2010.

Figure 6g: Giles Duley, 'Acid Burn Survivors'. Amnesty Media Awards runner up 2010.

Figure 7a: Inside Poster Power flyer, 2011.

Figure 7b: Poster Power exhibited, May 2011.

Figure 7c: Example of a poster used to promote the event in Belfast. 2011.

Figure 8a: Lovebox 2010 Poster.

Figure 8b: Amnesty stall at Lovebox, July 2010.

Figure 9a: Hamish in the Cambridge cage.

Figure 9b: Demonstrators wear pictures of prisoners.

Figure 9c: Newcastle demonstration against Guantanamo Bay detention centre.

Figure 9d: Newcastle demonstration against Guantanamo Bay detention centre.

Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1991. 'Writing against culture.' *WRITING 1*(3).

      2004. *The Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Adorno, Theodore. 2012. *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords* Columbia University Press: New York

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* London: Stanford University Press

Agre, Philip E. 1999. 'Life After Cyberspace'. *EASST (Eur. Assoc. Study Sci. Technol.) Rev.* 18: 3– 5

Alasuutari, Pertti. 1999. *Rethinking the Media Audience.* London: Sage

Allagui, Ilhem, & Johanne Kuebler. 2011. The Arab spring and the role of ICTs: editorial introduction. *International Journal of Communication*, *5:*1435-1442.

Allen, Beverley. 1996. *Rape warfare: The hidden genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia* Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press

Alston, Philip. 1982. 'A Third Generation of Solidarity Rights: Progressive Development or Obfuscation of International Human Rights Law?' *Netherlands International Law Review*, 29: 307-322

      2006. *The United Nations and Human Rights: A Critical Appraisal* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Amit, Vered. 2000. 'Introduction: Constructing the Field' in Vered Amit (ed.) *Constructing the Field: Ethnographic fieldwork in the contemporary world* London: Routledge

Amnesty Media Unit. 2005. *Groups Media Handbook* London: Amnesty UK

An-Na'im, Abdullahi. 2002. *Cultural Transformation and Human Rights in Africa.* London:Zed Books

Andén-Papadopoulos, Kar. 2008. 'The Abu Ghraib torture photographs: News frames, visual culture, and the power of images' *Journalism* 9; 5

Ang, Ien. 1994. 'Understanding Television Audiencehood' in Horace Newcomb (ed.) *Television: The Critical View* Oxford University Press: New York

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* London: verso

Avni, Ronit. 2006. 'Mobilizing Hope: Beyond the Shame‐Based Model in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict.' *American anthropologist*, *108*(1): 205-214.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1986. 'Introduction' *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspectives.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Arendt, Hanna. 1965. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* New York: Viking Press
      1990. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* New York & London: harcourt Brace Jovanovich

      2006. *On Revolution* London:Penguin

Arksey, Hilary, & Peter Knight. 1999. *Interviewing for social scientists: An introductory resource with examples.* London: Sage

Ash, Susan. 2008. "Heroin Baby" Barnardo's, Benevolence, and Shame. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *32*(2):179-200.

Azoulay, Ariella. 2008. *The Civil Contract of Photography* New York: Zone Books

Baba, Marietta L. 1986. 'Introduction'. *NAPA Bulletin*, 2:1–46. doi10.1525/napa.1986.2.1.1

Barry, Kathleen. 2010. *Unmaking War, Remaking Men: How Empathy Can Reshape Our Politics, Our Soldiers and Ourselves* Santa Rosa: Phoenix Rising Press

Barthes, Roland. 1981. *Camera Lucida* New York: Hill & Wang

　　　　1997. *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies* Berkeley: University of California Press

Batchen, Geoffrey. 1994. *Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance* New York: Princeton Architectural Press

Batchen, Geoffrey, Mick Gidley, Nancy Miller, & Jay Prosser. 2012. *Picturing Atrocity*. Reaktion Books: London.

Banks, Deena. 2003. *Amnesty International* London: World Almanac Library

Baudrillard, Jean. 1991. 'The Reality Gulf' Guardian 11th January: 25.

Bauman, Zygmunt, 1997. *Postmodernity and Its Discontents* Cambridge: Polity Press

Becker, Howard. 1995. 'Visual Sociology Documentary Photography, and Photojournalism: It's (Almost) All a Matter of Context' *Visual Sociology 10 (1-2): 5-14*

　　　　2007. *Telling about society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bell, Daniel A. 1996. 'The East Asian Challenge to Human Rights: Reflections on an East-West Dialogue' *Human Rights Quarterly* 18: 641

Belting, Hans. 2005. 'Toward An Anthropology of Images' in Mariet Westermann (ed.) *Anthropologies of Art.* London: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute and New Haven: Yale University Press.

Benenson, Peter. 1961. 'The Forgotten Prisoners' *Observer* 28 May: 1

Benjamin, Walter. 2009. *One-way street and other writings*. Penguin UK: London

Benthall, Jonathan. 1993. *Disasters Relief and the Media* London: I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd

Bentham, J. 2002. 'Nonsense Upon Stilts, or Pandora's Box Opened, or the French Declaration of Rights Prefixed to the Constitution of 1791 Laid Open and Exposed' in Cyprian Blamires, Catherine Pease-Watkin, & Philip Schofield (eds.) *Rights, Representation, and Reform - Nonsense upon Stilts and Other Writings on the French Revolution* Oxford: Clarendon Press

Berger, John. 1980. *About looking*. Random House Digital, Inc.

Bernard, Harvey Russell. 2011. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* Maryland: Rowan & Littleman

Bignell, Jonathan. 2004. *An Introduction to Television Studies*, Routledge: London

Besson, Jean. & Karen Olwig. 2005. *Caribbean narratives of belonging : fields of relations, sites of identity* Oxford, Macmillan Caribbean.

