RETHINKING COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL BUSINESS

HOW RE-MODELING COMMUNICATION KEEPS COMPANIES SOCIAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL

CRAIG E. MATTSON

Rethinking Communication in Social Business

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—CEM
Passiontide, 2018

Introduction

On Making Do and Making Good

ABOARD THE DEVELOPMENT BUS

How much you can see of human life in the marketplaces of Haiti depends a great deal on your vehicle. Hanging on to the back of a tap-tap bus, clinging to a pickup truck bed, weaving a bicycle through crowds—these all give you a full-on education in Haitian life with the always imminent risk of losing your balance and falling into a mango booth. The most oblivious way to go may be to take a rented school bus, as a *blan* (foreigner) like me might do on a service junket. Even if you open your window as wide as possible and keep your face to the hot, aromatic air, you may still miss how Creole roads reverse what North Americans take to be a responsible pedestrian/vehicle ethic. In Chicago, where I come from, a pedestrian has more social power than a bus driver: if a walker gets hit by a bus, for example, the walker will have all the public's sympathy and the driver all the blame. But the driver has all the material power: the road was made for buses not for walkers. Things are exactly reversed in Haiti: the driver has the prestige of a loud horn and a high-powered engine, but the road belongs to pedestrians and goats and donkeys—until something goes wrong.

One day, a medical team with whom I have some acquaintance was aboard one of those roaring schoolbuses, racing down the Haitian road near Les Cayes on the southern coast of the island, when the passengers heard a small, dull, terrible thud. The bus pulled to a halt, the doctors hurried off the bus, and there in the dirt beside the road was a man, and next to him the jug of ice he had been holding on his head. To their horror, the medics realized that the man had been struck by the driver's mirror as they raced to their next destination. They now confronted a dark irony. They were indeed equipped to treat the concussed man, but in doing so, they would be ameliorating injuries that they had themselves caused.

I begin with this parable of inadvertently dangerous development work in a country that has seen all too many such stories of failed relief aid. One need look no further than the 1990s, when the United States shipped subsidized American rice to Haitian communities, putting Haitian farmers out of work and deepening the poverty of the country.[1] The story has taken a prominent place in the critical documentary *Poverty, Inc.,* and joins the sprawling portfolio of similar tales of failed aid told by close observers like Paul Farmer, Timothy Schwartz, William Easterly, and Laurent Dubois.[2] Troubled by the sheer proliferation of such stories, changemakers the world over have begun to turn away from governments and philanthropic organizations and have instead turned to business as an engine for problem-solving.

Market-driven social problem-solving brings me to the subject of this book, which I will refer to as *business meliorism* and define as the discourse of for-profit logics, structures, and tools deployed for the relief and development of troubled societies across the globe. But as this idea has picked up speed and slipped into the mainstream of development theory, as much needed goods and services are chugging with all due speed to communities, ranging from Port au Prince to Mauritania, from Colombia to Budapest, from Jakarta to Chicago, I write this book out of concern for what I take to be a widespread disregard for the models of communication too often driving business meliorism. By relying on sender-receiver models of communication, business meliorism too often assumes its own variation on the big bus parable told above.

BUSINESS MELIORISM AND TRANSMISSIVE COMMUNICATION

This transmissive understanding is hardly new; indeed the very etymology of the word *communication* traces to notions of transferring objects from one place to another. As John Durham Peters notes, "The concept of communication as we know it originates from an application of physical processes such as magnetism, convection, and gravitation to occurrences between minds."[3] This transmissive construal of communication has a long heritage, tracing back to ancient notions of message dissemination (as in Jesus's parable about casting seeds on a field) and forward through early modern theories of idea transfer (as in John Locke's empiricist philosophy) to nineteenth-century spiritualism, and on to perhaps its quintessential expression in the mid-twentieth-century information systems model.[4] James Carey explains, "In the nineteenth century but to a lesser extent today, the movement of goods or people and the movement of information were seen as essentially identical processes and both were described by the common noun 'communication.'"[5] Even after the telegraph broke the union between space and communication (because electrically transmitted messages could then travel faster than letters sent by stagecoach or train), a powerful construal of communication has continued to be "the process whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people."[6] Whether referred to as the transmissive or sender-receiver or information-systems model, this account describes communication as a process in which a *sender* transfers a *message* along a *channel* to a *receiver* who issues *feedback*, with some measurable *effect* over against obstacles commonly referred to as *noise*.[7]

The model's popularity is no doubt due to its ease of understanding, its ready practicality, and its tacit acknowledgement of the vital place information plays in late-modern societies. Business meliorists take the Enlightenment maxim that "knowledge is power" seriously, especially in places where empirically based knowledge can be scarce, due to widespread illiteracy, inadequate data collection, or community veneration for traditional beliefs over against empirical inquiry. Understanding the factual workings of anti-retrovirals in Swaziland or the engineering dynamics of water purification systems in Lebanon can be a kind of knowledge whose power amounts to life or death. Little wonder, then, that entrepreneurial problem solvers tend to assume the unalloyed goodness of an information-systems approach to communication. It would seem that, in all the quandaries of development work, at least *that* is something to which we need give little thought.

But this model of communication also has significant blind spots as the following case study will suggest.

BUY STUFF, SAVE LIVES, SEND MESSAGES

Business meliorism today arguably traces to the discourse of corporate social responsibility (CSR), which began in the United States in the 1920s, found firm footing after the Great Depression, and eventually generated a remarkably varied portfolio of programs. The initiatives included corporate philanthropy such as Exxon Mobile's support of Masterpiece Theatre, social marketing campaigns such as Philip Morris's anti-smoking initiatives, and cause-related marketing campaigns like the 1970s March of Dimes and the 1980s American Express campaign to refurbish the Statue of Liberty.[8] Ben & Jerry's brand developed a reputation for being ethically exemplary, as did Starbucks, who conducted social responsibility initiatives ranging from Ethos water to over-the-counter conversations about race. CSR initiatives have also launched the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty and supported the virally famous, but ultimately collapsible Kony 2012 campaign. Historically speaking, these corporate initiatives in business meliorism have pursued religious and humanistic ideals, attempting to improve and then to communicate to the public the altruistic character of the modern corporation through community volunteering, cause marketing, employee development, civic philanthropy, and other pro-social initiatives.[9]

Although such campaigns have been around for a long time, few of them have achieved both the longevity and conspicuousness of the campaign that arose in the mid-2000s. One wintry morning in 2007, a rhetorical criticism student of mine raised her hand and asked if anybody in class had heard of Product (RED). Our class promptly dove into analysis of Bono and Bobby Shriver's 2006 cause-related marketing campaign to raise money for the Global Fund in order to provide anti-retroviral drugs in sub-Saharan Africa. RED seemed powerfully shaped by an information systems model of communication: the campaign assumed the role of a powerful speaker addressing a consumer audience with a chicly blunt message in a full-page ad in the *New York Times*:

> ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL. THEY ARE NOT.
>
> 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.
>
> (RED) IS THAT SIMPLE AN IDEA. AND THAT POWERFUL. NOW YOU HAVE A CHOICE. THERE ARE (RED) CREDIT CARDS. (RED) PHONES. (RED) SHOES. (RED) FASHION BRANDS. AND NO. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY ARE ALL RED IN COLOR. ALTHOUGH SOME ARE.
>
> WE BELIEVE THAT WHEN CONSUMERS ARE OFFERED THIS CHOICE, AND THE PRODUCTS MEET THEIR NEEDS, THEY WILL CHOOSE (RED). AND WHEN THEY CHOOSE (RED) OVER NON-(RED), THEN MORE BRANDS WILL CHOOSE TO BECOME (RED) BECAUSE IT WILL MAKE GOOD BUSINESS SENSE TO DO SO. AND MORE LIVES WILL BE SAVED.
>
> (RED) IS NOT A CHARITY. IT IS SIMPLY A BUSINESS MODEL. YOU BUY (RED) STUFF. WE GET THE MONEY, BUY THE PILLS AND DISTRIBUTE THEM. THEY TAKE THE PILLS, STAY ALIVE, AND CONTINUE TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR FAMILIES AND CONTRIBUTE SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

> IF THEY DO NOT GET THE PILLS, THEY DIE. WE DO NOT WANT THEM TO DIE. WE WANT TO GIVE THEM THE PILLS. AND WE CAN. AND YOU CAN. AND IT'S EASY.
>
> ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS UPGRADE YOUR CHOICE.[10]

The RED Manifesto sounded as if the AIDS crisis in sub-Saharan Africa could be resolved with a better, cleaner transmission of data to the buying public. Upon examination, the RED website further evoked this information-driven model of communication by means of a linear graphic that traced the path of amelioration from a RED shopper's purchase of some high-end product to the triggering of corporate donations to the Global Fund to the delivery of antiretroviral pills to the palms of sub-Saharan citizens. Although many other things have changed in RED's messaging over the past decade, it still uses an informationally inflected left-to-right linear graphic to explain "How (RED) Works."[11] The campaign's prolific use of statistics to report their impact also seeks to leverage world-betterment through information (and ultimately, anti-retroviral) transport.[12] RED seems to have leveraged a widely perceived correspondence between the logistics of shipping goods and the logistics of transmitting information. Corporations are good at transporting manufactured goods, so this logic runs; why not deploy their powers to transmit world-bettering information along with the goods?[13]

Whatever the precise reason for CSR's success, initiatives like RED show no sign of weakening and seem likely, in fact, to continue to proliferate as "a concept, accepted the world over."[14] CSR has become "a global phenomenon in both private and public sectors."[15] Even critics like Slavoj Žižek marvel that "charity is no longer just an idiosyncrasy of some good guys here and there, but the basic constituent of our economy."[16] CSR's popularity helps explain why RED continues to be a strong presence in the mediascape more than a decade after my students and I started tracking it.

