REVIEW ESSAYS

Principles, Publicity, and Politics: Notes on Human Rights Media

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The international human rights regime established following the end of World War II and the Holocaust was intended to protect persons against abuse and oppression. Despite this noble goal, U.S. anthropologists were initially skeptical about the metaphysical foundation of human rights asserted by founders of the movement. In a statement authored by Melville Herskovitz, the American Anthropological Association took the position that human rights concepts are culturally relevant and that human rights discourse is essentially an "ethnocentric extension of European concepts of individualistic rights to societies with more communistic political traditions" (Wilson 1997; see also American Anthropological Association 1947; Asad 2003).[1] Anthropologists have since moved from criticizing human rights to contributing to the expansion of the scope of new rights, in the process reformulating their stance toward human rights in such a way that reconciles human rights universalist claims with the discipline's historical commitment to cultural relativism. This synthesis recognizes the "right to difference." *Difference* in this sense presupposes universal human capacities that enable the production of specific social and cultural differences; in other words, the human "capacity for culture" (Turner 1997:290).

Much of the ethnographic research on human rights conducted by anthropologists in recent years focuses on the assertion of cultural difference by indigenous groups as well as on the role of rights in accomplishing sociopolitical transitions in postconflict settings (e.g., Farmer 2003; Feldman 1994, 2002; Schirmer 1998; Turner 1997; Wilson 1997). Significantly less attention has been paid to the relationship between human rights politics and media. While media are recognized as being critical to the diffusion of human rights norms and values, especially in the post–World War II period (e.g., Cmiel 1999), relatively little work exists that adequately addresses their role in the making of contemporary human rights claims.[2] This neglect can be attributed to two things: First, a tendency to treat human rights as "something out there" waiting to be realized legally or philosophically rather than as a flexible and expansive category through which politicoethical claims are made and sociopolitical transitions are accomplished; and, second, a tendency to overlook the fact that media are not merely conduits for social forces, or expressive of social realities, but possess logics and power that are constitutive of thought, identity, and action.

The global spread of electronic and new digital technologies over the last two decades has transformed the way in which social movements organize their relationship to publicity, with "image politics" becoming increasingly central to the ways in which political claims are made.[3] I have examined this phenomenon elsewhere with regard to the transnational Tibet movement, which I argue has made masterful use of celebrity and Western media interest in the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism (see McLagan 2002). In this review essay I argue that human rights activists have been in the forefront of the creation of a new kind of media activism, one that not only makes sophisticated and innovative use of techniques of celebrity and publicity through a wide range of forms, including older analog media such as print, photography, and film, and new digital media such as the Internet, CD-roms, and handheld video cameras, but that also involves the creation of new organizational structures that provide a kind of scaffolding or platform for the production, circulation, and distribution of these media. Indeed, a whole new arena of social practice has emerged around human rights media, from organizations that provide media training to activists such as www.spinproject.org, www.hrconnection.org, and www.dfn.org to those that provide outlets for distribution such as the International Human Rights Watch Film Festival, or www.mediarights.org. These organizations help activists channel their media to their intended audiences, whether in classrooms, on home video, in movie theaters, on the Web, or in governmental (e.g., U.S. Congress) or intergovernmental forums (e.g., the UN World Conference on Human Rights).

Like many other kinds of activists, human rights activists deploy media in order to produce social change. Analysis of human rights media thus involves more than aesthetic questions about formal semiotic properties or generic conventions; it entails consideration of how images generate action outside the textual event itself.[4] While I have organized the following review essay by forms of mediation, it is important to note that in practice they actually exist on a continuum, ranging from cultural spectacles to legalistic written reports, with activists often deploying them simultaneously.

HUMAN RIGHTS, ETHICAL ARGUMENTS, AND TRANSNATIONAL SYMBOLIC POLITICS

The discovery and representation of information on human rights abuses through specific forms of realism is central to most human rights work. Indeed, human rights activists and organizations are first and foremost "collectors, filterers, translators, and presenters of information regarding human rights violations" (Keck and Sikkink 1998:3). The underlying assumption is that the circulation of such information generates political action, whether through direct pressure on governments or corporations to change their policies, or through the mobilization of individuals on a grassroots level. Although this belief has been challenged in recent years by situations in which knowledge has actually *failed* to produce action, most notably the war in Bosnia and the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, it nevertheless remains a guiding principle of contemporary human rights politics.[5]

