New Practices of Giving:
Ethics, Governmentality, and the Development of Consumer-Oriented Charity Fundraising

Submitted by Louise Anne Rutt to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Geography
In September 2010

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: .................................................................
Abstract

This thesis emerges in the context of recent developments in the field of charity fundraising. In particular, in order to increase, or simply maintain, fundraising levels charities have had to develop innovative devices which both take charity giving into the spaces in which individuals carry out their daily activities, and provide mechanisms through which they are able to give to charity in their daily lives. This thesis focuses on one such attempt. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate both the practices of constructing alternative giving and the materials which result from this, and the practices of giving and receiving an alternative gift. Alternative giving refers to a fundraising device which is built around a range of gift cards or certificates produced by the charity, each of which represent one particular item or service provided by the charity to its beneficiaries. The cards or certificates are then sold at a price which is designed to mirror the actual cost of providing the item or service represented and are intended to be used by the purchaser as a gift for a friend or relative. As such, alternative giving, as a form of fundraising used by international development charities, raises a number of questions, particularly in terms of how it affects the relationships between individuals and charities, and individuals and the specific beneficiary. Therefore, this thesis draws on literatures around ethics, governmentality, consumption and gift theory to examine the implications of alternative giving for these relationships. Having drawn these literatures into conversations with empirical research based around interviews with charities and those engaging in alternative giving, and a range of textual materials surrounding this, the thesis argues that practices of alternative giving are carried out by ethical subjects who are situated within broad sets of social relations, and which matter to how connections in the charitable act are manifest.
Acknowledgments

My thanks goes, firstly, to all who participated in this research, whether working for a charity, a giver or recipient of an alternative gift, or those who have simply been willing to discuss the idea of it. I really appreciate the time you took out of your busy lives to talk to me about these things.

Next, I would like to thank all those in the geography department at Exeter. My PhD experience has been greatly enhanced by being part of both the academic and social community there. In particularly, I would like to thank Agatha, Anne-Flore, Kim and Liz who have kept me in the loop, despite my varying locations, and have provided me with food, entertainment and futon space, so as I could be more present.

Further, my supervisors, Paul Cloke and Nicola Thomas, deserve my extreme thanks for the academic guidance – both conceptual and practical – and moral support they have given me, in addition to their seemingly infinite patience! I must also especially thank Paul for encouraging me to apply for the PhD studentship in the first place, without which I would not have been able to carry out this research.

I must also thank my external thesis examiner, Marcus Power, and my internal thesis examiner, Nick Gill, for a thought-provoking (and enjoyable!) viva examination. I really appreciate the thorough engagement that you made with my thesis and questions and comments that emerged from this.

I would like to thank my friends, Sue, Mark, Tereza, Ness, Issie, Jane, Kat, Aisling; Katie, Rich, Zoe and Stephen from Keele; and all from OBWCC, OneSound (O&S!) and Children’s Holiday. These last few years would have been far less enjoyable without the fun times I spent with you, whether in a café or pub, on a cricket pitch or badminton court, playing music, or at Carroty Wood.

Finally, I must thank my fantastic family, particularly my Mum and Dad, Ian and Ina, Dave and Ailith, and Grandparents for their support, care, love, sense of humour and great food! I really appreciate all the things you’ve done in the last 4 years – and for several decades before that – and the interest that you always show in what I’m doing. And Paul S. I don’t know how to thank you enough for everything you’ve done (don’t worry, I’m not talking about you making me move across the country twice!). I really would not have been able to start or finish this without your patience, love and friendship.
Contents

Abstract p.2
Acknowledgements p.3
Contents p.4
List of Figures p.8

Introduction: Situating Alternative Giving p.10

Chapter 1: The Changing Relationship between Society and Charities p.23

1.1 Introduction: Defining Charities and Other Associated Terms of Organisation p.23

1.2 Charity and Consumption: Commodity, Spectacle and the Hyperreal p.30

1.2.1 Charity as Commodity p.31
1.2.2 Charity as Spectacle p.39
1.2.3 Charity as Hyperreal? Baudrillard’s Society of the Simulacrum p.42
1.2.4 Commodity, Spectacle and the Simulacrum Societies for Charities and Fundraising p.47

1.3 Charity and Government: Organisation and Practice p.48

1.3.1 Government, Governmentality, Governance p.48
1.3.2 Governmentality and the Subject p.52
1.3.3 State Government, Welfare and the Changing Role and Place of Charities p.56
1.3.4 Government and Charitable Subjects p.66

1.4 Chapter Summary: Reflections on the Changing Contexts of Charity for Alternative Giving p.74
Chapter 2: Ethics, Giving, Connecting

2.1 Introduction: The ‘Moral’ and the ‘Ethical’ p.75
2.2 Moral Philosophy, Geography and Ethics p.78
  2.2.1 Virtue Ethics p.84
  2.2.2 Virtue Ethics, Distance and Partiality p.89
2.3 Ethics and Connection p.92
  2.3.1 Care as Ethics and Practice p.92
  2.3.2 Gift Theory p.97
  2.3.3 Appeals by Charities and the Face of the Other p.101
2.4 Ethics of Complex Connections: Material Culture’s Ethical Potential p.106
2.5 Chapter Summary p.110

Chapter 3: Researching Alternative Giving p.112

3.1 Negotiating the Research Field p.113
3.2 Interviews and Focus Groups p.117
  3.2.1 Interviews with Representatives of Charities p.118
  3.2.2 Interviews and Focus Groups: Giving and Receiving Alternative Gifts p.126
3.3 Textual and Visual Analysis p.131
3.4 Critical Reflection on Research Methodology p.136

