

Making Development Marketable: The Politics of Image and Representation within Consumer
Driven Schemes of Development Fundraising

by

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Abstract

This project examines a new and growing form of international development fundraising, which constructs and packages development as a product of consumption in order to achieve its goals of awareness and fundraising. These efforts involve the use of a new set of marketing tools, technologies, languages, and tactics to encourage the sale of the development cause. The commodification of development activities within fundraising efforts ultimately poses an important quandary in terms of the effects that such ventures have upon public engagement and reception of international development. As such, this thesis explores the implications of such efforts for social justice in terms of the ways in which people's perceptions of their own involvement and the causes of which they are a part are shifted. In order to more closely analyze such activities, the organizations (RED) and Kiva were chosen to act as case studies of both corporate and non-for-profit endeavours.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols Used

(Product) ^{RED™} / (RED)	(Product) ^{RED™} corporate trademarks and logos
(Penguin Classics) ^{RED™}	The embrace; brackets surrounding a brand or any language having to do with a product are a marketing tactic used to symbolize (Product) ^{RED™} sponsored merchandise
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NGO	Non Government Organization
U.S.	United States
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Charity, Justice, and Ethics: A Discussion of the Terms and Their Implications

“Charity is no substitute for justice withheld.” - Saint Augustine of Hippo, 5th century

“It is justice, not charity, that is wanting in the world!” - Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792

When these two great thinkers penned these lines centuries apart they were both aware of the vast differences between what citizens, scholars, and politicians called charity and what they termed justice. Their statements emerged from a moral concern that charity might be confused for justice. It is from a similar perspective that I seek to critique the institutions of altruism and consumption as they exist in blurred forms within the marketing schemes of current efforts at consumer driven development fundraising. Consumer driven development refers to both the use of consumption-focused marketing techniques by the non-for-profit sector as well as the adoption of cause-related marketing and branding strategies by the corporate sector. This represents a new type of engagement strategy in the arsenals of both the corporate and non-for-profit sectors, blending the interests of social causes with the tools and techniques of commercial marketing and transforming development and social justice into saleable products. Through their efforts, they are packaging an experience that aims to engage a new breed of sponsor or donor that more closely resembles a consumer. These organizations have begun to construct development as a product and something to be sold to a consuming public through new and innovative styles of marketing engagement. Emerging alongside a number of other, more traditional forms of fundraising engagement, consumer driven development has become an important tactic in the arsenals of both corporate and non-for-profit organizations. By attempting to bring charitable and philanthropic efforts into the market, these initiatives construct and

reshape the moral and political landscapes in which social justice is understood with important consequences for how people understand capitalism, change, and themselves as active and responsible global citizens.

Cause-related marketing is a marketing strategy utilized by for-profit corporations in order to add value to their brands by associating them as closely as possible to social causes through the use of a variety of techniques and often through partnerships with not-for-profit organizations (King, 2006, p. 9; Andreasen & Kotler, 2008, p. 433). Within such practices, the act of giving becomes commodified in its association with the purchase of particular goods or services through marketing, with the aim of enhancing persuasion, funding, or awareness, and often all three of these factors, through acts of consumption. Consumption itself is constructed and portrayed as a beneficial force for change, so that when a consumer buys a product they are not simply consuming but giving back. The act of giving becomes a commodity by way of the price mechanism and the discourse of marketing while social justice and altruism become goods to be bought and sold (King, 2006). Solidarity is demonstrated with the swipe of a credit card as social ties become part and parcel of the economic system. These attempts at shifting the social psyche surrounding consumerism as an act of charity, benevolence and even activism need to be further investigated as they utterly reshape the ways in which social justice and development are perceived and carried out. In a transformative process these consumer driven schemes of development rearticulate the boundaries of social justice including the realms in which it takes place and the ways in which it is articulated. Acts of charity made through consumption and their associations with justice lie at the centre of the changes brought about by these new and emerging efforts. Thus, it seems both fitting and beneficial to begin with an analysis of the contrasting meanings of charity and justice.

Charity, unless geared towards structural change or the education of those involved in forwarding such institutional transformations, differs significantly from any notion of justice. In fact, charitable efforts are significant indicators that injustice continues to exist in the world and that something in our social and economic relations is terribly awry. Rather than a solution to moral inequalities and injustices, such as poverty and disease, caused by a system that maintains differentiated availability of access to resources, charity represents an after-effect of their occurrence, often inadvertently providing the illusion of justice through the provision of goods, services and standard-set prices, overlooking the vast disparities and discrepancies in labour, production, and consumption that exist a priori to such institutions. Theorists and philosophers since the time of John Stuart Mill recognized this ultimate consequence of charitable endeavour. As Mill (1869) stated, “As for charity, it is a matter in which the immediate effect on the persons directly concerned, and the ultimate consequence to the general good, are apt to be at complete war with one another”. He recognized the inherent conflict between the immediate positive effects of charity on the lives of individuals involved and the ultimate impacts it would have in causing people to overlook the underlying social justice issues that constructed the problem in the first place. Providing the sufferers of injustice with money and other resources may offer short term solutions and temporary benefits to a small number of individuals but it does not directly address the root causes of inequality and suffering. They exist prior to such institutional arrangements of giving.

Fair trade, for example, offers smaller business ventures and peoples of the developing world a more equitable means of competing in the capitalist marketplace but does not raise the question of why capitalism has failed in the first place as a means of the just distribution of resources necessary for well-being and how the system can be changed in order to do so. In this

way fair trade functions in a much similar capacity to charity as it works within existing capitalist arrangements without directly questioning the fundamental structures of difference that its institutions impose. As Fridell (2007) claims of fair trade, in a statement which could be applied to consumer driven efforts of charitable engagement more broadly, “Internationally, fair trade depends on existing consumption patterns which are characterized by ‘overconsumption’ in the North that threatens the depletion of natural resources and perpetuates the existing highly unequal distribution of global wealth. Thus, fair traders are seeking greater global justice on the basis of highly unjust global consumption patterns” (p. 267). These types of ventures do not ask why capitalism works to construct unjust conditions in the first place and how this can be changed, but simply work to incorporate a band-aid solution into the prevailing economic system. Consumption philanthropy, or the sale and purchase of goods and experiences in support of social causes, works within existing capitalist structures and even further entrenches those structures rather than critiquing their shortcomings.

Justice, on the other hand, implies the analysis, critique and reinvention of the prevailing structural and political arrangements with the aim of constructing a more equitable society by identifying why poverty, illness and other such inequalities are produced within the existing system in the first place, in the hopes of bringing about transformations through institutional change. This rests upon an understanding of social justice that emphasizes and respects the need for moral equity of all members of society above all notions of law and order. Charity and philanthropy, as voluntary and one-way acts of benevolence and responsibility, do not question the relations of power that exist between the donor and the recipient of particular goods and services, which had allowed one individual to have the resources to share with the other, whereas justice seeks out the wholesale abolition of those structures which give greater opportunity to

some over others. Perhaps the old proverb, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime” provides a useful analogy in this case. In a sense, peoples of the developed world and affluent segments within society, through their acts of charity, are giving a man a fish without first trying to observe, understand and overcome the reasons as to why the waters are not producing fish in the first place. As Maggie Black (2002) explains, “knowing how to fish often turned out to be the least of his – or her – problems. The river might be polluted and the catch depleted. The trees from which boats were traditionally built had been cut down by loggers, or the right to fish on that waterway granted to others with powerful patrons and larger boats. Fishing families were forced to sell their catch to a marketing board, which depressed producer prices, so that they could no longer make a living. In these situations, the ‘knowledge transfer’ needed was not how to fish, but the skill to organize, bargain collectively, expose misappropriation and get corrupt officials off their backs” (p. 112). Simply giving to charity or supporting supposedly benevolent acts of consumption neglects important questions about why existing social, political, and economic structures give rise to the need for charity in the first place. It overlooks and undervalues the systemic factors, such as the role of capitalism itself in maintaining a number of the issues of poverty and disease through the unequal distribution of resources. Awareness and critical thinking about the impacts of such strategies in relation to these factors are an afterthought in contrast to the mandate of selling the cause. For instance, brand and corporate marketing expert, Carol Cone (as cited in King, 2006) has noted a fundamental shift in corporate thinking, no longer looking at how companies can aid charity but to how charity can support business (p. 1). Therefore, it is important to examine the relations of giving, which permeate and are promoted by consumer driven schemes of development in order to bring one closer to an understanding of their implications for the ethics

of social justice, development and aid. Consumer driven efforts relegate the relationships of aid and social justice activism to the marketplace as consumer and product, in a manageable, normative, and strictly financial sense, denying the interactions of much of their human qualities. By integrating these efforts as exchange relationships and part and parcel of the capitalist system, they not only maintain the status quo but further its continued expansion into new territories, selling the very ideas of activism and change themselves (Marx & Engels, 1887/2007).

Research Questions and Argument

Building on the distinctions between charity and justice highlighted by St. Augustine and Mary Wollstonecraft, this thesis addresses three central questions. These include: What are the networks and processes behind the construction of development as a marketable commodity within non-for-profit and corporate efforts? What are the social justice implications for development and aid becoming represented as a consumer project? And finally, how does consumer driven development impact our conceptions of self and other? In attempts at providing responses to these questions the scope of this study will encompass a comparative analysis of case studies of organizations from the corporate and not-for-profit sectors based in the global North. Through the analysis of their various marketing strategies at the micro-level, a broader understanding of the convergence of consumer driven development schemes among various actors within the development apparatus and their implications for public engagement and understanding can be reached. In carrying out this project, the research will make two central arguments. The first is that consumer driven schemes of development fundraising redefine the relationships upon which development is predicated, which has profound effects for social justice. Through the various marketing tactics associated with these endeavours, a way of seeing and knowing aid is constructed that transforms the ways in which first world consumers envision

themselves and peoples of the South within such arrangements, only further entrenching the unequal relations between donor and recipient. No longer are the already unequal relationships fostered simply between donor and recipient but consumer and product. The donor is turned into the consumer while the development project and those peoples associated with it become products to be packaged and marketed to first world spenders in what Escobar (1995) has described as the discursive and semiotic conquest of the “third world” by particular regimes of understanding. Secondly, the discursive and representational practices involved in these efforts reshape the environment of aid and the experience of giving. By utilizing the tactics of corporate marketing to redefine development causes as products and commodities, these consumer driven schemes recreate development fundraising as a market activity, pushing it further into the consumer realm. This, in turn, robs these experiences of much of their humanity and reinforces capitalist arrangements and behaviours, which were complicit in structuring the relations upon which a number of social justice issues arose in the first place. In integrating activism into the market environment, consumption becomes a force for benevolence and justice and the negative impact associated with its institutions become overshadowed.

The Study of Philanthropy and Reform: An Historical Overview

The famed English author, poet, and playwright Charles Dickens (1868) once wrote, “charity begins at home, and justice begins next door” (p. 47). His nineteenth century French contemporary, the Baroness Amantine Lucile Aurore Dudevant, better known under her pseudonym, George Sand (1842-1843), wrote of charity, “[it] degrades those who receive it and hardens those who dispense it.” “Charity,” Oscar Wilde (2001) emphatically declared, “creates a multitude of sins.” Rather than being a “solution”, the “altruistic virtues” associated with such activities were “an aggravation of the difficulty” of “reconstruct[ing] society on such a basis that

poverty [would] be impossible” (pp. 127-128). Thus, questions of charity for each of these social critics also brought with them questions of justice. Each, in their own way questioned the legitimacy of charity as a means of bringing about meaningful and lasting change and betterment. In fact, as these statements suggest, a number of early philosophers and social justice critics believed that it only exacerbated social problems by providing a temporary, after-the-fact solution that took concern and critical awareness away from searching for the real reason of why particular circumstances of injustice existed in the first place.

A similar concern for the political, social and economic implications of pursuing issues of social justice through charity, social enterprise or philanthropic means occupied many other political, philosophical and literary thinkers of social reform movements throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Living and writing in a world later to be described by Foucault (1977) as an era of “reform” through “discipline and punish[ment]”, these thinkers were deeply concerned and affected by the position of the poor and impoverished within their own communities and nation-states, however, as the statements above illustrate, they were also critical of the limits, impacts and effects of various charitable activities and social efforts. A general concern for the overall health and sanctity of society through efforts at providing aid and other social programs characterized the mood of the times, and this drove many to critique these institutions. The problematization of charitable efforts became a significant issue for academics and businesspeople alike. It was in this climate of increasing awareness and concern for working class issues by middle and upper class observers and the emergence of charitable and philanthropic organizations that followed, that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were inspired to write their numerous political and economic treatises on capitalist exploitation and power. Marx and Engels (1844; 1848/2009) decried charity and all attempts at market-oriented schemes of

social justice through reform as being preservers of working class destitution, allowing for the maintenance of bourgeois society and the status quo through quelling and repressing social grievances within the existing societal order and arrangements, thus maintaining and prolonging the structures of capitalism, which produced poverty and the need for charity in the first place. Like many, he questioned the ability of these institutions of aid and reform to have any real impact on the underlying structural causes of injustice and poverty. Marx (1848/2009) believed that charity slowed the historical dialectic of change by maintaining the status quo through appeals to bourgeois sentimentality. Discussing charitable efforts in relation to Christian socialism he stated,

Nothing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the state? Has it not preached in the place of these, charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat (pg. 19).

Thus, charity provided the illusion of societal well-being and another way to quell the unrest and critical questions brought about against archaic state structures and institutions.

Nonetheless, subsequent to this age of reform, inquiry, and critique into the proliferation and implications of charitable institutions within the political and economic landscapes of nineteenth and early twentieth century capitalism, these efforts have not been placed under the same scrutiny at the forefront of critical thought. Choosing to focus on the efficacy of these initiatives in terms of business and marketing, critical studies and analyses into the ultimate impacts of these endeavours have been given a backseat. Though charitable efforts and

initiatives at social enterprise and reform have continued to proliferate on into our own era, and have even expanded beyond the simple boundaries of the nation-state to occupy truly international spaces, the analysis of these programs and their impacts upon understandings of social justice has not experienced the same growth. Yet, these activities are of no less concern or significance to humanity and the ethics of being human then they were when they were first being commented upon in the nineteenth century by social justice advocates and critics, the likes of Dickens and Mill.

In the field of international development, in particular, where the primary emphasis has been placed on examining efforts in the global South rather than what these organizations do in the North, the fundraising and charitable tactics of development organizations have been given much less consideration. This is not to say that they have been overlooked entirely, since, as will be illustrated, there is a small but growing group of dedicated scholars who have sought to challenge these understandings, but that they have been given far less attention than the field based practices of these organizations being carried out in the global South. For instance, Smillie (1995; 2000), Smith and Yanacopulos (2004), and Richey and Ponte (2008) have all stressed the significance of giving ample critique to the fundraising and awareness generating activities of development institutions due to their immense impact upon social understandings about global issues. It is based off of this emerging field of academic inquiry that this thesis situates itself, in the hopes of illustrating that development's charitable activities in the global North need to be given just as much thought and scrutiny as all other initiatives in order to gain a more holistic understanding of their ultimate implications for social justice.

Consumer Driven Development Fundraising: What It Is and What It Means

A recently published guide to environmentally-friendly shopping proclaims, "You have

the power to save the world, and it's right in your pocket—or maybe your wallet or purse” (Nagle, 2009, p. 4). Reminiscent of the attitude of the times many contemporary social causes have been marketed with the view that money and consumption exist as viable solutions to combating the ills of contemporary society. An individual's spending and consumption habits have become a major means of expressing their political views on existing social justice arrangements through the purchase of particular product and ideals. Increasingly, sentiments similar to this have come to play a significant role in the fundraising and marketing schemes of a large number of non-governmental, corporate, and fair trade organizations to the point where the distinction between the activities of selling a product and selling a cause have become blurred and difficult to distinguish. The commodification and consumption of ways to save our “doomed” planet has become a hot topic among businesspeople and philanthropists alike, taken up as an important strategy in their vast arrays of persuasive tactics.

Whether it is on the store shelf, in the gift catalogue, or through the online vendor, the act of consumption and that of expressing our morality through charitable giving are increasingly being joined and intertwined to the point where they are becoming indistinguishable. The Greater Good Network, for example, which is owned and operated by CharityUSA.com, runs a website which allows consumers to associate their purchase of a product with any of six particular causes, including, hunger, breast cancer, child health, literacy, save the rainforest, and animal rescue, with funds being distributed to non-profit organizations tied to each of these efforts. And, as if this was not enough, they also offer sale and clearance items of various fair trade goods, jewellery, clothing, crafts and multitude accessories (CharityUSA.com, 2010). As market and consumer analyst Tom Watson (2006) explains, “causes sell - they touch human emotions and create deep allegiances to experiences and quite possibly to products.” As justice

and morality become commodified as goods and services available for purchase, the act of consumption itself takes on entirely new meanings. In fact, according to a number of popular media sources and business analysts we are in the midst of a revolution of sorts, or at least a reformation to a form of softer capitalism that “cares” (See, for example, Benett & O’Reilly, 2010). In a number of nations, for example, organizations have been set up for the sole purpose of bringing businesses and philanthropic ventures together for mutual benefit, such as the UK based ‘Business in the Community’ and the U.S. based ‘Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy’. Consultancies, such as ‘Changing our World, Inc.’, which specializes in the marketing of charitable causes, abound while the projected growth rate of spending on cause-related marketing in the U.S. alone in 2006 was outpacing all other forms of sponsorship, including sports-related contracts, as per a study carried out by sponsorship consultancy firm IEG, Inc. (Watson, 2006). A growing body of literature and management courses, which offer advice on non-profit and cause-related marketing, have also begun to emerge (See, for example, Adler, 2006; Andreasen & Kotler, 2008; Kotler & Lee, 2008).

Nonetheless, some scholars have come to question so-called “ethical consumerism.”(See, for example, Anderson, 2008). Ultimately, the expansion of the capitalist market and neoliberal modes of being into new aspects of social life clearly merits further investigation. As non-governmental and corporate organizations come to sell social justice and development as marketable products to Northern consumers it begs questions surrounding the ethics involved and their implications for activist mentalities. Neoliberal understandings of political economy continue to spread the idea of the market as the solution to all issues and only forward understandings of consumption as the necessary corollary to activism. Through new strategies of governance, these corporations and non-for-profit entities manage understandings of citizenship

and activism by giving meaning to active involvement in the activities of consumption and self-gratification, which define new roles and identities for social and civic engagement, ultimately constructing renewed beliefs in the market (King, 2006).

In recent years, the international development community has witnessed an upsurge in the popularity of market-based and consumer-oriented efforts at social justice. As part of a much larger shift occurring across multiple philanthropic circles, a number of organizations have moved towards integrating a more commercialized and commodity driven form of donor engagement. Due to the extent of global injustice brought about by Northern consumption behaviours and the unequal distribution of opportunities and resources that are part and parcel of the capitalist system, it is particularly important to examine the implications of such changes in the field of international development. Through such initiatives, emerging alongside a number of other more traditional fundraising tactics, the moral and political landscapes in which aid and philanthropy were once envisaged have begun to be reshaped and reimagined along with the images, narratives and representations that were once associated with them. From the specialized setting of the classroom, the streets and campaign posters of activist marches, and some of the more morally sensationalist campaigns, photos and narratives employed by a number of development organizations in what has been termed the pornography of poverty, the fundraising and awareness strategies aimed at bringing attention to development issues have been relocated to the local shopping mall, the grocery store and the online vendor.

The target of these campaigns and public engagement initiatives has also changed. It is no longer solely the “guilt-stricken” and “responsibility-laden” “donor” but rather the “caring”, “compassionate” and “reflexive” “consumer”. Recent corporate efforts, such as Irwin Toys’ release of the Karito Kids line of dolls in partnership with Plan International, or (Product)^{RED™},s

branding strategy to provide funding for the Global Fund for Aids, Malaria and Tuberculosis along with non-governmental initiatives, including Kiva's attempts at providing financial products in the form of loans for Northern donors to support Southern partners and World Vision's Sponsor A Child program, which in effect promotes the commodification of children, exist as just a small number of myriad tactics of consumer-driven development taking place in recent years. The more traditional means of providing information on product origin utilized by many fair trade distributors to make their items more competitive on the global marketplace would also fall within this category of market-based efforts at development. In what Lisa Richey and Stefano Ponte (2008) have termed, "a new frontier for development aid,...the marriage of consumption and social causes has become one and indivisible" (pp. 711, 716). Corporate entities and their not-for-profit and fair trade counterparts and affiliates are beginning to realize that 'development sells' and capitalizing upon the perceived benefits that can be gained from such cause-related and consumer-oriented strategies of marketing. In the process, the political, social and moral landscapes of development have also begun to be reimagined. As the political and economic 'fields' in which development was once communicated begin to shift, so do its images, narratives and discourses (Bourdieu, 1993). The locus of such efforts is not only being resituated in the physical sense but also within the hearts and minds of Northern publics.