Blakemore, Steven. 1997. *Intertextual War: Edmund Burke and the French Revolution in the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, Thomas Paine, and James Mackintosh*. Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated

University Presses

Blattberg, Charles. 2009. *Patriotic Elaborations: Essays In Practical Philosophy* Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press

Bleiker, Roland. & Amy Kay. 2007. 'Representing HIV/AIDS in Africa: Pluralist Photography and Local Empowerment' *International Studies Quarterly* 51: 139-63.

Bob, Clifford. 2005. *The Marketing of Rebellion: insurgents, media and international activism* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Booth, Ken. 1995. 'Human Wrongs and International Relations' *International Affairs* 71(1):103-126

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2003. 'Participant Objectivism' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 9(2): 281-291

Bourdieu, Pierre & Loic Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Bourgois, Philippe. 2001. 'the Power of Violence in War and Peace: Post Cold War Lessons for El Salvador' *Ethnography* 2(1): 5-37

Bourriaud, Nicolas. 2002. *Relational Aesthetics* Dijon France: Les Presses Du Reel

Boltanski, Luk. 1999. *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media, and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boyle, Francis. A. 1980. 'Irrelevance of International Law: The Schism between International Law and International Politics' *The. Cal. W. Int'l LJ*, 10:193.

Brabazon, James. 2011. 'Tim Hetherington Obituary' *The Guardian* Thursday 21 April 2011

Britain, Gerald, & Ronald Cohen. 1980. 'Towards an Anthropology of Formal Organization' *Hierarchy and Society: Anthropological Perspectives on Bureaucracy* London: Sage

Brown, Wendy. 1995. *States of Injury* Princeton University Press

Brown, John, & Paul Duguid. 1991. 'Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning and innovation'. *Organization Science* 2 (1).

2000. *The Social Life of Information*. Boston: Harvard Bus. Sch. Press

Brugger, Winifred. 1996. 'The Image of the Person in the Human Rights Concept' *Human Rights Quarterly* 18(3): 594-611

Brysk, Alison. 1993. 'From Above and Below: social movements, the international system and human rights in Argentina' *Comp. Pol. Stud.* 26(3): 259-85

2002. 'Introduction' *Globalization and human rights*. California: University of California Press

Burawoy, Michael. 2003. 'Revisits: an Outline of a Theory of Reflexive Ethnography' *American Sociological Review* 68(5): 645-79

Burke, Edmund. 1982 *Reflections on the Revolution in France* London: Penguin

Campbell, David. 2003. 'Salgado and Saheil: Documentary Photography and the Imagining of Famine' in François Debrix, & Cynthia Weber (eds.) *Rituals of Mediation: International Politics and Social Meaning* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

'Atrocity, Memory, Photography: Imagining the Concentration Camps of Bosnia *Journal of Human Rights* 1&2:1

Candea, Matei. 2009. 'Arbitary Locations: In Defence of the Bounded Field Site' in Mark Antony Falzon (ed.) *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research* Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd

Carroll, Thomas F. 1992. *Intermediary NGOs: the supporting link in Grassroots development* West Hartford: Kumarian Chong

Carrithers, Michael, Steven Colins, & Steven Lukes. (eds.) 1985. *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Chatterjee, Partha. 1993. *The Nation and It's Fragments* N.J. Princeton University Press

Chayes, Abram & Antonia Chayes. 1993. 'On Compliance.' *International Organization*, *47*(2): 175-205.

Chouliaraki, Lilie. 2006. *The Spectatorship of Suffering* London:Sage

Clark, Andy. 2008. *Supersizing the Mind: Embodiment, Action, and Cognitive Extension*. Oxford University Press.

Clark, Ann Marie, & James McCann. 1991. 'Enforcing International Standards of Justice: amnesty international's constructive conflict expansion' *Peace & Change* 16(4)

Clarke, Gerald. 1993. 'People Power: NGOs and Philipine Politics Since 1986' *Philipe Q. Cult Soc.* 21: 231-*56*

Clifford, James. 1999. *'Indigenous Articulations' Contemporary Pacific* 12(2)

Cole, Arda, & Gary Knowles. 2001. *Lives in context : the art of life history research* Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Collier, John, & Malcolm Collier. 1986. *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press

Cooley, Alexander, & James Ron. 2002. 'The NGO Scramble: Organizational Insecurity and the Political Economy of Transnational Action' *International Security* 27(1): 5-39

Cooper, Frederick, & Randall Packhard. 1997. *International Development and the Social Sciences:Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* Berkley: University of California Press

Cottle, Simon, & David Nolan. 2007. 'Global Humanitarianism and the Changing Aid-Media Field' *Journalism Studies* 8(6): 862-878

Counihan, Carol. 1999. *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender Meaning and Power* NY: Routledge

Cowan, Jane K. 2006. 'Culture and Rights after Culture and Rights'. *American Anthropologist*, 108 (1): 9-24

Cowan, Jane, Marie-Benedicte Dembour & Richard Wilson (eds). 2001. *Culture and Rights: Anthropological Perspectives.* Cambridge University Press.

Crapanzano, Vincent. 2011. *The Harkis: the wound that never heals*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Crook, Tony. 2000. 'Length Matters: A Note on the GM Debate', *Anthropology Today*, 16(1): 8-11

Csordas, Thomas J. 1990. 'Embodiment and Power. Embodiment as a paradigm for anthropology'. *Ethos* 18: 5-47

2013. 'Morality as a Cultural System?' *Current Anthropology*, 54(5): 523-546.