Although RED has proven to be a powerful purveyor of information to shoppers in the wealthy North and West, critics have roundly condemned the campaign, often on the grounds that the brand was saying one thing and doing another, a cardinal sin for anyone using the information systems model.[17] Indeed, CSR has rarely been without its critics, especially for its tendency to whitewash (or "greenwash" or "pinkwash").[18] Critics hearken back to Milton Friedman's famous 1970 *New York Times* op-ed piece decrying CSR's appearance of civicmindedness as taxation (by CEOs) without representation (by shareholders).[19] A Friedman descendent, David Henderson, has argued that CSR's "misguided virtue" has become hegemonic in contemporary business discourse naively committed to "global salvationism."[20] Much more recently, Joe Cahill has asked, "What Should a Corporation Value above All

Else?"—and has subsequently come to the conclusion that Friedman may just have been right about CSR.[21] For such skeptics, CSR may be an unavoidably paradoxical project, whose "moralistic rhetoric simultaneously positions the corporation as a sinner responsible for egregious social wrongdoing as well as a potential savior, an entity with unequalled power to solve the very social ills for which it is blamed."[22] Other critics like Easterly argue that impressive CSR-styled plans are not adaptive enough to bring sustainable benefit.[23] But what all these critiques tend to rely upon is a conventional model of communication, in which the corporation quasi-sovereignly addresses audiences with its powerful message—a difficult characterization to maintain when corporations are so multi-partite, omnidirectional, and polyphonous.[24] In any case, the criticism that CSR rhetoric allows companies to say one thing while doing another relies upon a tacit ethic of sincerity that drives the information systems model of communication.[25]

After years studying RED's rhetoric, however, I have come to think that this criticism provides more distraction than purchase. A more adequate critique would center, not on RED's disingenuous use of the information systems model of communication, but rather on the inadequacies of that model itself. Any model, of course, enables people to see some things and disables them from seeing others, rather like the windows of the bus in the parable above. But in this case, I fear that the transmissive model of communication disables business meliorists from seeing, much less from adequately engaging, enormously consequential changes in the dynamics of late-modern societies.

EVOLVING CONDITIONS IN THE BUSINESS SCAPE TODAY

Let me outline the affective, digital, and political conditions that are changing the earth beneath the feet of business meliorists today. First, the affective conditions. Social entrepreneurship confronts communicative challenges in what Nigel Thrift calls "soft capitalism," or the intensely self-reflexive character of late-modern economics. Put differently, soft capitalism functions in terms of an affective economy, one in which identity formation and emotional investment are the most powerful movers and shapers of economic and communicative action. But, because affective investment often happens collectively, well beyond the confines of a single personality, this communicative action does not fit easily into a unidirectional, or even a bidirectional sender-receiver transaction.

A second factor emerges with widespread logics of digital mediation. These logics indicate, not just that digital technology has provided business meliorists with platforms like Etsy and eBay or with cellular tools—one thinks of Blake Mycoskie saying, in a well-known 2006 AT&T commercial, "I operate my entire business from my phone."[26] No, digitality's consequences have been far more than instrumental. Just as language shapes consciousness in everyday life, just as symbols construct social realities, so the grammatical elements of digital media are giving a highly malleable structure and a viral acceleration to both the problems and the sustainable solutions of our time.[27] Such mediation has made new ways of imagining and enacting business-focused problem-solving necessary—and possible.

A third set of genesis conditions giving rise to social entrepreneurship emerges from intensified political tribalism across contemporary societies. I began drafting this introduction during the first years of the Donald Trump presidency, in a society whose fragmentation entailed occasional forays into violence. But even this violence was not as frightening for the future of the country as the consequences of exclusivist political logics for the future of liberal democracy.[28] Andrew Sullivan describes tribalism's aim as "the obliteration of the other party by securing a permanent majority, in an unending process of construction and demolition."[29]

Here is this book's argument in short: *these three ground conditions—affective economics, digital mediation, and political fragmentation—require practitioners of business techniques for social problem-solving to alter how they theorize and practice public communication.* Consider a geometric analogy. The information systems model often construes a communication situation with a triad of elements, the sender, the receiver, and the message. So long as the company is able to keep the angles of this triad connected, the shape holds its integrity and the project feels effective. But now, imagine that powerful forces from inside and from outside the triangle push and pull on the three sides until they blow out, detaching completely from each other. All the original lines may still be visible, but now there are enormous gaps where the angles once were. As the forces push and pull, the shape eventually disappears altogether, leaving only lines pointing every which way. Instead of the tightly boundaried triangle, this open field of action closely resembles what business meliorists find themselves navigating today, thanks to bewildering but powerful shifts in digital and affective conditions in globalized society.

In fact, RED's rhetoric seems to have responded to these changes in rhetorical culture before many of its critics have. Consider, for example, some of the less informative elements in RED's rhetoric: the campaign's reliance on Bono's celebrity discourse, the brand's insistent use of a quasi-revolutionary aesthetic in its multiple Manifestos, and RED's pushing of consumption as an identity-forming social performance. All these illumine a field of affective action far in excess of the sender-receiver-message situation. By inviting RED shoppers to take up a mode of complex attention and to put on a highly changeable social comportment—their shoppers are at one and the same time buyers (of stuff) and savers (of victims)—the campaign makes everyone involved a sender, everyone a receiver, everyone a message.[30] Within this blown-apart communication situation, diffusions of digitally enabled and affectively animated connectivity require a looser and more performative account of communication's role in business-focused problem-solving than an information systems model affords. If business meliorists try to squeeze their projects onto the bus, barreling down on their audiences in need with overbearing messages and untimely provisions, they may well bonk unnoticed passersby on the head, sending their would-be beneficiaries sprawling.[31] The time has come for business meliorism to switch vehicles.

SOCENT AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MELIORISM

My first ride on a Haitian motorbike was in Pignon, in the central plains of Haiti. To my North American suburban sensibilities, the ride was an off-road adventure. Moped-riding compels riders to bend and sway around potholes, dodge small domestic animals, beep at running children, and draft along behind tap-tap buses, hoping not to get soused by enormous mud puddles. Mopeds have to constantly change course, sometimes stopping altogether or even doubling back, as drivers push their bike forward through a thick crowd. I loved every moment of the ride, not least for the gift of rushing air, which was, after all, no small affordance in tropical humidity. But mostly I loved the complex combination of acceleration and immanence that a motorbike provided. In a way I had never experienced on a bus or even on the back of a pickup, I felt in and amongst the aromas and the cacophonies, the tightly pressed and richly human presence, of Haitian life. For me, the moped enacts the idiosyncratic dynamics of social entrepreneurship, a very different sort of business meliorism from that discussed so far. In contrast with CSR initiatives which are invariably add-ons to an already established mission to increase shareholder returns, social entrepreneurship entails the incorporation of for-profit or not-for-profit organizations whose mission from the get-go is to address social and/or ecological problems.[32]

The moped trip was more than a joy ride, of course; it was also a research junket for an Iowa-based socially entrepreneurial nongovernmental organization (NGO) called Many Hands for Haiti. As our moped went house by house, my companion spoke with householders about the needs they knew of in their own homes and community. Although my few words of Creole hardly allowed me to contribute to the interviews, I could make out that my companion was asking questions about such matters as where people sought health care (physicians or witch doctors) or what constituted the floors of their houses (cement or dirt). By looking to employ and educate Pignon citizens—and by starting North American–based enterprises to provide further revenue—Many Hands for Haiti makes social entrepreneurship intrinsic to its mission, rather than adding it on to a prior profit-making ambition. The organization may be smaller and less impressive than, say, the CSR divisions of companies like Dell or Hershey or Apple, but such socially entrepreneurial organizations move with moped-like agility down the roads of Pignon.