The motivations behind such socially charged and philanthropic ventures are not always shared and can often vary. For instance, Pringle and Thompson (1999) see a dual benefit arising from cause-related marketing enterprises taken on by for-profit industries, in that the corporate brand benefits from the positive imagery of being associated with a particular cause while the funding arising from the increase in sales is passed on to non-for-profit partners involved in the campaign. Others, such as researcher and activist Naomi Klein (2009) take a much more critical

position on the marketization of social causes by private corporations in stating that these efforts, in effect, come down to, “the privatization of our collective rights as citizens” as the right to justice becomes a good to be bought and sold on the global market (pp. 442). As Samantha King (2006) further explains, “marketing experts frequently refer to cause-related marketing as a means to ‘cut through the clutter’ caused by increasing competition between manufacturers,” (p. 10) rather than a means to justice first and foremost. A marketing consultant contributing to an article in the Harvard Business review put it much more bluntly, stating “cause-related marketing was meant to be marketing, not philanthropy” (Welsh, 1999, p. 24, as cited in King, 2006, p. 10). According to Gavin Fridell (2007), the intellectual origins of the contemporary fair trade movement focused on the search for an alternative trading system that would transform capitalist relations worldwide. However, more recently he sees a similar shift towards organizations taking on fair trade products primarily as a means of achieving more effective competition within the capitalist marketplace rather than as a means of seeking justice. The non-governmental or not-for-profit sector, on the other hand, seems to have turned to marketing strategies as a means of gaining access to a much larger population of “caring consumers,” taking off from the corporate example as an effective means of gaining followers to the cause. All of these statements point to a Northern public that is searching for meaning in their lives and a consumer realm that is all too ready to profit off of such motivations. As Northern publics become disconnected from traditional modes of civic engagement and involvement, consumption offers an important space for connectedness and inclusions, as well as to shape the norms of a society or the ways in which people understand themselves and how they should act and belong (Putnam, 2001). This means the power to define what it is to be “caring,” “just,” or “responsible” is being reimagined by corporate and non-for-profit bodies, articulating new forms of governmentality. As the

statements posed above suggest, this raises a number of issues concerning the profit-making motivations behind such activities as well as the identities and understandings being fostered.

Ultimately, though the commodification of development initiatives within cause-related and consumer-oriented marketing schemes represents just one among many strategies of fundraising and awareness gathering activities of for-profit and non-for-profit organizations, it nonetheless provides a significant site for understanding the implications of development's outreach endeavours upon the social justice mentalities of constituents of the global North. Development education, or any sort of focused analytical lens offered to the general public on development issues is something that is sorely lacking in many centres of the global North. This means that the fundraising and marketing tactics of development organizations are often the most significant sources aside from the news media in the dissemination of information on particular issues as they exist within the developing world (Smillie, 1995). As a result, marketing and fundraising initiatives come to represent important "public faces of development" that shape the ways in which the public understands development issues (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004). The importance of development fundraising and marketing materials in shaping public understanding makes a serious analysis of the tools and techniques employed by non-for-profit, corporate and fair trade organizations within consumer-driven schemes of aid and development as well as the implications that they have for Northern consumers and donors all the more critical.

Situating the Field

A critical studies approach, to the field of international development studies concerns itself primarily with the observation and critique of the institutions of development themselves through the employment of the most useful and innovative methods available (See, for example, Ferguson, 1990; Sachs, 1992; Escobar, 1995). Yet, an important component often overlooked

within its networks and relations of power by a large proportion of international development's most ardent observers, including the ones cited above, are the administrative and fundraising practices of organizations in the global North that promote awareness and understanding surrounding its projects and actions. While scholars such as, Wolfgang Sachs (1992) and Arturo Escobar (1995) have written exhaustively about the ways in which development was constructed as an apparatus in the global North at its birth, they did not look further into how it has continually been reconstructed by organizations and efforts to bring new understandings and actions into being amongst a Northern public. Similarly, James Ferguson (1990) utilized a methodology that looked, "not [at] the people to be 'developed,' but the apparatus that is to do the 'developing'" (p. 17), however, he also did not adequately address the practices and ideologies of these institutions in the context of the global North, choosing to emphasize instead on the impact of their operations in the South. Following this, most researchers have tended taken for granted the ways in which development's power to shape people's actions, perceptions, and beliefs continues have lasting influence far beyond the generally conceived and conceptualized boundaries of the development apparatus in the global South.

Primarily concerned with the efforts and actions of international development organizations and agencies as they are taking place within the global South and other impoverished regions of the Earth, few scholars have been sufficiently critical of the messages which development organizations are relaying to those on the giving rather than the receiving end of the aid chain. This has left ample room for the critique and analysis of such practices and a further look into the implications that such institutions have for social justice and the project of international development as a whole. As such, this thesis proposes to contribute to the significant efforts of a small number of scholars in shifting such conventions, by concerning

itself with the ways in which Northern bodies and minds are shaped into being and becoming “globally responsible citizens and consumers” through the interaction of individuals with the development system as they occur within commodity relations. Thus, its thrust and concentration will primarily be placed upon development institutions as they function in the global North to renegotiate and reconstruct understandings of social justice and conceptions of development more broadly through their consumer driven fundraising and charitable initiatives. In the end, it is hoped that this will help to demonstrate that the activities of development in the supposedly “developed” regions of the world are of no less significance than those taking place within the areas which they are seeking to “develop”, and should, in fact, be included in any comprehensive study of the development enterprise. The ways in which development initiatives and organizations are represented and choose to represent themselves within the global North can have tremendous impacts and repercussions upon the ways in which social justice is both envisaged and practiced globally and, as a result, they deserve much deeper attention.

The ways in which the issues of the developing world come to encounter and act upon the sentiments, sentimentalities and subjectivities of publics in the global North deserve just as much attention and scrutiny as the ways in which development is practiced and played out in the communities of the global South. In fact, as will be illustrated, to separate these undertakings into two distinct areas of concentration is very much a relic of development studies’ past disciplinary focuses, structures, and ways of perceiving the world. To overlook the multiple ways in which these mutually interdependent aspects of the development apparatus or machine overlap and intertwine is to misunderstand and ignore the myriad ways in which understandings in the global North can influence the emphasis and practices of development in the global South. Not only do the ways in which peoples interact with development impact their understandings of

their own role within the development process but they also influence the ways in which acts of social justice are perceived worldwide. As such, as development efforts become commodities to be bought and sold as products in the global marketplace, this has important consequences for reshaping the ways in which development and social justice are perceived and practiced. Such insights raise issue to the relationships and distinctions between charity, reform, justice, and morality which persist as common themes of inquiry throughout this thesis.

The anthropology of development, or the study of the apparatus of development itself through a critical and holistic lens, has contributed much to our understandings of Northern ties and connections to the developing world. Through the analysis and examination of practices as far reaching as the commodification of culture and the sale of human organs (Scheper-Hughes, 2000, 2002), to the privatization of the genomes of living things (Escobar, 1996, p. 47) to name but a few it has offered vital understandings into the ways in which global North and South interact through commodity relations in often menacing ways. Nevertheless, the sale of altruism within these networks is a topic that deserves far greater attention in terms of its impacts upon development awareness, beliefs and practices in relation to social justice and charity. As has been observed, the marketing of social justice, human generosity, morality, and social responsibility within both non-for-profit and corporate efforts at consumer driven development fundraising has only been given significant insight by a limited number of interested scholars and thus leaves ample room to expand and contribute. Such a task involves getting at the ways in which an individual's participation in these schemes of marketing and representation comes to inform very important aspects of their ethicopolitical self and their understandings of humanity more broadly.

With this in mind, the convergence of fundraising and consumption raises a series of

important questions: In a world where caring is increasingly becoming synonymous with consuming and activism is something to be bought and sold, what are the implications of the messages that circulate and transit these networks? How do the images and meanings associated with development change? When aid and philanthropy enter into the competitive world of the global marketplace what are the ultimate consequences for understandings of social justice?

Within the field of international development, charity and fundraising play an influential and yet understudied role in the construction of international relations and understandings of acts of social and economic justice as they are perceived and carried out worldwide. Until relatively recently, and except among a small group of interested individuals, the institutions and activities of charitable organizations, social enterprises, and corporate philanthropy efforts within the development apparatus, have been relatively underexplored. As such, this thesis seeks to address such questions, as well as those posed earlier in this introduction, utilizing the methods and methodology which follow.

Methodology

Despite the lack of critical studies literature focusing on development's fundraising and engagement strategies in the global North, there is a core group of scholars that this thesis project seeks to draw upon in its efforts to place a critical lens on initiatives in the global North. One important source for gathering information and resources, which provided a number of useful methods and philosophies to follow in carrying out this study, was the sixteenth volume and fifth issue of the 2004 Journal of International Development. This was a special issue that focused specifically on scholars who had chosen to carry out their work in examining development projects as they impacted Northern individuals in various ways. These included, studies of development's effects through radio (Poland, 2004), travel abroad trips (Simpson, 2004), and

education (Cameron & Fairbrass, 2004; Smith, 2004), among others, all as they were constructing knowledge within the global North. These provided an important basis for entering the field and comprehending the very different ways in which development acts with Northern publics in comparison with the South. Another important piece of research in looking at ways in which to examine development's fundraising and awareness efforts was Kevin Rosario's work on the efforts of the Red Cross in the early part of the twentieth century, which compared the organizations use of images and narratives to the mass media culture of time (Rosario, 2003). This was most useful in moving forward with understanding how to analyze how a culture of consumption could compare and be integrated with feelings of charity, caring, and responsibility within current efforts at consumer driven philanthropy. Both Richey and Ponte (2006) and Cameron and Haanstra (2008) provided useful background into delving into the world of (Product)^{RED™}'s consumer engagement strategies from which to begin my own analyses.

Nonetheless, with the exception of two of the studies mentioned above, this project is also relatively different in its approach to critically examining the convergence of marketing principles, aid, ethics, and the processes of commodification as they are being brought together within the specific context of the development industry more particularly. Thus, this research project provides a relatively new space for the examination of some actors and actions as they exist within the aid chains and the development process. The relative newness of research conducted in this area, and the desire to delve more deeply into its uncharted territory, accounts for the necessarily exploratory nature of this thesis. In doing this, I hope to allow for the emergence of themes and understandings in investigating the multiple ways in which development comes to formulate new modes of being, acting and understanding through the processes of marketing and commodification taking place within its charitable networks.

Corresponding to the exploratory character of this project, the methodology which I follow is qualitative. It involves examining and interpreting the various marketing strategies, framing practices, and narratives associated with consumer driven schemes of development employed by both the organizations and consumers themselves in their interactions with these apparatuses. In carrying out these analyses and in attempts at providing responses to the research questions posed in the previous section of this chapter, I chose two organizations from each of the corporate and non-for-profit sectors in order to assess their convergences and divergences in both the projection and effects of their consumer driven schemes of development. Selected both on the basis of the availability of marketing materials and consumer responses through primarily web-based media, as well as their relative representativeness of market driven schemes of social justice within each of their fields, I chose (Product)^{RED™} and Kiva for a more in-depth examination. (Product)^{RED™}, a result of the work of celebrity musician Bono and California based activist and attorney Bobby Shriver, offered an important glimpse into the corporate strand of involvement to be analyzed within these efforts. Representing the commodification of development outreach programs and services by the not-for-profit sector, the organization Kiva offers sponsors the chance to provide loans to recipients within the developing world with the expectation of repayment. Although these two organizations and efforts can by no means be said to characterize the full breadth and depth of marketized development schemes, they do nonetheless act as useful representatives for comparative analysis of each of the categories of development assistance initiatives which will be examined within this project.

In order to effectively analyse the marketing and commodification practices carried out these two consumer efforts, a crucial component of this research involves the deconstruction of media sources as marketing tools. As both of these organizations have a significant online

presence, the research to be conducted will be mainly web-based. It involves the deconstruction and interpretation of text, image, and various other multimedia sources, including a diverse range of products, which will largely be selected upon the basis of access and availability. Following communication theorist and philosopher Marshall McLuhan's (1964/1997) famous statement, "the medium is the message", such analyses move beyond the strictly content-based in addressing diverse types of media and the ways in which their various forms, styles, and layouts play a key role in the engagement process. Borrowing from the works of Barthes (1972) and Hall (1997), among others, in elucidating a discursive and semiotic reading of images, objects, and various other art forms as text, I hope to demonstrate the ways in which development is portrayed to potential consumers and impacts social justice arrangements through its various representations. A number of other scholars have contributed to an analysis of the representations of development images and texts in particular. Both Ferguson (1990) and Escobar (1995), for example, have emphasized text as a discursive form of knowledge production within development policies that shape particular ways of knowing the developing world and hence the interventions that come along with them. Such understandings can be usefully transferred to the examination of the representations and product layouts utilized by (RED) and Kiva in their attempts at selling each of their respective causes and the implications that these have for how development is conceived. As signifiers, these various media sources and commodities bound up within consumer driven development schemes all have a role to play in the construction of a social imaginary of the project and are certain to have unique messages and meanings associated with them. For instance, the purchase and consumption of fair trade coffee or beauty products takes on a very physical form and the meanings associated with it extend beyond the simply semiotic to a material and biological connection. Development as an

aesthetic exists in manifold forms and styles within the consumer world and it is essential to examine these in order to assess the question of how the processes of commodification and branding take place within the development enterprise as well as to understand the semiotic meanings that are associated with them and their ultimate consequences.

Also central to the understanding of the ultimate effect of these consumer driven schemes of development fundraising is an examination of the responses of consumers to such efforts through an analysis of online forums and networking sites. Both (Product)^{RED™} and Kiva offer online forums for their consumers to interact and obtain information about their causes and products, which can be found at www.facebook.com/joinred and www.facebook.com/kiva respectively. These offer useful and informative loci in assessing the extent to which market-oriented forms of public engagement have an impact in educating and pushing people to think more critically about the consequences of their purchases as well as broader development issues. They provide a space for individuals to express themselves as consumers and fans of the brands which they follow and also a space for critique. Such explorations move beyond simply understanding the potential consequences of the projection of marketing schemes to beginning to understand the actual effects and implications that they have on the behaviour, identity and social justice mentality of individual consumers and followers of these development schemes.

Due to the size of its web-based community and in order to provide some control and limits to the vast amount of consumer discussion available through online forums, social media and networking sites, the majority of investigations of consumer input were limited to the (Product)^{RED™} Facebook “fan” page at www.facebook.com/joinred as it offered the most well established network of respondents of the two organizations examined within this thesis. With a fanbase of over half a million members at the time of research, it provided a wide representation

of the full range of viewpoints shared and held by its consumers. As such, it seemed the most suitable and representative choice to study. To control even further the vast number of comments made in this web-based group and brand community for the purposes of making my research feasible, I also restricted my analyses to postings and comments made between the first of January 2009 and the thirtieth of June 2010, for a total of 18 months.

As sites of both individual and communal expression, online message boards can offer useful entry points into the ways in which the public consumption of discourses and objects through marketing shape attitudes and perceptions about development, global social justice, and capitalism (Kozinets, 2010). Scholars have utilized similar methodologies in analyzing a variety of topics including, interestingly enough, efforts at consumer-based activism (Kozinets & Handelman, 1998), product and brand advertizing (Nelson, Keum & Yaros, 2004), the construction and representation of the self through online digital media sources (Schau & Gilly, 2003), and the examination of global ethics through peer-to-peer file-sharing (Cohn & Vaccaro, 2006). Though the vast majority of research in this area has been conducted within the field of marketing studies, the application of such methodologies within the social science disciplines offers new and interesting avenues for analysis. Taking off from these studies, the methods utilized in the current research project involved collecting discourse data from consumers who visited and engaged in Facebook fan page discussions. These consumer responses and opinions were then reflected upon in order to find and develop emergent themes that could later be subjected to further analysis.

It is also important to understand the limitations of this approach to what Professor in Marketing, Robert Kozinets (2010) has termed “netnography”. As a viable source of information on individual consumer perceptions and behaviours, online forums and message

boards are useful tools but they also pose limits to the extrapolations and interpretations that can be made of user comments. First and foremost, the extent to which the effect of these projects can be measured by the sole use of online forms may be limited by the degree to which people are willing to make their actions and ideas public due to the communal nature of the Facebook message boards. A preliminary analysis of a number of the comments made on the (Product)^{RED™} Facebook fan page found that the vast majority of postings are limited to very brief statements, it is nonetheless believed that these can still offer valuable insights into consumer interactions with the brand. The close-knit nature of these sites could also have effects on the responses made to any particular comment by their members in what has been termed groupthink whereby members attempt to avoid conflict by providing responses that will not incite any form of disunity (Janis, 1972). Thus, the depth and variety of the comments made by users may pose certain difficulties and limits upon the study. Finally, as a researcher, I lack any knowledge or background information of the contributors involved in these online forums. As such, I cannot be fully aware of the changes that have taken place in the processes of social identity formation and assimilation and am left with only a small amount of textual information provided by the user concerning their experiences in order to make my interpretations. Despite these limitations, I believe that the online forums and social networking sites analysed in this thesis offer a useful entry point in moving beyond simply examining the ideas projected through development-based marketing schemes towards understanding their ultimate implications upon power, agency and individual identity formation. The use of Facebook as an online forum and networking site for analyzing consumer understandings of their purchases and participation in consumer driven schemes of development allows for further examination into the types awareness and identities being fostered by such schemes. In terms of social justice, this is

significant in that illustrates the level of critical understanding being generated by such marketing.

The extent to which these techniques of analysis and information gathering deserve ethical consideration is outlined as follows. All of the information gathered and utilized in this study is part of the public domain, so concerns about the privacy of information are limited and informed consent is not required. Nevertheless, as a researcher, I find it important to set a certain standard and degree of confidentiality within my own writing. Thus, in order to protect the identities of those online contributors utilized within this project, names of online contributors will be substituted with the descriptive words “user” or “consumer”.

It is also important to emphasize that this study is first and foremost an examination in critical international development studies research. As such, in applying qualitative and exploratory approaches to examining the consumer arms of the development apparatus, this project takes as its example a critical research methodology and framework. This mode of analysis involves the deconstruction of texts, systems, institutions and relations of power in pursuit of further awareness of the structures of influence and regulation in which we exist. Thus, in focusing on the development apparatus as the central network of power within my research, I hope to understand the ways in which it is made manifest as both ideology and praxis in influencing the consumer’s “self-understand of experience” (Hackley, 2003, p. 148). It is through the use of these techniques that I hope to garner a greater understanding of the ways in which consumer-driven development schemes impact upon the minds and bodies of Northern constituents working to reshape notions of social justice and development itself.

Plan of Development

In following through on these analyses chapter two provides an historical background for

the application of marketing to social causes and a theoretical framework for understanding consumer driven schemes of social development through which the analysis of the case studies to follow will be situated. Chapter three then moves on to begin the case study analysis of (Product)^{RED™} through an investigation of practices of representation and commodification while Chapter 4 provides a similar examination of Kiva's consumer driven efforts. Chapter 5 examines the reimagining of subjectivities within these charitable marketing schemes by integrating consumer comments from the (Product)^{RED™} Facebook fan page. This is followed by chapter 6, which brings together the diverse strands of analysis carried out within the thesis and provides a brief conclusion assessing the ultimate implications of consumer driven schemes of development for social justice and encouraging development organizations to think more critically about their fundraising models.

CHAPTER 2

THE MARKETING AND COMMODIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENT: HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT

A Short History of the Application of Consumer-oriented Marketing to Social Causes

After a small test run in San Francisco, in 1983 American Express added a revolutionary new concept and campaign to its arsenal of marketing tactics in the United States. Every time a transaction was made by one of its cardholders one cent would be donated to the renovation of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, while for every new cardholder that joined, American Express would donate one dollar to the cause. It termed this strategy “cause-related marketing” and in doing so cemented a role for the social cause and fundraising efforts within business and marketing activities for years to come (Daw, 2006, p. 4). It also provided a fiscally successful precedent for the partnership between business and non-for-profit organizations and an example for the marketing of social causes through consumer-oriented tactics, which would eventually influence strategic planning in both sectors (Andreasen & Kotler, 2008, p. 414). Now numerous non-for-profit organizations have their own credit card in affiliation with one of the major providers. Though, no doubt, these schemes may have existed in small proportions further back in twentieth century history, simply the vast variety and availability of products that one can purchase towards aiding any particular social cause is astounding. An individual can buy wristbands, earrings, and necklaces that support just about any cause from cancer research to environmental stewardship. Ribbons, flowers and motivational statements adorn various brands of clothing and apparel promoting and fundraising for a number of social endeavours. Non-for-profits have begun to introduce business and marketing standards and codes of ethics to their management and fundraising objectives (Raddon, 2008, p. 3) and, in the past twenty years, “corporate philanthropy [has developed] from a relatively random, eclectic, and unscientific

activity to a highly calculated and measured strategy that is integral to a business's profit making function" (King, 2006, p. xxx).