Curtis, James. 1986. 'Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother, and the Culture of the Great Depression' *Winterthur Portfolio* 21(1): 1-20

Daniel, E Valentine. 1994. 'The Individual in Terror' in Thomas Csordas (ed.) *Embodiment and Experience: the Existential Ground of Culture and Self* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Das, Veena. 1990. 'Our Work to Cry Your Work to Listen' In Veena Das (ed.) *Mirrors of Violence: Community Riots and Survivors in South Asia* Delhi: Oxford University Press

1994. 'Moral Orientations to Suffering' in Lincoln Chen, Arthur Kleinman, & Norma Ware (eds.) *Health and Social Change* Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Dant, Tim. 1999. *Material Culture in the Social World: Values, Activities, Lifestyles* Buckingham: Open University Press

Demian, Melissa. 2011. ''Hybrid Custom' and Legal Description in Papua New Guinea.' In Jeanette Edwards & Maja Petrovic-Steger (eds.) *Recasting Anthropological Knowledge*. Cambridge: CUP.

Denise, Chong. 2001. *The Girl in the Picture: the Story of the Story of Kim Phúc, the Photograph and the Vietnam War* London: Penguin

Dembour, Marie-Benedicte. 1996. 'Human Rights Talk and Anthropological Ambivalence'. In Harris (ed). *Inside and Outside the Law*. London: Routledge

Derrida, Jacques. 1995. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* Chicago: University Press

1997. *The Animal that Therefore I am* New York: Fordman University Press

Dogra, Nandita. 2012. *Representations of Global Poverty: Aid, Development and International NGOs*. London: Tauris

Domke, David, David Perlmutter, & Meg Spratt. 2002. 'The Primes of Our Lives: an examination of the 'power' of visual images' *Journalism* 3(2): 131-159

Donnelly, Jack. 1989. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

1999. 'Human Rights and Asian Values: A Defence of 'Western' Universalism.' in Joanne R. Bauer & Daniel A. Bell (eds.) *The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights* Cambridge University Press.

Dornfeld, Barry. 1998. *Producing Public Television* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Douglas, Mary. 1978. [1970]. *Natural Symbols*. New York: Praeger

Douzinas, Costas. 2000. *The End of Human Rights: Critical Legal Thought at the Turn of the Century* Oxford: Hart Publishing

Durkheim, Emile. 1887. *Ethics and the sociology of morals*. Translated and with an introduction by Robert T. Hall. New York: Prometheus

1906. The determination of moral facts. In *Sociology and philosophy*. D. F. Pocock, trans. Pp. 35–62. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

1925. *Moral education: a study in the theory and application of the sociology of education*.

New York: Free Press.

Dworkin, Ronald. 2011. *Justice for hedgehogs*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge

Edwards, Elizabeth. 2006. 'Photographs and the Sound of History' *Visual Anthropology Review* 21(1&2): 27-46

Ehrlich, Paul, & Robert Ornstein. 2012. *Humanity on a Tightrope: Thoughts on Empathy, Family, and Big Changes for a Viable Future* Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield

Eisenman, Stephan. 2007. *"The" Abu Ghraib Effect*. Reaktion Books.

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2003. *Globalisation - Studies in Anthropology: Methodological Issues New York:* Pluto Press

Elkins, James. 1996. *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing* London: Harvest Books

            2011. 'Introduction' in Elkins, James & Maja Naef. (eds.) 2011. *What Is An Image?* Penn State University Press

Engel, Karen. 2001. 'From Skepticism to Embrace: Human Rights and the American Anthropological Association from 1947-1999' *Human Rights Quarterly* 23(3): 536-559

Falk, Richard. 1980. 'The Theoretical Foundations of Human Rights' in Paula Newburg (ed.) *The Politics of Human Rights* New York: NY University Press.

Falzon, Mark-Anthony. 2009. 'Introduction' Mark-Anthony Flazon (ed) *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality Contemporary Research* Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd

Fanon, Franz. 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth* New York: Grove

Farmer, Paul. 2001. *Pathologies of Power*, *Infections and Inequalities* California: University of California Press

Fassin, Didier. 2008. 'The Humanitarian Politics of Testimony: Subjectification through Trauma in the Isreali-Palestinian Conflict' *Cultural Anthropology* 23(3): 531-558

            2008b. 'Beyond good and evil? questioning the anthropological discomfort with morals.' *Anthropological Theory* 8(4):333–344.

            2011. *Humanitarian reason: a moral history of the present*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fassin, Didier, & Richard Rechtman. 2009. *The empire of trauma: an inquiry into the condition of victimhood*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Feldman, Allen. 1994. 'On cultural anaesthesia: From desert storm to Rodney King'. *American Ethnologist*, *21*(2): 404-418.

Feldman, Ilana, & Miriam Ticktin. 2010. 'Government and Humanity' in Ilana Feldman & Miriam Ticktin (eds.) *In The Name of Humanity:The Government of Threat and Care* (eds) Durham: Duke University Press

Fiske, John. 1987. 'Active Audiences' in *Television Culture*, Methuen: London

Fisher, William F. 1997. ''Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices' *Annual Review of Anthropology 26* : 439-464

Foucault, Michael. 1997. *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984. Vol. 1, Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. Paul Rabinow (ed.) London: Penguin

2002. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Routledge: London

Freedberg, David. 1989. *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Freedman, Des, & Daya Thussu. 2011. *Media and Terrorism: Global Perspectives* London: Sage

Freeman, Michael. 1994. 'The Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights', *Human Rights Quarterly* 16(3)

Fuller, Chris. 1994 'Legal Anthropology, Legal Pluralism and Legal Thought'. *Anthropology Today* 10(3): 9-12

Ghils, Paul. 1992. 'International civil society: international non-governmental organizations in the international system.' *International Social Science Journal,* XLIV (133): 418, 421-7

Geertz, Clifford. 1983. *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.

