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### Visual Analysis

I found this image in an archive of old Amnesty International ad campaign photos. Amnesty International is an organization that works to promote human rights around the world for many causes. Child soldiers, the subject of this campaign, are one of their recurring campaigns. Amnesty International often encourages people to sign petitions, pledge to not use certain products, or donate money to a cause as their main method of consumer involvement. According to the statistic on the advertisement, 300,000 children are currently serving as child soldiers. Based on personal knowledge, the vast majority of child soldiers serve in Africa and Southeast Asia, and this advertisement is likely set in Africa. Given the context, the target audience is likely adults with children or planning to have children in the future, likely middle or upper middle class, and in America or England. This seems to be the audience because of the English text at the bottom, the fact that there is a website at the bottom as well (only adults with some time to spare and money to potentially donate would go to the website), and because this advertisement would not be as powerful with children, who also cannot donate, but instead people who have children or students recently out of college who can imagine themselves having children and contrasting the image of children they normally see with this image.

This image actually provokes two emotions, and that is what makes it more powerful. The first thing that people notice about the picture is that it is two children playing soccer. You can see at least part of both of their faces, and they both look happy and intently into their game. This evokes a feeling of happiness, fond nostalgia, and comfort in the audience, because it brings to mind the sounds and picture of kids playing outside that the audience has doubtlessly heard. After the first cursory glance, though, it becomes apparent that they are not actually kicking a soccer ball, but rather a human skull. The audience at this point is horrified that something that seemed so happy and innocent is contrasted with the brutality and horror of war and death. As the audience looks even closer, they see that the children's clothes are torn and they are laden with ammunition, even though they are likely less than ten years old. Additionally, the dry dusty ground and the house burning in the background suggest that other things are wrong, but these two are not in the main focus of the picture, so the audience likely does not consciously notice it when they look at the ad, but rather just feel discomfort instead. The contrasting emotions of joy and horror make this emotional appeal more powerful. It juxtaposes something innocent and sweet with something horrific and brutal, and does it without making it seem like anyone in the picture even notices the latter. It strikes a chord in the audience because there is something inherently "wrong" that makes them feel uncomfortable and horrified. This discomfort is often more compelling to the audience than simply sorrow because the audience will be more likely to try to right the wrong and make themselves feel comfortable again, whereas sorrow can be cathartic on occasion and does not always push the audience to take action.

Based on the text at the bottom, the advertisement wants you to go to the website and learn more about the issue. Once on the site, Amnesty International almost always wants the reader to sign a petition, promise not to do certain things, and donate money to a cause, as I

noted above. It is interesting that the advertisement does not send the readers to the child soldiers information and support page, but rather their home page instead. This is likely because Amnesty International wants readers to look at more pages and participate in more than one campaign.

In order for this advertisement to work, the audience must first believe that there is something inherently wrong with the image in order to want to look further. Then, you have to believe that what is wrong with the image is inextricably tied with the use of child soldiers. If you believe that the use of child soldiers is wrong, you then have to believe that there is something you can do to change it or some way to know more. If you think there is something you personally can do, then you might think that going to the website at the bottom of the image is worth your time. If you go to the website, you have to think that signing various things and donating are worth your time and money. Each step likely has fewer people that believe it, but the ad makes it easy to at least get to the step of going to the website.

This applies well to the middle-aged class, because people must be moved by it (like the young) but also want to take the time to do something (like the old). It does not explicitly appeal to gullibility or short-temperedness or even really shame, but rather pity and disgust, traits that carry into the middle age as well. Because it involves the time commitment, it is not explicitly for the young, but it does involve reacting strongly to the image, so it does not explicitly involve the old either. It identifies more with the middle and upper-middle classes, who have the time to spare and the mentality to contrast the image on the picture with the image of children playing of which they are familiar.

Link to larger image: [s3-ec.buzzfed.com/static/enhanced/webdr05/2013/7/6/13/enhanced-buzz-wide-29391-1373130745-11.jpg](https://s3-ec.buzzfed.com/static/enhanced/webdr05/2013/7/6/13/enhanced-buzz-wide-29391-1373130745-11.jpg)