In the early years of Amnesty International USA (AI-USA), activists devoted a huge amount of their energy to gathering specific data about violations, which they analyzed according to human rights principles and put in the form of written reports. These "thick rivers of fact" were circulated to governments and the press as evidence of their claims (see Cmiel 1999). Activists' reliance on "documentary rhetoric"—realist forms of representation and conventions of documentation (see Hesford and Kozol in press)—presents a problem in that abuses are never clear-cut; there are always contradictions between human rights classifications of violence and how violence actually plays out on the ground. In order to manage the instability of the category on which their claims are made, human rights activists formulate their reports using abstract universal discourses, and a particular style of journalistic realism. This genre presents information as if it is simply factual and transparent; claims are supported with numerous references to how sources are checked, to international human rights standards, and to previous reports (Cohen 1996:518). By presenting their findings in this way, NGOs are able to appear credible (and their information objective) and in so doing to cultivate a veneer of independence and impartiality in the international arena, which helps legitimize their assertions about the need for human rights norms.[6]

In contrast to the legalistic documentary practice of human rights reporting, other argumentative modes combine the making of ethical arguments with emotional persuasion.[7] This form of human rights media utilizes symbols, images, and stories of suffering in such a way as to form identification with the suffering of an "other" and thereby emotionally engage and persuade their audiences of a cause's moral worth. Through this process, we as viewers become connected to a political project and can be moved to action.[8] *In other words, human rights activists make ethical claims through media, and these media operate by making ethical claims on us.* Not all images of suffering make demands on us the way human rights media do. Mass mediated spectacles of suffering tend not to facilitate our emotional engagement, instead, they often produce what Susan Moeller (1999) describes as "compassion fatigue," a profound indifference and empathic exhaustion produced by the repetition of shocking images.[9] Human rights media, by contrast, attempt to solve this problem by deploying explicit framing devices that supplement images with specifically targeted information aimed at provoking change.[10] They prescribe solutions and in so doing, human rights media avoid treating suffering as a commodity to be consumed.[11]

Ilan Ziv makes a powerful critique of mainstream journalism's tendency to sensationalize suffering in his brilliant documentary film *Consuming Hunger* (1988). The film tracks how the Western news media represented and constructed the Ethiopian famine of 1984 through the use of images of teeming masses of unidentified starving people (Figure 1). Through reenactments, interviews with experts, and archival footage of NBC and BBC television broadcasts that show how news stories are produced, Ziv examines the circulation of a set of images of emaciated and tearful Ethiopians shot by an ITN (a British news company) cameraman in an early stage of the crisis. We then watch as news producers debate the meaning of the footage

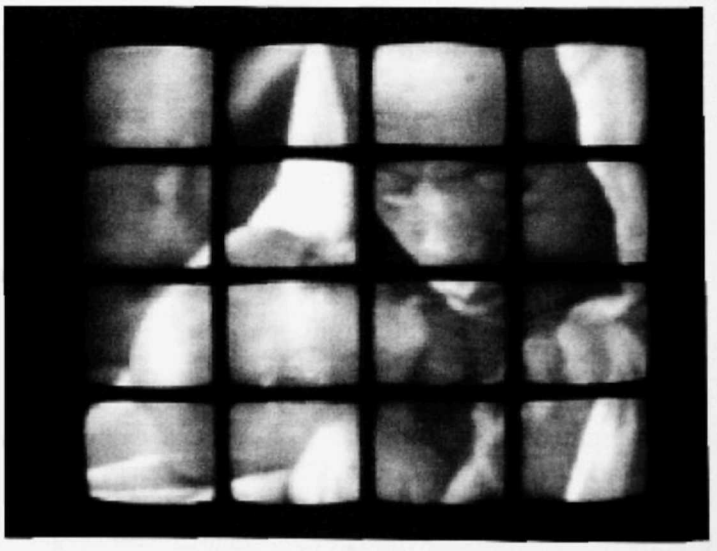

FIGURE 1. In this scene from his documentary *Consuming Hunger*, Ilan Ziv unpacks the symbolic politics behind media coverage of famine in Africa.

and its status as evidence of a looming humanitarian disaster. The film reveals much about newsgathering as a process and the limitations of mass media as a means to facilitate understanding and effective action.[12] *Consuming Hunger* unmasks the standard template for reporting issues such as famine and in so doing, implicitly underscores the fact that public attention is not enough; audiences need to be educated about issues.