Gell, Alfred. 1998. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* Oxford: Clarendon Press

Gidley, Mark. 2012. 'Visible and Invisible Scars of Wounded Knee' in Geoffrey Batchen (ed.) *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis* London: Reaktion Books

Ginsberg, Faye D. 1991. 'Indigenous Media: Faustian contract or global village' *Cultural Anthropology* 6: 92-112

    1999. 'Shooting Back: From Ethnographic Film to Indigenous Production/Ethnography of Media' In Toby Miller & Robert Stam (eds.) *A Companion to Film Theory*. London: Wiley Blackwell

Geschiere, Peter, & Wim Van Binsbergben. 2005. *Commodification: Things Agency and Identities: The Social Life of Things Revisited* Munster: Lit.

Gray, David. 2009. *Doing Research in the Real World* London: Sage

Gregory, Sam. 2006. 'Transnational Storytelling: Human Rights WITNESS, and Video Advocacy' *American Review of Anthropology* 108(1): 195-204

Gledhill, John. 1997. 'Liberalism, Socio-Economic Rights and the Politics of Identity: From Moral Economy to Indigenous Rights.' In Derek Wilson (ed.) *Human Rights, Culture and Context.: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.

Gaer, Felice D. 2003. 'Human rights NGOs in UN peace operations'. *International Peacekeeping*, *10*(1): 73-89.

Gultang, Johan. 1969 .'Violence Peace and Peace Research' *Journal of Peace Research* 6: 167-191

Goodale, Mark. 2007. *The Practice of Human Rights: Tracking Law Between the Global and the Local* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Gupta, Akhil, & James Ferguson. 1997. 'Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era', in Akhil Gupta & James Ferguson (eds.) *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology.* North Carolina. Duke University Press.

Hall, Stuart. 2001. 'Encoding/Decoding' In Douglas Kellner & Meenakshi Gigi Durham (Eds.) *Media and Cultural Studies. Key Works*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hankinson, Philippa. 2001. 'Better Branding Leads to More Charitable Giving' *The Edge 7*. Swinton:ESRC

Hannerez, Ulf. 2007. 'Cosmopolitanism' in David Nugent & Joan Vingent (eds.) *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing

Haraway, Donna. 1991. 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialism in the Late Twentieth Century' *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinventing of Nature.* New York: Routlegde

Hariman, Robert, & John Lucaites. 2007. *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture and Liberal* Democracy Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Harper, Douglas. 2002. 'Talking About Pictures: a case for photo-elicitation' *Visual Studies*17(1): 13-26

Hastrup, Kirsten. 2003. 'Representing the Common Good: the limits of legal language' in Jon P. Mitchell & Richard A. Wilson (eds.) *Human Rights in Global Perspective: Anthropological Studies of Rights Claims and Entitlements* London: Routledge

Hart, Herbert. 1984. 'Are there any Natural Rights?' *The Philosophical Review*, 64(2).

Hayden, Cori. 2003. *When Nature Goes Public: the making and unmaking of bioprospecting in Mexico* Princeton: Princeton University Press

Hearne, Amiria, Martin Holbaard, & Sari Wastell. 2006. *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically* London: Routledge

Herzfeld, Michael. 1987. *Anthropology Through The Looking Glass: Critical Ethnography in the Margins of Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Himpele, Jeff. 1996. 'Film distribution as media: mapping difference in the Bolivian cinemascape' *Visual Anthropology Review*, *12*(1): 47-66.

        2008. *Circuits of Culture: Media, Politics, and Indigenous Identity in the Andes* University of Minnesota Press

Hobbes, Thomas. 1997. *Leviathan; Or, The Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil* New York: Touchstone

Hockings, Paul. 1995. *Principles of Visual Anthropology*. The Hague: Mouten

Holloway, Wendy, & Tony Jefferson. 2000. *Doing Qualitative Research Differently: free association, narrative, and the interview method* London: Sage

Horst, Cindy. 2009. 'Expanding Sites: The Question of Depth Explored' in Mark-Anthony Flazon (ed) *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research* Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd

Hume, David. 1978. (1740) *A Treatise of Human Nature* Selby-Bigge Edition Oxford:Oxford University Press

Hunt, Lynn. 2008. *The Invention of Human Rights* Norton: London

Huntington, Samuel. 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Hopgood, Stephen. 2006. *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International* New York: Cornell University Press.

Ignatieff, Michael. 1998. 'The Stories We Tell: Television and Humanitarian Aid' In Jonathan Moor

(ed.) *Hard Choices: Moral Dilemmas in Humanitarian Intervention* USA: Rowan & Littlefield

Ishay, Micheline. 2008. *The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era* Berkeley: University of California Press

Jacobson, Colin. 2002. *Underexposed: Images of the 20th Century they Didn't Want You to See* London: Vision On Publishing Ltd

Jones, Peter. 1999. 'Human Rights, Group Rights and Peoples' Rights.' *Human Rights Quarterly.* 2(1)

Kant, Immanuel. 1983. [1795]. *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays* trans. Ted Humphrey. Indianapolis: Hackett

Kearney, Michael. 1995. 'The Local and the Global: Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 547-65

Keck, Margaret, & Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists beyond borders.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press

Keenan, Thomas. 2004. 'The Mobilization of Shame' *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103 (2-3): 435-449

Keith, Linda Camp. 1999. 'The United nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Does It Make a Difference in Human Rights Behaviour?' *Journal of Peace Research*. 36(1).

Kelly, Tobias. 2009. 'The UN Committee Against Torture: Human Rights Monitoring and the Legal Recognition of Torture', *Human Rights Quarterly* 31(3): 777-800.