The history of the introduction, use and application of marketing tactics to international development's fundraising and aid streams within this movement, has a relatively short track record in both the corporate and non-for-profit sectors. As has been explained, cause-related marketing itself, as a strategy for increasing the profitability of a brand through association with a social cause, did not emerge as an effective tool and branding scheme, let alone a concept, until the 1980s, and it is only more recently that international development organizations and corporations have become involved in employing such tactics. Some of the earliest development organizations to employ such strategies in their fundraising arsenals were the children's relief effort and aid organizations. Through the financial transactions involved in sponsoring a specific child in a particular country whereby the donor is offered a photograph, drawings, letters and other information regarding the child in exchange for their monetary investment, the act of sponsorship became ever closer to one of consumption. With the advent of the internet the parallels between child sponsorship and consumption grew even closer as the web programs that allowed sponsors to click a button to 'sponsor this child' became virtually identical to the "add to cart" button on on-line shopping platforms. Through the use of gift catalogues and the packaging of development efforts into a somewhat more tangible experience they attempted to engage and more closely involve their donors in the development process.¹ Oftentimes, these purchases would only act as a representation for monies going to fund a particular cause or community project but they nonetheless sought to give the consumer a more active role and involve the imagination in the aid giving process through consumption. While not offering the donor any actual products, they nonetheless set a precedent for the packaging of consumer

¹ For instance, World Vision introduced its first gift catalogue in 1996 (World Vision, 2010, para. 6).

choice within the international development fundraising stream and for the more active role of the donor-consumer in making the choice of which goods and services to spend their monies on. Other major development organizations, devoted to more diverse causes, such as Oxfam, were soon to follow this trend, later creating their own chain of stores where profits made from consumer purchases financed the organizations' development projects. In many ways, we are still witnessing the true first wave of attempts at applying market logic and strategies to development objectives. Nonetheless, all of these efforts must be understood within a much deeper history of social theory and marketing practice.

It was nearly sixty years ago that research psychologist G. D. Wiebe (1951-1952) posed a very important question for the history of the development and application of market logic and practices to social justice awareness raising campaigns and reform movements. In an article titled "Merchandising Commodities and Citizenship on Television" Wiebe inquired, "Why can't you sell brotherhood and rational thinking like you sell soap" (p. 679)? In what would become a puzzle that would transfix marketing professionals, social planners, reform movement advocates, fundraising and aid campaigners for years to come he revolutionized people's understandings about the psychology of marketing and how it could be applied to social movements. Little did Wiebe comprehend the significance that his query might have upon the institutions and practices of social justice within the consumer world as well as the entanglement of ethics, identity and the market that it might bring about. As the title of his work suggests, in this piece Wiebe was primarily seeking to understand whether television as well as radio could be utilized to influence ideas of citizenship and community through the employment of marketing tactics in a similar manner as they were being utilized to advertize and sell commodities like soap. On a broader scale, he was concerned with the ways in which human behaviours and attitudes could be

influenced and changed by their environment and social surroundings. He pondered the efficacy of utilizing a marketing logic and principles in the pursuit of “‘sell[ing]’ broad social objectives” (p. 679). In doing so, he hoped to better understand whether the conditions and circumstances under which commodities were marketed and sold could be utilized in the same way to reinforce or bring about certain ways of being and knowing. Ultimately, he wondered whether marketing could be utilized as a positive force for the social good and well-being of humanity, a central component of the line of questioning taken in this thesis, but limited in its capacity in that it did not problematize the relationships and assumptions inherent in the marketing process itself and simply sought to understand its efficacy as a device for behavioural change.

In his own work, Wiebe was not even beginning to question the motivations and power dynamics that might manifest themselves through such endeavours, but rather was simply interested in marketing’s effectiveness as an ideological instrument in shaping attitudes. He conceived of the idea of selling citizenship and community participation without raising questions about the conglomeration of government, corporate and non-for-profit sectors involved in such projects and the issues that could arise from the mixture of morality and profitability that might come with the commodification of social change. He was simply looking at the application of marketing tactics without taking account of the other components of marketing mentality and ways of knowing that might come about as a result of associating social behaviours with commodities. A product of his times, Wiebe did not even begin to realize that social causes could conversely be utilized by the corporate world in their marketing schemes in order to sell products and boost profitability; not simply as a means of promoting change but of subsuming the radical into the capitalist popular culture. He was thinking about the ways in which these strategies could be utilized to aid in government initiatives or reform movements

without taking into account that there were not only power relations behind the ways in which people's attitudes and behaviours were being affected and changed but even the ways in which the idea of socialization itself was being organized and conceived of by the multiple parties involved. Lacking this basis of critical insight, his ideas would, nonetheless, go on to influence multiple organizations and sectors of society. It is this deficiency of critical thinking about the application of marketing logic and commodification to the social world through development related aid and fundraising that this thesis seeks to remedy and explore.

To this day, the potential value that Wiebe saw in applying a marketing logic to social initiatives and causes continues to spread and inspire new thinking, ideas and research into the many ways that marketing tactics can be applied in innovative ways to forward particular social causes bringing about the rise of such terms as “social marketing” and “social entrepreneurialism.” As a result of his questioning and the work of subsequent scholars and professionals the effectiveness and applicability of such methods and techniques is no longer as widely disputed or debated. Among marketing analysts, the business community and now even a large number of non-for-profit organizations, the advantages of these technologies of marketing persuasion are generally well accepted. Certainly, thirty years following Wiebe's seemingly simple inquiry, Kotler and Zaltman (1971/1997), the pioneering advocates and inventors of the term “social marketing,” believed it to be “a promising framework for planning and implementing social change” and that, “the application of the logic of marketing to social goals [was] a natural development [in the promotion of historical progress]” (p. 8). Twenty-five years after this article was published, Kotler continued to promote social marketing as a “useful perspective and tool for ameliorating social problems” (p. 7). The groundbreaking work of these two scholars would go on to lead a revolution in marketing tactics and thought in both the

corporate and non-for-profit worlds as well as within government institutions that would only begin to be witnessed in the 1980s. There are now entire journals, textbooks, university and college courses devoted to the subject and a myriad of businesses are also realizing the profitability that can come with associating one's brand with a social cause or movement.² More recently, in a paper prepared for the Skoll World Forum on Social Entrepreneurship, Jeff Skoll (2009) exclaimed that in the proceeding decades "Social entrepreneurship has emerged as a legitimate model for transformative social change" (p. 3). Certainly, social marketing in itself, a specific expression of this particular type of thinking has also had similar impacts upon the perceived ways in which it can be utilized for positive change by impacting the ways in which peoples interact with and the situations in which they think about justice. The emphasis in such enterprises on treating social development as a business and utilizing the market for change illustrates the large strides that this type of logic has taken in recent years. It is precisely this increase in the acceptance and spread of such practices and understandings that should raise questions about their ultimate implications and effects upon people's understandings of social justice and altruism and the supposedly positive force that marketing can have in forwarding such causes.

Nevertheless, Wiebe was not near the first to question or attempt to bring together the practices of business and the non-for-profit realm. Part of the increasing commercialization and commodification of today's aid and fundraising schemes can also be attributed to the reform movements and early philanthropic efforts of business leaders, which took place during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These saw an ever growing interest and role for

² Journals on these topics include *Social Marketing Quarterly*, *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, *Innovations*, *Nonprofit Sector Marketing*, *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing*. Textbooks include Andreasen and Kotler (2008), Kotler and Lee (2008), Daw (2006).

business in the non-for-profit and public sectors, as the owners and Chief Executive Officers of some of the world's wealthiest companies sought to put their fortunes to use towards social causes. Moguls and tycoons, the likes of Kellogg, Rockefeller and Carnegie became patrons and philanthropists of public institutions and pet causes, pouring not only capital but ideas, development and management strategies into a number of social initiatives. Many of these individuals were not satisfied to be mere spectators and armchair observers, simply funding these operations behind the scenes and sitting on the sidelines while their money did the work, but instead sought to play leading roles in the development of such projects. Beginning and directing charitable organizations, founding a number of educational institutions and overseeing the development of national parks, they sought to play a central role in the society of their times and have an important say over its management and administration beyond the realms of their corporate control.³ Long before the advent of cause-related marketing and corporate social responsibility efforts were taken on as essential strategies in the corporate arsenal, these initiatives provided significant examples for what was later to come. Through them, charity and philanthropy began their integration into the corporate realms, no longer simply as casual pursuits or sideline interests but as integral tools and strategies for building business reputations and consumer loyalties through marketing. It is this tradition of the application of business and marketing strategies to social causes that this thesis seeks to critically examine.

Nonetheless, one must plunge even deeper into the history of social thought and political economic theory to get at the roots of consumer fundraising and philanthropy as they persist within a neoliberal ideology and discourses. The philosophical groundwork and underpinnings for leaving social justice and benevolence to the market were laid out in the writings of Adam

³ One can see a current example of this type of arrangement within development circles in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to which Bill Gates has pledged to devote his time and efforts to after stepping down from his role at Microsoft (Andreasen and Kotler, 2008, p. 12).

Smith. Indeed, for Smith, altruism and justice would perpetuate themselves through the free reign of the market. The market itself existed as an instrument and mediating force in fostering the relationships and responsibilities entailed by aid and justice. Through the free and unhindered exchange of goods and services it allowed each individual to be a part of something greater than him or herself, a system which perpetuated the well-being of society through mutual obligation and understanding (Smith, 1776/1937). Without comprehension, individuals daily promoted the sustenance of others and the public interest through labour and consumption. As he explained, through the market an individual is “led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was not part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it” (Smith, 1776/1937, pp. 351-352). His allusion to the invisible hand, illustrated that he believed that the market offered a guiding force in the redistribution of resources through the production of needs in the self-interest of some to aid the cause of others. Probably one of his most famous and often quoted statements from *The Wealth of Nations* pushes for this form of thinking. As Smith (1776/1937) states,

...man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and show them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this: Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages (p. 20).

For Smith, it was not the charity or goodness within a person that an individual or organization should appeal to in hoping to garner aid for a cause, but their self-interest. In stating this, he believed that appeals to abstract notions of charity, benevolence and justice would not be as effective as

appealing to an individual's feeling of self-worth and empowerment. As will be demonstrated this appeal to the self would become a central aspect in a number of the marketing campaigns that would become associated with development fundraising and aid. In his *Theory on Moral Sentiments*, which preceded *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith (1759/1976) regarded sympathy and self-interest as two sides of the same coin. In a dualistic way, it was through petitioning a reflection upon one's own position and the possibility of experiencing the suffering of the other that an individual becomes empowered and seeks to provide assistance. Since, for Smith, the primary motivating factor driving all rational behaviour within the market was one of self-interest, it would provide an effective means for eliciting funds through illustrating the utility of the purchase both symbolically and materially to an individual's sense of worth. Speaking of capitalism and the free market as self-regulating systems for the amelioration of social ills, Smith no doubt would have seen the expansion of market discourse and practices into social justice, fundraising, and reform movements as a natural progression of human society and history. In all probability, Smith himself would have pushed for the further integration of social justice and altruism into the marketplace of life, beyond simple charity efforts as a much more efficient means of social management. Although Smith emphasized a role for the state, it did not extend on to charitable institutions but only through public services, such as roads, education, and religious institutions, believing that charity and capitalism would go hand in hand through natural processes (Smith, 1776/1937).

Even before Smith, the profit driven motives and market incentives behind charitable and philanthropic giving and ethical consumption enterprises have precedents that existed even as far back as the middle ages. The practice of selling indulgences in medieval Europe provides perhaps one of the earliest documented attempts at the commodification and marketing of humanity's absolution from an unworthy and immoral life. It gave the Roman Catholic Church complete temporal control over determining who would be considered a moral, benevolent and

just subject on their journey in the afterlife through the commodification and sale of pardons. Employed by parishes and even the pope as a fundraising strategy, the sale of indulgences was a way of both figuratively and literally buying your way into heaven and becoming a better person. Through the payment of an indulgence an individual was granted absolution from all of the sins that they had committed in their past life and ensured a faster, safer journey to heaven that did not involve a long stay in purgatory in order to determine a person's fate. One must consider that another key component of today's market and consumer oriented fundraising strategies is the attempt at the commodification and marketing of human morality and ethics and its resale to the consumer through acts of consumption. What the indulgence ultimately amounted to was the commodification of humanity's absolution from sin through acts of charitable consumption in a much similar manner to the ways in which the purchase of socially invested goods equates to the absolution of guilt from living in an extremely unequal world today.

According to historian Robert Swanson (2007) the market for the redemption of human souls, or, what he calls the "indulgence business" (p. 161), was a well-developed, formalized and intensely competitive one. It involved a vast array of marketing and advertising techniques and procedures that would be recognizable and impress consumers and marketing analysts alike even today. As Swanson (2007) further elaborates:

Its systems and practices were based on mass consumption, effectively on consumerism. While the surviving documentary base is woefully incomplete, enough exists to show its integration with commercialism, through advertising and publicity, and the commodification of indulgences as an aspect of material culture....For pardons to attract donations, they had to be known, and attractive. This grew increasingly important as the market became saturated, competition for gifts increased, and attractiveness became a matter of novelty and fashion - factors all discernible by the sixteenth century. Publicity, advertising, became crucial (p. 161).

The variety of indulgences and the diversity of ways in which they were produced and packaged necessitated a myriad of public engagement strategies. Such strategies could include simple word

of mouth transactions between villagers or the employment of a town crier but they also necessarily involved advertisement and marketing giving during the sermons of local priests in advance of a visiting pardoner's coming. The Rounceval pardon was announced at St. Paul's Cross in London for a fee of 4d (Swanson, 2007). In many cases, these marketing and commodification schemes involved a combination of spoken word and written information of what was offered being posted or engraved on cathedral walls and church doors. For instance, Swanson (2007) records an instance of a proclamation on an English church door encouraging visitors to tell others of the indulgences that they offered upon their return home. Tombstones also recorded and proclaimed the types of pardons and indulgences which their constituent had received in order to pass them on to others for consumption (Swanson, 2007). Swanson (2007) even records examples of mass mailing campaigns and correspondence efforts meant for wide distribution and circulation during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in England. These could be simple bills and leaflets describing the pardon services offered by a particular parish or fraternity but documentary remnants exist that also point to the use of forms where the intended recipients could fill in the requisite gaps and send a payment for services to distant parishes. All of these practices point to a highly formalized and professionalized market for indulgence products and commodities that relied on vast networks of communication and persuasive strategies. Like the contemporary examples of ethically produced goods and services this also included the creation of regulatory certification boards and codes of ethics that saw the accreditation of licensed pardoners who were authorized to sell such products and carry out the tasks associated with them by the administration of the Catholic Church to ensure fraudulent activities did not occur (Swanson, 2007). What these examples illustrate is that while intangible, indulgences could nonetheless be produced and packaged as a service to be bought and sold

through the use of marketing techniques, albeit in a religious marketplace for the cleansing of human souls. Through indulgences the just, benevolent and altruistic lifestyle was in effect packaged, bought and sold like soap. Such practices brought about a market in human morality the likes of which could easily be compared to the professionalized markets in aid, fundraising and ethical products of today.

Situating the Analysis of Consumer Driven Development: Theoretical Context

As a consequence of the effective spread and expansion of neoliberal ideals and ideologies in the past few decades, the proliferation of what Marx and Engels (1887/2007) and Simmel (1907/1990) saw as the money mediation of modern social existence has continued to penetrate on into newer aspects of public and private life. In this emerging global order, market solutions to social problems are a relatively new form of ‘struggle’ in the fight for social justice. As tools in corporate, government, and non-governmental arsenals, they have only just begun to enter into a marriage with the development industry. Nonetheless, they have begun to influence and entice new ways of knowing and being upon the global North surrounding issues of social justice and activism that need to be examined in much greater detail to better understand their ultimate implications. Building off of Samantha King’s (2006) discussions in her groundbreaking work *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*, which analyses the merging of breast cancer philanthropy and for-profit marketing, it is within this reformed neoliberal order that consumer-oriented solutions to social problems threaten to rearticulate the boundaries between the state, not-for-profit, and corporate sectors. These new strategies work to reshape notions of political action, social responsibility, generosity, and citizenship as consumer endeavours creating new mechanisms for control and authority. It is within such understandings that I situate my own work.

The spread of neoliberal ideals of government rollback, market expansion and increasing privatization through international development is not only being felt in the projects being carried out within the global South, it is also penetrating into the fundraising activities of corporate and non-for-profit organizations within the global North as charitable and philanthropic ventures become commodified. The commodification of social justice within current efforts at development fundraising is part and parcel of this expansion of market relations into new areas of social existence. It involves the transformation of social relations into exchange relations through the use of various marketing technologies including the price mechanism as well as other textual devices and scripts (Marx & Engels, 1887/2007). These bestow new meanings upon the relationship as one of consumption in both tangible and intangible forms or a mixture of the two, as both objects and experiences. Through these discursive activities and framings, new meanings are placed on the charitable relationship. As Appadurai (1986) once wrote, “commodities represent very complex social forms and distributions of knowledge” (p. 41). Commodities and the environments that they are situated within are aspects of productive labour, constructed through the use of discourses and signs, which manipulate meanings for their consumers. It is therefore imperative to get at the “ideology of consumption”, which structures the politics behind consumer experiences in order to understand their implications for social justice. An understanding of the commodity and the commodification processes that take place within these efforts requires a, “double analysis – that of the distinctive social function of objects and that of the political function of the ideology that is attached to [them]” (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 29). It is this deeper understanding of the commodity as a sign and of the commodification process as one of signification that has ample bearing upon understandings of the restructuring of social justice relations within consumer

driven development and market-oriented efforts at aid. It is through the meanings that they imbue upon the act of consumption that the relations of the consumer/donor and aid are shifted and transformed. Such understandings bring together theoretical insights of three different yet interconnected scholars in the works of Marx, Foucault, and Baudrillard.

Examining these acts of commodification within consumer driven schemes of development fundraising and their implications for social justice involves the use and merging of classical materialist, discursive, and semiotic forms of political economy in order to better situate the unique settings of these cultural products. This requires bringing together traditional Marxist insights and combining them with insights forged by Foucault, Baudrillard and a number of their followers. While to a certain extent the ideas of these thinkers rest on different assumptions they can nonetheless be utilized in a productive manner to more adequately describe and examine the relationships involved within and impacts of consumer-oriented schemes of development assistance. What a Marxist understanding of political economy brings to this project is a basis for explaining these shifts in fundraising tactics as acts of commodification, a process of bringing social relations previously outside of the realms of consumer relations and placing new meanings and values upon them as marketable products. Marx's idea of commodity fetishism explained these processes as the transformation of previously social relationships into objectified goods by mediation of the market, turning aspects of subjective value into objective value and ridding them of their previously human qualities in exchange for a strictly economic frame of reference (Marx & Engels, 1887/2007). Thus, as development's causes become increasingly associated with products they become less aspects of humanitarian concern and more of objective and fiscal value. This allows for questions to be raised concerning the ethics involved in such transformations in meaning and understanding and their ultimate implications for social justice.

Foucauldian analyses allow for a way of understanding the changes in meaning and commodification brought about within these consumer driven fundraising schemes as products of discursive formations of power/knowledge. For Foucault, objects and ideas are part and parcel of systems of knowledge whose meanings and significance are framed through discourse. These formations of giving are not ahistorical, objective facts but socially produced and manipulated through human discourse since, “nothing has any meaning outside of discourse” (Foucault, 1972). Therefore, they must be understood and analyzed as such in order to get at the motivations of power behind them in producing particular norms of behaviour in order to ultimately challenge them. Foucault’s analyses provide a means of examining the ways in which these shifts in the meanings associated with the practice of giving and fundraising have implications for the broader society in placing new meanings upon social action and the relationships and individuals involved in such activities. Nevertheless, Foucault (1980) looked at the broad historical questions of power, knowledge, and meaning.

Baudrillard’s work focused on the more minute questions that impact these broader understandings. Regardless of his differences with Foucault in his later career, what he did was to bring the analysis of control and power into the modern era. He also distanced himself from traditional Marxist conceptions of the ways in which particular realities and ideologies were constructed. Where Marx argued it was the material and productive forces that structured and shifted society, Baudrillard claimed that it was people’s consumption practices as well as the ideas, objects, signs and coded messages that surrounded commodity relations, which had the largest impact on constructing reality. What is most significant about Baudrillard’s philosophies for the purposes of this research is this emphasis that he placed on signs and representations in constructing reimagined spaces and values within markets and society more broadly. Through

his analyses of these devices and their interactions within consumer society, his works provide key insights into the ways in which modern relations are forged through commodities.

For Baudrillard, in order to understand the ways in which consumer driven schemes of development redefine the space of social justice and consumerism one must critically examine how meaning is constructed within these networks of the brand. Baudrillard (1968/2005, 1981) proposed that what is most important within consumer culture as a system of objects is the system of signs which come to be attributed to those products and commodities and ultimately come to define particular systems of meaning and understandings surrounding their consumption. While he was speaking primarily of the class-based connotations that are derived from the purchase of particular goods and services as a part of systems of value and meaning constructed around consumer culture, his sentiments nonetheless continue to have meaning in the age of ethical consumerism and its associated projects of the self. The marketers of each of the consumer based initiatives actively construct a system of meaning surrounding their products that applies particular understandings to the actions and behaviours involved in their purchase. As Clark (1995) has stated of Baudrillard, “For Baudrillard (1983), at any moment in the course of our modernity, a particular arrangement of signifying objects and images conditions the way we see the world” (p. 114). Utilizing a similar theoretical framework and line of thinking, Appadurai (1986) has termed these much more specific systems of meaning contrived around commodities and particular aspects of commodity culture, “regimes of value.” As constructs of the social imaginary these give significance to experience through discourse. Appadurai meant these to refer not only to value in the economic sense but the non-economic categories of values and understandings that surround particular commodity arrangements. As brokers of meaning, in their consumer driven fundraising campaigns, organizations are active in configuring such

regimes of value around individual consumer purchases. Through the use of text, image, narrative and discourse within their consumer driven initiatives, they construct systems of meaning and value that validate consumerism as an act of agency. In carrying out such efforts, these organizations foster new modalities for aid.