Seeing Is Believing: Handicams, Human Rights, and the News (2002), a documentary film directed by Katerina Cizek and Peter Wintonick, explores the production of images by human rights activists. It is an instructive contrast to Ziv's analysis of and meditation on the problematic nature of electronically mediated representations of suffering. The film centers on the role of small digital video cameras in various human rights struggles around the world. In the film, Sociologist Alex Magno sets up the framework of the piece with his observation that video cameras are simply the latest in a long line of new communications technologies or "small media" that have played a critical part in various political revolutions around the world, from audio cassettes in Iran in 1979, to faxes in Tiananmen Square in 1989, to email and text messaging in the Philippines in 2002.[13] Drama is provided by the story of a Filippino activist named Joey who works closely with a group of indigenous people in the Philippines known as the "Nakamata Coalition." We first see Joey training members of the Coalition to document their struggles with local plantation owners over land in Mindanao, and then we see Coalition members take the camera out by themselves in order to document a meeting with outside officials. This practice of documenting oral transactions on video has emerged as an important one for indigenous people who view such transactions as contractually binding within their own societies. By videotaping discussions about land claims, for instance, nonliterate activists have recourse to video records when agreements between parties break down.[14] Soon after the Coalition training process finishes, violence breaks out and the camera, provided by WITNESS, a New York–based human rights media organization, is there to record it all.

At the heart of this film is a theory of truth and transparency that is premised on two things: (1) the authenticity of experience (I was there, I witnessed it, therefore it is true), and (2) a commitment to the gathering and display of visible evidence. The transparency attributed to video evidence parallels that attributed to legalistic realist forms such as written human rights reports, though it is presented in a much more obvious framework of advocacy.

The truth status of moving images has always depended on critical contextualization. Images do not accomplish meaning without framing, a point starkly illustrated by the various readings of the Rodney King video footage elicited by the prosecution and the defense during the trials[15] and underscored by countless writers on documentary film and photography.[16] *Seeing Is Believing* amply demonstrates the fact that the global spread of digital video technology has helped make video images central to struggles of all kinds, whether by human rights activists; Bin Laden's Al Qaeda network; suicide bombers in Lebanon, Palestine, and Sri Lanka; far-right U.S. militias; or antiabortion groups, to name just a few. Still, the broader question raised by their use centers on how they actually create links between viewers and issues.

WITNESSING THE REAL: TESTIMONY AND DOCUMENTARY

If the individual is the "indivisible unit of symbolic currency" in contemporary human rights discourse (Adams 1998:82) then individual bodily suffering is the indivisible unit of symbolic currency in human rights media. Indeed, representations of suffering, often in the form of testimonials, dominate the genre.[17] Testimonials are first-person narratives aimed at outsiders in which an individual's account of bodily suffering at the hands of oppressive governments or other agents comes to stand for the oppression of a group. Based on the Christian ideology of "witnessing," the belief in transformative experience and presence as a stimulus to political action, testimony is a deeply persuasive cultural form that animates and moves Western sensibilities.

A recent video, *Testimony: Annie Lennox in Conversation with Palden Gyatso* (Lennox 1998), exemplifies the use of personal narratives of suffering in human rights media. Palden Gyatso, a monk from Tibet who spent 34 years in prison after the Chinese takeover in 1959, tells his story to Annie Lennox, singer of *Eurythmics,* with help from London-based Tibetan intellectual Tsering Shakya.[18] A large portion of the 30-minute program is devoted to Gyatso's tale of his arrest and mistreatment by the Chinese over the years, including torture with an electric cattle prod. At one point Gyatso pulls out several torture instruments, which he brought out with him from Tibet. He then leans forward and demonstrates to Lennox the way thumb cuffs work (Figure 2). In this moment, we see how testimony functions as a kind of intercultural technology, connecting individuals together from different worlds through the medium of pain, creating solidarity out of difference (McLagan in press).