Social entrepreneurship's deft and close-to-the-ground business meliorism is fairly young, tracing back perhaps only to Muhammad Yunus's micro-lending Grameen Bank in 1983. But new as the phenomenon is, social entrepreneurship has begun to proliferate a remarkably diverse array of organizational forms.[33] Ranging in size from the tiny start-up to the mighty unicorn (a start-up worth more than a billion dollars), social entrepreneurships take a remarkably diverse array of legal forms, including impact investment firms, social enterprise for-profits, low-profit limited liability companies (L3C), community-interest companies, socially responsible corporations, benefit corporations (not the same thing as B Corps), S corporations, flexible purpose corporations, cooperatives, and public sector spinouts. These business meliorists all pursue what Paul C. Light calls, "a search for value," and they all make "*efforts to solve intractable social problems through pattern-breaking change.*"[34]

Social entrepreneurship has become a global phenomenon, as witnessed by the some 9,000 companies that have signed on to the United Nations' Global Compact, which seeks to "transform the world through business."[35] Consumers increasingly know about the phenomenon thanks to a subset of social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, whose exemplars include Warby Parker and TOMS.[36] Nobel Prizes are given and governmental policies attributed to social entrepreneurs.[37] Forums and institutes focused on social entrepreneurship such as Ashoka are growing, and journals on the subject of social entrepreneurship are multiplying. The *Stanford Social Innovation Review,* the *Social Enterprise Journal,* the *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship,* and the *International Journal of Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation* continue to press scholarship towards maturity. Increasingly, social entrepreneurship is catching the eye of academics, who address it in research and classrooms alike.[38] Little wonder that some watchers of the field claim that social entrepreneurship has gone culturally mainstream.[39]

What has brought about the proliferation of social entrepreneurship? Suntae Kim and Todd Shifeling attribute its popularity to the public's dissatisfaction with CSR.[40] Social entrepreneurship does seem to have found a more persuasive way of talking about cultural engagement and intercultural development than CSR has: corporations talk about their ameliorative work in terms of doing good and doing well; social entrepreneurs talk more felicitously and pragmatically about their work in terms of problem-solving.[41] But an even more fundamental difference emerges in social entrepreneurship's amenability to what might be called a performative model of communication.[42] Instead of theorizing communication primarily as information transfer, social entrepreneurs treat communication performatively. As my interviews throughout this book, as well as my rhetorical analysis of socially entrepreneurial communication will show, these new business meliorists approach communication as a type of conduct. Their adherence to a model of communication-as-action enables social entrepreneurship to be remarkably adept in the midst of the bewildering, ever-emergent conditions of late modernity.

Consider, for example, socially entrepreneurial negotiations of the shifts in affective ecology described above. Using games to motivate people to recycle, New York's Recycle Bank not only recruits recyclers from the general citizenry, runs an online store called One Twine, partners with Ziploc and Unilever, but also partners with city governments to make recycling happen. Recycle Bank's appeals to playfulness represent a characteristically affective investment in support of a pro-social cause. The organization evinces an admirable shrewdness about the role of feelings in consumer-citizen decision-making today, a shrewdness married to a strong commitment to pro-social problem-solving. But emphasizing affective investment (as opposed to rational self-interestedness) complicates the conventional business communication situation. Instead of a speaker addressing an audience with an effective, artful message, this social entrepreneurship functions as "a multi-dimensional and dynamic construct moving across various intersection points between the public, private, and social sectors."[43] Of course, social entrepreneurship is not only wholly unique in its self-reflexive and border-crossing character. But among the many species of business meliorists, social entrepreneurial practitioners of what Emily Barman calls "caring capitalism" intensify and accelerate the movement among societal sectors, from nonprofits to federally funded organizations to for-profit enterprises.[44]

A second condition of possibility for social entrepreneurship emerges in its negotiation of digital mediation. A case could be that digital dynamics have powerfully propelled and shaped the idiosyncratic structures of socially entrepreneurial organizations. They tend to exhibit sectoral hybridity (being private and public at once), networked complexity (being comfortable with globalized logistics), and highly decentered operations (in which neither powerful individuals nor organizations function sovereignly alone). Take, for instance, the "mass social innovation" of the Brazilian city of Curitiba, whose "small army of recycling entrepreneurs" has turned a municipality into a changemaker network: Instead of emphasizing the power of the individual, instead of trying to maximize the size of the organization, Curitiba provides an intriguing example of digitality incarnated in socially entrepreneurial structures of innovative waste management.[45] Digitality gives rise to social entrepreneurship as a networked, often self-organizing, affiliation among scattered organizations.[46]

Finally, consider what might be called the political vitality of social entrepreneurship in tribalist times. This liveliness traces to the way that social entrepreneurship both reinforces and challenges the norms of deliberative democracy. When citizens lose confidence in civic discourse, when governmental bodies fail to conduct rational discussion, when political factions cannot agree about what counts as reliable evidence, social entrepreneurship offers a way back into these democratic norms for public communication. Social entrepreneurship creates organizational forms whose sustainability requires deliberative exchange and whose operations rely upon empirical and strategic clarity. Social entrepreneurs engage multilateral exchanges among executives, employees, community members, suppliers, shippers, and beneficiaries. They cannot afford the gridlock so often customary in American democratic politics today. Instead of getting stuck on one side or another of the divide between the state and the private sector (as CSR often does), social entrepreneurship affiliates with both, often blurring the lines between them, and thus serves as what Geoff Mulgan calls a "discovery mechanism" by which democracy can run experiments for bettering society. "[T]hrough the hard graft of trying to put an idea into practice in a world where there is intensive competition for resources, loyalty, and time, social entrepreneurs learn whether there really is a need and whether there is a coherent business model for meeting it," in contrast with "the policy makers or analysts in consultancies" who simply "will not be reliable judges of what will and will not work."[47] I will address further ways that social entrepreneurship challenges the norms of deliberative democracy in each of the subsequent chapters, but especially in Chapter 4's critique of democratic problem-solving discourse.

In any case, social entrepreneurs are increasingly to be seen abandoning whatever corporate bus they used to be on, leaving the paved roads altogether, and heading out into the bush, where the most needed capacities include changing direction abruptly, doubling back, and barreling through obstacles. Little wonder that social entrepreneurs, who have proven to be the mopeds of business meliorism, need to steer their work with different sorts of heuristic questions than their counterparts in other sectors of the economy.

ASKING NEW QUESTIONS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

When changemakers apply an information systems model of communication to the challenges of organizational and public messaging, they tend to come up with questions such as the following: How can companies share their stories effectively and artfully? How can companies raise awareness both for social problems and for their own brand? How can companies adapt their messages to different parts of their complex audiences without compromising their mission? How can companies use pro-social messaging to resolve cultural problems? These questions are, in fact, the immediately felt predicaments of the half-dozen social entrepreneurs that I interviewed in the course of writing this book.[48] And yet this book's research and analysis, not to mention its probing of these very entrepreneurs' own stories, suggest that the conventional problematics of business communication eventually prove less than helpful, given changes in affect, digitality, and publicity today. Let me offer a few fictive mini-studies that illustrate the dynamics of these new settings.

Scenario #1: You do public relations in a mid-sized digital tech manufacturing firm and are asked by the company president to plan a 5K run as a fundraiser for better tablets in the local middle school. After a year or two, the run becomes a highly recognized annual event in your community. Your colleagues in the marketing department tout this innovative project in all their promotional materials and tell stories about it at their shareholder banquets. You can, with little effort, track down social media posts by fellow employees who are tweeting and posting images from the last fun run. A local car salesman has referred to the event in one of his cheesy commercials. A bumper sticker has appeared on a smattering of cars, parodying the initiative. Every audience for this 5K run is doing something with the event, sometimes in ways that you as the event planner would not have desired.

Scenario #2: A mentor in an entrepreneurial incubator five years ago told you to start a social enterprise, arguing that a social justice–related cause would help to differentiate your brand. The problem with this otherwise sound advice is that every major corporation has a social responsibility wing, with the result that ethically minded capitalism feels less like a way to capture attention for your company than simply the cost of doing business today. You can easily see how your company's mission can be read, in part, as raising awareness for a vital problem in human life today, and yet you find more and more of your communicative energies going into not just cueing people to notice that your company has noticed a problem that needs noticing, but also equipping people to pay a special kind of complex attention themselves.

If your company is to succeed, you cannot help feeling, it has to do more than raise awareness or capture attention; it also has to create a manner of attending that people outside your company can participate in.

Scenario #3: Your small company decides to seek a formal accreditation of social responsibility called B Corp certification. In order to strengthen your community engagement, you and some of your employees begin to offer pre-professional training to some of the unemployed folk in your suburb. As it turns out, the best way to find these people is by partnering with an aging mainline Protestant congregation, whose building is perfect for your training seminars, and with a tiny, but ambitious evangelical Christian congregation renting the sanctuary on Saturday nights. As it turns out, the mainline pastor and the evangelical church's three deacons are experts in finding people likely to stay the whole six weeks of your pre-professional seminar—and then to get a job afterwards. Partnering with these churches, despite your entirely non-religious motives, offers you strong evidence in your annual shareholder report and on the B Corps assessment that your company is creating social impact. One evening, as you are setting up for your seminar, you notice a denominational magazine on the lobby table, touting the church's partnership with a local business to do good in the community. There is even a testimonial from one of the participants who has come to faith, she claims, due to her involvement in the program. Although your company started this initiative to try to tell a fresh story about your organization's relationship with the community, it has become unclear which speaker is behind or which audience in front of the story or, for that matter, what the story itself is.

These scenarios point to a simple but unavoidable reality for changemaker companies today: directly tactical questions are necessary but insufficient when it comes to engaging the confusing and diffuse communication conditions of late modernity. There are, in any case, numerous public relations gurus and CSR marketing experts who can guide a businessperson in how to tell an organizational story well, how to raise awareness, how to talk to complex audiences, how to balance operations between doing good and doing well.[49] But what has become clear in my research is that a peculiar kind of theorizing is essential to socially minded business today—a theorizing that attends *from* tactical questions *to* tacit questions.[50] Instrumentalist questions about how to tell a story or raise awareness are cues to apprehend farther questions, questions shaped by the decentering affective dynamics, digital mediations, and political fragmentation of late modernity.