Ultimately bringing together the insights of each of these scholars allows for a clearer understanding of how actions such as consumption can be given more specific definitions to mean something altogether different at specific historical moments. In their marketing and production as commodities, development issues are constructed within particular regimes of truth (Foucault, 1977) or systems of knowledge that place specific meanings upon interactions within them. The act of consumption of such goods also becomes a part of a regime of value (Appadurai, 1986), in terms of the normative roles and identities that they come to be associated with, such as radicalism, responsibility, and generosity. The meanings being produced out of such relations have profound implications for social justice and the ways in which it is imagined.

The convergence of numerous corporate and non-governmental interests and activities around schemes of market-led, consumer driven and trade-based development initiatives deserves much greater consideration from the scholarly community. These new moral economies of aid and development represent an important addition to the tactics of actors that threatens to reshape and restructure the ways in which social change is conceived. The consequences of the integration of such strategies into the ethicopolitical and consumerist arsenals of these actors cannot be taken so lightly but rather requires detailed investigation into their ultimate effects. Scholarly interest in the emergence of these commercial, trade, and philanthropic undertakings has only very recently gained a niche appeal among a small but growing number of intellectuals. The marketization and commodification of international

development fundraising schemes as well as the integration of fair trade endeavours into mainstream consumer markets to take advantage of so-called “ethical consumers” has broad-ranging implications that extend far beyond their immediate surface characteristics, working to reshape individuals, ideals and activism surrounding issues of social justice, capitalism and democracy.

The consequences of consumer-oriented fundraising and cause-related marketing strategies or consumption philanthropy, as others have chosen to call such practices, cannot be understood outside of a broader theoretical context. Rather, it is at the nexus of multiple bodies of thought and literature and within long and varied histories of development-related, non-governmental, and corporate experimentation and adaptation that such ventures must be situated. The entanglement of consumption, philanthropy, and development within current efforts at what Canadian political scientist and specialist in ethical consumerism, Gavin Fridell (2007) has termed “market driven social justice” raises a number of questions and concerns that require the theoretical insights and observations of previous theoreticians in order to more fully comprehend their complexities, specificities, and ultimate implications. It is at the confluence of these multiple streams of social thought and critique that the implications of these endeavours can best be examined. Through analyzing the processes involved in the commodification of development as a product and the languages of persuasion and knowledge construction utilized in its marketing, a broader understanding of the implications of these schemes for social justice will be obtained. As such, it is here that I situate my own analyses in order to provide a theoretical framework for investigations into consumer driven schemes of development. This chapter seeks to offer an in-depth elaboration of the complex theoretical terrain through which these consumer driven schemes of development will be studied as well as a commentary and discussion of those

positions that have already been taken by scholars within the field. It is within these traditions that the implications and current practices of fair trade, consumer-oriented fundraising and cause related marketing ventures will be considered in the chapters that follow.

In engaging this new realm of consumer driven development it is apt to look into the ways in which a number of scholars have sought to expand the traditional boundaries of social thought and geography surrounding the development enterprise into new realms of engagement. These researchers aim to track development to the fields in which it takes place within Northern constituencies, and the ways in which it interacts with Northern publics (i.e. through fundraising, the media, consumer products, etc.) to shape perceptions of the global South and our (Northern) relations to it (Van Rooy, 2000; Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004; Dogra, 2007; Cameron & Haanstra, 2008). Within their various works, these researchers engage development as “a ‘technical’ and specialized activity practiced by particular ‘experts’ and organizations” but also, more importantly, as a network and communication medium through which issues of the South are articulated and represented to “non-specialized publics” in the North (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004, p. 657). Through what Matt Smith and Helen Yanacopulos (2004) term “the public faces of development,” various development organizations convey to publics in the global North new meanings and representations of both the global South and the concept of development itself that need to be examined and better understood for their political and ethical implications.

Utilizing such a theoretical backdrop involves conceiving of the development apparatus as an instrument of communication and mediator in representing issues of the global South to Northern publics. It entails examining the numerous discursive practices of image-making and meaning production that go into the construction of development issues and how they come to engage a populace, in various contexts, forms and styles. Following from Baudrillard (1981), it

involves looking at how consumer products functions as signs and objects in systems of meaning creation for Northern publics, developing particular realities around development and their involvements with it. Finally, it necessitates confronting the issues of power and authority as they come to be played out through such practices and the ways in which they educate new ways of conceiving of the world and social justice along with it. Through their use of marketing strategies and products in attempts at eliciting funding, interest, and knowledge of particular causes, consumer driven schemes of development present a unique ‘public face’ within Northern constellations of aid and philanthropy. As new and alternative means of directing peoples to numerous projects that would fit under the development banner, they raise important questions surrounding their ultimate implications and effectiveness. The ways in which these consumer-oriented projects are framed, interpreted and understood can have significant consequences for the overall effect of the development enterprise within Northern constituencies. Ultimately such activities can have very real implications for the future of development and social justice more generally, not only in the ways in which it impacts Southern beneficiaries, but also in how it works to reshape Northern subjectivities and politics. Drawing from the works of Stuart Hall (1992, 1997) and his thoughts on the politics of representation, an examination into the ‘public faces’ of development offers a deeper means of engagement in understanding the ways in which semiotics and various discursive practices in image-making work to construct hegemonic narratives and visions of the world. Analyzing the ways in which development faces outwards to a Northern public through its multitude fundraising activities and advocacy awareness strategies helps to illustrate how these activities reshape the ways in which peoples act and behave as ‘globally responsible citizens’ and perceive ‘distant Others’.

Analysis of the implications of the commodification of development philanthropy and

fair trade schemes must also be situated within much wider critiques of the development system as a whole. In order to provide a suitable analysis of the effects that such practices have upon our moral understandings of social change it is necessary to delve deeply into the precedents set forth by others within the social science disciplines. The history of development theory itself offers crucial tools and insights into the examination of these marketing and consumer schemes. It is over twenty years since anthropologist James Ferguson (1990) instituted an important shift within the field of international development studies. Rather than measuring it against the potential outcomes that were supposed to come about as a result of its projects, he stated what researchers should be examining were its actual practices and their consequences. The groundwork which he laid out for questioning and exploring the institutions of development themselves remains useful and constructive even today. In his dissertation work entitled *the Anti-politics Machine* Ferguson (1990) postulated that rather than simply trying to understand issues of development only as they existed within so-called 'recipient' communities, the critical lens needed to be shifted to the practices, policies, and procedures which went into constructing and maintaining these particular 'regimes of truth.'

In order to more fully comprehend the complexities of these processes and structures Ferguson (1990) argued that scholars needed to begin studying and analyzing the development industry and apparatus itself and the ways in which it produces and represents particular visions of development and social change. To truly understand the effects of these apparatuses of change, he maintained that researchers needed to take a reflexive look inwards to the actors, institutions and practices which contribute to the production of these systems. In the case of consumption philanthropy, cause-related marketing, and fair trade efforts, the focus needs to be shifted to the marketers and the consumers themselves. Ferguson's research was indicative of

much wider changes taking place within the social sciences and the discipline of anthropology in particular, which sought to examine the institutions and practices of power as they existed within various social orders and organizations. What came to be known as ‘institutional ethnography’ has continued to have lasting influence within the academic community in confronting hegemonic orders and subjecting them to the same critical treatment as has been placed upon Southern peoples and subaltern groups. His theoretical insights offer a useful means for confronting both the practical and ideological implications of how development exists as an apparatus of power and control.

For Ferguson (1990, p. 13) following Foucault (1977, 1980), it is important to understand institutional efforts “not for what they don’t do or might do, but for what they do.” It is the *productivity* of the development industry that primarily interested Ferguson and it is within these criteria that I situate my own analyses of the implications of consumer-oriented development philanthropy and fair trade marketing strategies. For as Foucault himself asserted, it is not the *repressive* potential of power that makes it so insidious but rather its *productive* nature. “What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Foucault 1980, p. 119). It is these relations of power and their implications upon the social world of willing Northern consumers that lie at the heart of what I hope to further understand. While Ferguson’s analyses rested on examining the impact of development or what it does in the global South within the particular context of Lesotho, perhaps just as important are the impacts of the development industry in the global North and the ways in which it shapes popular understandings of development and the global south. Through the fundraising and marketing efforts of development organizations, the act and experience of giving

is reimagined in ways that shape new identities and understandings surrounding social justice. In taking Ferguson's example as my point of departure, I aim to examine the *productive capacity* of these endeavours for the ways in which they work to reshape particular ways of being, knowing, and envisioning the world.

As text, image, and oftentimes physical object the practices of marketing and commodification that come together in building a product for consumption within consumer driven schemes of development construct a particular narrative or ideology around the acts associated with the good. These representations and the marketing discourses used to sell them function to construct new understandings of agency, responsibility, and generosity, as well as notions about the empowered self and the other as part of the product. These seemingly insignificant activities play a relatively important role in shaping what Ferguson (1990) once explained as "the constitution of the object of 'development'" (p. 25). They have a means of constructing their own version of what development should look like and what underdevelopment is, that ultimately plays a role in determining the way that it should be carried out. Through the employment of technologies of persuasion and particular models of fundraising, they contribute to the formation of a particular type of development subject on both ends of the aid chain that influences and defines the relations that exist therein. Ultimately, fundraising activities shape the way that international development is understood and the ways that change can be brought about, they represent reality in a way that justifies a particular type of intervention. The ways in which reality is constructed and the means and methodologies utilized in constituting change in order to "set up a target for a particular sort of intervention" (Ferguson, 1990, p. 28) ultimately have implications for social justice that demand further exploration. Through their discourses, fundraising models and practices, consumer driven schemes of

development define a particular set of relations in which social justice can be both imagined and conducted, which ignores other possibilities and contrives particular beliefs and understandings. In a way that Marx spoke of power over the means of production, they retain control over defining the means, modality and experience of giving. These do not propose to make any real lasting changes to existing capitalist arrangements but instead work within them, reinforcing market structures and identities that created a number of the issues of social injustice in the first place.

In carrying out this study I am thus not primarily interested in whether these endeavours are perceived as successful or failed ventures but rather in what they *do* – that is, how they shape popular understandings of development. What deserves examination here, are the ways in which these ventures contribute to what Rodriguez (2007, p. 31, emphasis in original) terms the “cooptation of the political imagination” or the disciplining of “*a way of knowing* social change and resistance praxis” that filters the ways in which peoples think and act politically contributing to the construction of a “*creative relation of power* that forms a restricted institutional space in which ‘dissent’ movements may take place.” Heath and Potter (2005) speak to this management of dissent in similar fashion by theorizing how the corporate system has increasingly subsumed social justice and activism as a marketing opportunity working to reify existing structures and relations of capitalist exploitation. Thus, the objects of my analyses are the ways in which individuals interact with these consumer efforts and come to communicate their understandings of the consequences of their actions in taking part in such endeavours. The activities of marketing and consumption which revolve around consumer-philanthropy and cause-related marketing schemes are thus fundamental to this research in existing as central nexuses of power through which activism, issues of social justice, and the globally responsible citizen are being

renegotiated and commodified. For if, as Ferguson (1990, p. 13) states, “a structure always reproduces itself through a process” than the object of analysis must become the processes that go into the production of these structures themselves. Utilizing such theoretical conceptions as a framework for further understanding goes a long way in providing a normative critique of these activities as they exist as extensions of the development apparatus itself within Northern constituencies. They provide a useful basis for evaluating what these ‘public faces’ of development achieve in their production and just how these processes of commodification impact consumer identities and ideals.

What lies at the heart of my analyses into the productive capacity of development’s consumer driven marketing efforts is the rearticulation of the individual consumer as the site for social change and the consequences that this has for social justice worldwide. This requires an understanding of the ways in which consumer driven schemes of development help to rework conceptualizations of the commodity-choosing consumer as a conduit for morally responsible action, reshaping the ethicopolitical landscape of development through the shopping habits of individual consumers. As sociologist Matthias Zick Varul (2008, p. 655) puts it, again citing Foucault (1987, p. 117), this, “like all construction[s] of free subjects – requires the problematization of freedom in an ethos.” Thus, theoretical insight into the ways in which the individual consumer plays a central role in the reification of these structures and relations of power through their own actions is crucial to my research. Central to the control of the political imagination of the self within these structures is the reformation of the citizen as the *subject* of corporate relations. Butler (1997, p. 16) explains that within such relations “power assumes...a reversal of its direction, one that performs a break with what has come before and dissimulates as a self-inaugurating agency.” Within these endeavours power is maintained through the illusion

of agency and the ability to affect social change through consumption when in fact social change itself has been subsumed by the very system of capitalist exploitation that it seeks to reform. What Foucault (1982) termed “the conduct of conduct” is fundamental in the control of the consumer’s political imagination through marketing discourses that discipline the individual into internalizing a particular articulation of social justice. Within these arrangements the market exists as a technology and apparatus of normalization and subjectivization through which politics can be incorporated into existing political arrangements. Nonetheless, in their actions as ethical consumers, the peoples involved in these movements are essential to the reproduction of these ways of knowing and acting politically. What this amounts to is the self-government and self-discipline of consumer activism through the subsuming of the critique of social issues by the capitalist status quo. In this process, the subject as consumer plays a fundamental role in the reification of existing relations.

What the theoretical insights of the researchers mentioned above illustrate is how agency can often substitute as a source of hegemony within these consumerist projects. Just as these groups and individuals assume a knowledge, a discourse and a performative role as a means to action and gaining accessibility to the possibility of social justice and influence over various policies, projects and agendas, they are also subsumed within capitalist narratives and institutions of authority. At the very moment that their actions could be construed as strategies of autonomy, control and even resistance over resources and identities the discourses and performances that they take on as consumers make them subject to the rules, regulations and domination of a centralized technomanagerialist form of governmentality over their hearts and minds. This type of agency only furthers the reproduction and reaffirmation of power by giving legitimacy to social activists only if they fulfill the dominant images and stereotypes constructed around them.

As Judith Butler (1997, p. 10, emphasis in original) puts it in a statement illustrative of these forms of hegemony, “subjection is...a power assumed by the subject, an assumption that constitutes the instrument of that subjects becoming....Power not only *acts on* a subject but, in a transitive sense, *enacts* the subject into being.” These processes of knowing and being involved in the construction of identities to forward particular goals are intimately intertwined with the construction of power itself.

Writing from an understanding of hegemony that is a ‘multi-sited,’ ‘historically situated’ and ‘productive’ process rather than a ‘static’ imposing structure, both Foucault (1982) and Butler (1997) provide important theoretical insight into perceiving power and agency in the duplicitous manners that they play out in practice within the flows of development networks. These scholars explain that hegemony and power are not simply forces coerced upon the actions of individuals by the state, but rather consist of a productive process in which citizens play an active role in constructing and fulfilling social norms. Through their supposed acts of agency, individuals are all the while taking part in discourses and identities of what it means to be an agent and occupy a particular identity. Just as consumers expresses his or her agency by purchasing a cause-related product, they also take on definitions of what it means to be socially responsible, generous, altruistic, and active global citizens, through satisfying a role and a stereotype constructed by marketing discourses and tactics. As such, power is ‘multi-sited’, ‘historically situated’ and ‘productive’ since structures of what it means to be a particular type of individual are constantly being renegotiated and imposed by various actors.

The renegotiation of development as something that can be commodified within current efforts at cause-related marketing, consumer-oriented philanthropy, and fair trade is not entirely imposed by corporations and non-for-profit entities, but is a negotiated process of meaning

making in which the consumer plays an active role in contriving new understandings.

Consumers, themselves, help to renegotiate the meanings of responsibility, citizenship and social justice that come to be associated with such acts of development assistance. Through their performative interactions with aid and the understandings that they contrive out of these commodity driven schemes and relationships, new subjectivities come to be formulated in which consumerism becomes a significant feat of agency and activism through responsibility. As Foucault (1982, p. 791) states, power “is not reconstituted ‘above’ society as a supplementary structure” but rather exists “deep in the social nexus.” It is through “the conduct of conduct,” or the normative meanings imposed upon, and negotiated through the acts of free thinking individuals, that understandings of the social universe and individual’s behaviours within it are constructed and regulated. Citizens remain self-governing and self-disciplining subjects, in this case, by subsuming political action and issues of social justice into their existing role as consumers as new meanings of generosity and citizenship come to be formulated. It is this understanding of the role of consumers and the affects that their own discourses and behaviours play in the constitution of development as a consumer effort that will be of central concern in applying these theoretical approaches.

The ways in which the “public faces” of development reveal themselves within these efforts are through consumer goods and the financial market. As such, at the basest level, this thesis is about ‘things’ and our relations to them. Most significantly the ways in which they work to reshape our conceptions of ourselves as well as the world around us. This type of analysis requires an understanding of the commodity not simply as an item existing with a prescribed surface-level utility function but rather as a ‘thing’ with a functionality that extends beyond this, as “a sign in a system of signs” (Appadurai, 1986, p. 45; Baudrillard, 1968/2005,

1970/1998). In a world of logos, branding and endless labelling schemes this becomes even more pertinent. It rests upon an understanding of commodities as things that act upon and inform our subjectivities and influence our better natures, working to change the way peoples conceive of themselves and are conceived of by others. A product's semiotic qualities, its form, its style, and its content, play a key role in its productive capacity, comprising an ideology and an ethos surrounding particular ways of being and of knowing. Consumption is thus part of the process of becoming in constructing particular 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1980). For Baudrillard (1968/2005) it is this "functionality" of the commodity that enables it to, "play a part, to become a combining element, an adjustable item, within a universal system of signs" (p. 67) wherein, "consumption *is* an order of significations in a 'panopoly' of objects; a system, or code, of signs; 'an order of the manipulation of signs'; the manipulation of objects as signs; a communication system (like a language)" (1970/1998, p. 15, emphasis in original). It is this particular capacity of 'things' to play an active role in bestowing meanings upon the world and constructing realities around us through signs, what Appadurai (1986) terms their "social lives", that is of central significance to my own argument in understanding commodities as playing a fundamental role in consumer philanthropy efforts.

Such an approach to understanding consumption can be placed within a more generalized theoretical conception of the relationship between commodities and the self and the ways in which they exist within, "a wider context of life strategies" and "the constitution of meaningful existences" and ultimately of identity construction itself (Friedman, 1994). Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize the meanings and networks of power which are situated between people and 'things', subjects and objects, whether such a classificatory system can even be applied. Commodities and consumer relations exist within what Baudrillard (1970/1998) describes as a

complex system of production of systems of needs and fair trade, consumer philanthropy, and cause-related marketing strategies are no exception to this theory. They exist as forces of production in the construction of systems of needs among consumers albeit in much more complex and unique ways that deserve much greater scrutiny in order to understand how they play a crucial role in the production of worldviews. The formulation of these relations of power as they exist in the interactions between consumer, commodity, and marketer in the process of identity construction is probably best described by Nickel and Eikenberry (2009) citing Agger (1989, pp. 47, 58, 86) in their examination into the discourses of marketized philanthropy:

In fast capitalism, neoliberal market ideology is concealed in texts, which discipline imagination by appearing not to be written. When perceived as authorless, texts become thing-like, losing their undecidability and thus their alterability. Agger explains how ideology (text) is uncritically internalized specifically because it pretends not to be ideology (written). A text is “that which compels or liberates behavior”; thus, the new modal power relationship in fast capitalism is between readers and writers, or between those who present the world as unauthored and thus unchangeable and those who internalize it as such. This power relationship is effective as such because texts (ideology) are internalized without pause to consider what they signify (p. 977).

Within this relationship consumers exist as the often subconscious readers of the discourses and “texts” of marketized philanthropy embedded within commodities and market relations. These are subsequently internalized as ideologies in the production of “consumption as the *object* and the *medium* of moral action” and the perception of the market as a vehicle for articulating social change, global responsibility and betterment (Barnett, Cafaro & Newholm, 2005, p. 22, emphasis in original). Where Foucault (1980) would advocate an understanding of society that sees a more active and productive role for consumers in constructing these discursive relations of power/knowledge since power is multi-sited, Marx (1887/2007) and later Baudrillard (1994) would have been much more apt to view the construction of such ideologies and realities in the way that Nickel and Eikenberry describe them as being much more imposing upon individuals.

The material, social, and ideological relationships, in which consumer driven schemes of development are constituted all play an important role in shaping particular understandings and configurations of social justice through these efforts and it is here that I situate my own analyses. It is through such theoretical underpinnings that I hope to analyze the ways in which consumer philanthropy and cause-related marketing inform subjectivities in the production of new vision of issues involving development and social justice. I also hope that these understandings will facilitate a greater comprehension of the ways in which money is figured into these consumer relations and reproduced into a kind of moral currency that has the potential to communicate beyond its simple financial value. For Simmel (1907/1990, p. 129), “when the mind is embodied in objects, these become a vehicle for the mind and endow it with a livelier and more comprehensive activity. The ability to construct such symbolic objects attains its greatest triumph in money.” It is thus the ideologies and meanings that become associated with this process of becoming through consumption and the money that mediates these relations that is of significance in the discussion of the ethical and political implications of consumer philanthropy and cause-related marketing within international development. The chapter that follows seeks to take these theoretical insights and apply them to a particular case, that of (Product)^{RED™}. While it is not pretended that a single example can represent the full breadth and depth of consumer-oriented marketing tactics utilized within development fundraising, it is nonetheless believed that (Product)^{RED™} serves as a useful example for examining the implications that such strategies have for social justice through corporate endeavours in particular.