Human rights activism has always exhibited a strong "documentary impulse" like that demonstrated in *Testimony.* Film theorist Bill Nichols describes documentaries as "a discourse about the world," one that shows us situations and events "that are recognizably part of a realm of shared experience: the historical world as we know and encounter it, or as we believe others to encounter it" (1991:x). What makes it interesting as a form, he notes, is the fact that our experience of documentary work "can be a force unto itself and move us beyond itself, toward that historical arena of which it is a part" (1991:xvi). In other words, our engagement with documentary can extend "beyond the moment of viewing into social praxis itself" (Nichols 1991:x).[19]

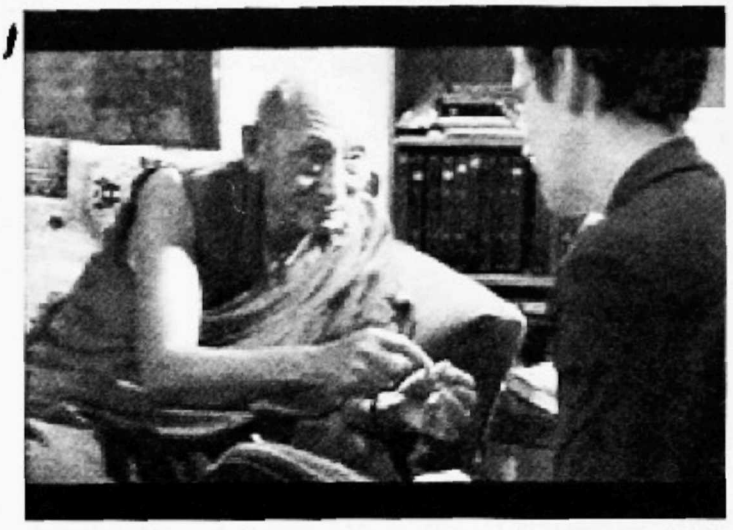

FIGURE 2. Tibetan monk Palden Gyatso engages rock star Annie Lennox of *Eurythmics* with his testimony.

How is this effect achieved? The answer begins with the particular way in which documentaries rely on the indexical bond that exists between the audio/image track and the objects and events in the historical world to which they refer. What we see on film can seem "to bear indexical links to another world with autonomy and specificity of its own," although as the Rodney King video proves, even raw footage does not guarantee a particular meaning. "This creates a sense of awe," Nichols writes, "which makes it easy to forget we are dealing with a sign system rather than a direct, unmediated duplication of reality." The result, he suggests, is a constant oscillation between "the duplication of reality and the reality of the duplication" (Nichols 1991:x). The tendency to forget that the filmic reality remains a construct, an approximation and a re-presentation of a profilmic reality to which we do not gain truly direct, unimpeded access, however, is what gives viewers of realist documentaries such pleasure: For the time being, their knowledge of this fact is suspended and they can surrender themselves to the immediacy of the reality onscreen.

Much has been written about this attribute of resemblance in the documentary aesthetic. There is a strand of documentary theory that has tried to recuperate realist film in recent years by making an argument for the politicizing potential of documentary based on its "aesthetics of similarity."[20] Gaines, for example, uses the term *political mimesis* to describe the process whereby a sensuous link is formed between bodies represented on screen and bodies in the audience (1999:90). Here she is building on the work of film theorist Linda Williams (1994) who writes about film genres that "make the body do things" through a kind of involuntary mimicry of emotion or sensation of the body on screen. For example, "horror films make us scream, melodrama makes us cry, and porn films make us come." According to Gaines, realist political documentaries work through mimesis, they produce emotion in the spectator in and through conventionalized imagery of struggle. Spectators, through an indexical identification with characters on screen, then are "poised to intervene." As she is careful to point out, however, shared cultural and historical context, and not the indexical image alone, are what lead to viewers' sympathetic action. In other words, political mimesis is possible because an audience shares the same set of political, historical, and cultural forces. Realism is a device that, through the process of political mimesis, can act on a politicized audience, extending the community of activists.

Human rights documentaries, with their heavy reliance on realist "cine testimonials," achieve their representational efficacy through this same process, with activists explicitly seeking to create moral spaces through which processes of political mimesis can occur and sympathy can be evoked (Figure 3).[21] As ethical arguments, human rights documentary film and video work by asserting that an "existing normative belief or moral conviction ought to be applied to a particular situation" (Crawford 2002:24). That is, the claims they make play on and resonate with audiences' shared underlying ethical and moral beliefs.

Testimonial documentary is a subgenre of human rights documentary, which, as I suggest above, in turn is a subgenre of political documentary. It sits at the intersection of personal narrative and documentation. Contrary to the impression given by the film *Seeing Is Believing*, human rights abuses are not usually witnessed and do not take place on camera. Though we are rarely witnesses to atrocity, we *are* witnesses to stories of atrocities by their survivors. These stories take the form of testimony and we often regard them as evidence of "what really happened."