2012. 'Sympathy and suspicion: torture, asylum and humanity' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18: 753-768

2012b. *This Side of Silence: Human Rights, Torture, and the Recognition of Cruelty* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

Kenrick, Justin, & Jerome Lewis. 2004. 'Indigenous People's Rights and the Politics of the Term "Indigenous."' *Anthropology Today* 20(2): 4-9

Kennedy, D. 1987. *International Legal Structures*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft

2002. 'International Human Rights Movement: Part of the Problem?'. *Harv. Hum. Rts. J.*, 15: 101.

Khondker, Habibul Haque. 2011. 'Role of the new media in the Arab Spring.' *Globalizations*, *8*(5): 675-679.

Kleinman, Arthur. 2006. *What really matters: living a moral life amidst uncertainty and danger*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2000. 'The Violences of Everyday Life: The Multiple Forms and Dynamics of Social Violence' in Veena Das & Arthur Kleinman (eds.) *Violence and Subjectivity* Berkeley: University of California Press

1988. T*he Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing and Human Experience* New York: Basic Books

Kleinman, Arthur, & Jean Kleinman. 1994. 'How Bodies Remember Social Memory and Bodily Experience of Criticism, Resistance, and Delegitimation following China's Cultural Revolutio*n' New Literary History 25: 707-723*

1996. 'The Appeal of Experience: The Dismay of Images: Cultural Appropriations of Suffering in Our Times' *Daedalus* 125(1): 1-23

Korey, William. 1998. *NGOs and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Curious Grapevine* London: Saint Martin's Press Inc.

Koven, Seth. 1997. 'Dr. Barnardo's 'Artistic Fictions': Photography, Sexuality, and the Ragged Child in Victorian London,' *Radical History Review* (69): 6-45

Kumar, Amitava. 2000. *Passport Photos* Berkeley: University of California Press

LA Times. 1978. 'Can't Get a Penny': Famed Photo's Subject Feels She's Exploited' *LA Times* Spring 1978

Lambek, Michael. 2008. 'Value and virtue.' *Anthropological Theory*, *8*(2): 133-157.

2010. *Ordinary Ethics: Anthropology, Language, and Action.* New York: Fordham University Press

Latour, Bruno. 1999. *Pandora's hope: essays on the reality of science studies*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

2007, 2005. *Reassembling the Social: an Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* Oxford:Oxford University Press

Laqueur, Thomas W. 1989. 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative' in Lynn Hunt (ed.) *The new cultural history*. University of California Press.

2009. 'Mourning, Pity, and the Work of Narrative in the Making of "Humanity"' in Richard Wilson & Richard Brown (eds.) *Humanitarianism and suffering: the mobilization of empathy through narrative*. Cambridge University Press.

Law, J. 2002. *Aircraft stories: Decentering the object in technoscience*. Duke University Press.

Leach, James. 2007. 'Differentiation and encompassment: A critique of Alfred Gell's theory of creativity' in Ami Henare, Martin Holbraad, & Sari Wastell (eds.) *Thinking Through Things* (2007) London: Routledge

Levi, Primo. 2000. *The Drowned and the Saved* Abacus

Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1966. 'The Scope of Anthropology' *Current Anthropology* 7(2) 112-123

Levin, David M. 1993. 'Introduction' *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision* Berkley: University of California Press

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1991. *Totality and Infinity* Kluwer Academic Publishings: The Netherlands

1993. 'The Rights of Man and The Rights of the Other' *Outside the Subject* London: Athlone Press

Levitt, Peggy, & Sally Merry. 2009. 'Vernacularization on the ground: Local uses of global women's rights in Peru, China, India and the United States.' *Global Networks* 9(4): 441–461.

Lidchi, Henrietta. 1999. 'Finding the Right Image: British Development NGOs and the Regulation of Images' in Tim Allen & Tracey Skelton (eds.) *Culture and Global Change* London: Routledge

Liebes, Tamar, & Elihu Katz. 1990. *The export of meaning: Cross-cultural readings of Dallas*. New York: Oxford University Press

Linfield, Susie. 2012. *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

London, Jack. 1903. *The People of the Abyss* London: Echo Library

Lyons, David. 1984. *Ethics and the Rule of Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Macpherson, Crawford. 1964. *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* Oxford: OUP.

Mahoon, Maureen. 2000. 'The Visible Evidence of Cultural Producers' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29: 467-492

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* London: Routledge

   1926. *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*, London: Rowman & Littlefield

Malkki, Liisa. 1996. 'Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization' *Current Anthropology* 11(3): 377-404

   1997 'News and Culture: Transitory Phenomena and the Fieldwork Tradition' in Gupta, Akhil & Ferguson, James 1997 (Eds) *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology.* North Carolina. Duke University Press.

   2010 'Children, Humanity and the Infantalising of Peace' in Ilana Feldman & Miriam Ticktin (eds.) *In The Name of Humanity:The Government of Threat and Care* Durham: Duke University Press

Marcus, George. 1995. 'Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 95-117

   1998. *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

   2009. 'Notes and Queries' in Mark-Anthony Flazon (ed.) *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research* Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Marien, Mary Warner. 2006. *Photography: a cultural history*. London: Laurence King Publishing.

Marx, Karl. 1977a. 'The Jewish Question Revisited' in David McLellan (ed.) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* Oxford: Oxford University Press

   1977b. 'Marginal Notes to the Programme of the German Worker's Party (1875)' in Karl Marx & Frederik Engels *Selected Works* New York: International

Mauss, Marcel. 1989. *The Gift. The Form and Reason for Cultural Exchange in Archaic Societies* London: Taylor and Francis.