CHAPTER 3 **(PRODUCT)^{RED™}: THE MAKING OF A CONSUMER CAUSE**

“Buy (RED), save lives. It’s as simple as that” ((RED), “The (RED) Idea,” n.d.). As the preceding statement suggests, it is a simple message that the designers of the (Product)^{RED™} brand and logo wish to get across to their consumers. Purchase (RED) labelled merchandise and help to prolong and better the lives of those living with and suffering under the ill-effects of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in Africa. It is a message of empowerment for Northern consumers that (RED) aims to construct. Through this message, (RED) promotes the idea that all an individual has to do is buy a product and they can save lives and have an impact. No further awareness or understanding of the root causes behind the spread of these diseases is necessary for involvement. For every straightforward act of consumption carried out by a consumer of a (RED) affiliated good or service at one of the numerous retail locations carrying a (RED) branded line of products, one of (RED)’s corporate partners will contribute a designated portion of their revenues to the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, a public/private partnership set up to facilitate and increase the dissemination of funding and resources between these two sectors. The Global Fund, in turn, distributes these monies in the form of grants amongst various actors and NGOs working to provide assistance to those living under the effects of the aforementioned diseases on the African continent, all at no extra cost to the purchaser.

Buy a (RED) product or make use of one of the services associated with the cause, and help to aid those in the developing world to combat dangerous, debilitating and life-threatening diseases. If one were to follow the marketing language of (RED), the implications of the concept and the act of purchase of a (RED) associated good or service seem relatively simple, clear-cut and even empowering at the surface level and yet the institutions and processes which are

involved in constructing the meanings behind making these actions meaningful are much further reaching. The consequences of creating such a shift in the meanings associated with consumerism and its relationships to social justice and development within the social psyche of a populous run much deeper than they appear. In setting a new precedent for the distribution of aid to the developing world, consumer-oriented schemes of development fundraising work to renegotiate the ways in which social justice is construed, imagined, administered and realized; they function to reformulate the relations that permeate the ever-expanding fields of the aid chain as well as the transactions therein; and, ultimately, (RED)'s efforts challenge the ways in which development is carried out and becomes manifest on a much broader scale. The networks of people, tools, ideas, concepts, and transactions that make up the aid chain in bringing monetary aid to the developing world constitute an important site in which meaning is made, understandings are fostered and relationships are negotiated. In constructing new ways of being, knowing and acting altruistically through the language of persuasion, consumer driven schemes of development fundraising have consequences that reach far beyond the initial interactions between consumer and retailer. Through its marketing efforts, (RED) constructs a far reaching notion of consumerism and the charitable efforts associated with it as a solution to the ills of disease and lack of access to medication, however, in the process, it constructs a shallow understanding as to why these issues arose in the first place. In doing so, it does nothing to reframe the systems of inequality, which brought about unequal access to medical resources in the first place. This surface level of engagement buries the issues of development behind a facade of perceived radicalism and responsibility that masks the underlying problems of poverty and injustice facing people of the South. As such, an analysis of the implications of the institutions, interactions, and discourses that permeate (RED)'s marketing networks proceeds in

the chapter that follows. Through the examination of the marketing tactics employed by (RED) and its corporate partners in formulating the sale of altruism and social justice, it is hoped that a greater understanding of the ultimate effects of consumer driven schemes can be reached.

The Making of (RED)

The (Product)^{RED™} brand campaign was begun in January of 2006 in an effort to gain increased corporate support in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in Africa. The brainchild of celebrity U2 musician Bono and California-based attorney and philanthropist, Bobby Shriver, as of October, 2010, (RED) had facilitated the flow of more than \$150 million in aid monies to the Global Fund through the sale of (RED) branded products, helping to support relief programs in Africa ((RED), “Impact”, n.d.). It also boasted over twenty corporate partnerships with some of the world’s most influential commercial brands and companies, including the likes of Microsoft, Nike, Giorgio Armani, the Gap and American Express. From its beginnings, (RED) set out with the intention of enlisting partnerships with some of the world’s most powerful and iconic corporate brands in the hopes of capitalizing on their already existing brand power and large consumer followings ((RED), “The (RED) Idea,” n.d.). In consultation with these corporate partners, it has emblazoned a number of their clothing accessories, gift cards, electronic devices and various other product lines with its own logo in the hopes of gaining support for both the corporation and the cause through their development-based marketing schemes. Through eliciting the funds of consumers in the purchase of their goods and services, it would then facilitate the streaming of a portion of the profits made by these businesses to be directed towards the Global Fund. In return, the partner organizations would gain from the positive imagery and appearance of being associated with the (RED) brand. Over four years on, one can now purchase a (RED) iPod Nano, a line of (RED) shirts from The Gap, a

selection of (RED) Converse shoes as well as a (RED) Dell computer, to name but a few of the many products and services available. Perhaps the quintessential example of marketized international development fundraising and consumer driven efforts at development within the corporate sphere, (Product)^{RED™} has quickly become one of the most well-known and probably one of the most widely studied and critiqued of cause-related marketing campaigns within the development field. Articles, such as Lisa Richey and Stefano Ponte's (2008) "Better (RED) than Dead" as well as an entire issue of the Journal of Pan African Studies have been devoted solely to (RED). Nonetheless, research, especially as it regards the commodification and branding practices of (Product)^{RED™} and their effects upon consumers in their interactions with the marketing cause deserves further attention. Previous studies have tended to place less significance on these acts of marketing and consumerism as sites of meaning-making, overlooking their social psychological implications and the ways in which they work to reshape understandings of aid and social justice. As such, this analysis aims to delve further into comprehending these more subconscious effects of (RED) in the hopes of gaining a broader understanding of the implications of consumer-driven and market-oriented schemes of development more generally.

Launched during the proceedings of the 2006 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, (Product)^{RED™} promised to bring forth an innovative business approach to aid and development assistance that did not look anything like past examples of cause-marketing. Seeking to consolidate a marriage between the causes of development and the marketing and management prowess of the commercial world, the architects of this initiative, including Bono and Shriver, could not have chosen a more appropriate venue for its unveiling. A meeting concerned with issues of global corporate economic governance and citizenship as

well as international management strategies and practices, seems as though it would have made a fitting reception for the beginnings of this new breed of development aid and assistance programming. Attended by celebrities, business executives, government representatives, development officials and academics alike, the World Economic Forum provided the ideal setting for the release of (RED).

Consistent with the neoliberal political and economic agenda supported by many of the participants of this meeting, (RED) acted as a forerunner in facilitating a discussion involving the integration of a new modality to the fields of thought, action, and governance within international development fundraising and aid circles in the global North in the name of the brand. It proposed a move toward a more corporate, commercially administered, and focused economic system of sponsorship and philanthropy that would come to emulate the privatization that was already occurring within domestic markets under the new neoliberal system. Brought together to discuss issues of global economic welfare, the inauguration of (RED) saw the AIDS crisis in Africa played out in stark relief to an outdated model and ideology of Western aid and charity that required good business sense in order to be managed effectively and efficiently. It offered a newer, sleeker version of aid that would appeal to a much wider audience by integrating development issues into the market through cause-marketing.

In doing so, (RED) presented itself as different from other cause-related marketing schemes and platforms. It was, “not a charity” but rather a “business model” ((RED), “Frequently Asked Questions,” n.d.). Consistent with the World Economic Forum’s (2005) motto, “entrepreneurship in the global public interest”, (RED) offered to provide market solutions to social problems, as well as a business mentality, and the application of current best management practices towards increasing the flows of aid to Africa, which would have sat well

with the majority of participants taking part in this exclusive conference. For (RED), it was business and marketing, not charity that could provide the impetus and knowhow to increase the efficiency of flows of funding through the aid chain. It offered a privatized solution to the management of aid within existing commercial networks that skipped over the bureaucracy of many of the government-led and not-for-profit initiatives. In so doing, it sought to appeal to corporate philosophy by making aid appear profitable and cost-effective through the use of consumer marketing schemes. In fulfilling the goals of cause-related marketing it sought to play a dual role and provide mutual benefit for both the cause and the corporation by building on both corporate and development models (Pringle & Thompsom, 1999). On the one hand, it would aim to foster awareness as well as an increase in the flows of capital being contributed towards the issues of AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in Africa. On the other hand, it would also be about boosting the morale and interest in its commercial partners in the hopes of increasing sales. The question that ultimately arises from these discussions is whether such dual responsibilities can work side by side for mutual advantage or are their conflicts inherent to such arrangements? As this thesis is primarily interested in the effects that such configuration have upon development rather than marketing the following chapter seeks to provide an examination into just what the consequences of such a model of aid are for social justice.

Fulfilling the buzzwords of “leanness”, “flexibility” and “efficiency” so pervasively valued and sought after within the discourses and transactions of both the corporate and aid streams, Richey and Ponte (2008) exclaim, “Product RED is a quintessential concoction of current understandings of ‘best practice’ in corporate strategy, aid delivery and trade” (p. 712). It offers a simple and innovative solution with minimal overhead costs, acting only as an intermediary or “network” company in furthering the speedy and effective flow of monies from

the private sector to the public-private trust overseen by the Global Fund (Richey & Ponte 2008, p. 712). (RED) embodies the new favoured model of corporate and commercial practice and management forthright, wherein “whoever owns the least, has the fewest employees on the payroll and produces the most powerful images, as opposed to products, wins the race” (Klein, 2009, p. 4). This would also seem to appeal to the emphasis on efficiency and linearity which permeate discourse on aid and project management within the development regime.

Connecting the spaces and filling the space between the public and private spheres, (RED) redefines the boundaries and spaces of active citizenship by bringing forth new modalities in aid. Following the examples taking place within the domestic markets of both the North and South under neoliberal policies, (RED) furthers the expansion of the private into previously public spaces and responsibilities within the realms of the aid chain through corporate engagement and lifestyle politics. It realigns the position of the consumer as equal to that of the activist or political advocate. Borrowing from Samantha King’s (2006) interpretations of the marketing and consumer oriented shifts taking place within current philanthropic and charitable activities, (RED)’s strategy of brand management also seems to fit well within corporate constellations, “[of] ensur[ing] that the brand and the corporation’s philosophy of responsible citizenship share the same ‘territory’ in the minds of all those who interact with the company or the product” so that it forms, “a veritable covenant with the customer” (p. 87). Such branding is invaluable in coming to associate the cause with the corporation in the hearts and minds of ethical consumers.

The Commodification of Development Assistance

If consumer driven development, market-oriented fundraising, and brand-based lifestyle politics are the promise of a “new frontier for development aid” (Richey & Ponte, 2008, p. 711)

through (RED), then the commodity and the brand are its vehicles for spreading the message in carrying out such changes. Within the sphere of (RED), the commodity and commodity relations play a fundamental role as mediums to the cause and carriers of the values and understandings embedded therein. Both the brand and the products which it has come to encompass are central components in structuring the meanings and relationships embodied within the acts of consumerism fostered by (RED). Through their manipulation within (RED)'s advertisement and marketing campaigns, these devices instil acts of consumerism with a sense of urgency, agency and purpose that functions well beyond their initial surface-level qualities and speaks to consumer demands for transcendence within their purchases and shopping experiences. While the objects in themselves retain no inherent qualities, it is through their *marketization* and *commodification* – the acts of *signification* – that they gain their place in the social universe that is constructed by (RED), not only as representations of benevolence and justice but as their physical embodiments. Through the discourses and images that come to surround them within such processes, these products construct a faith in the market and charitable acts of consumption that overshadows notions of social justice in terms of searching for a solution that gets at the root causes of the issues in the hopes of creating structural change. Instead the after-effect, shopping for change, is promoted as the solution, which in the end only perpetuates and prolongs the cycle by providing only a temporary, reactive rather than proactive response. They act as the signifiers in the processes of signification entailed by the commodification of altruism and social justice within (RED)'s cause-related marketing schemes (Barthes, 1968). To utilize a quotation borrowed by another critic of (RED) to describe the complex system of objects, signs, and values, which the organization has constructed around and attached to its cause, “objectification can point to the sturdier embodiment of the values they have created, and even of the experiences

they imply” (Alexander, 2004, p. 254 as cited in Anderson, 2008, p. 42). It is thus, imperative to understand the processes involved in the construction of this commodity and brand network in order to get at just how (RED) hooks potential consumers into its cause-related marketing schemes and shifts the ethical realms of altruism and social justice to the marketplace.

The commodification and marketing of social justice and altruism by (RED) is achieved through a disciplining of the minds and the bodies of its consumers through text towards their consumer goals. (RED) has formulated an ideology of consumption or regime of truth around its corporate partners, their products, and the act of consumption itself, which tells consumers just what they are consuming through the commodity and what these acts of consumption signify (Baudrillard, 1981; Foucault, 1980). This ideology is not immediately apparent. It is concealed within texts which give meanings to such actions and make the relationships appear natural and uncontrived. To cite Nickel and Eikenberry (2009) again, “in fast capitalism, neoliberal market ideology is concealed in texts, which discipline imagination by appearing not to be written” (p. 977). The texts produced by (RED) give people particular understandings about the effectiveness of consumerism. For example, upon entering the “Products” section of (RED)’s website, the user is inundated with material concerning the effectiveness that purchasing a product has in providing assistance for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, usually in the form of a percentage. The use of quantitative technologies, in particular, works as a tool to provide the illustration of efficacy to the consumer cause ((RED), “Products,” n.d.; Porter, 1995). In the marketing of a number of products, however, the message of social awareness is overlooked while that of product advertisement is put at the forefront. The benefits of the product are highlighted with little time or space given to explain the situation in Africa and how individuals can become more directly involved in understanding and affecting change.

Shankar, Elliott and Goulding (2001) have stated that narrative in particular plays a very important role in constructing the realities of marketing persuasion. By way of the narrative experience which these objects are entangled within (RED) turns the act of consumption into something more than just that. It is utterly reshaped, reworked, reimagined and transformed into a meaningful demonstration of social and ethical responsibility as well as altruism. The discourse of (RED) turns the shopping mall or retail store into an environment for action and change in the struggle against AIDS. In doing so, it does not encourage its consumers to become critical of why such disease and disparities in access to medication exist in the first place but simply proposes charitable consumption and the subsidization of antiretroviral medication as an after-effect. Any change that is to be brought forth as a result of such behaviours is hampered by the lack of knowledge of the structural problems at the root of these issues. (RED) turns consumption into a political project that the individual can work upon in bettering the self. It is infused with a sense of agency beyond its means. For instance, one (RED) advertisement developed and released in partnership with the GAP for magazines the likes of Vanity Fair, Vogue and O, The Oprah Magazine asks, "Can a t-shirt save the world?" replied to with the candid and almost cheeky response, "This one can" (Nickel & Eikenberry, 2009, p. 979). Such messaging and tactics help to articulate consumerism as a radical solution to global injustice and human suffering. Through (RED) consumerism becomes tantamount to fulfilling an individual's duties to his or her fellow human beings redefining citizenship, social involvement and generosity and relocating them within the consumer realm. The (RED) messaging on their website pushes consumers to "Take Action," but then the first choice that the consumer is encountered with in order to make change is buying (RED) products. Thus, social

transformation towards justice is promoted through acts of consumption in the most direct manner.

Built up, contrived, conjured and transformed into a meaningful struggle against a number of life threatening illnesses the act of consumption becomes one through which social justice and action can be bought. At once, (RED)'s marketing campaigns transform the consumer from a seemingly simple, everyday shopper into an empowered, active, and thoughtful global citizen whose agency extends far beyond the strictly commercial realms of the shopping malls and department stores of the global North, on into the activist political arena. Nevertheless, they are made activists in word alone. Consumers are provided with little in the way of knowledge help them to confront the issues of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria as well as a lack of access to medication as they become manifest from the start. All the while, (RED)'s efforts at meaning-making act as a productive force in the arsenals of capitalist hegemony by working to conceal the true costs of consumption in favour of a system of meaning developed by (RED) that encourages its continued spread. Discourse, imagery, literary and textual devices, along with various other technologies and apparatuses of marketing and advertizing persuasion are all brought together in constructing these meanings and understandings in the interests of relocating consumerism into the realms of ethics. Slogans, such as "INSPI(RED)," "EMPOWE(RED)," and "UNCENSO(RED)," which adorn (RED) affiliated merchandise from water bottles to T-shirts, greeting cards and a number of other products bring notions of creativity, agency, and political consciousness to the consumer experience all the while veiling capitalisms more insidious consequences (See, for example, (RED), "Products," n.d.). What is termed, the "embrace," the brackets which encompass the brand names of (RED) partner products, helps to give a feeling of connection to the cause by tapping into feelings of warmth and family that helps the activity

involved in such transactions to transcend the simply consumer relationship being carried out through capitalist exchange and purchases.

As such, the commodities and the brand must both be understood as acts of productive labour in the construction of a very particular way of knowing social change and understanding consumerism through (RED). In its processes of signification, (RED) actively seeks to bring development politics into the consumer realm by applying their own sense of meaning to the act of consumption. Baudrillard (1981) termed these processes of signification through branding and advertizing campaigns, “labours of signification” and understood them as part and parcel of the commodification process. In carrying out these labours the (RED) marketers are not only working upon a product but upon a consumer psyche and subjectivity constructing the meanings which they derive from their shopping experiences. “It is an active, collective process of production and reproduction of a code, a system, invested with all the diverted, unbound desire separated out from the process of real labor and transformed onto precisely that which denies the process of real labor” (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 93). It is the relation between the individual and the act that (RED) seeks to imbue with significance. The corporation understands that the consumers are not primarily interested in the products themselves but the sense of meaning that they give to the experience around them, their sign value. Klein (2009) has termed this new age of the brand an “experiential shopping environment” (p. 20) in which it is the meanings that are tied to the product that are its true value in the eyes of consumers rather than the product itself (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 29-30). (RED) achieves the ultimate goal of a brand in corporate eyes. As current consumers are searching for a way to rectify their actions and incorporate them into semiotic systems of meaning (RED) provides that opportunity. It has created a narrative space in which selfish acts of consumption can be reconciled with those of benevolence and selflessness.

Through (RED)'s consumer tactics, when individuals enter the shopping mall they are made to believe that they are no longer simply shoppers, but givers and doers, a "financial force" ((RED), "Frequently Asked Questions," n.d.). They are entering into a space where they can change the world and feel good about their selfish actions all at the same time. As Klein (2009) has stated, "...if brands are about 'meaning,' not product attributes, then the highest feat of branding comes when companies provide their consumers with opportunities not merely to shop but to fully experience the meaning of their brand" (p. 146). Thus, in creating this sense of identity and agency around its associated products, the primary feat of (RED) is in aiding the corporate cause to sell products. At the same time, it develops a shallow sense of engagement and awareness that misleads consumers into the belief that they are a part of something radical and different, when all the while they are contributing to the maintenance of existing arrangements without bothering to question why aid is necessary in the first place.

Effects and Implications

In facilitating the construction of an experience of giving, one of the greatest gifts of (RED) to the corporate cause is in turning the act of consumption into something entirely radical, fashionable, just and altruistic. It is here, perhaps, that the organization achieves its most monumental transformation of the causes of development and social justice more generally into consumer-oriented and market driven efforts. Appealing to notions of the modern, the chic, the rebellious, as well as an aggressive masculinity so characteristic of the prevailing fast capitalist ethos, Bono himself stated during the proceedings of the World Economic Forum annual conference, "philanthropy is like hippy music, holding hands. Red is more like punk rock, hip hop, this should feel like hard commerce" (Weber, 2006, para. 6). Only months later, the former President of (Product)^{RED™}, Tamsin Smith expressed in an interview with New Internationalist

Magazine, “We are harnessing the power and direct connection to human nature that capitalism has, and turning it to good” (Worth, 2006, para. 6). It is these references to capitalism as a benevolent and revolutionary force, which construct the new consumer-driven frontier of aid by shifting the morality of spending money and shopping into a force for the betterment of humanity and the advancement of the self. If, as Heath and Potter (2005) claim, “it is rebellion, not conformity, that has for decades been the driving force of the marketplace” (p. 102) then (RED) is only just beginning to capitalize on these notions within the realms of corporate development aid.

In its attempts to commercialize aid through the framing and mainstreaming of radical and leftist political discourse, (RED) turns the act of consumption into one of altruism and social justice into a commodity to be bought and sold on the global marketplace. In contrast to what Ferguson (1990) made of the development apparatus as an “anti-politics machine,” rendering the political technical through its representation, image-making and narrative practices, (RED)’s attempts at market-oriented aid and consumer-driven development seek to render acts of consumption into something profoundly political, at least on the surface level. They attempt to redefine the space of the political in the hearts and minds of those who purchase their products. In what King (2006) describes as a “transformation and reconstitution of the political” (RED) is attempting to remap and renegotiate the spaces and places of political action (p. 45). Through the brand they are endeavouring to institute a transformation of the political to the consumer realm.