Chapter 4: The Place of Alternative Giving within Charities p.139

4.1 Introduction: Genealogy p.139
4.2 Beginnings…Transfer of Knowledge p.140
4.3 Why Charities Choose to Adopt Alternative Giving p.154
4.4 The Donor/Recipient-Beneficiary Relationship Constructed in Alternative Giving p.170
  4.4.1 Restricted Spending Model p.171
  4.4.2 Generalist Spending Model p.173
  4.4.3 Restricted vs. Generalist? How Charities Decide p.177
  4.4.4 Restricted-Generalist Model p.180
4.5 Conclusion p.185
Chapter 5: The Construction of Alternative Giving

5.1 Introduction

5.2 The Spaces of Discursive Construction
   5.2.1 The Catalogues
   5.2.2 Producing the Catalogue ‘Feel’ with Alternative Giving
   5.2.3 Differences between Display Technologies

5.3 The Spectacle of Alternative Giving: Entertainment, Ethics and Imagined Geographies
   5.3.1 The Construction of the Gift
   5.3.2 Spectacularisation 1: Skirting around the Serious
   5.3.3 Spectacularisation 2: Ethical Modes of Address
   5.3.4 Spectacularisation 3a: Tangibility and Imaginings of the Material Gifts
   5.3.5 Spectacularisation 3b: Alternative Giving’s Imagined Geographies of Development

5.4 Conclusion

Chapter 6: Practices of Alternative Giving and Receiving: Ethics Before, Between and Beyond?

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Purchasing an Alternative Gift: Donating to Charity through the Gift
   6.2.1 Who Gives Alternative Gifts? Givers as Ordinarily Ethical Consumers
   6.2.2 Why Do Givers Get Involved with Alternative Giving?

6.3 Receiving an Alternative Gift: The Occasion and the On-going Gift
   6.3.1 The Occasion of Giving and Receiving: Intrigue, Surprise and Delight
   6.3.2 Beyond Giving and Receiving: Material Manifestation, Display and Ethics

6.4 The Relationship Between the Giver and Receiver of the Alternative Gift
   6.4.1 The Place of the Beneficiary in the Giving and Receiving of an Alternative Gift

6.5 Conclusion
Chapter 7: Conclusion  p.314

7.1 Thesis Overview  p.314
7.2 Key Research Findings  p.316
   7.2.1 International Development Charities and the Emergence of New Fundraising Devices p.316
   7.2.2 Representing the ‘Distant Others’ of Development p.317
   7.2.3 Charity Fundraising and (Ethical) Consumption p.319
   7.2.4 Moral-Selves or Ethical Connections? p.321
   7.2.5 The Implications of these Findings for the Future of Charity Fundraising p.323
7.3 Rethinking Concepts Relating to the Government of the Ethical Consuming Self p.325
7.4 Critical Reflections on Researching Alternative Giving p.329
   7.4.1 Researching ‘Ethical’ Organisations? p.329
   7.4.2 Researching ‘Ethical’ Practices? p.331
7.5 Further Research? p.332

Appendix 1: Example of Charity Participant Consent Form p.334
Appendix 2: Overseas Development Charities and their Alternative Gift Catalogues p.335
Appendix 3: Initial Interview Request Letter and Information Sheet to Charity Representative p.336
Appendix 4: Charity Interviewees p.338
Appendix 5: Interviews, Focus Groups and Email Responses about Practices of Giving and Receiving Alternative Gifts p.340

References p.342
# List of Figures

## Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>Image from Innocent-Age Concern marketing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>The Live8 symbol</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Overview of the methods used to address each research question</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Outline of the textual and visual analysis carried out</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>“Walled Garden Candle” for sale in the UNICEF online gift catalogue 2010</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>‘UNICEF Premium Eco Bag’ for sale in the UNICEF online gift catalogue 2010</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>‘UNICEF Mini Car’ for sale in the UNICEF online gift catalogue 2010</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Front cover of the Oxfam Unwrapped 2008/9 paper catalogue</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5a</td>
<td>World Vision UK’s ‘Must Have Gifts’ Christmas 2008 catalogue (Page 13)</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5b</td>
<td>World Vision UK’s ‘Must Have Gifts’ Christmas 2008 catalogue (Page 14)</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>‘Oxfam Unwrapped’ catalogue, 2008-9 (pages 24-5)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Main page for ‘Foodie’ section of ‘Oxfam Unwrapped’ website</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Page of gift of ‘Coffee’ from ‘Oxfam Unwrapped’ website</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>‘FARM-Africa PRESENTS’ homepage</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>Sending gifts by email</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>‘Oxfam Unwrapped’ Virtual Village</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>‘Oxfam Unwrapped’ Virtual Village ‘Kidang Pao’</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.13: Pages from Christian Aid’s ‘Present Aid’ catalogue, Spring/Summer 2009 p.218
Figure 5.14: Display of ‘Oxfam Unwrapped’ Gifts in Oxfam Shop, Salisbury p.219
Figure 5.15: Front page of Help the Aged’s ‘Cows ‘n’ Things’ catalogue p.228
Figure 5.16: ‘Oxfam Unwrapped’ goat p.230
Figure 5.17: Plan UK Alternative Gifts advert, Guardian, December 2007 p.241
Figure 5.18: Front cover of World Vision UK’s ‘Must Have Gifts’
Christmas 2008 p.242

Chapter 6
Figure 6.1: Receiving an alternative gift at Christmas p.283
Figure 6.2: ‘On the fridge…the collection gathered over the years’: Display of alternative gift fridge magnets p.290