THEORIZING A DIFFERENT SORT OF HOW-TO

Exploring these remarkable conditions, this book pursues a primarily theoretical investigation, focused on helping social entrepreneurs to understand, and scholars to account for, the affective structures and vectors that propel business meliorism into social spaces where the customary lines drawn among the elements of a communication model become exceedingly blurry. That fact that socially entrepreneurial organizations must deal with such affectively powerful immanent forces only increases the urgency of how-to questions regarding generating and sustaining new living arrangements with contemporary social and ecological problems. Even when companies cannot fully and finally end the wicked problems of our time, they can discern better and wiser ways to communicatively dwell with these problems.[51] I support these how-to discussions with the help of communication theory, rhetorical analysis, and qualitative interviews.

Communication Theory

Let me speak first of the theoretical literatures I draw on to equip this book's pragmatic inquiry and argument. The literature on affect touches on many quarters of communication theory, as scholars attempt to analyze the ways that people and institutions and technologies and natural places tug on each other. This tugging and being tugged on registers in what theorists call:

> those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world's apparent intractability.[52]

The changemaking that social business seeks depends upon such affective propulsion and must often find its way through and around such worldly intractability. This is an intensely practical concern. Describing how change moves within and around affective structures—that is, in spheres of action where no one communicator is in charge, no one text focused upon, no one communicational situation delineable—Eric Jenkins has usefully brought the affective theory of Baruch Spinoza and the modal theory of Gilles Deleuze to the field of communication studies, describing a mode as "a manner of relating" or "how one body plugs into or interfaces with another to produce affections."[53] Social entrepreneurship makes possible the interfacing of many different kinds of entities: shareholder bodies, managerial bodies, activist bodies, community bodies, suffering bodies, giving bodies, not to mention the many bodies that make up the natural habitats in which social commerce commences.

Readers of rhetorical theory focused on publics and counterpublics will also recognize my reliance upon Michael Warner, Frank Farmer, and Jenny Rice. Warner's discussion of the formation of publics, or virtual collectives that attend on the circulation of particular discourses helps me to locate what is socio-politically distinctive about social entrepreneurship: it engages its constituents (managers, employees, community partners, activists, advocates, shippers, manufacturers, etc.) not as a bounded set, but as an open field of action constituted by attention to the discourse of world-betterment through business.[54] Farmer draws on Warner (and other scholars of publicity) to limn an academic discipline (composition studies in his case) as a counterpublic; and his moves have helped me to think about social entrepreneurial organizations as constituting, not just a fixed sector of civil society (the private sector, say), but an alternative style or comportment distinct from other publics at play in the fields of liberal democracy.[55] Rice discusses the ways that discourse seeking change can instead diminish possibilities for change by producing disengaged political subjects—that is, people who imagine themselves to be intervening on social problems, but who are inadvertently factoring themselves out of civic action.[56]

Rhetorical Analysis

Besides drawing on the theoretical equipment provided by affective, communication, and publicity literatures, I also conduct textual analysis to check the validity of my theoretical tracings. Because I am a rhetorician by training, my analysis goes deep in a few case studies, rather than attempting a broader more comprehensive coverage. But although I do conduct close readings of company discourses, studying a broad portfolio of messaging—website discourse, publications, industrial whitepapers, commercial advertising, and other related texts—my aim is not to use these cases as exemplars for how socially entrepreneurial communication *should* be done nor as cover-ups for what is *actually*, i.e., deceptively, going on behind all the discursive smoke. That kind of rhetorical analysis or ideological critique offers diminishing returns, given the diffuse and decentered character of communication in affectively driven and digitally circulatable times like ours.[57] (In a viral economy, finding *the* center of power abuse begins to feel like whackamole.) In any case, socially entrepreneurial discourse invites analysis of a collective comportment, a shared way of inhabiting meliorist projects that harness business to better the world.

Qualitative Interviews

Finally, I conducted seven semi-structured interviews, seeking data upon which to base this book's argument:

- Lime Red Studio—Emily Lonigro (president) and Demetrio Cardona-Maguigad (strategic design director)
- One Collective—Richard Roche (business catalyst)
- Art on Sedgwick—Charlie Branda (president)
- Hope Works—Mary Elizabeth Goodell (director of donor relations; has since transitioned to another socially entrepreneurial organization)
- *Native Tongue*—Jason Moosikkamol (co-founder, head writer)
- Cara & Clean Slate—Robert White (chief program officer)
- New Moms & Bright Endeavors—Laura Zumdahl (CEO)

These interviews often opened with an extended prefatory conversation before continuing a more formalized exchange. The discussions broached questions under four headings: (1) how the social entrepreneur narrated her or his company's project; (2) how she or he raised awareness for a social problem; (3) how she or he certified the company's authenticity; (4) how she or he designed philanthropic operations that garnered earned income. I talked about these strategically focused questions, because that is where my interviewees seemed to feel most urgently concerned. But within that structure, I encouraged the social entrepreneurs to take the interview in directions peculiar to their company communications and operations.

One surprising direction these interviews took was a move from research subject to consultancy client. Although I came to these entrepreneurs seeking their wisdom as skilled practitioners in their field, the tables sometimes turned, positioning the entrepreneurs as clients in relation to me and even my students. For example, my students and I offered *pro bono* consultancy advice to the organizations Art on Sedgwick, Native Tongue, New Moms, and One Collective to discern how they might communicate better with their publics. The conversations gave me a clear sense that social entrepreneurs are used to highly changeable communication situations, situations that require them to toggle between roles as expert problem-solvers and as life-long students. In any case, this multilateral engagement with these companies, in which I played multiple roles as scholar, teacher, and consultant, provided me with an experience of the changeability of late-modern communication situations. My field observations and interviews have helped me to proffer a book-length how-to guide, not in the customary "dummy's guide" sense of a manual, but rather in Bruno Latour's sense of the how-to provided by a map for strange terrain.[58]

TO WHOM THIS BOOK MAY CONCERN

My primary audience comprises academics in rhetorical studies, communication theory, and business ethics. All of these fields, of course, are influenced by critical theorists, who examine the interaction of neoliberalism and communication regarding social change. My study, too, is influenced by critical theory, especially in my leeriness about profiteering motives in social business and my attention to the voices of relatively disempowered sectors in late-modern society.[59] But critics of business-focused do-gooding tend to ask what Barman calls "countless new questions about its possible effects and efficacy; its possibly cynical motivations or incredulous claims" and to seek intellectual control over a constantly dynamic phenomenon.[60] Such questions unfortunately tend to leave these critics perpetually unsurprised: behind every expression of pro-social business is the same old, unsurprising ideology of neoliberalism. I seek in this book's case studies to recover surprise at the idiosyncratic ways that social entrepreneurships respond to digital and affective and political conditions in late modernity.

That responsiveness enables them to confront vitally new sorts of business communication questions. Instead of merely asking how to tell a company story effectively, social entrepreneurs ask how to tell a company story *to provide access to that company's mode of engagement*. Instead of asking how to capture attention for a brand, they exemplify how *to create full-on attendance to a social problem*. Instead of asking how to address a complex audience, they ask *how to engage a circulation and cultivate an alternative public*. Instead of asking how to solve a problem, they ask *how to give a gift*.

I also aim in this book to address a secondary audience of practitioners. Because social entrepreneurship is still a relatively young field, its major literatures, produced by thought leaders like Roger L. Martin, Sally Osberg, Bill Drayton, J. Gregory Dees, Muhammad Yunus, David Bornstein, Rupert Scofield, and Tania Ellis, focus on refining and propelling the concept of social entrepreneurship in books, essays, and podcasts.[61] Their literatures exhibit a primary impulse to recruit new changemakers. Even as they lay out how to do social entrepreneurship, they seek converts to business-animated problem-solving. They offer frameworks for application in varied business situations and in predicamental communities. In contrast, this book addresses not potential converts so much as already established practitioners, especially those who have been in the field for five to ten years or more and whose communication predicaments differ from those of the start-up. Starter entrepreneurs benefit a great deal from being shown how to apply already existent theory to an unprecedented situation, but social entrepreneurs who have been in the field a while have run into difficulties for which there is no existent theory. Each chapter in this book addresses a different dilemma faced by changemaker communicators: dilemmas of disaffection, salience, simultaneity, and intervention. But I am not "fixing" these dilemmas (either by freezing them or eradicating them) by developing a theory of socially entrepreneurial communication. What I am doing is searching out a flexible posture towards social business and the problems it incorporates to resolve.[62]

GUIDE TO THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS

Each of the business communication questions raised above lays out, not a destination point, but a passageway into ameliorative involvement. By moving along these routes, companies and their constituents have, so to speak, put themselves into public circulation. They have enacted a distinctive habitus, a collective comportment that holds promise for engaging social and ecological crises on many different scales. Accordingly, each of the subsequent chapters takes a journey down the route of one of those questions.

Chapter 1 proposes that if we squint at the storytelling of social innovators, we can learn to recognize not just a set of strategic moves likely to garner consumer buy-in and donor support, but rather a mode that animates social entrepreneurship, a mode that approaches social change as a meaningful project. I examine four case studies from what might be called the field of vision-focused entrepreneurship, in which people like Jordan Kassalow, Blake Mycoskie, Joshua Silver, and Neil Blumenthal tell stories in order to address the global ophthalmological problem, in which so many people around the world do not have the vision care they need. These powerful CEOs are compelling storytellers, with much to teach other start-ups about how to cast a winsome narrative. But I am instead primarily interested in how their stories give access to a collective comportment that connects innovative business operations and recalcitrant social problems in an effort to make the world better. This comportment, this mode, may well be the most vital communication that social entrepreneurship has to offer the world. But it can be easy to miss, for entrepreneurs and for their audiences alike. The work of storytelling is demanding enough, but to see such narration as a way to portal into an energizing mode may well be what Shakespeare would call an enterprise of great pith and moment.