Testimony is premised on the belief that pain is universal, that it crosses all boundaries.[22] This belief in the universality of pain and its effectiveness as a tool for creating solidarity is underscored by researchers who have found that torture is the easiest human rights issue to campaign around (Cohen 1996, 2001). Circulation of human

FIGURE 3. A Muslim woman mourns the death of males in her family in a scene from the documentary film *Srebernica: A Cry from the Grave*.

rights testimonials create what I call "witnessing publics." As narratives and images of suffering travel, they have the potential to construct audiences as virtual witnesses, a subject position that implies responsibility for the suffering of others. In this sense, human rights images make ethical claims on viewers and cultivate potential actors in the global arena.

BRANDING HUMAN RIGHTS

In the introduction, I suggested that human rights activists have been on the cutting edge of the emergence of a new kind of mediated activism, one that combines new and old media technologies in innovative ways and that entails the creation of new organizational forms to support the proliferation of human rights media. This new form of activism builds on a long history of "image politics" first developed by Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) (see Cmiel 1999) in the 1970s, which were aimed at reaching international audiences. For instance, AIUSA was among the first human rights groups to attempt to "brand" their organization through use of a logo (i.e., a candle and flame wrapped by barbed wire).[23] The explosion of rights-oriented digital media in the second half of the 1990s represents an expansion of this kind of mass mediated activism, with human rights groups self-consciously deploying publicity strategies and visual rhetoric borrowed from advertising.

Before the creation of the World Wide Web, political activists used the Internet to connect to each other via email, newsgroups, and chat rooms; the "virtual politics" (see McLagan 1996) carried out online was a largely logocentric affair. Since that time, as it has become faster, easier, and cheaper to send visual data electronically, there has been a seismic shift in political use of networked computers. Today activists of all stripes recognize the necessity of having a presence online—well-designed websites are now assumed to be key "portals" of entry into activism, especially by members of the younger generation who take the existence of the technology for granted. In the case of human rights websites, increasingly we find information and personal stories presented not in gritty realist documentary style, but embedded in such things as flash graphics and sometimes even supplemented by downloadable audio files in MP3 format—strategies that pivot not on emotional identification like that discussed above but, rather, on different forms of signification.

The significance of this shift in relation to age and generation was brought home to me in my teaching recently when I asked students in an undergraduate class on human rights to pick out their favorite rights websites. I was interested in what students thought about how the sites were organized and the aesthetic strategies that were used, as well as what conclusions they might draw about the sites' potential efficacy as tools to promote human rights. One of sites we explored together was www.stoptorture.org, a project of Amnesty International. On the bottom of the screen were the words *click here to stamp out torture* (Figure 4).[24] Absurd as the proposition that one could simply click and stop such a practice might appear to me, none of my students questioned the claims of such sites promising visitors this kind of "fast and easy activism." The point was underscored when we looked at the site (www.mirrorimage.ai.org) of a local Amnesty International group based in the Boston/Cambridge, Group 133, which was responsible for organizing a campaign to free 14 Tibetan nuns imprisoned by the Chinese for demanding their homeland's independence. Group 133 launched www.drapchi14.org in December 2001. I had been interested in the site initially after reading something about the site's innovative use of MP3 files. While in prison, the young women managed to secretly make a tape recording of songs calling for Tibetan independence; the tape was smuggled out of Drapchi prison and eventually it landed on the desk of Robbie Barnett, founder of Tibet Information Network, in London. After removing the names of the women on the tape in order to protect their identities, Barnett made the tape available to human rights groups interested in the nuns situation, including Group 133.

Drawing on Amnesty International's Prisoners of Conscience Model, Group 133's Drapchi14 campaign was designed to publicize the situation of the nuns and in so doing, to win their release. In an interview, one of the group's organizers, Carl Williams, adopted a marketing metaphor to describe what they were doing. "If you want to use the marketing term 'branding' . . . to get a person's name out there makes it much more difficult to torture or kill that person," Williams told the *Globe* reporter (Cox 2002).