As part of a much larger movement within corporate and non-for-profit circles, the organization is seeking to subsume the space of the political in order to gain access to a new breed of consumer for both marketing and fundraising purposes. As Pringle and Thompson

(1999) state, “‘Buying’ loyalty is not only becoming very expensive, it is becoming harder because... there is strong statistical evidence that consumers really are ascending towards the pinnacle of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. This means that material wealth is decreasingly relevant to personal happiness as the desire for ‘belonging’, ‘self-esteem’ and ‘self-realization’ become more important” (p. 12) Thus, in their search for experience and meaning in their lives consumers seek new spaces and places to express themselves. With declining trust and participation in the “traditional” modes of civic engagement and responsibility, consumer politics and the corporate realm have attempted and even been encouraged to fill the space of the political through varying means of engagement of consumers and employees (Putnam, 2000; Pringle & Thompson, 1999). As Lance Bennett (2009) explains,

[It is within this context that] public (citizen) identities change as global economies create new personal challenges for managing careers, social relationships, and family life. Cosmopolitan citizens in global societies process their political choices increasingly in terms of how those choices affect their own lifestyles. As lifestyles become more diverse, they are poorly articulated with old political categories such as class, party or religion. As a result, ideological messages – particularly about global justice issues -- are less likely to be received positively by typical citizens. In this context, effective activist political communication increasingly adopts a lifestyle vocabulary anchored in consumer choice, self-image, and personal displays of social responsibility. In particular, attaching political messages to corporate brands becomes a useful way to carry often radical ideas into diverse personal life spaces, as well as across national borders and cultural divides (p. 102).

With the advent of neoliberal globalization as governments play less of a role in the social issues affecting society, the corporate and non-for-profit sectors have attempted to fill the voids left in its wake and consumer politics has been one of a broad range of proposed means of social engagement. Through marketing and the construction of a system of meaning, consumer choice becomes a means of advocacy as more and more rights become privatized and government plays less of a role in people’s daily lives. For (RED), “As first world consumers, we have tremendous power. What we collectively choose to buy, or not to buy, can change the course of life and

history on this planet” ((BLOG) RED, 2007, para. 6). It is statements and textual devices such as these that transform consumption into a political project and foster the expansion of the commercial into the previously public realm of politics. As a recent purchaser and proponent of (Product)^{RED™} has stated of this new age of consumerism, “Buying a product that just gives money to a corporation is so old-fashioned!” ((Product)^{RED™} [Facebook], November 28, 2009). (RED) is at the forefront of a new and emerging movement that seeks to move choices in the commercial sphere on into the realms of “ethics” and “beliefs” (Pringle & Thompson 1999, p. 4). This ultimately facilitates the expansion of the brand and hence the corporation’s territory into new realms of public life and makes the shopping experience appear more meaningful and ethical while concealing its possible indiscretions. It effectively fetishizes the commodity in a discourse of empowerment and goodness.

To understand the imaginary landscape that (RED) constructs around its products and its ultimate consequences, it is essential to examine the language and images, which its promoters utilize in their branding and advertizing campaigns. As a constitutive process language has the power to shape perceptions and beliefs, bringing particular categories of thought and reality into being (Hackley, 2003). As such, following Cornwall and Brock (2005) it is important to examine “what these words, *as words*, do for development” (p. 1044, emphasis in original).

Through (RED), the act of aiding development through consumer purchases is turned into a revolutionary feat. Ironically, through its appropriation of revolutionary discourse, (RED) encourages the expansion of capitalism into new realms of social life. The (Product)^{RED™} Manifesto perhaps best illustrates (RED)’s attempts to subsume social justice issues and transformative potential within capitalist acts of commodification and consumption. Conjuring allusions to Marx’s communist manifesto it begins with the rather unambiguous statement, “All

things being equal. They are not” ((BLOG) RED, 2007, para. 5). This gives the perception that through purchasing (RED) branded merchandise the consumer somehow helps (RED) in equalizing the inherently unequal relationships of the current world order all the while working to reify such relations unknowingly. The need for change and the power of (RED) products to bring about such transformations is a consistent message within their marketing efforts. For instance, the Chuck Taylor All Star (RED) Converse shoes, “serve as the canvas for brush strokes that symbolize change” ((RED), “Products,” n.d.). These shoes allow the consumer to create their own design in their manufacture giving the illusion of originality and power over their own imaginations while at the same time working within the regimes of value and signifying practices created by (RED). The (Product)^{RED™} line of Penguin books also appeal to this discourse and language of revolutionary transformation. A statement on the back cover of each of their books proudly proclaims, “Penguin Classics have inspired the imagination of millions of readers all over the world, transforming the way people think and feel forever” (Penguin Books, 2010). The (Product)^{RED™} blog continues this line of thinking by claiming, “Throughout history, each of these books has in its own way changed the world. Dramatic or groundbreaking characters such as Tolstoy’s spirited heroine Anna Karenina and Bram Stoker’s hypnotic Dracula have enriched lives, changing and challenging us” ((BLOG) RED, 2010, para. 3). These marketing texts promote the idea that (RED)’s products provide individuals with an alternative way of conducting political action and conceiving of political thoughts. The unique cover designs of each of these books, which make use of abstract art, also push the idea of (RED) as being on the verge of something new and alternative.

Real structural change, however, is not what the brand is fostering. In fact, through its efforts it actively fosters the continued expansion of the capitalist system. It maintains the

prevailing system by reinforcing acts of consumption. While it produces an image and a discourse of radicalism on the surface level, the actions and relationships involved in its transactions only work to reinforce the very system, which has a proven track record of producing a number of the issues of poverty and disempowerment in the first place. It does not propose any sort of systemic change but rather continues to bolster existing institutional arrangements that have failed in providing peoples with a means of access to medication in the first place. In fact, by creating an imagined space in which consumerism is viewed as the solution to social ills it actively discourages criticism of the capitalist system. As Nickel and Eikenberry (2009) explain,

When discourse takes place through the venue of the market, it cannot help but stabilize the market as it shortens the distance between consumption and critical action. When stories of philanthropy sell products or increase the number of viewers of a given television show, the distance between the philanthropic impulse and the market collapses. Rather than providing an open, discursive space for transformative imagination, philanthropy, as it is currently being discussed and increasingly practiced, disguises its own disciplinary ... [it] freezes the world into ontological permanence” (pp. 976, 977).

Such a discourse gives the perception of radicalism to potential consumers while veiling an underlying dogma of conformity to prevailing business models and corporate marketing practices of social responsibility. (RED) carries out what Rodriguez (2007) has termed “a political practice that is...*radical in form, but liberal in content*” (p. 34, emphasis in original). It helps to give the perception that selfish acts of consumption can overcome issues of poverty as the major contributing factor to the issue of access to life-saving medication in the first place. (RED) promises to make some rather large transformations through simple acts of consumption and it is this discursive appearance of radical action that masks its essentially conformist tactics. Such tactics seem to fit with Baudrillard’s (1994) discussions of the hyperreal where image

becomes more important than substance and it is all about the way an idea is presented rather than practiced. Through (RED) individuals are given the projection that consumer philanthropy is radical when really it just reifies the existing capitalist orthodoxy. Through the use of “inscriptive devices” fiction becomes reality and reality a backdrop to these constructs of the marketing “hinterland” (Law, 2004). They give rise to an ontological understanding of reality that sees consumption as a viable means of combating poverty and access to medication, all the while masking its more sinister consequences.

These constructs of the political imaginary help to mask and fetishize the technical and calculated acts of social and economic management taking place within the organization. Rather than treating revolutionary ideals as a threat to the capitalist order and, more immediately, its own marketing prowess, it subsumes their symbols and buzzwords, turning them into an opportunity. In effect it constructs a mythology around its products, one that makes the act of consumption appear political and ethically responsible while concealing the negative effects of such actions (Barthes, 1972). Through such efforts, (RED) brings the politics of aid into the consumer sphere and further blurs the lines between the corporate, non-for-profit and governmental sectors. This merging of business, aid, and politics under a corporate model within consumer efforts makes acts of social justice and development politics more “legible”, “manageable” and easily “administered”, bringing about new possibilities for governance (Scott, 1998). The management of aid through these marketized efforts facilitates the expansion of corporate control and administration into new realms of public life, social behaviour and civic responsibility.

Through the effective management of the brand and its various techniques of marketing and advertising persuasion, (RED) seeks to engage a new kind of consumer-donor and transform

them into effective corporate and consumer-citizens. They aim to capitalize on the discursive power of their brand to make people feel important about going to the shopping mall and buying their products, as if they are doing a greater good for humanity through acts of selfishness. What these types of feel-good and empowering statements achieve is to discipline the mind, body, and imagination into conceiving of consumerism and more broadly capitalism as productive forces in the alleviation of human suffering. As (RED)'s Director of Global Communications, Sheila Roche explained in a 2006 interview with *New Internationalist* magazine, "It's a way for the sinner to become saint – to spend money but to feel good about it. Red's hip and sexy. Red is never about making a purchase because you're feeling sorry for someone" (Worth, 2006, para. 7). (RED) wants the consumer to feel "good" and empowered about their consumption choices. Utilizing such tactics it redefines the landscape of social justice as well as the norms of behaviour and actions that go along with it. No longer is consumerism portrayed as a completely negative force in the ebb and flow of global development relations but rather (RED) converts it into one of optimism that can be caring and just. What this amounts to is what Rodriguez (2007) has termed "the cooptation of political imagination" (p. 31). Through the various scripts, narratives and texts, which (RED) and their partners employ in the marketing of their products and ideals, they construct an apparatus which filters the ways in which peoples think and act both politically and ideologically surrounding development and social justice issues. This functions as an epistemology, or "a way of knowing social change and resistance praxis – that is difficult to escape or rupture" resulting in "the domination of political discourse and possibility" (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 31, emphasis in original). Through (RED), the market acts as the key mediator and distributor of benevolence and justice while the development activist and the concerned donor citizen are transformed into "ethical" consumers, instituting new means of

control over dissident behaviour and instilling a renewed interest in the possibilities of a reformed capitalist order that would promise to cure the ills of the old system, capitalism with a conscience. As Baudrillard (1970/1998) once wrote, in a piece that appears almost anticipatory of these shifts, “The industrial system, having socialised the masses as a labour force, was forced to go further, in order to finish the job, and socialise them (which is to say, control them) as a consumption force” (p. 170).

Thus, (RED) in effect manages dissent through encouraging consumption as an apparently viable means of confronting social issues and subsuming opposition within the capitalist system. In a Foucauldian sense, these schemes work to reshape the body and reconfigure the mind of ‘docile’ subjects into a socially-minded global consumer citizenry through the use and application of the corporate brand, producing a system of self-regulation and perceived self-betterment that in fact serves the interests of productivity (Foucault, 1977). The significance of such a shift cannot be undervalued or taken for granted. As King (2006) states, “global strategic community relations programs”, such as that being pushed by (RED), are an ever-growing aspect of corporate strategy and, “as such should be taken seriously in struggles over what a global civil society might look like and how individuals and groups, within and across national borders, might negotiate the relationships between economic and political freedom” (pp. 99-100). The consumer driven and market-oriented schemes of development that are employed by (RED) threaten to rewrite and shift people’s understandings of social justice in significant ways and thus deserve further scrutiny. In order to provide a more general picture of the implications of consumer-oriented and market-based development fundraising beyond the simply corporate sphere and within non-for-profit efforts, the following chapter seeks to provide an analysis of the organization Kiva. Ultimately, the analysis returns to (Product)^{RED™} in

Chapter 5 to examine how the brand and its commodification efforts are negotiated by users and consumers to create new meanings through interactions occurring on the organizations online Facebook fan site.

CHAPTER 4

KIVA: THE MARKETING OF MICROFINANCE

“Massive change is occurring in the nonprofit sector. Seemingly isolated events touching the lives of virtually everyone are, in fact, parts of a pattern that is little recognized but has enormous impact; it is a pattern of growing commercialization of nonprofit organizations” (Weisbrod, 1998, p. 1).

The commodification and marketing of international development issues within current efforts at fundraising and philanthropy persists well beyond the bounds of the corporate sphere. Nor is the market in development-related goods dependent upon only one technology and technique of power and persuasion. It is a diverse landscape of social institutions that rest upon multiple technologies and apparatuses of persuasion, which deserve much further consideration in order to appreciate their manifold expressions. (Product)^{RED™} is only one among many such endeavours to attempt to elicit funding, aid, and awareness through the use of marketing tactics, commodified goods and services. With the advent and spread of microfinance, the financial realm holds fertile ground for such ventures and the U.S. based non-for-profit organization Kiva has taken advantage of this role as an intermediary between North and South. Kiva’s strengths do not lay in its appeal to the brand. Its efforts at commodification are based upon a much different frame of reference. Through the use of the loan and microfinance, Kiva proposes to bring forth new meanings images, narratives, and ideologies to the “financescapes” of development aid and fundraising in extending connections from the developed to the developing world (Appadurai, 1996). As a non-for-profit organization it represents a distinct manifestation of the adaptation of marketing techniques to development fundraising and, as such, will be examined in the chapter that follows.

In international development circles they are more commonly termed non-governmental organizations and though they play a significant and active role in carrying out projects that have

massive impacts upon the global South, an often overlooked aspect of their efforts is the work that they do in raising funds and awareness about particular issues and causes. Critical investigations into the understandings and relations behind such initiatives as they are represented, shaped and sold to the global North have been left to just a small portion of academics. Yet, as Andreasen and Kotler (2008) explain in a textbook on non-profit marketing, “Nonprofit organizations are *persuasive institutions* affecting our lives and the world around us in numerous ways” (p. 4, emphasis added). As such, they deserve further critical attention. Previously, development researchers did not treat these issues as significant, but the adaptations currently being made within non-for-profit development fundraising efforts demand a rethinking of their importance. Researchers have begun to look into the ways in which the policies and images employed by these organizations have come to influence people’s notions of social justice and the ways in which the development process should be carried out itself and yet it still remain a vastly underexamined area of analysis (VSO, 2002; Smith, 2004; Abraham, 2007; Dogra, 2007; Cameron & Haanstra, 2008). The impact of the marketization and commodification of non-for-profit development fundraising efforts and its influences upon international relations and understandings in particular has received very little attention. While Kiva represents just one such example of these shifts, it is nonetheless useful in illustrating the affects of a larger trend towards the integration of a marketing language, devices and representations geared towards the sale of development as a product, occurring across the non-for-profit realm through consumer driven schemes of engagement. Changes in vision are taking place as new modes and methodologies of garnering aid become adopted and these have implications that require detailed inquiry.

Kiva Microfunds, or simply Kiva for short, is an international development aid and fundraising organization aimed at increasing the flow and access to capital for microfinance institutions in the global South. Launched in 2005, it is the product of the joint efforts of its cofounders Matt Flannery and Jessica Jackley. Both business majors who became interested in the issues of development and social justice, Kiva is an attempt to blend investment with social causes. As a registered non-for-profit organization under the U.S.'s 501(c) (3) legislation, Kiva provides another interesting example for exploring the implications associated with the marketization and commodification of development issues and fundraising schemes, which is being implemented across multiple corporate and non-governmental bodies. Kiva offers a web-based platform through which microfinance institutions can market specific entrepreneurs in the global South to potential lenders in the global North. This online profiling system provides a photograph as well as information about each potential borrower, their business, the microfinance organization through which they are receiving their loan and the amount of funding which they require. The goal is for potential lenders to review these profiles and provide loans and receive a return on investment of their principle with no interest accrued once the loan is paid back which can be utilized to fund future loans or be retained by the lender. Comprised of a small staff that included just 35 people as of 2009, Kiva by no means resembles one of the large multinational aid conglomerates, such as Oxfam, World Vision or Plan (Flannery, 2009, p.36). Its activities nonetheless provide a significant example of the types of changes that arise as a result of the implementation of consumer driven schemes of development fundraising and the implications that they can have for social justice.

As of May 4, 2011 Kiva had facilitated the distribution of over \$211 million in loans, supporting a network of more than 1 million lenders and borrowers in some 200 countries

worldwide ((RED), “Statistics,” n.d.). The implications of the apparatuses involved in such a far-reaching institution upon the social imaginary of development should not be underestimated. Despite all of the praise and attention that it has received in the popular media, including endorsements from the Oprah Winfrey Show, Time magazine, The New York Times, and various other leading news programs and journals across North America and the globe, as well as backing from a number of prominent figures both political and celebrity, featuring the likes of ex-President of the United States Bill Clinton, critical research by social scientists into the workings and impact of Kiva are few and far between. Research that is available has tended to emphasize the business-related aspects of the project rather than its relationship and effects upon development and social justice. Treated as a less significant aspect of the process, the fundraising arrangements involved in development’s construction as an apparatus have been given far less attention, being seen as, “peripheral to the ‘real work’ of development” (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004, p. 658). Scholars have been too quick to discount and overlook this area of development studies and what it can tell about the relationships and understandings that are being forged out of such discursive framings. Ultimately, the way in which Kiva conceives of development, development fundraising and aid giving processes within their fundraising efforts and the implications that these practices have for social justice deserve much further scrutiny.

A trailblazer in the field of microfunding, Kiva brands itself “the world’s first online person-to-person micro-lending platform” (Kiva, “Kiva Launches Online Microfinance in the United States,” 2009) and claims to “connect people through lending, for the sake of alleviating poverty” (Kiva, “About Us,” emphasis added, n.d.). The extent to which these close-knit ties are truly what are being fostered within its fundraising efforts is up for debate. In providing its users with images and stories about each of its entrepreneurs Kiva builds off of the child sponsorship

campaigns of other organizations in attempts to apply it to the microfinance world (Flannery, 2007, p. 55). According to Smillie (2000), “child sponsorship...almost unnoticed among the wider development set, has become not only the most successful fund-raising tool in the North, but the pre-eminent lens through which a very large and growing number of Northern citizens view the South” (p. 121). The problem with Kiva integrating such techniques is that the borrower, or the supposed beneficiary of Northern investment into Southern microfinance institutions, becomes objectified. By integrating them within the current financial landscape Kiva shifts the relationships between lender and borrower so that the borrower becomes a product for Northern investment.

Products of Commodification

While Kiva presents itself as a connection between lender and borrower, the relationship is in fact much more in depth. Kiva is not the direct link from “lenders” to loan recipients in the developing world, but rather an intermediary between the typically Northern donor and the microfinance group that funds the individual in the global South. This is why Kiva calls themselves microfunders rather than microcreditors. The funds that are provided through Kiva are utilized as a source of collateral against the loans made by microfinance agencies to their entrepreneurs. In turn, the microfinance groups are in fact, the true producers of the narratives and images of entrepreneurs that are posted on the Kiva website. Kiva contrives a connection between lender and borrower that does not really exist as the monies provided by lenders are dispersed to microfinance institutions not to individual borrowers (Kiva, “How Kiva Lending Works, Simplified,” n.d.). As such, Kiva’s greatest work of fiction is the supposed link, connection and sense of partnership that it claims to foster between lenders in the global North with borrowers in the global South. In reality, this supposedly straightforward network is, in

fact, much more complex involving multiple actors and settings. If one delves further into the Kiva website the true complexity of this relationship is brought to light. Partnership becomes simply another buzzword (Cornwall and Brock, 2005). In its definition, partnership implies transparency and active involvement of both parties together, two aspects of the Kiva facilitated relationship that are not shared equally between lender and borrower. The true connection that it makes is one between consumer and product as lenders get to choose from a vast array of potential investment products.

Within Kiva, development is constructed into a commodity through the marketing of the loan request. It is through this posting that Kiva lenders determine the investment potential of the labourers to whom they will be supporting. As the recent title of a work by David Lewis and David Mosse (2006) suggests, Kiva and its field partners are essentially “brokers and translators” of a different sort of commodity, the life stories and labours of people in the developing world. As brokers and translators they function to construct new meanings in the relationships between donor and recipient that permeate the aid chain. Through their institutional technologies and apparatuses they are managing a way of knowing and seeing the developing world that is sellable. Utilizing text and image in the practices of framing they construct entrepreneurs into products. Kiva offers a different form of commodity from (RED) that requires a separate set of marketing tactics in order to cater to a distinct type of consumer but they are nonetheless packaging a product. Their markets do not rest upon the sale of tangible goods but of investment narratives. Matt Flannery likens the role of Kiva and its field partners to that of a “story factory” (Flannery, 2009, p. 41). The metaphor seems apt, as the production of the entrepreneur as commodity by Kiva and its field partners operates like a factory floor setting with multiple labourers involved in its discursive framing. They are brokers of narratives and translators that

have profound influence over the meanings fostered within the relationships of aid as interpreted by their investors. As such, they are active in constructing and creating a market for aid through lending. Just as they espouse partnership over benefactor relationships they are making a space in which the relationship is between consumer and products. In running their “story factory,” Kiva seeks to cater to a very niche crowd of business oriented and yet socially concerned and active Northern clients (Flannery, 2009, p. 41). As such, these stories must match the requirements of creating the image and representation of poverty as well as that of a plausible business opportunity. For peoples of the global North, development is transformed into an auction, a marketplace for bidding upon subjects become objects and commodities worthy of funding. The layout of Kiva’s website makes the process of development appear simplified and manageable, like choosing from an online catalogue without even having to leave the comfort of one’s own home. As a result, the Northern donor-lenders do not feel and experience the consequences of their decisions upon the livelihoods of the ultimate recipients of their loans. It makes the complex relationship that exists between lenders, microfinance institution and Southern borrowers appear simplified and straightforward.

