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Visual Analysis of an Amnesty International Ad Campaign

“War. Such a little word, such a depth of agony. Blood, death, conquest, starvation, plague, and horror,” expressed David Gemmel, British author and journalist, while describing the atrocity of war. During wartime, inhabitants frequently hear distant explosions and gunfire, and children must hide from the violence and the people who carry out the violence. Armed groups in many countries suffering from wars kidnap children and violate their human rights horrendously. Due to this, organizations worldwide try to fight to stop these acts from happening in various ways. An organization, Amnesty International, utilizes visuals and advertisements to spread awareness of these issues. One of the visuals depicts a small child kneeling on the ground in all muted green, armed with an assault rifle. The child looks directly into the viewer's eyes, and the visual contains a transparent background so that the viewers can see the location of the city they live in. The top of the graphic has the logo of Amnesty International on the left, the name on the right, and the text: “It’s not happening here, but it is happening now” (“60 Powerful Social”). Through ethos, logos, and pathos, this visual provides a compelling argument to viewers going about their daily lives that ordinary people do not get involved in fighting for human rights as they do not see the atrocities in their daily lives.

The creator utilizes the placement of the Amnesty International logo and name to reinforce their credibility. Since Amnesty International, a well-known human-rights advocacy organization, created the visual, they make it clear that it connects to them, so the audience will

have greater trust in the message conveyed (“About Us”). However, they would improve their credibility with a more prominent logo and name placement. Also, the credibility would be enhanced if they explained what exactly Amnesty International does in a nearby area so that if an uninformed viewer sees the name “Amnesty International,” they can still understand the organization behind the visual.

The creators of this visual primarily utilize the transparent background and words at the top to argue that even though not everyone can see the atrocities happening around the world, they still occur. Through the transparent background of the visual, the creator displays the plights that children around the world face, but in an environment right in front of them. Moreover, the background of the visual, being an area familiar to the viewer, reinforces the point that seeing an event causes more impact than hearing about it. Through the same logic, if a bystander sees a car crash, they are more likely to help than if a diner at a nearby restaurant hears about it. Thus, showing the armed child to a person walking down the sidewalk can make the audience realize that groups violate human rights worldwide and that they can help or donate. Moreover, the sentence at the top of the image solidified this idea by spelling it out entirely in the viewer's mind. However, this logic has one major flaw. The audience cannot see the initial visual's context, location, or background. The picture would have had a more significant impact on the viewer if they had included at least a little bit of the surrounding area from the image to give the audience more information about the child's actual dire circumstances. Although they could have included statistics backing up their claim, their strategy of including just a visual argues their idea more effectively. Statistics often do not provide enough shock to viewers after seeing significant statistics everywhere, and they become numb to how large or dire a problem is.

The creator's use of a small, armed child looking sadly up at the viewer imparts a sense of guilt and despair, especially in parents. While the viewers safely learn at school, children in many countries try to survive fighting against men. Moreover, the initial shock of the visual provides enough interest to cause the viewers to consider and look at the visual closer. By inciting guilt in the viewers, accompanied by the text at the top of the graphic, the creators make the viewers think about how they can cause real change in the world. This visual asserts their idea extremely effectively due to the shock and guilt caused by the image of a child in dire circumstances. Had they used an older kid or man, the impact on the viewers would have been much less. The idea of a small armed child incites much more emotion than if the visual contained an older person. Thus, the creators' utilization of a vulnerable small child successfully argues that people would fight for others' human rights if they saw the problems with their own eyes.

The creator's adept use of the placement of both the Amnesty International name and logo, the words at the top of the visual, and the utilization of a small child to incite a sense of guilt make this visual an effective tool to spread the idea that even though most people do not see the problems with society around the globe, they still happen. Violent groups violate children's human rights in many areas of violence today, and governments worldwide need to significantly push to help children found in these dire situations actively. If governments do not take action, perpetrators of violence will continue to abuse and use children, resulting in deaths, severe psychological damage, and loss of childhood growth. Children should not have to worry about whether they will survive the next day or ever escape the bleak situation they find themselves in, and by fighting for the rights of children around the world, we can ensure that future generations do not get harmed. Every child should have the opportunity to have a safe and happy childhood.

Works Cited

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