Mazzucato, Valentina. 2008 'Simultaneity and Networks in Transitional Migration: lessons learned from simultaneous matched sample methodology' in Josh DeWind & Jennifer Holdaway (eds.) *Migration and Development Within and Between Borders* Geneva: International Organization Migration

McLagan. Meg. 2003. 'Human Rights, Testimony and Transnational Publicity' *Public Sentiments* 2(1): 1-33

   2005. 'Circuits of Suffering.' *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 28(2): 223-239

   2006. 'Making Human Rights Claims Public' *American Review of Anthropology* 108(1): 191-195

McLuhan, Marshall, & Bruce Powers. 1989. *The Global Village: Transformations in World, Life and Media in the 21ˢᵗ Century*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mehta, Uday Singh. 1990. 'Liberal Strategies of Exclusion' *Politics and Society* 18(1): 427

Mercer, Philip. 1972. *Sympathy and Ethics: A Study of the Relationship between Sympathy and Morality with Special Reference to Hume's Treatise*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Merry, Sally Engel. 1988. 'Legal Pluralism'. *Law and Society Review* 22: 869-896

      1997 'Legal Pluralism and Transnational Culture: the Ka Ho'okolokolonui Kanaka Maoli Tribunal, Hawai'I, 1993' In Richard Wilson (ed.) *Human Rights Culture & Context: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.

      2006a. *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

      2006b. 'Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle' *American Anthropologist* 108 (1): 38-51.

      2007. *The Practice of Human Rights: Tracking Law Between the Global and the Local*. Co-edited with Mark Goodale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

      2012. 'Human Rights Monitoring and the Question of Indicators.' In Mark Goodale (ed.) *Human Rights at the Crossroads*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Meskin, Aaron, & Jonathan Cohen. 2008. Photographs as evidence. *Photography and Philosophy. Essays on the Pencil of Nature*, 70-90.

Messer, Ellen. 1993. 'Anthropology and Human Rights' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22: 221-249

Messerschmidt, Donald. 1981. *Anthropologists at Home in North America: Methods and Issues in the Study of One's Own Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Meyrowitz, Henri. 1984. *Réflexions sur le fondement du droit de la guerre*. Leiden: M. Nijhoff

Mitchell, William John Thomas. 1986. *Iconology: image, text, ideology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

      2005. *What Do Pictures Want?* London: University of Chicago Press

Mintz, Wilfred. 1985. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York and London: Sifton

Moeller, Susan. 1999. *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death* New York: Routledge.

Moore, Sally Falk. 2002. 'Certainties undone: fifty turbulent years of legal anthropology, 1949 ‑ 1999' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 7(1): 95 – 116.

Morgan, David. 1999. *Visual piety: A history and theory of popular religious images*. California: University of California Press.

Morgan, Gareth. 1986. *Images of Organization* London: Sage

Morris, David. 1991. *The Culture of Pain* Berkeley: University of California Press

Mosse, David. 2004. *Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice* London: Pluto Press

Moyn, Samuel. 2006. 'Empathy in History, Empathising with Humanity' *History and Theory* 24: 397-415

      2007. 'On the genealogy of morals.' *The Nation* 16: 25-31.

2013. 'Dignity's Due' *The Nation*

Mukherjee, Roopali. 2006. 'The Ghetto Fabulous Aesthetic in Contemporary Black Culture' *Cultural Studies*, 20(6): 599-629

Munn, Nancy D. 1983. 'Gawan Kula: Spactiotemporal Control and the Symobism of Influence' In Edmund Leach & Jerry Leach (Eds.) *The Kula, New Perspectives on Massim Exchange* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1992. *The Fame of Gawa, A Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in a Massim Society.* Duke University Press.

Myers, Fred. 2001. 'Introduction' in Fred Myers (ed.) *Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture* Santa Fe: American School of Research Press

Nagengast, Carole. 1997. 'Women, Minorities and Indigenous Peoples: Universalism and Cultural Relativity.' *Journal of Anthropological Research*. 53(3).

Narayan, Kirin. 1993. 'How Native Is A "Native" Anthropologist?' *American Anthropologist,* 95(3): 671-86

Nash, Kate. 2009. *The Cultural Politics of Human Rights: Comparing the US and UK*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2010. 'Media and the Cultural Politics of Human Rights' *CERI (CNRS) SciencesPo June* 2010

Nelson, Deborah. 2004. 'Suffering and Thinking: The Scandal of Tone in Eichmann in Jerusalem' in Paul Gilbert & Lauren Berlant (eds.) *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion* London: Routledge

New York Times. 1862. 'Bradey's Photographs.; Pictures of the Dead at Antietam'. Published: October 20, 1862 .

1915. 'Interview with Henry James' *New York Times* 12th March 1915.

Nussbaum, Martha. 1999. *Sex and Social Justice* New York: Oxford University Press

O'Dwyer, Brendan, & Jeffrey Unerman. 2008. 'The paradox of greater NGO accountability: a case study of Amnesty Ireland' *Accounting Organizations and Society* 33(7-8): 801-824

Oberleitner, Gerd. 2007. *Global Human Rights Institutions: Between Remedy and Ritual*. Oxford: Polity Press.

Ong, Aihwa. 2006. *Neoliberalism as an Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. North Carolina: Duke University Press

Orendt, Brian. 2002. *Human Rights: Concept and Context.* Ontario: Broadview Press

Ovenden, Richard. 1997. *John Thomson (1837-1921) photographer.* Edinburgh: The Stationery Office

Perlmutter, David. 1995. 'Opening Up Photojournalism' *Visual Communication Quarterly* 2(2): 45-78

1998. *Photojournalism and Foreign Policy: Icons of Outrage in International Crisis* London: Preager Paperback

Perry, Michael J. 1997. 'Are Human Rights Universal? The Relativist Challenge and Related Matters.' *Human Rights Quarterly*. 19(3).