Chapter 2 notices that entrepreneurs might be tempted to enter the "social sector" on the grounds that value-driven commerce provides an organic way to conduct public relations and marketing. After all, the company has an urgent but organic motive to speak: to raise awareness for a dire civic or natural predicament. But many critics have rightly asked whether awareness-raising discourse actually resolves any problems. Are problems likely to become less wicked if people become engrossed with them? At the same time, I am not willing to entirely agree with the notion that awareness-raising is actually awareness-razing. Instead, I explore a third route that social entrepreneurs are taking (without ever quite talking about it), what I will call *networking awareness*. Changemaking entails more than altering the psychological states of sundry citizens. Those citizens might feel better—it does feel good to better grasp the facts, even when those facts are unpleasant—without actually bettering the problem. But when social entrepreneurs network attention, they also scale it. By *scaling* awareness, I do not mean that they simply get more people to notice something. The scale is not quantitative, but virtual. Instead, networking public awareness puts attenders in touch with the material factors that make a problem persistent. This attending may look less like someone who is individually sharply observant; instead it could look like someone who is contacting and being contacted by a problem's immanently related elements, including the technologies, infrastructures, systems, ecologies, algorithms, and ideologies that can make problems so recalcitrant. People with network awareness recognize themselves as attendant on the polyvalent forces that push and pull on them, which shows how networks can attend on people as well.

Chapter 3 studies the role of expertise in socially entrepreneurial discourse, especially by closely examining the mentoring provided by three representative consultancy companies: School, Lime Red Studio, and B Lab. Each of these companies offers a different kind of expertise in service to social entrepreneurship. Up to this point in the book, I will have largely contrasted two models of communication, the transmissive and the performative. But in this chapter, I examine three different models of communication in the hands of brand management consultants, showing how dissemination, dialogue, and algorithms all provide a kind of affective access to business-animated problem-solving. I argue that these consultants not only help companies to better address their complex audiences, but they also help to generate more audiences attentive to world-bettering discourse. Business meliorism is not, of course, sovereignly overseen by any one communicator: no one can find the one true source of the many messages that circulate through late-modern society. Scholarship on publics and counterpublics, however, would suggest that although this messaging would seem to address an already existent audience, that audience is nowhere to be found before the messaging arrives. Accordingly, business-meliorist discourse precedes even the companies speaking it. With that communicational oddity in mind, this chapter notices how third-party communicational experts help to produce communicational apparatuses that increase the chances that more and more people will gather around the discourse of social entrepreneurial problem-solving.

Chapter 4 brings this book's analysis to the question of cultivating democratic societies in late modernity. I examine the use of a much-maligned manner of speaking that is nonetheless deployed by many social entrepreneurial organizations—gift-giving discourse. Companies that tie together consumption and donation are indubitably entering a complicated ethical field: scholars and pundits debate whether companies that "give" are actually as amelioratively generous as they clearly aspire to be. But their use of the gifting trope is hardly a "merely stylistic" element of their organizational discourse, nor is it an element that is less materially consequential than the problem-solving discourse lauded, or at least assumed, throughout most of this book. Late-modern democracy arguably demands a close attention to style. This chapter's stylistic analysis of the public communications of giving companies does not serve as a platform for recommending a particular company's model as the best way to provide goods, information, and services to communities in need. I am instead interested in how gift-giving discourse works in socially entrepreneurial organizations in politically productive ways. By putting the long tradition of gift theory into conversation with social enterprises that aspire to be generous, I search out the contributions of this mode of engagement not just on a given society's democratic public, but also for how this mode contributes to the formation and recognition of social entrepreneurship's counterpublic.

THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF SCHOLARS AND PRACTITIONERS

When I sat down with Chicagoland social entrepreneurs in coffee shops with great names like Counter Coffee or walked the neighborhoods of the B Corps in the Ravenswood neighborhood, I encountered people who were themselves living the book I was trying to write. But they also expressed avid interest in my as yet unformed research. I think that we each recognized that the other was mapping out the locations and relations that constitute a confusing and exciting field. Our exchanges were like comparing two wax-paper maps, overlaying one with the other and then reversing the overlay to see what the other had discovered. The relation between the two maps was not just a matter of the entrepreneurial practice supporting or countering the academic theory. Instead, our projects were more like two different styles of cartography, each capable of picking up on topographical elements that the other might miss, but both laying out the same terrain.

As Latour would point out, there is often a similarity between the work of the scholar and the work of a practitioner—at least when both are attempting to make sense of a complexly woven phenomenon like social entrepreneurship.

> It is simply because they are on par with those they study, doing exactly the same job and participating in the same tasks of tracing social bonds, albeit with different instruments and for different professional callings. . . . [T]hey remain in the same boat all along and play the same role, namely group formation. If the social is to be assembled, every hand is needed.[63]

In a sense, then, this book is itself an act of social entrepreneurship. The word *entrepreneur* is derived from an identically spelled French word that means “agent” and from another French term *entreprendre*, a verb meaning “to undertake.” Both the researcher and the entrepreneur undertake to put collectives together: the entrepreneur does this mapping in order to make her organization function within and along the connections; the scholar maps these connections in order to make sense of what is going on in and around a discourse. But in both cases, socially entrepreneurial communication gives access to a kind of latent manner of relating, a potential interfacing. The point is not to help constituents to cut past appearances and thus to see what is “really going on” in a given social business, but rather to give people a sense of how they might move into relation to a field of meliorist action.[64]

MAKING DO AND MAKING GOOD

I began this Introduction in Haiti, so perhaps it is apt to end there as well. The Creole word for “making do”—a practice essential to entrepreneurs the world over—is the simple but powerful term, *degaje*. I saw this “making do” in action in Les Cayes, Haiti while accompanying a varied team of professionals and students on a hot Friday afternoon. I was offering what assistance I could in a queue of medical relief personnel as we worked through a long line of community members, checking blood pressure, looking for scabies or ringworm, doling out vitamins. Near the end of the afternoon, a boy came over and took my hand in order to show me something. He led me away from the bilingual chatter of our improvised clinic, around to a field behind the building, where we walked across the trash-strewn dirt clods for a while, staying adjacent across the gap of our language worlds. Finally, he pointed at what looked like a garbage bag balled up on the ground. I bent and looked for a moment, seeing nothing but litter. I smiled a question at him, and he reached down to hold up the bag for me to see better. Then I started to see sticks forming crossbars, a long piece of string, and, eventually, a kite. I myself have a history of failed kite-flying with far more promising-looking models, so

I was a little surprised when the boy tossed the unlikely assemblage into the air, and it caught, hovered, and rose. When we drove away that late afternoon, I looked back and saw the trashbag kite still flying in the field, just visible over the low-slung building where we had been doing our work, a floating bit of plastic and stick and string and *degaje*.

I mention that story as an instance of entrepreneurship emerging where least expected. That boy, I have come to think, was a micro-entrepreneur. Where I had seen nothing but trash, he had seen opportunity and value. His improvised construction does not, perhaps, foretell a powerful business venture in kite-making industry. But his skills in transvaluation and improvisation are smaller variations on the work of other business-minded folk, making do in conspicuously inventive ways across the earths of the developed and the developing worlds alike. By designing companies that address social and ecological predicaments, by designing marketing to advance these companies and to engage their constituents, my anticipated audience has already narrated themselves into the same entrepreneurial discourse that this book participates in. This book addresses those practitioners who, having taken the socially entrepreneurial turn, are now all over the landscape putting up their kites.

NOTES

1. As President Bill Clinton told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "It was a mistake. It was a mistake that I was party to. I am not pointing the finger at anybody. I did that. I have to live everyday with the consequences of the lost capacity to produce a rice crop in Haiti to feed those people, because of what I did. Nobody else." Notice that this heroic self-censure is consistent with the wrongheaded notion of American power that drove the decision in the first place. Clinton surely overstates his own responsibility here: the initiative involved multiple sectors of American society, not only the U.S. government, but also the corporations that make up American agriculture and, of course, the philanthropic organizations that were only too glad to distribute the rice on the ground in Haiti. "'We Made a Devil's Bargain': Fmr. President Clinton Apologizes for Trade Policies That Destroyed Haitian Rice Farming," *Democracy Now*, April 1, 2010, https://www.democracy now.org/2010/4/1/clinton_rice.

2. *Poverty, Inc.,* Director-Producer, Michael Matheson Miller, https://www.povertyinc.org/. Paul Farmer, *Haiti after the Earthquake* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011). Timothy Schwartz. *Travesty in Haiti: A True Account of Christian Missions, Orphanages, Fraud, Food Aid and Drug Trafficking* (Booksurge Publishing, 2008). William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (New York: Penguin, 2007). Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Picador, 2012). Let Dubois speak for all these authors: "Haiti's proud independence has been eroded . . . by the

thousands of foreign organizations that have flocked to the country over the years with projects of improvement and reform. For all their work, though, hunger, poverty, and disease still stalk much of the population" (10).