Williams's comment about branding prisoners of conscience raises an interesting set of issues that are worth spelling out briefly. First, what does it mean for human rights advocates to articulate their politics using a commercial idiom? Like the subjects of countless human rights documentaries, the individuals represented on the Drapchi14 site are victims whose stories of suffering are meant to provoke our identification and to stimulate political action. Yet the way in which they are represented, through the techniques of celebrity and advertising, transforms

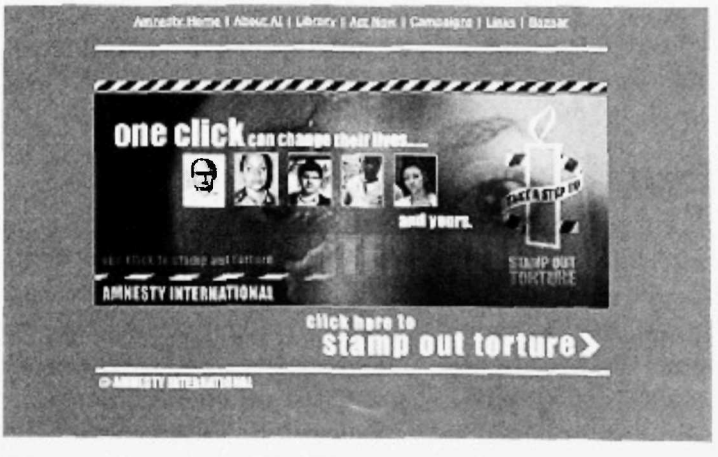

FIGURE 4. Stoptorture.org entices visitors to its site with promise of immediate gratification: "click here to stamp out torture."

their meaning. Or does it? Could it be that there are different ways of interpreting or decoding the relation between the form and the content, such that what strikes one generation as the "aestheticization of politics" strikes another as a new way to reconcile political goals and capitalist aims through a pervasive and influential medium? Has social marketing simply come of age such that it is a mode of political communication taken for granted by those who have grown up after the 1970s? As Lev Manovich (2002) suggests in his writing on the use of Flash software in web design, do teenagers and twenty-somethings simply possess a different aesthetic than that of previous generations who located gritty politics in realist representation? Indeed, can we map the continuing evolution of technological and aesthetic strategies and the consequent production of new political forms in terms of generational shifts?

A second issue that is linked to the idea of branding victims of human rights abuses is that of efficacy. In a chapter of *No Logo,* Naomi Klein (1999) examines some of the limits and contradictions of what she calls "brand-based politics" by which she means antiglobalization activism that focuses on individual companies such as Nike, Shell, McDonalds, or Starbucks. Klein notes that although targeting popular brand corporations has been successful, these sorts of campaigns can have unintended and contradictory consequences (e.g., with companies often spending more time and money on publicity than on internal reform, or people feeling they must consume more ethically, and not do much else). Similarly, by focusing a campaign on individual sufferers of human rights abuses who have been branded in a certain way on these sites, activists run the risk of freeing certain people but not necessarily achieving the long-term effect they desire—forcing governments to change their practices. For example, in recent years China has released several of the most well-known Drapchi14 prisoners on condition that they leave the country. This is part of a much broader Chinese policy toward dissidents that enables the government to quiet Western criticism of its poor human rights record without actually having to make major changes.[25] Once the individuals are released, pressure is usually relieved on the Peoples Republic of China and attention focused elsewhere. Thus, although activists are always extremely happy to be able to secure the freedom of individual dissidents, there are clear limits on deploying publicity in this manner.[26]

CONCLUSION

I have noted that human rights activists often deploy various forms of mediation simultaneously, each of which circulates in particular arenas, reaching particular audiences. I conclude by suggesting we think about this practice in terms of activists' use of different "registers" to construct political issues. These registers feed off and at times clash with each other in interesting and productive ways. For instance, logocentric forms of documentary evidence continue to play a fundamental role in the work done by human rights lawyers; they remain powerfully persuasive to U.S. Congressional committees, international legal bodies, and nongovernmental organizations that seek to influence policy rather than mass audiences. Human rights documentary film and video, though they rely on similar concepts of visible evidence, are visual media and as such have a capacity to generate emotion in audiences through the use of evocative storytelling and affective imagery. Activists use this form to mobilize new publics around individuals who function as "nodal points" in a transnational network of identification and solidarity (Nelson 2001:305). Through victims' onscreen narratives or testimonies, witnesses are situated as potential ethical actors that might intervene in the situation that produced the suffering that is on display.

Finally, we know that new media refashion prior media forms such as writing, film, and photography, and that this process of "remediation" (Bolter and Grusin 1999) upends old ideas about subjects and participants, producers and texts that underpin theories about how media work. So, for instance, instead of occupying just one position, we occupy multiple shifting positions (e.g., as voyeurs, as consumers, as activists). How does this multiple positioning, which is evident if we analyze human rights sites, square with the argument made above that human rights media offer one subject position, that of witness with ethical responsibility? Understanding the ways in which digital activism and the "language of new media" (Manovich 2001) might reshape the possible horizon of identities and actions that can be produced is critical to making sense of the new arenas of practice that are emerging around human rights media.