Phillips, Laura. 2002. 'Reclaiming the Shoes of the Dead: Jenny Stolzenberg's installation, Forgive and do not Forget' *Jewish Quarterly 49(4): 5-8*

Philo, Greg, & Mike Berry. 2004. *Bad News from Israel*. Pluto Press, London, UK

Pink, Sarah, Laszlo Kurti, & Ana Afonso. 2004. *Working Images*. London: Routledge

Pink, Sarah. 2006. *The Future of Visual Anthropology: engaging the senses* London: Routledge

      2007. *Doing Visual Ethnography* London: Sage

Pinney, Christopher. 2001. *Beyond Aesthetics: art and the technologies of enhancement* Oxford: Berg

      2004. *Photos of The Gods: The Printed Images and Political Struggle in India* London: Reaktion Books

      2005. *Things Happen Or From Which Moment Does That Object Come?* In Daniel Miller (ed.) *Materiality.* Duke University Press.

Powers, Jonathan. 2002. *Like Water on Stone: the story of Amnesty International* London: Penguin Books

Price, Derrick. 1997. 'Surveyors and Surveyed' in Liz Well (ed.) *Photography: A Critical Introduction* London: Routledge

Prosser, Jon. 1998. *Image Based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers.* London: Framer Press,

      2006.'The Darker Side of *Visual* Research' in Peter Hamilton (ed.) *Visual Research Methods.* London: Sage

Provost, Rene. 2005. *International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Rabben, Linda. 2003. *Fierce Legion of Friends: A History of Human Rights Campaigns and Campaigners* Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press

Radway, Janice. 1988. 'Reception study: ethnography and the problems of dispersed audiences and nomadic subjects.' *Cult. Stud*. 2(3): 359-76

Rajaram, Prem Kumar. 2002. 'Humanitarianism and Representations of the Refugee.' *Journal of refugee studies* 15(3): 247-264.

Ranciere, Jacques. 2004. 'Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?' In *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol 103 (2/3).

Renteln, Alison. 1990. *International Human Rights: Universalism Versus Relativism* London: Sage Publications

Richardson, Frederick, & Charles Walker. 1948. *Human Relations in an Expanding Company: A study of manufacturing departments in the Endicott Plant of International Business Machines Corporation.* New Haven: Yale University Labour Management Centre

Rifkin, Jeremy. 2009. *The Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis* New York: Tarcher

Riis, Jacob. 2009 (1890). *How the Other Half Lives* USA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

Riles. Annelise. 2006a *Documents: Artefacts of Modern Knowledge*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

2006b. 'Anthropology, human rights, and legal knowledge: culture in the iron cage.' *American Anthropologist*, *108*(1): 52-65.

2001 *The Network Inside Out* Michigan: University of Michigan Press

Robbins, Joel. 2007. 'Between reproduction and freedom: morality, value, and radical cultural change.' *Ethnos* 72(3): 293–314.

Rorty, Richard. 1999. 'Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality' *The Politics of Human Rights* Ed The Belgrade Circle Verso:London

Rosen, Michael. 2012. *Dignity: its history and meaning*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge MA

Rosler, Martha. 2006. *Decoys and Disruptions: selected writings 1975-2001* MIT Press: Cambridge MA

Russell, Ruby. 2008. 'War Photography: Why We Don't Want to See It.' *Daily Telegraph*. 11 Oct 2008

Rutherford, Danilyn. 2009. 'Sympathy, State Building and the Experience of Empire' *Cultural Anthropology* Vol 24(1): 1-32

Salgado, Selbastiao. 1986. *Sahel: Man in Distress*. London: Aperture

Salzman, Todd A. 1998. 'Rape camps as a means of ethnic cleansing: Religious, cultural, and ethical responses to rape victims in the former Yugoslavia' *Human Rights Quarterly*, *20*(2): 348-378.

Sander, August, Gunther Sander, & Linda Keller (eds). 1986. *August Sander: Citizens of the Twentieth Century: Portrait Photographs 1892-1952*. USA: MIT Press.

San Francisco News. 1936. 'Ragged, Hungry, Broke, Harvest Workers Live in Squaller.' *San Francisco News* March 10, 1936

Sansi-Roca, Roger. 2005. 'The Hidden Life of Stones; Historicity, Materiality and the Value of Candomble Objects in Bahia' *Journal of Material Culture,* Vo1 10(2): 139- 156.

Scarry, Elaine. 1985. *The Body in Pain: the making and unmaking of the world* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1992. *Death Without Weeping: the violence of everyday life in Brazil* Berkeley: University of California Press

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, & Margaret M. Lock. 1987. 'The mindful body: a prolegomenon to future work in medical anthropology' *Med. Anthropol. Q*. 1(1): 6-41

Scott, Shirley. 2004. *International Law in World Politics: An Introduction* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers

Shestack, Jerome J. 1998. 'The philosophic foundations of human rights'. *Human Rights Quarterly*, *20*(2): 201-234.

Smith, Adam. 2011. [1759] *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* York: Empire Books

Smith, Benjamin. 2003. 'Images, Selves and the Visual Record: Photography and Ethnographic Complexity in Central Cape York Peninsula' *Social Analysis* 47(3): 8-26

Sontag, Susan.1979. *On Photography* Penguin: London

2003. *Regarding the pain of others* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux

2004. 'Regarding The Torture Of Others' *New York Times Magazine;* May 23, 2004; National

Newspapers

Stallabrass, Julian. 1997. 'Sebastião Salgado and Fine Art Photojournalism', *New Left Review,* 223: 131-160.