3. Ibid., 78.

4. John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 51–54, 84, 23–26.

5. James Carey, *Communication as Culture* (London: Routledge, 1989), 15.

6. Ibid.

7. For discussion of old and new notions of communication-as-transport, see John Durham Peters, "The Gaps of Which Communication Is Made," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 11.2 (June, 1994). To get a sense of the continuing power of this construal of communication, the reader need but thumb through the first pages of any public speaking text close at hand—e.g., Deanna D. Sellnow, *Confident Public Speaking*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2005)—to see the continuing influence of the information systems model that traces back to an article written by Claude E. Shannon in 1948 for *The Bell System Technical Journal*, which eventually seeded a book, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (University of Illinois Press, 1971).

8. For a concise historical account of the evolution of CSR, see Jesse Dillard and Alan Murray, "Deciphering the Domain of Corporate Social Responsibility," *Corporate Social Responsibility: A Research Handbook*, eds. Kathryn Haynes, Alan Murray, and Jesse Dillard (London: Routledge, 2013), 10–27. For discussion of religious origins in CSR's development, as well as of managers as "public trustees," see William C. Frederick, *Corporation, Be Good! The Story of Corporate Social Responsibility* (Indianapolis: Dog Ear Publishing, 2006), 30–32. Daniel Yankelovich also offers a boosterish account of CSR in *Profit with Honor: The New Stage of Market Capitalism* (New Haven, MA: Yale University Press, 2006), 11–15, countered somewhat by Henry G. Manne's more critical "First Lecture," in *The Modern Corporation and Social Responsibility* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research: 1972), 1–3.

9. For narrations of CSR's contested history, see Daniel Yankelovich's boosterish *Profit with Honor: The New Stage of Market Capitalism* (New Haven, MA: Yale University Press, 2006), 11–15, as well as Henry G. Manne's more critical "First Lecture," in *The Modern Corporation and Social Responsibility* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research), 1–3. See also C. Paramasivan, *Social Entrepreneurship* (New Century Publications, 2016). Finally, see Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee, *Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the Most Good for Your Company and Your Cause* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005), 22–24, for a good summative discussion of CSR's diverse expressions.

10. "The (RED) Manifesto," http://web.archive.org/web/20071210121154/www.joinred.com/manifesto/. Wayback Machine. Internet Archive. (Snapshot date, December 8, 2007). The umbrage over RED's alleged insincerity almost certainly traces to critics embracing some variation on the information systems model of communication. For reflection on the relation between sincerity and information transfer,

see Richard Lanham, *The Economics of Attention* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 137–139.

11. "What is (RED)?" Product (RED) website, https://red.org/what-is-red/.

12. Regarding RED's sometimes dubious use of statistics, consider the sometimes incompleteness of their website statistics. The "Our Impact" page claims that the campaign has raised $500 million and "impacted" 90 million people. "Our Impact - How (RED) Is Making a Real Difference," https://red.org/our-impact/. On the left side of the Impact page is a list of a countries assisted by the campaign. Clicking on each country's name brings up further statistics, regarding population, numbers of the infected, money distributed, and those whose lives are "impacted." These statistics would frustrate an analyst for what they omit: significance, derivation, sample size, or margin of error. RED makes statistical claims, but does not detail their proportion in relation to other statistics. For example, when RED says it has contributed $500 million to the Global Fund, it does not compare that number with the Global Fund's overall goals. RED is, of course, not the only contributor to the Global Fund, but it is hard to know how much $500 million is without comparing it to some sought-for objective—or without knowing if RED has helped the Global Fund to meet any of its past goals. McNeil, Jr., Donald G., "Drug War Statement Upstaged at AIDS Gathering," New York Times, July 22, 2010. I am indebted for this discussion both to Dave Klandermann's collegially mathematical conversation and Deirdre McCloskey's book *The Rhetoric of Economics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press) 2nd ed. 1998, 112–138.

13. Paul C. Light has argued that corporations can be matrices for ameliorative action, not least because "socially entrepreneurial activity appears to flourish in settings that provide the high performance needed for sustainable impact"—which can happen in sprawling international corporations whose infrastructure, so far from being merely an obstacle to innovation, provides "remarkably large dissemination systems that might provide the opportunity for much faster scale-up of promising ideas." *The Search for Social Entrepreneurship* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 2008), 214.

14. Suntae Kim and Todd Shifeling, "Varied Incumbent Behaviors and Mobilization for New Organizational Forms: The Rise of Triple-Bottom Line Business amid Both Corporate Social Responsibility and Irresponsibility." *Social Science Research Network* (2011).

15. Kenneth Amaeshi, Paul Nnodim, and Onyeka Osuji, *Corporate Social Responsibility, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 7.

16. "First as Tragedy, Then as Farce," RSA Animate, Jul 28, 2010. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpAMbpQ8J7g.

17. "In reality, it's just one more example of the corporate world aligning its operations with its central purpose of increasing shareholder profit, except this time it is being cloaked in the patina of philanthropy." Mark Rosenman, "The Patina of Philanthropy," *Stanford Social Innovation Review,* April 11, 2007, http://www.ssireview.org/opinion/entry/the_patina_of_philanthropy/. Writing for *The Lancet*, Colleen O'Manique added that the campaign "depicts consumption as a radical and ethical act, while reinforcing highly unequal and ecologically destructive

patterns of consumption worldwide." Colleen O'Manique and Ronald Labonte, "Rethinking (Product) RED," *The Lancet* 371.9624 (2008): 1562. Charles Kernaghan complains, "It's absurd, weird, really. The thought of using consumer dollars made off the backs of workers held in sweatshops to help fund Bono's causes is really hypocritical—that's not the way to go." Geoffrey Gray, "Achtung, Bono! Activists See Red," *The Intelligencer*, October 30, 2006, http://www.runmyclub.com/OxonianSociety/ClientFiles/newyorkmag.pdf. For reflection on the relation between sincerity and information transfer, see Richard Lanham, *The Economics of Attention* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 137–139.

18. Jennifer Budinsky and Susan Bryant, "'It's Not Easy Being Green': The Greenwashing of Environmental Discourses in Advertising," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 32.1 (2013): 207–226. Dara Persis Murray, "Branding 'Real' Social Change in Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty," *Feminist Media Studies* 13.1 (2013): 83–101. Phaedra C. Pazullo, "Resisting 'National Breast Cancer Awareness Month': The Rhetoric of Counterpublics and their Cultural Performances," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89.4 (2003): 345–365. I list these articles, because they discuss the phenomenon of corporate whitewashing, though not because they adhere to a naive information systems model. The first two articles, while not advocating for an information-systems model of communication, do assume a fairly stable communicative situation at least affiliated with the information model. Pazullo's piece, in contrast, draws upon publics and counterpublics scholarship much as this book does, especially in Chapter 4, which decenters the communication situation. For a less suspicious description of CSR's communication, see Schoeneborn and Trittin's discussion of corporate "greenwashing," in which they ask how "to make the most powerful global institution, the corporation, more responsive to human needs." "Transcending Transmission Towards a Constitutive Perspective on CSR Communication," *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 18, no. 2 (2013): 193–199, 201.

19. Even he conceded that he could not himself tell CEOs *not* to give back to society, lest he preach the very "responsibility" that he himself decried "Social Responsibility of Business," *New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1970, 33, 122–126.

20. David Henderson, *Misguided Virtue*, (London: Institute of Economic Affairs, 2001), 16.

21. *Crain's Chicago Business*, January 19, 2018, http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20180119/ISSUE10 /180119878?X-IgnoreUserAgent=1.

22. Amanda Matthews, "Sinning and Saving: The Rhetoric of Corporate Social Responsibility," All Academic Research, http://citation.allacademic.com//meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/1/2/9/7/pages12976/p12976–1.php.

23. "Unfortunately, my experience so far with CSR . . . departments is that they are too often filled with wooly-thinking people hired especially for CSR — not anyone with entrepreneurial experience from the corporation itself." "Bill Gates' Misguided Capitalism," *Huffpost, The Blog,* May 25, 2011, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/william-easterly/bill-gates-misguided-capi_b_110289.html.

24. This tendency of communication to exceed the intentions of its communicators emerges in Malcolm McIntosh's argument that the corporation is so loose-jointed, so diffuse that "in the modern corporation we have created a being over which we have less control than we would like to think. It is recognized that many of its agents have the best of intentions; however, because the corporation itself has a life of its own, these agents have less control than is sometimes recognized." "Progressing from Corporate Social Responsibility to Brand Integrity," *The Debate over Corporate Social Responsibility,* 46. This accords with Brian Massumi's contention that, when cultural critique frames a phenomenon (in this case, the uncontainable late-modern corporation), it loses touch with the phenomenon's evolution: "When positioning of any kind comes a determining first, movement comes a problematic second. After all is signified and sited, there is the nagging problem of how to add movement back into the picture." *Parables of the Virtual*, 3.http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/13563281311319481

25. As Antony Page and Robert Katz note, "For every company that appears to promote social concerns there is somebody who accuses it of paying mere lip service to these concerns." Antony Page and Robert A. Katz, "Is Social Enterprise the New Corporate Social Responsibility?" Seattle University School of Law Volume 34 (2011): 1352. Similarly, Easterly expresses agreement with the notion "that CSR departments have more incentive to do PR . . . than to achieve results for the poor." "Bill Gates' Misguided Capitalism," *Huffpost.* Critics who treat discourse as something to be transmitted take advantage of what Lanham calls "a powerful moral charge." He explains that when we treat messaging as an object (i.e., something transportable), then wrapping that object deceptively (with a rhetorical flourish, say) is what he calls "communicative vice." *Economics of Attention*, 138–139. It is a corollary of this book's argument that we should view the preoccupation with uncovering corporate hypocrisy with some skepticism.