The use of a particular language and discursive frame is significant in creating this type of market environment in which people become treated as products and commodities. In a piece suggestive of Kiva’s role as translators Lewis and Mosse (2006) explain,

All actors (and not just sociologists) produce interpretations, and powerful actors offer scripts into which others can be recruited for a period. In this sense their interpretations are performative: “They prove themselves by transforming the world in conformity with their perspective on the world” (Latour, 1996, p. 194-195). Our concern becomes, then, not how actors operate and strategize *within* existing arrangements of development (or between its institutions and society), but how development projects – always unforeseeable – become real through the work of generating and translating interests, creating context by tying in supporters and so sustaining interpretations” (p. 13).

Kiva takes the language of financial management and blurs it with that of development to create a marketable product. From the start, rather than about building a cause this was about “building a great product” (Flannery, 2007, p. 45). As Flannery (2007) further iterates in his discussions of Kiva,

“We have an unusually vibrant and resilient investment opportunity on the Kiva site—the world’s working poor. In the past four years, their stories have been trickling over the wire into the workplaces, homes, and minds of the world’s privileged. Kiva has played a big role in that. In an era of exuberant growth, philanthropy provided a bit of meaning during the course of many people’s busy, productive lives” (p. 47).

Through the discourse of Kiva and the dehumanizing impact of the processes of commodification “the world’s working poor”, people with faces, identities and lives, become “investment opportunities,” simply a way of bringing meaning to the lives of empowered Northern lenders who play the role of financier. The language utilized to characterize the transaction process on the Kiva website itself also deserves further discussion. In the purchasing process, the borrowers chosen by lenders in representation of the organizations that they are funding become merchandise in the “basket” and later items in the “portfolio” of the investor. Thus, Kiva further facilitates the distance and differentiation between lender and borrower. The language of Kiva robs the development process of its human content and places it in the realms of a business transaction and investment relationship. The lender remains the active, agency-filled subject and the borrower just another passive asset to be bought and sold on a market for labour in stock and bonds.

The Construction of Value within the Market for Microfunds

Within Kiva the entrepreneurs and their stories become subjects of value in themselves, forced to compete in a tournament of text and imagery, on display to see whom is most worthy of the monetary investment of Northern lenders. It reproduces a neoliberal mentality amongst

both its lenders and its recipient entrepreneurs by constructing a competition driven market for investments and loans, where individuals must compete through representation and narrative to obtain funding. In this case, however, most worthy often equates to a fine balance of who can appear most impoverished and underdeveloped but also with the most potential. In many respects, while the narratives used to obtain the funds may differ, this competition for investment does not vary greatly from the contests harboured over access to any other type of private loan. Yet, this is precisely one of issues that Kiva's model raises in terms of social justice. Should people in poverty and suffering under injustices have to compete for access to funds and be represented as commodities in the process in order to solicit the investments of first world lenders? This is a market for livelihoods, not simply one amongst wealthy businessmen and mortgage investors. Those who are not funded do not simply lose out on a purchase. The poor are faced off against one another to compete for investments. The very canvas upon which social justice is to be carried out becomes a battlefield in the war of words and displays of neediness rather than an example of cooperation and partnership. Instead of the "partnership relationships" so desired by Kiva what actually occurs is the reification and continuation of the "benefactor relationship" into new areas of social existence whereby those *have nots* who are *dependent* upon loans in the global South are forced to compete for the money of the Northern *haves*. Individuals of the global North and South are not placed on equal footing, but rather the Southerners must compete through representation for their loans by demonstrating their *legitimacy*, a legitimacy contrived out of images and stories that illustrate a fine balance between hopelessness and yet the potential to become.

Very similar to indigenous peoples' requirement to prove their indigeneity in order to make claims and receive access to funding, the potential loan recipient must appeal to a set of

stereotypical notions of backwardness and poverty as established by a history of colonial and development representations in order to appeal to the gaze of the Northern lender and acquire a faster investment (Conklin, 1997; Robins, 1999; Sylvain, 2005). It is thus of no coincidence that Flannery (2007) has reported:

As the pan-ethnic personality of the site evolved, so did an unusual cross-cultural form of competition. Our users, given an array of choices, voted with their wallets. Every business on the site thus far has been funded at an average rate of 2.2 days per business, but with significant variance. Lenders showed unambiguous preferences according to region, gender, and business type: Africans first, women first, and agriculture first. A female African fruit seller? Funded in hours. Nicaraguan retail stand? Funded in days. A Bulgarian Taxi Driver? Funded in weeks (p. 50).

As bastions of primitiveness and alterity, the “Dark Continent”, the rural and the female body fit the desired Northern stereotype of underdeveloped and hence most worthy of funding. They rest upon a definition of poverty and promise as produced by the development apparatus itself. As Ferguson (2006) explains, Africa has long occupied a very specific and significant place in the imagined global order “as both a location in space and a rank in a system of social categories.” Each subject and place has a “socially meaningful, only too real, and forcefully imposed position in the contemporary world” as part of the “encompassing categorical system” of the “globe” (pp. 6, 7). Understandings built up around an individual’s perceived “rank” within these systems of belief and representation have important implications for determining value within Kiva’s marketplace for microloans in influencing whom is the most deserving of aid. Thus, even within these markets of human bodies and life stories, value is constructed and bound by a set of behaviours and understandings, which set the normative tone of what it is to be poor.

The commodity existence and competition driven landscape of Kiva does nothing to rid development of the binary relationship constructed between lender and borrower. As markers of difference it would appear that temporality and level of progress, as aspects of representation,

remain significant markers in the decision-making process of lenders. As signs of alterity and signifiers of difference, they construct an apparatus that legitimizes the superiority and responsibility of Northern lenders in a perceived need for distance in lender relations. In her study of the United Kingdom NGO, Christian Aid, Nandita Dogra (2007, p. 169) illustrates how organizations continue to play with ideas of the backwardness and the fixed primitive temporality of “Third World” peoples by displaying them mostly in rural settings with the exception of the slum and garbage dump, existing on the margins of the modern world. These help to create the socio-temporal divisions necessary to maintain the myth of Western modernity in constructing the non-industrialized “other” in need of the tropes of capitalism. To borrow from Sylvain (2005), Kiva provides a space in which “identity politics join with market demand” to produce an essentialized notion of underdevelopment “often difficult to distinguish from colonial stereotypes” (p. 355) as a “homogenizing form of representation” (Hall, 1997, p. 28). What is being commodified and reiterated through Kiva’s competition driven marketplace for loans is a particular notion of what poverty and backwardness should look like, putting a face and a narrative space to these ideas. As commodities participating in a market of first world lenders, the representations of individuals in the global South are forced to appeal to a system of texts and images that, “reproduce *difference*, *otherness*, and *distance*...in the production of alterity of a particular kind – a kind that is anchored in racial and geographical divides, that recycle cultural hierarchies based on colonial and anthropological ways of knowing the world” (Abraham, 2007, p. 212, emphasis in original). In this case it is about *essentializing* the individual or the workforce in order to best *sell* their selves through *representation*. Thus, the conquest of the global South continues on through text and the semiotics of representation.

These imaginary landscapes reinforce colonial mentalities and ways of thinking about what poor people should look and act like in order to be worthy of investment, in a reconquest, and colonization of the hearts and minds of both lenders and borrowers (Nandy, 1997). As Fanon (1952/2008) explains, peoples as colonized are subject to the limits of the knowledge and language of the oppressor. In providing pictures and narratives of lenders, the Southern microfinance partners of Kiva borrow from a system of difference imposed by the North that stresses the backwardness of the other but at the same time his or her willingness to enter the realms of the supposedly superior world of finance capitalism. The types of representations and unequal relationships, which are most valued by lenders create a way of knowing development that borrows heavily from colonial and neo-colonial stereotypes that emphasize, agriculture, rural living, and women as being the most in need on a preconceived social hierarchy. Through Kiva the power to control remains fervently within the hands of the Northern lender. It stresses an appeal towards neo-colonial understandings of the underdeveloped other, thus reinforcing hierarchies of difference under the veiled discourse of “partnership.” Rather than a system of empowerment, where consultation could be carried out with those in the South concerning the distribution of their loan funding, Kiva leaves such decisions to a largely distant, decontextualized, and, often, minutely informed Northern public, by means of their field partners. The lender not only controls who they will lend their money to but they determine what types of persons are best suited for their investments. As such, they shape and control the very apparatus of aid, the market and the experience of giving itself, through determining which types of livelihood representations hold value and which do not. While the means of production in terms of image-making and narrative may remain in the hands of Kiva’s Southern field partners, they must ultimately work to meet the demands of their anxious Northern investors.

There are other significant dangers to consider in running a development organization under Kiva's market-influenced, competition-driven, and consumer-oriented fundraising strategy that treats people's livelihoods like commodity investments. The first to come to mind is that it runs the risk of a turn to the type of business and profit-making mentality that has invaded conservation circles within the environmental movement, where those species and landscapes considered to be the soundest investments (i.e. the most marketable and hence most valuable) receive the greatest attention and funding (Smith, Verísimo & Douglas, 2010). In these industries, cute, cuddly, beautiful, and hence popular sell. An interesting example of this type of marketing strategy is the World Wildlife Fund's use of the panda as an ambassador species and brand. In this particular instance, the organization is large enough to be able to diversify its funds and spread them across multiple efforts in determining where the monies are most necessary. Yet, in smaller organizations that do not have the luxury of diversifying donations, those animals and landscapes that are deemed the most marketable and soundest investments but may not necessarily be the most in need are given precedence. For instance, the panda and tropical rainforests may be far more marketable, whereas those more important keystone species, such as the leopard frog and swamplands receive far less attention (Smith, Verísimo & Douglas, 2010).

The consequences of such a shift are already being felt by Kiva in the discrepancies in lending behaviour described by Kiva CEO Matt Flannery. Unlike the ambassadorial approach to marketing utilized by World Wildlife Fund and a number of child sponsorship programs, Kiva's investments are made on a one to one basis between a particular lender and borrower. Therefore, the funds never become spread out by any intermediate organizational structure that could assess the situation on the basis of needs. The problem is that these initiatives do not rest upon a needs-

based framework but rather upon a system of values determined by the market. It fosters a particular form of “strategic essentialism” on the part of Kiva and their microfinance field partners in the struggles for legitimacy that permeate the market in development fundraising representations, privileging a particular type of development subject over all others that may not necessarily reflect the needs-based realities (Spivak, 1996, pp. 159, 214). Through Kiva, the consumer is left completely in charge of where and to whom funds will be directed, which, while democratic, does not rely on any technical or expert knowledge about the development situation. Many of these decisions are influenced by values produced through marketing and popular Northern perceptions of what constitutes underdevelopment. As Flannery (2007) raises the question himself, how do you make a Nicaraguan taxi man, “tug...at people’s heart strings” (p. 54)? Even Kiva’s lenders themselves recognize such issues as one of the user’s of Kiva’s Facebook fan page was keen to explain, “there is a perception that lenders are likely to favour women, so often women are the faces/names of what are actually family loans” (Kiva [Facebook], March 5, 2010). The regimes of representation and signification working within Kiva’s consumer driven marketing efforts value certain development subjects over others but not necessarily on the basis of need (Lash, 1988). He suggests offering interest and return on investments to Kiva lenders in order to differentiate in a way that makes the decision less “emotional.” This, however, would still rest within the competition driven schema developed by the organization and has the potential to raise a host of other ethical dilemmas concerning the differences in the amount of interest, which microfinance institutions would be able to support depending upon the region and class of peoples. Those areas and individuals who could support higher returns on investments might not be in the greatest need from a development perspective.

By proposing a vaguely softer, less harsh form of capitalism with lower interest rates, Kiva does little to address issues of social justice that exist at a more systemic level. Thinking about development in terms of a commodity investment, dependent upon the whims of consumer/lenders, not only risks reifying pre-existing post-colonial mentalities but could also foster a further intensification, exaggeration and widening of class-based issues and differentiation. Kiva's market driven model takes the attention away from these much larger and interconnected issues by focusing on individual causes. It individualizes the issue on both ends of the aid chain and does not encourage its lenders to question the structural issues that face people as collectives. It does not address these larger problems in terms of the barriers to social infrastructure, intolerance, or political representation that individuals may face but instead simply comes with the same form of thinking and methodology that has existed in the minds of capitalist economists for centuries, that these changes will come about as a result of natural development through market expansion. In her study of breast cancer, King (2006) discusses how this tendency to individualize problems takes away from those external social and environmental variables and the structural issues contributing to the cause. There is a lack of scale to the framework adopted by Kiva that does not allow them to address the multiscale issues of poverty that exist at compound levels of social existence. Kiva's "person-to-person" approach while innovative in providing, at least the first world lender, a connection to the microfinance institutions in the global South, does not establish any cohesive macro-level strategy but it is instead left to the decisions and devices of a variety of scattered individuals.

Through the use of various "inscriptive devices" (Latour & Woolgar, 1979), tools and techniques, Kiva defines the imaginary landscape in which its lenders participate concerning the ways in which development is both perceived and carried out. In determining and mapping the

discourse of its initiatives it is able to manipulate the type of objects, subjects, and subjectivities that arise out of its efforts. To borrow from Mosse (2003), Kiva's marketing strategies "are constructs invested with the power to interpret and give coherence to activities and events... creating and sustaining...models that reveal, conceal or give meaning to...activities and events" (pp. 44, 46). In its marketing techniques it reflects a strategy increasingly being pushed by marketing consultants for non-for-profits to place emphasis on the personal consumption and investment aspect of donor relations rather than its altruistic connotations (Daw, 2006; Andreasen and Kotler, 2008, pp. 404-437). Kiva has literally begun to "treat donations like investments" (King, 2006, p. 7). Through its control over the networks and relationships in which aid is administered it pushes a distinctive type of mentality and understanding surrounding its efforts. In this case a product mentality in which individuals are transformed into products and commodities through acts of narration and signification further eroding "poor people's ability to define and take care of their own lives" (Escobar, 1995, p. 39). The organization claims to be based on a people centred model. As Flannery (2007) puts it, "This model thrives on information, not marketing. The entrepreneurs represented on the site are not promotional material—they are real people in the course of attracting and paying back loans" (Flannery, 2007, p. 56). Nonetheless, the shifts in its language dehumanize the process of aid and development by packaging both its processes and its constituent recipients as investments rather than treating them as socially grounded issues of justice. Business buzzwords such as "product vision or quality" and "investment opportunity" are utilized throughout reports and discussions produced by Flannery concerning Kiva's marketing and business management model to describe the ways in which it represents people of the global South (See, for example, Flannery, 2007; Flannery, 2009). This use of language empties development of its humanitarian dimensions.

Even though these investments become embodied in the faces and places of entrepreneurs in the developing world, the human aspect is once again removed through the use of the dehumanizing language of commodification and commodity relations where labour becomes simply a product and potential investment. As institutions of signification Kiva and non-for-profits organizations more generally need to be taken seriously for the implications that they can have upon the development imaginary. Through their fundraising activities and public engagement strategies they have significant authority and impact over the ways in which development and social justice are perceived. As such, the adaptation of consumer-centric and market oriented technologies of persuasion by Kiva cannot be overlooked.

CHAPTER 5
(RED)EFINED: THE REIMAGINING OF THE SELF, THE OTHER AND
CONSUMERISM WITHIN (RED)’S BRAND-BASED CONSTITUENCIES

“We are the people we have been waiting for” ((BLOG) RED, 2007, emphasis added).

The title of one of the posts made on the (Product)^{RED}TM blog and a statement made in a speech given by past president Tamsin Smith, allude to the type of commodity and marketing campaign utilized by (RED) in its fundraising and awareness efforts. (RED) diverges from the majority of fundraising campaigns of many other development organizations in that the emphasis is not on a distant other but the Northern self as consumer. Within (RED)’s efforts at consumer driven development fundraising, it is not only a new environment that they are attempting to negotiate but new forms of global citizenship. Their marketing efforts help to fashion a new construction of public life and active citizenship that has far reaching implications for social justice. Celebrity sponsors and supermodels grace (RED)’s ad campaigns, taking the emphasis off of African others and onto the “Good Looking Samaritan” ((BLOG) RED, 2007, para. 14). Through these marketing strategies what is occurring is the transformation of the consumer. The image of the celebrity places new meanings upon the acts carried out by consumers. (RED) is seeking to capitalize on a shift described by scholars in our contemporary social arrangements. As individuals become distanced and disillusioned from “traditional” institutions and forms of social and political engagement, due to changes in family structure, the disintegration of local structures in the face of global market and communications expansion as well as through the increasing commodification of personal ties, they are searching for new sites and alternatives outlets for self-expression and meaning in their lives (Putnam, 2000). In response to this sense of disconnectedness and apathy towards existing political and social arrangements, Pringle and Thompson (1999) have explained that there is a growing desire for “self-realization” in new

realms of existence that include the commercial environment. Fridell (2007) citing Lasch (1979, p. 72-75) explains these shifts in sentimentality as a sense of narcissistic anxiety and a need to belong:

In psychoanalytic theory, narcissism is not driven by selfishness or self love, but by deep anxiety and self-hate, which leads to a desperate desire to gain validation from others (Lasch 1979, p. 72-75)... According to Lasch, against the feelings of narcissistic anxiety, loneliness, and alienation, capitalism offers consumption as the cure.... Feeling powerless and anxiety-ridden, ethical consumers can turn towards purchasing fair trade goods on the market, both to somewhat appease their feelings of powerlessness and to construct their own self-identity as 'ethical' people. In essence, fair trade entails the commodification of social justice and allows consumers to channel their desire for a more just world into purchasing goods on the market to validate their own self-esteem (pp. 267-268).

While speaking primarily of fair trade, his statement is nonetheless illustrative of the type of consumer driven fundraising model pushed by (RED). Through its own commodification efforts, (RED) aims to provide consumers with a sense of meaning in their shopping experiences that reworks, not only the identity of the consumer but also the meanings of agency and social justice action. In the process, however, it pushes new moralities of being upon capitalist acts of consumption. The aid chains and the consumer realm offer new spaces for negotiating these roles and identities but in reifying the image of the consumer as ethical subject they also pose significant new challenges for social justice.

The majority of past and many of the existing awareness and fundraising efforts of international development organizations and agencies have focused on representations of Southern "others" as the centre of their marketing and advertisement campaigns. Poverty-stricken, diseased, and malnourished, these images were meant to evoke sympathy as well as a sense of superiority and thus responsibility in the hearts and minds of Northern donors in what has been termed the "pornography of poverty" (Plewes & Stuart, 2006). The images and texts

utilized in these initiatives often emphasized the neediness, lack, backwardness, passivity, and dependency of potential aid recipients. They also depended upon a great deal of sensationalism (Rosario, 2003). According to a study conducted by the British non-for-profit development organization VSO, at least in the particular context of the United Kingdom, “80% of the British public [continue to] strongly associate the developing world with doom-laden images of famine, disaster and Western aid” and “74%...believe that these countries ‘depend on the money and knowledge of the West to progress’” (VSO, 2002, p. 3). This type of fundraising representation came with a hierarchical and paternalistic understanding of the development process that did not attribute much to the capacities of the Southern recipients. They constructed an understanding of the relations of the aid chain and the developing world as passive recipients of Northern aid. (RED) on the other hand attempts a different tact, that of self-gratification and representation of the Northern consumer/donor through acts of consumption. It institutes a new form of representation through marketing and consumption philanthropy that focuses explicitly on Northern consumer as the central aspect of the transformations taking place through such relations. What is particularly unique about (RED)’s campaign is the ways in which it encourages consumers to reimagine themselves and act in a performative way in negotiating the meanings of the identities constructed around the brand and consumerism. In doing so, however, it constitutes old forms of capitalist hegemony.

The changes taking place within these efforts at commodifying development aid and fundraising need to be examined for the ways that they are being interpreted and understood by the Northern public in order to move beyond potential shifts brought about by their mere projection. An important site for investigating and evaluating the implications of these attempts at shifting the sentimentalities of Northern consumers is the official (Product)^{RED™} Facebook fan

page and website (www.facebook.com/joinred). In comparison to Kiva, (Product)^{RED™} offers the most a much more established community of online respondents and consumers of their cause . As an online social media and networking utility the (RED) Facebook page connects consumers of the brand and interested parties in a space in which they can actively take part in the discussion and negotiate the roles being articulated to them through (RED)'s marketing campaigns. During the time period in which this study took place it boasted well over half a million “fans” that had chosen to “like” the group ((Product)^{RED™} [Facebook], July 5, 2010). The website is unique in that it provides a space for the dissemination of organizational material and advertisements via the internet but also offers both existing and potential consumers the opportunity to discuss and interact with the brand, the organization, and one another. As such, it allows for an interpretive process to take place in which individuals can negotiate their experiences with the brand and its products. While the vast majority of posts made to the site remain limited to short and even one word statements of praise and positive feedback to the brand, a select number of comments made by “fans” provide important spaces for examining the types of transformations taking place on an individual and collective basis. Even these brief statements can provide useful insights into the ultimate implications that (RED) is having upon individual consumers. The productive capacity of the brand, or what it “does” – to borrow from Ferguson - is elaborated and perhaps most intimately observed through consumer reactions and interpretations. A number of the posts examined will be utilized in the analysis below in order to better understanding the implications of (RED) for social justice.