Stemple, Lara. 2009. 'Male Rape and Human Rights' *Hastings Law Journal* 60: 605

Strathearn, Marilyn. 1990. *The Gender of The Gift: problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia* London: University of California Press

Stocking, George. 1992. *The Ethnographer's Magic and Other Essays in the History of Anthropology* Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press

Taussig, Michael. 1994. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. New York: Routledge

Taylor, John. 1998. *Body Horror: Photojournalism, Catastrophe and War* Manchester: Manchester University Press

Ticktin, Miriam. 2006. 'Where Ethics and Politics Meet: the Violence of Humanitarianism in France' *American Ethnologist* 33(1): 33-49

        2011. 'The Gendered Human of Humanitarianism: Medicalising and Politicising Sexual Violence' *Gender and History* 23(2): 250-265

Thomson, John. 1878. *Street Life in London* London: Wellcome Trust Collections

Trachtenberg, Alan. 1985. 'Albums of war: on reading Civil War photographs'. *Representations*, 9: 1-32.

        1977. *Lewis Hine: The world of his ar*t. In Vicki Goldberg (ed.) *Photography in print*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Tsing, Anna. 2006. *Friction: Anthropology of Global Encounters* Princeton University Press

Turner, Terance. 1990. 'Visual Media, cultural politics, and anthropological practice: some implications of recent uses of film and video among the Kayapo of Brazil' *Visual Anthropology Review* Spring: 8-13

Torpey, John. 2002. *The Invention of The Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Uimonen, Paula. 2001. *Transnational. Dynamics@ Development.Net: Internet, Modernization and Globalization.* Stockholm: Stockholm Stud. Soc. Anthropol.

Waldron, Jeremy. 1987. *'Nonsense upon stilts': Bentham, Burke and Marx on the Rights of Man* London: Metheun.

        2012. *Dignity, rank, and rights*. Oxford University Press: Oxford

Walton, Kendall L. 1984. 'Transparent pictures: On the nature of photographic realism.' *Critical Inquiry*, *11*(2): 246-277.

Warner, Michael. 2002. 'Publics and Counter Publics' *Public Culture* 14(1): 49-90

Wastell, Sari. 2007. 'When is Law and Custom Not Customary Law?' In *Suomen Antropologi*, 32(2).

Watson, Alison. 2004. 'Human Rights Watch' *Political Economy* 9(3): 441-53

Weiss, Richard, & Lynn Miller. 1987. 'The concept of ideology in organizational analysis'. *Academy of*

Management Review 12: 104-16

White, Geoffrey, & John Kirkpatrick. 1985. *Person, Self and Experience: Exploring Pacific Ethnopsychologies* Berkeley: University of California Press

Whittle, Andrea, & Andre Spicer. 2008. 'Is actor network theory critique?' *Organization Studies* 2008 29: 611

Wilson, Richard A. 1997. 'Representing Human Rights Violations: Social contexts and Subjectivities' In Wilson (Ed) *Human Rights Culture and Context: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.

        1997b. 'Human Rights, Culture and Context: An Introduction' In Richard Wilson (Ed.) *Human Rights Culture and Context: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto

        2000. 'Reconciliation and Revenge in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Rethinking Legal Pluralism and Human Rights'. *Current Anthropology* 41: 75- 98

Wilson, Samuel, & Leighton Peterson. 2002. 'The Anthropology of Online Communities' *Annu. Rev. Anthropol*. 31:449–67

Wilson, Richard, & Richard Brown. 2011. *Humanitarianism and suffering: the mobilization of empathy through narrative*. Cambridge University Press.

Winner, Langton. 1993. 'Upon Opening the Black Box and Finding It Empty: Social Constructivism and the Philosophy of Technology' *Science Technology, & Human Values* 18: 362-378

Wolf, Eric. 1997. *Europe and the People Without History* California: University of California Press

Wood, Helen. 2006. 'The Mediated Conversational Floor: An Interactive Approach to Audience Analysis' in *Media, Culture & Society*, 29(1): 75-103

Wootliff, Jonathan, & Christopher Deri. 2001. 'NGOs: The New Superbrands' *Corporation Reputation Review* 4: 157-164

Wright, Susan. 1994. *Anthropology of Organizations* London: Routledge

Zaloom, Caitlin. 2006. *Out of the Pit: traders and technology from Chicago to London* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Zechenter, Elizabeth M. 1997. 'In the Name of Culture: Cultural Relativism and the Abuse of the Individual.' *Journal of Anthropological Research* 53: 319-347

Zigon, Jarrett. 2007. 'Moral breakdown and the ethical demand A theoretical framework for an anthropology of moralities.' *Anthropological Theory* 7(2): 131-150.

Websites Used

The American Anthropological Association http://www.aaanet.org last accessed May 2013

Amnesty International www.amnesty.org last accessed May 2013

Amnesty International UK www.amnesty.org.uk last accessed May 2013

Liberty www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk last accessed May 2013

Human Rights Watch www.hrw.org last accessed October 2013

International Woman's Day http://www.internationalwomensday.com last accessed January 2011

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights http://www.ohchr.org last accessed October 2013

Legal Documents

The American Declaration of Independence 1776.

Declaration des Driots de l'Homme et du Citoyen 1789.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Entered into force 23 March 1976. (999 UNTS 171)

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, Entered into force 3 January 1976. (993 UNTS 5; 6 ILM 361)

International Covenant on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1981, Entered into force

on 3 September 1981 (1249 UNTS 13; 19 ILM 33)

United Nations Gaza Report. 2009. 'Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict' (A/HRC/12/48)
http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/25184E52D3E5CDBA8525763200532E73

UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III):
http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html accessed 2 December 2013