26. "AT&T / TOMS Shoes Commercial," https://vimeo.com/5673015.

27. I am relying on Lev Manovich's *The Language of New Media* for my own understanding of elements such as numerical representation, modularity, automation, variability, and transcoding that have constitutive force in everyday human life. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 18–48. Transcoding, for example, represents a way that technology acts back on those who created it, thus effecting what Manovich calls the "computerization of culture": in which "cultural categories and concepts are substituted, on level of meaning and/or language, by new ones that derive from the computer's ontology, epistemology, and pragmatics." *Ibid.*, 47.

28. A recent piece in the Atlantic suggests that tribalism is not merely a phenomenon of the United States, but has even become characteristic of apparently calmer, more rational, and more united countries like Germany. Yasmeen Serhan, "'Germany Is Becoming More Normal,'" *The Atlantic,* November 20, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/11/is-this-the-end-of-germanys-political-stability/546323/.

29. "America Wasn't Built for Humans," *New York Magazine*, September 19, 2017. http://nymag.com/daily /intelligencer/2017/09/can-democracy-survive-tribalism.html.

30. The Manifesto's rhetoric, for example, works by requiring readers to shift their attention rapidly between seeming oppositions: "All things being equal . . . They are not"; its proposal is "that simple" but also "that powerful"; its power rests in what consumers "choose to buy or not to buy"; its products are not "all red" the same color but "some are"; it is "not a charity" but "a business model"; its beneficiaries will "get pills" or they will "die." This back and forth attentiveness, so far from being merely about information, cultivates an affectively shared comportment that keeps buying and saving together, without collapsing one into the other. The analysis of RED conducted throughout this Introduction depends upon Craig E. Mattson, "Buying Stuff, Saving Lives: A Critical Account of Product (RED)'s Economics of Attention," *Southern Journal of Communication* 77.3 (July/August 2012): 216–238.

31. Reports of the unethicality of transmissive or disseminational communication are often, admittedly, somewhat exaggerated. Peters, *Speaking into the Air,* 33–36. But to borrow an insight from Sara Ahmed, the conveyance of goods may disguise the theft of goods. Corporations can transport goods that they themselves had first taken away from the community through an oppressive neoliberalism. It is quite possible, then, to describe the communication of cultural goods by saying that the initiative "takes, then gives, *and in the moment of giving repeats as well as conceals the taking*." *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 22 (emphasis hers).

32. Alex Nicholls suggests two factors that distinguish social entrepreneurship: "a prime strategic focus on social impact and an innovative approach to achieving its mission." "Introduction" in *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Social Change*, ed. Alex Nicholls (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 13.

33. According to Kim and Shifeling, social entrepreneurship has produced "a flowering of new organizational forms that install non-shareholding stakeholder interests (e.g., employee, local community, and natural environment) at the center of an enterprise's purpose." Suntae Kim and Todd Schifeling, "Varied Incumbent Behaviors and Mobilization for New Organizational Forms: The Rise of Triple-Bottom Line Business amid Both Corporate Social Responsibility and Irresponsibility," *SSRN,* June 13, 2016, 2. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2794335.

34. Paul C. Light, *The Search for Social Entrepreneurship*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 12.

35. "Our Participants," United Nations Global Compact, https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/participants. I can attest to its presence in such out-of-the-way corners of the world as Haiti, both in the central plains where undergraduate students, a co-professor, and I now conduct development-focused research and in the far south coastal town of Les Cayes. I have, for example, witnessed social entrepreneurship at work in the south coast of Haiti, in an organization referred to as ESMI (El Shaddai Ministries International), which supports an impressive constellation of orphanages, churches, and schools, often through the revenues of tiny businesses which they have themselves launched. ESMI's administrators do

conventional fundraising, of course; but they are just as likely to buy a dump truck for hauling gravel or to build a bakery for selling bread. I have tasted bread fresh from one of their businesses' ovens and can attest to the deliciousness of this enterprise.

36. Although social enterprise and social entrepreneurship can be hard to distinguish, the second is the larger category. Social enterprises tend to innovate on conventional business by altering their operations; social entrepreneurships represent a broad range of organizations that innovate not only their operations, but their structures as well. Belinda Luke and Vien Chu, "Social Enterprise Versus Social Entrepreneurship: An Examination of the 'Why' and 'How' in Pursuing Social Change," *International Small Business Journal* 31.7 (2013), 766.

37. Alex Nicholls and Rowena Young, "Preface" in *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Change*, ix-xii.

38. "Research on social entrepreneurship is finally catching up to its potential for supporting socially entrepreneurial activity in society as a whole," notes Paul C. Light. "It is a magnetic effect that often shapes a field of research—if you pick a compelling question and provide reasonable support, the researchers will come." *The Search for Social Entrepreneurship*, vii-viii.

39. As I will later suggest (in Chapter 4), this mainstreaming designation elides the generative idiosyncrasy of socially entrepreneurial discourse. Still, social entrepreneurship is an undeniably impressive emergent phenomenon.

40. To provide a counter-example to CSR projects, they study the rise of socially entrepreneurial organizations known as B Corps, companies discussed in chapter 3 of this book, which undergo rigorous accreditation in order to demonstrate their social responsibility. These companies spread not just in reaction against the profiteering sins of the transnational corporation, but in response to apparently well-intentioned corporate pro-social provisions as well. As Kim and Shifeling found, even CSR's positive initiatives provoked missionally minded companies like B Corps to take a different shape—the shape of social entrepreneurship—in order to demonstrate their genuine concern for social and ecological problems—"and to distinguish themselves from 'greenwashers.'" "Varied Incumbent Behaviors and Mobilization for New Organizational Forms," 34.

41. Whereas corporate initiatives broadcast their do-gooding in the world, social entrepreneurial projects tend to tout their problem-solving capacities. Bright B. Simons, "What Makes Social Entrepreneurs Different?" *Harvard Business Review,* January 11, 2013, https://hbr.org/2013/01/what-makes-social-entrepreneur. CSR projects rely on the language of philanthropic discourse. For example, when Mark Zuckerberg issues a manifesto about Facebook's contribution to the world, he will speak in altruistic terms about community formation. Alexis C. Madrigal, "The Education of Mark Zuckerberg," *The Atlantic,* November 20, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2017/11/the-mark-zuckerberg-theory-of-community/546290/. Contrast CSR's philanthropic and altruistic language with the more problem-focused language of companies like Fonta Gilliam's SouSou, a social entrepreneurship that speaks in pragmatic terms about helping business women "save, network, build their credit and cash collateral needed to attract a loan from one of our partner banks and investors." "Designed for Women, By Women to Improve the

Lives of Women," SouSou website, http://investsousou.com/. As problem-solvers rather than do-gooders, social entrepreneurs discern "opportunities in problems" and get excited "when humanity [has] united to solve a problem." Lindsey Kneuven, "A Letter from our CIO," Cotopaxi website, https://www.cotopaxi.com/pages/impact-report. Eden S. Blair, "Solving Problems with Social Entrepreneurship," *Peoria,* June, 2010, http://www.peoriamagazines. com/ibi/2010/jun/solving-problems-social-entrepreneurship. "For MIT Students, an Entrepreneur in Residence with Developing World Experience," MIT Management Sloan School News Room, http://mitsloan.mit.edu/newsroom /articles/for-mit-students-an-entrepreneur-in-residence-with-developing-world-experience/. Even social entrepreneur Jason Haber's altruistically entitled book *The Business of Doing Good: Social Entrepreneurship and the New Bottom Line* (Irvine, CA: Entrepreneur Press, 2016) defines social entrepreneurship "as the mechanism by which private sector actors solve public and private sector problems that are currently not being addressed" (24).

42. The performative terminology derives from J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. The William James Lectures (Harvard University Press, 1975), 6–7. This model is similar to cultural, ritual, constitutive, and constructivist models that might fall under James Carey's now classic definition of a "symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed." *Communication as Culture*, 23.

43. Alex Nicholls, "Introduction," *Social Entrepreneurship*, (OUP Oxford, 2006), 12.

44. "The idea seems simple enough: companies can pursue social impact and they can make profit in so doing. . . . Caring Capitalism thus represents a departure from how we have traditionally understood the societal division of labor. It upends the recent belief, one that dominated the global economy for much of the late twentieth century, that businesses should focus on shareholder value while nonprofits should work on social value, and governments should deliver public value." *Caring Capitalism: The Meaning and Measure of Social Value* (New York: Cambridge, University Press, 2016), 1.

45. Charles Leadbeater, "The Socially Entrepreneurial City" in *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Social Change*, 240.

46. *Ibid.*, 240–241

47. "Cultivating the Other Invisible Hand of Social Entrepreneurship: Comparative Advantage, Public Policy, and Future Research Priorities," in *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Social Change*, 77.