NOTES

1. See Donnelly 2002 for a critique of the radical cultural relativist stance of the AAA in 1947.

2. See Bradley and Petro 2002 for one exception to this rule.

3. See McLagan 2002 for more on this subject.

4. My thinking on human rights media has been influenced by literature in cinema studies on "political documentary" (e.g., Gaines 1999) and new models of media production and distribution (e.g., Whiteman 2002).

5. See Cohen 1996, 2001, and Keenan 2002 for interesting analyses of this phenomenon.

6. See Clark 2001 on the role of Amnesty International USA in the formation of international human rights norms.

7. I draw on Crawford's influential work on the role of argument in international politics (2002) in my argument here.

8. Brysk notes that "a message can foment change by creating an alternative reality, transferring daily experience to a different realm in which it is valued and thus opening the recipient to consider a new social order" (1995:579).

9. See also Cohen (2001) in which he describes what he calls the "guilt spiral," the more one acknowledges information about suffering, the more likely one is to turn off or to be overwhelmed and paralyzed.

10. It is important to note there is a distinction between images that point toward violence and images that are explicitly violent or sensational. Context is key in both instances, a point made by Susan Sontag in her famous book *On Photography* (1977) and reiterated in *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003).

11. See Bolstanski 1999, Ignatieff 2001, Nichols 1991, and Sontag 2003.

12. Ziv's film is composed of three half-hour segments and can be used in the classroom to great effect if paired with reading such as Susan Moeller's *Compassion Fatigue* (1999). See also Nichols 1991:11.

13. For more on this topic, see Annabel Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi's seminal study of "small media" during the Iranian revolution (1994); Calhoun 1994 on the importance of fax and CNN during the events in China of 1989; and Rafael 2002 on cell phones during the uprising against President Estrada in the Philippines in January 2002.

14. See Ginsburg 1997 for more on the political use of video in indigenous communities.

15. See Feldman 1994, Nichols 1994, Ronell 1992 for more on the use of video in the Rodney King trials.

16. See, for example, Linfield 2001, Nichols 1994: ch. 2, and Sontag 1977, 2003.

17. See essays by Bronkhurst in the special issue of Visual Anthropology edited by Hafsteinsson and Eyjolfsdottir (1997) on images and human rights for more on human rights documentary conventions.

18. See McLagan 2002 for a discussion of the use of celebrities in political activism.

19. Nichols's applies this observation to what he terms the "new documentary," by which he means work that is not strictly observational and that includes interview-based histories, reflexive, experimental, and personal documentaries.

20. See Feldman 1997 for an interesting discussion of visual realism in relation to photography and political violence.

21. See Nichols on testimonial as a "blurred genre" (1994:13) and Juhasz 1999 on feminist realist documentary.

22. Contra Cohen and others, Scarry 1985 argues for the difficulty of translating pain across the membrane between bodies.

23. AIUSA also pioneered the use of celebrities and musical spectacles, a tactic borrowed widely by social movements around the world. The evolution of these tactics signals a moment of basic political restructuring, one in which activists aimed less at mass participation than at mass influence. Instead of bringing people to campaigns, campaigns were brought to people, with measure of success for a political campaign or performance now being media coverage.

24. When you click, you are taken to the home page of Amnesty International's stop torture campaign, which includes images of several recent victims of torture and a brief paragraph stating AI's position on freedom from torture as a fundamental human right. The page also includes a description of AI's long history of work around torture and a "Take Action" section, which consists of a space for visitors to indicate their interest in joining the campaign by filling in their email address.

25. The most recent example of this is the case of Ngawang Sangdrol, a nun detained at the age of 13 for participating in proindependence demonstrations in Tibet.

26. Just as I finished revisions for this essay, a Tibetan nun named Ngawang Sangdrol, one of the most well-known of the Drapchi14 arrived in the United States, after having been paroled from prison by the Chinese for medical reasons. See www.savetibet.org for more information on her reception in the U.S. See also the book and accompanying CD-Rom of *Rukhag 3: The Nuns for Drapchi Prison* by Steven D. Marshall, available from Tibet Information Network (www.tin.org).

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