Consumerism with a Conscience

(RED) appears to be more about building the agency of Northern consumers to shop than raising awareness about the cause of HIV/AIDS in Africa. It promotes consumerism as a feel-

good, ethical activity while veiling its role in the continued existence of poverty and unjust conditions. As a number of posts from the (Product)^{RED™} Facebook fan page would seem to confirm, this understanding of the act of consumption as a site for promoting social justice and “doing good” is being actively taken up by consumers. As one user proudly stated, “I’m so glad your [sic] doing this in a way to help both the consumer AND the cause! I love buying RED” ((Product)^{RED™} [Facebook], July 29, 2009). The benevolence that has come to be associated with consumption through (RED)’s marketing efforts shines through in this consumer’s words. Another individual exclaimed, “I have this card and I don’t feel as bad paying \$4 for a cup of coffee when I use it... It gives back and makes me feel like I’m making a difference. Love Product Red” ((Product)^{RED™} [Facebook], August 11, 2009)!!!! As a site for, “making a difference” this consumer has interpreted consumption as a means of active involvement in bringing about productive change. Through Facebook, consumers consistently try to reassert this sense of agency and self-worth through display in a public setting by posting pictures of themselves with their recently purchased (RED) merchandise and discussing what they have bought. Through these images the act of “accessoriz[ing] yourself” becomes a visible symbol of connectedness and patronage to the cause (<http://blog.joinred.com/2007/02/we-are-people-we-have-been-waiting-for.html>). As King (2006) suggests,

In the age of ‘intimate citizenship’ (Berlant’s term), in which politics via mass anger and disruption is dismissed as silly, dangerous, and futile, an ethic of self-government has emerged that encourages people to turn their critical selves inward and to question and work upon their psychic health and self-esteem.... Instead, the preferred ideal is to know and work upon one’s self and one’s community through personal acts of philanthropy and unpaid service to one’s fellow citizens in a space that is imagined to be outside of the realm of social inequality and political struggle” (pp. 43-44).

In this case consumerism is reinforced as a means of expressing the individual’s ethical and political self. Through its advertizing materials and the comments made by its consumers it

promotes a renewed faith in the capitalism system and the consumption activities associated with it without proposing any structural changes to the problems that, such activities were actively involved in it creating in the first place.

The Relationship Between Self and Other

Although within (RED)'s efforts the gaze may have shifted from neglected Southern "others" to beautiful Northern "selves", this does not mean that the "other" has become completely lost in such efforts but that their presence within these campaigns has taken on new meanings and purposes. While they are present within the stories and images of (RED), Africans act merely as a backdrop to the building of Northern attitudes, conceptions and beliefs around Northern selves as consumers through the commodification of the experience of giving (Jefferess, 2002). A statement by (Product)^{RED™}'s past President Tamsin Smith put this quite plainly in stating,

When some folks hear about my job, they sometimes say: 'How wonderful of you to do what you do for people you don't even know.' And I tell them: 'I do what I do for me. I do it for how good it feels.' That's [sic] to me is what will make (RED) a huge success at the end of the day ((BLOG) RED, 2007, para. 19).

(RED) is about feeling good about one's self through acts of shopping. As Uzodinma Iweala (2007, July 15) has suggested, what becomes particularly evident within (RED)'s development driven marketing campaigns is that, "Africans...are props in the West's fantasy of itself" (para. 9). In this he means that the "other" only exists as something to be worked upon in relation to building the image of the empowered Northern self. The self can only be defined in relation to the other and so the compassionate and caring consumer is constructed out of narratives of the uplifted "other." Similar to Said's discussions of the Orient, what becomes evident is that these marketing initiatives can tell us much more about the West's construction of itself than providing any sort of awareness about the "other": "in discussions of the Orient, the Orient is all absence,

whereas one feels the Orientalist and what he says as presence” (Said, 1978, p. 208). In a statement illustrative of this tendency to put the Northern self first, Bono has been quoted as explaining, concerning his role with (Product)^{RED™}, “I represent a lot of [African] people who have no voice at all . . . They haven’t asked me to represent them. It’s clearly cheeky but I hope they’re glad I do” (Harrison, 2005 as cited in Richey & Ponte, 2008, p. 721). In this position Bono retains a place of authority for African’s who have “no voice” and hence no agency to better their own lives. Citing Spivak (as cited in Moore-Gilbert, 1997, p. 94), Jefferess (2002) describes how the role of the Southern “other” in need of redemption creates a space for the “benevolent” Northern consumer (p. 15). As Cameron and Haanstra (2008) state, “The problem with these representations is not that agency in the North is unimportant, but rather that the representations promote paternalistic, charity-driven identities and roles for Northern donors and suggest that the agency of people in the South is not important, thereby failing to challenge the representation of Southern ‘others’ as helpless victims” (p. 1483).

The posts of (RED) consumers echo these sentiments. For instance, one user exclaimed, “Focus and Unity is necessary. Profile pictures need to be changed to RED. I would love to see all fans of this page go RED. If we RED here, we RED there. Africa needs our support. EVERYONE Please change your profile pic to RED” ((Product)^{RED™} [Facebook], November 30, 2009). In his statement this user actively interpreted Africa as a place in “need” of “support,” constructing a space for the Northern consumer as active contributors and Africans as passive recipients. Another consumer made the comment, “product [RED] is an amazing company, helping thousands of Africans enjoy life everyday! The amount of medical assistance in that country [sic] has greatly improved over the past few years, but for many Afircans [sic], the medication needed is a few days walk away. With everyone’s support, more medical centers can

be built, helping more Africans live normal lives” ((Product)^{RED™} [Facebook], June 30, 2010)!

For this individual Africans are people in need of assistance, while (RED) is the “helper” and the bringer of “normality,” in this case a “normality” defined by Northern standards of being.

Similar instances of the use of such representations in portraying Northern selves as “helpers”, “rescuers”, “money givers”, “changers” and “supporters” in comparison to Southern “others” as passive recipients have been discussed by Lamers (2005) in a study of the fundraising efforts of a number of Belgian NGOs (p. 74). It is through their actions upon the “other” that the Northern consumer gains self-validation and meaning. Africa is the focus of (RED)’s efforts and many of the stories that are told, but it is an Africa that remains largely passive to it and its consumer’s experiences and actions but not the locus from which agency and change spring forth.

Perspective is important within these efforts, in defining the position of each of the actors involved in the development process as tales are told from the perspective of the consumer or the organization rather than the Southern other (Lewis & Mosse, 2006). As Jefferess (2002) explains, through these representations, “a binary of privilege and poverty is constructed in which the only possible relationship between self and other is one of aid and reception” (p. 15). In the end, it is ultimately the Northerner consumers who are constructed as the saviours and restorers of African dignity, an image not too dissimilar from those of conquest, colonialism and empire.

Citizenship Redefined

Through its discursive apparatuses and fundraising materials, (RED) is transforming the notions of agency that can be used to carry out social justice. It is redefining the act of consumerism and the moralities and meanings associated with it. In her studies of breast cancer fundraising, King (2006) describes how discourses surrounding “consumer-oriented

philanthropic solutions to social problems... have helped fashion a far-reaching construction of public life, of the meaning of citizenship and political action, and of notions of responsibility and generosity” (p. xi). She further elaborates,

The assumption that quick, convenient, and relatively inexpensive acts of giving have nonetheless powerful effects and deep spiritual meaning constitutes a common theme in contemporary discourse on philanthropy. The significance attributed to such acts stems in large part from their association with ideals of active citizenship, or from the notion that citizenship in the contemporary moment should be less about the exercising of rights and fulfillment of obligations and more about fulfilling one’s political responsibilities through socially sanctioned consumption and responsible choice (p. 73).

Within its own efforts (RED) is actively pursuing such a shift surrounding the politics of the self. Through (RED), these experiences and ways of being become commodified as products that one can buy and sell in their integration into consumer culture by way of the brand, ultimately passing onto the consumer.

The ways in which (RED) redefines the spaces of responsibility, generosity and active citizenship can be seen in the posts made by a number of its users. This can be seen in the types of comments made by a variety of users that reassert their position as socially responsible and generous through acts of purchase. The interpretive community established on the (RED) Facebook fan page provides a space for these performative scripts to be reified actively internalized and interpreted by the consumers themselves. In these socially mediated spaces the image of the consumer is increasingly being blurred with that of the socially responsible citizen in consumer understandings of the self. For instance, two users expressed the sense of meaning, which they garnered from their purchases as such: “I have a (RED) gap shirts [sic], (RED) converse and I have bought (RED) cards before. I love contributing” ((Product)^{RED™} [Facebook], May 18, 2009)!; and “I really feel like I’m contributing, I love the products!!

Bracelets, chucks, sprint phones, now I just need a few shirts for me and my friends” ((Product)^{RED™} [Facebook], May 20, 2009)!! Despite their brevity what can clearly be elaborated from these texts is that the consumers’ understandings of their acts of consumption are being mediated by an ideology that frames them as generous acts. Both of these consumers interpret their acts of consumerism and ownership of these products as moving beyond the simple act of shopping. Through their statements the selfish act of consumption becomes more than just that. It becomes a meaningful statement of their active engagement, altruism and generosity to the cause, since they are “contributing” to something greater than themselves. In the act of displaying their purchases, these individuals provide themselves with a narrative that makes consumption appear a socially active and responsible form of giving. The ideals, which (RED) embodies within its consumer relations and products contain within them a faith in the market and the spirit of capitalism that entrusts upon these institutions a part in constructing the socially just conditions that they are also complicit in creating in the first place. In fact, for Sheila Roche, (RED)'s Director of Global Communications,

that’s the only way that Red survives. It’s a win-win-win situation. The companies get a lot of benefits – they still get to make their profits. Consumers get these great products that do this incredibly powerful thing and they don’t have to pay the premium for it. And the ultimate winner is somebody in Africa who gets to have their life ‘borrowed’ for them, by access to anti-retroviral drugs (Worth, 2006, para. 9).

The narratives that individuals tell themselves and are told to them by (RED) makes capitalism and consumerism appear as a socially valid expression of fundraising, transforming consumer understandings of themselves and their actions.

(RED) also imparts a sense of responsibility articulated through simple acts of purchase. For example, one user made the statement, “I have a (RED) Starbucks card so you know I’m doing my part. 10% of each purchase gets donated” ((Product)^{RED™} [Facebook], April 6, 2009).

This individual equates their use and ownership of a (RED) product to all that is necessary for a demonstration of involvement and the fulfillment of their ethical duties of benevolence and justice. Another consumer put it much more bluntly exclaiming, “Did my duties today! Feeling good” ((Product)^{RED™} [Facebook], August 11, 2009). Such understandings renegotiate the meanings of global citizenship as buying (RED) product becomes the ultimate display of effective social justice and the definition of what one must accomplish to illustrate responsibility to one’s fellow human beings. Within these arrangements notions of responsibility are being shifted to the corporate and commercial spheres. Through buying their goods each of these users feels a sense of accomplishment and integration into a system which places the highest value on the act of shopping. Upset over their inability to purchase (RED) products another fan of the (RED) Facebook page explained, “I can’t make too much impact, since (RED) isn’t available in Slovenia :(I wanted to get a (RED) Amex but they don’t carry them either” ((Product)^{RED™} [Facebook], May 20, 2009). This user directly associated their potential for active citizenship and agency to their ability to purchase (RED) products. Through their comments the act of consumption becomes the exclusive site for social justice actions, ignoring and denying all other possibilities for change. The “ideology of consumption” constructed by (RED) around its products helps to structure these relations and understandings in the formation of new meanings and subjectivities (Baudrillard, 1981).

As can be seen by the types of statements being made by its consumers regarding their acts of consumption and purchase, the ideology of active consumerism espoused by (RED) has significant implications for social justice. While brief, these comments taken from the (RED) Facebook fan page examined above clearly illustrate how its consumers are playing a performative role in carrying out the scripts provided by (RED) that help to reshape notions of

responsibility, generosity, active citizenship and the relationships between self, other and the act of consumerism. The consequences of capitalism becoming more closely associated with social justice are that people forget to question the politics that remain implicit within the acts of consumption and any negative connotations they may have. The structural issues of poverty brought about by capitalism become further fetishized in the process. As Smillie (2000) explains,

most of the biggest Northern NGOs are not selling ideas, change, or reform to their donors. They are not building consensus around the social, political, and economic changes that inevitably precede genuine and broadly based development. They are selling salve for the troubled conscience, small feel-good opportunities for busy people living in a crass, materialistic world (p. 121).

In many ways (RED) appears to reflect these observations. While the statements made by its consumers are often brief they are nonetheless illustrative of the ways in which (RED) is transforming the notions in which small, feel-good acts of agency and the representations that come along with them are being utilized to bring social justice into the consumer realm and in the process reifying the systems that sustain global poverty and injustice.

A Brief Comparison with Kiva and its Lenders

The reason for examining (RED)'s consumer fan base as the primary example of the affects of consumer driven development upon its constituent "funders" through their own voices and understandings was that it offered such a well established group of consumers with a breadth and depth of comments and discussion on the topic that extended well into the organization's past. However, a brief examination of Kiva's own online community and fan base is useful in order to illustrate that the perceptions being felt and expressed by (RED) consumers can be applied more generally to multiple organizations and similar schemes. That observations made about the impact of (RED)'s market-based schemes of development fundraising upon the

perceptions of its consumers are relevant beyond its own efforts can be illustrated through an exploration of some of the comments made by users of Kiva's Facebook fan page at www.facebook.com/kiva. While it does not provide the same intensity of user base, Kiva, nonetheless, offers a useful means for comparison of these impacts.

While Kiva does not provide exactly the same type of experience as (RED) in terms of product engagement, the emphasis on the agency and empowerment of the Northern "self" in assisting over the often Southern "other" is nonetheless evident in both models. For instance, one Kiva fan stated, "It is great how Kiva gives You the opportunity to loan to very deserving people from across the world! You get to help out people whom you've never met and probably never will..and that's amazing" (Kiva [Facebook], October 29, 2009)!! It is significant that this user chose to capitalize the "Y" in "You" for their statement as it reiterates the point that lending is an empowering experience for the Northern funder over his or her Southern counterpart as they have the power to provide funding and decide upon whom it will be distributed to. Through its use of language and discourse, Kiva also encourages its lenders to think of development more in financial than in human terms or at least through a unique blending of the two that makes much more of the fiscal aspect of the relationship than the humanitarian, redefining social justice in terms of economic exchange rather than structural realignment. As one user exclaimed, "I use my kiva [sic] account like a savings account. Every month I add to it. The interest is human interest" (Kiva [Facebook], May 28, 2010). Another commented, "I've made two loans to date and really like that I can choose who the money goes to. Make it feel like I'm a real part of their new business venture" (Kiva [Facebook], April 24, 2010). These users have begun to speak of development in terms of "business venture's" and "human interest" taking on a largely exchange based vision of development and losing touch with the human side

of such relationships. Within these statements it is easy to see how Kiva is slowly constructing investment as the new means of demonstrating one's agency and involvement or responsibility to the cause. Similar to (RED), Kiva reiterates the idea that the best way to express one's self in order to bring about justice is through financial transactions and the market. This type of thinking that emphasizes economic development over all other forms of social justice only further encourages peoples of the developed world to believe that access to the formal market is one of the only and most significant means of empowerment, overlooking situations of poverty constructed by the market in the first place. Taking off from such analyses, the following chapter seeks to bring together these disparate findings in order to provide some overarching to the project and suggest means of moving forward with future research and actions.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

“If donors and recipients were able to be more aware of what they are really doing in the practice of aid, including above all, recognizing how power shapes the aid relationship, there might be more of a chance of the good intentions of aid...making more of a real difference in the lives of those that international aid claims to help” (Eyben, 2006).

This thesis set out to examine the implications of a new and emerging model of fundraising undertaken by international development related aid organizations in the garnering of funds and dissemination of awareness information. It rested upon the premise that the “public faces of development” or what it does in the global North have important implications for imagining the system of international development as well as issues of social justice more generally in terms of the ways in which they should and can be carried out (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004). In doing so, it offered an analysis into the reinvention of development fundraising as a consumer project and the ways in which the implementation of marketing tactics and the use of products have come to occupy a very significant space within these efforts. It also illustrated that this is a process that encompasses multiple efforts and diverse strategies of marketing and consumer engagement. As such, two case studies were chosen for examination due to their relative representativeness to similar fundraising initiatives in each of their respective sectors. These came to form the basis of a more detailed and grounded analysis into the practices and implications of consumer driven development fundraising.

What these studies illustrate is that firstly, the reimagination of development fundraising as a consumer project involves the use of various scripts, textual devices and representations that, in turn work to fundamentally shift people’s understandings of the aid giving process. These technologies and apparatuses reshape the engagement process and construct a space for

development issues and charitable encounters to be marketed as commodities. It is a constitutive process of product development and consumer engagement in which images and discursive formations come to frame the relations embedded within the fundraising encounter. In doing so, these efforts redefine the space of aid and the types of subjectivities formed through it. Thus, they are powerful tools in structuring the ways in which international development strategies are imagined and carried out and need to be recognized as such.

The conversion of development fundraising into a consumer project has a number of implications for social justice. First and foremost, in employing consumption and consumerism as seats of change, these initiatives only work to reify the existing capitalist arrangements that were complicit in structuring the relations upon which a number of social justice issues arose in the first place. They do not propose to make any changes to the status quo in understanding the reasons as to why such issues exist in the first place but only foster an understanding that the solution to fighting HIV/AIDS or global poverty can be achieved through throwing money at them as an after-effect. In the process they foster an identity of social activism and involvement that is strictly limited to market choices, ignoring other possibilities for social justice changes.

In their market orientation these consumer driven schemes of development fundraising push new roles upon the consumer, redefining the spaces of generosity, responsibility and active citizenship. Consumption becomes constructed as part of an act of selfless giving rather than simply one of selfish behaviour. As individuals enter the shopping mall they are given the perception that they are a part of something greater than themselves. This works to further fetishize the role of capitalist relations in bringing about a number of these development issues in the first place.

In mediating relations between the global North and South, the shift to consumer driven schemes of development has also, in many ways, only worked to maintain the relations between self and other that existed under previous representational framings of development, re-entrenching colonial stereotypes and relations of inferiority and superiority. Regardless of whether the images utilized by these organizations choose to focus on Northern “selves” or Southern “others,” the narratives that accompany them continue to discuss the North as the site of agency and change and the South as the passive recipient of aid. A subject/object dichotomy is constructed in which, as consumers, Northern “selves” become the subjects or those capable of carrying out action and the issues that Southern “others” face or the individuals, themselves, the objects of their consumption.

In fact, in carrying out development fundraising in such a manner, the issues and even the Southern individuals involved within these projects become aspects of commodity relationships. As products, they lose part of their connection to the human world and the very real experiences of poverty and suffering that they are a part of to become aspects of exchange value rather than social value. Development is no longer understood or practiced on a needs basis but rather on the basis of which issues and individuals “sell” or, in other words, receive the greatest funding. As King (2006) found within her own analyses of breast cancer marketing within North America, in a competition-driven marketplace those issues that “sell” receive the greatest attention, causing discrepancies in the funding, focus and behaviours of charitable institutions and the practice of giving more generally.

To follow the example of another set of development scholars interested in similar issues, the major question that arises out of the analysis of these fundraising initiatives is, do the ends justify the means? Do the potentially new donors and funding sources garnered by the causes of

consumer-driven schemes of development justify or overshadow the ethical consequences of their skewed representational formats (Cameron & Haanstra, 2008)? In offering a space for critical thinking about these efforts and their implications for social justice, this thesis suggests that there are a number of issues inherent to such arrangements. The conclusions and considerations to be drawn from these examinations are that development organizations need to begin to think more critically about the types of perceptions and mentalities fostered through their representations and fundraising practices. They have to critically re-examine their own tactics and techniques for the types of visions and understandings that they cultivate. Scholars must also begin to take more seriously the impacts of these activities upon the imaginaries of development and the ways in which they are constituted. Research needs to be the driving force behind this process in order to realize the most effective models for affecting positive change towards social justice. Finally, Northern donors have a role to play in becoming more aware of such issues in being complicit in the aid process, in order that they can make more informed choices concerning their social justice activities and acts of giving.

As the statement made by Eyben at the beginning of this chapter suggests, if the importance of representations and the aid giving process were to become more transparent and allowed peoples involved in such transactions to become more aware of their position within such relationships, it would go a long way in making a real difference in the lives of those involved. This project has attempted to make a first step in doing just that. Through bringing to light the types of power relationships inherent within the aid giving process and the implications that these have for social justice, it has sought to provide at least a starting point for understanding just one of the multiple ways in which development fundraising is carried out. It has made a distinctive effort at trying to reveal the processes involved in facilitating new ways of

seeing the world and people's perception of themselves and others within it. Ultimately, it is hoped that such research will provide an impetus for future endeavours and investigations into efforts at development fundraising within the global North by revealing the importance that such activities have for social justice understandings. It seeks to provide a basis for people to begin to think more critically and question their positions within the relationships of aid and development in order that they can make the most useful and meaningful engagements and decisions for future change.

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