48. The first scenario traces to Robert White at Cara; the second to a fashion apparel company that Mary Elizabeth Goodell is laboring to start; the third to Laura Zumdahl's Bright Endeavors; and the fourth to Emily Lonigro's Lime Red. But I am conjoining and telescoping elements encountered across the interviews. Based on my interviews with these practitioners, I feel confident that each of these scenarios would be recognizable by all of my interviewees despite marked differences in their organizations.

49. The literature here is so enormous and so at hand as to render endnotes superfluous. But for a sample of a conventional approach to such questions, see

Adam Bluestein, "How to Tell Your Company's Story," *Inc.* http://www.inc.com/magazine/201402/adam-bluestein/sara-blakely-how-i-got-started.html. Dan and Chip Heath, "The Myth About Creation Myths," *Fast Company*, March 1, 2007, https://www.fastcompany.com/58773/myth-about-creation-myths. See also Pradeepa Wijetunge, "Organizational Storytelling as a Method of Tacit-Knowledge Transfer: Case Study from a Sri Lankan University," International Information & Library Review (December 2012) 44.4: 212–223.

50. Polanyi explains, "Whenever we use certain things for attending *from* them to other things, in the way in which we always use our body, these things change their appearance. They appear to us now in terms of the entities to which we are attending *from* our body." Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Gloucester MA: Peter Smith, 1983), 16.

51. By wicked problems, I mean those predicaments that embed each other mutually in conditions so recalcitrant to resolution that problem-solving seems largely inadequate. Martín Carcasson and Leah Sprain, "Beyond Problem Solving: Reconceptualizing the Work of Public Deliberation as Deliberative Inquiry," *Communication Theory* 26.1 (2016).

52. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, "An Inventory of Shimmers," *The Affect Theory Reader* (Duke University Press, 2010), 1.

53. *Special Affects: Cinema, Animation and the Translation of Consumer Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 2014), 14.

54. Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 66–124. As will become apparent in Chapters 3 and 4, Warner pervasively shapes how I understand the generation and evolution and circulation of socially entrepreneurial constituencies.

55. Frank Farmer, *After the Public Turn: Composition, Counterpublics, and the Citizen Bricoleur* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado), 132–154. Farmer's notion of a *citizen bricoleur* strikes me as a useful way to identify a social entrepreneur, a maker of counterpublics. *Ibid.,* 155–156.

56. Jenny Rice, *Distant Publics: Development Rhetoric and the Subject of Crisis* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2012), 5.

57. Jenkins joins other communication scholars in making the case that digital (and especially visual) rhetoric today makes modal analysis, rather than textual analysis essential. "The Modes of Visual Rhetoric: Circulating Memes as Expressions," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100.4 (November, 2014), 445–446.

58. Latour contrasts two kinds of literatures, one a "coffee table book offering glossy views of the landscape to the eyes of the visitor too lazy to travel" and, two, "a travel guide" that "can be put to use as well as forgotten, placed in a backpack, stained with grease and coffee, scribbled all over, its pages torn apart to light a fire under a barbecue." *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory,* Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 17.

59. One such critical theorist is Mohan J. Dutta, who attends to the voices of the disempowered in movements such as Occupy Wall Street, the Indian National Day of Fast, and the Mexican Zapatista Movement. He notes, "From stories voiced in the

struggles for water rights in Cochabamba to stories of resistance against World Bank-imposed mega-dams in Narmada, local communities seek change by pointing out the hypocrisies in the language of neoliberalism and by explicitly articulating skeptical stances towards projects of global expansionism narrated under the guise of altruism." *Voices of Resistance: Communication & Social Change* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press), 38.

60. *Caring Capitalism*, 5.

61. Roger L. Martin and Sally Osberg's *Getting Beyond Better*: *How Social Entrepreneurship Works* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2015), for example, offers a highly accessible guide that acquaints people with a new kind of business and lays out a roadmap for developing such a business. But their book is essentially a primer on a new paradigm for social commerce and changemaking. Bill Drayton writes the foreword to Laurie Ann Thompson, *Be a Changemaker: How to Start Something That Matters* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014) and in essays like "The Citizen Sector Transformed" in *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Change*, generating arguments—like those of Muhuammad Yunus *Building Social Business: The New Kind of Capitalism that Serves Humanity's Most Pressing Needs* (Public Affairs, 2010) and David Bornstein *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007)—evoke the arrival of a new paradigm rather than offering farther-down-the-road counsels for already established social entrepreneurs who are running into its indispensable but often baffling affective forces. J. Gregory Dees, one of the grandfathers of the field of business-focused problem-solving, co-authors with Jed Emerson and Peter Economy, an enormously practical *Enterprising Non-Profits: A ToolKit for Social Entrepreneurs* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2001); but it too assumes that it is addressing an audience of newbies in the field. Rupert Scofield's *The Social Enterprise Podcast* (http://www.socentpodcast.org/) offers many inspiring interviews and narratives of people discovering the usefulness and purposefulness of this sector. Tania Ellis's book *The New Pioneers*: *Sustainable Business Success through Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2010) exemplifies the winsome and compelling effort to enlist more participants in the socially entrepreneurial field: she lays out the problematic and changeful circumstances of globalized business and shows how social business offers a framework-busting array of solutions. All of these books represent an important starter stage for social entrepreneurship, but they are less assistant to those for whom the abnormal science of social entrepreneurship has become normal and ordinary.

62. For example, if I were to simply apply communication theory to bear on the problem of how to tell a story persuasively or how to capture attention or how to address different demographics within the same audience, I may miss the sheer communicative innovativeness that social entrepreneurs are deploying—or might yet deploy—in order to make new organizational associations possible. Massumi warns against theoretical "application" in this way: "If you apply a concept or system of connection between concepts, it is the material you apply it to that undergoes change, more markedly than do the concepts. The change is imposed upon the material by the concepts' systemacity and constitutes a becoming homologous of the material to the

system. This is all very grim." *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 17.

63. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 34.

64. I am indebted in this discussion to Eric Jenkins discussion of modes and affect in *Special Affects*, 13–14. He sets over against the appearance/reality distinction a Deleuzean distinction between the virtual and the actual. "The term 'virtual' designates the series of relations accompanying all actualisations. Relations create a field of potential within which things take place, so the virtual can also be described as the real potential coexisting with all actualisations. Movements (including perceptions, affections and cognitions) become actual by drawing from this field of relations and potential)."

Chapter 1

How to Tell the Company Story (To Share Its Mode)

PROJECTS OF WORTH

What do workers gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun?[1] Those words from the book of Ecclesiastes name an important challenge of social entrepreneurship today, identifying what makes it worthwhile to get out of bed and go to work each morning. Five hundred years ago, nearly everyone might have appealed to religious motivation for daily work, whether or not they themselves fully subscribed to any traditional orthodoxy.[2] Today, such religious rationale feels inaccessible to many "decent godless" people, not least because what constrains everyday work feels more governmental or corporate than theological.[3] This irreligiosity brings with it a kind of freedom—a heady, heroic sensibility that touts its autonomy from a surveillant state, from corporate bureaucracy, or from an intrusive god.[4] But what is all that personal freedom *for*? As Taylor notes, modern freedom is often accompanied by a yearning for meaning. Pulled taut between these two desires—for autonomy and for significance—the audiences to whom social entrepreneurs tell their company stories can all too easily resort to cynicism or apathy. The question for this chapter, then, is *how can social entrepreneurs talk about their projects compellingly in a time when vocational depression feels so close at hand?*

Part of what makes pessimism persuasive today is a reductive binary between altruism and egoism: either you do things for noble reasons, or you do them for self-interested reasons, full-stop. But socially entrepreneurial projects cannot be explained simply by appeal to self-interested or other-interested motives. If social entrepreneurs were simply asking, *What's in it for me?*, they would be better off eliminating their pro-social mission and pursuing revenues as maximally as possible. If, on the other hand, social entrepreneurs were stern adherents to an ethical code merely, they might well drop their business operations altogether and pour all their energies into delivering a philanthropic service as directly as possible. Instead, social entrepreneurs take a third way: not just acting according to duty, not just doing what benefits the self, but doing what proves to *matter*. The stories they tell about meaningful work thus align with recent moral philosophy on the significance of human projects.[5] Susan Wolf, for example, commends selecting undertakings according to "a category of value that is not reducible to happiness or morality, and that is realized by loving objects worthy of love and engaging with them in a positive way."[6] She calls this criterion *meaningfulness*.

Some readers will recognize in Wolf's philosophizing a popular notion that you should follow your heart, or that you should do what gives you satisfaction. But Wolf adds this further consideration: self-gratification cannot be the sole source of a project's worth, lest we call bingeing on Netflix a significant project. A project's meaningfulness depends not only upon personal fulfilment, but also upon the estimation of others.[7] In short, "when subjective attraction meets objective attractiveness," there we are likely to find what Wolf would call a project of worth.[8] That would seem to be the precise intersection where the most effective socially entrepreneurial stories take shape.

But although Wolf's account of meaningfulness offers a prefatory explanation for how social entrepreneurs might tell their company story, her framework does not sufficiently address what this book's Introduction described as the diffuse and rapid circulations of affect—including the depression, apathy, confusedness, and cynicism anticipated by Ecclesiastes—through the digital mediation of late-modern culture. Inattention to the digital and affective dynamics of our time can all too easily result in changemaking communication that inadvertently reinforces pessimistic answers to the Ecclesiastes question.

MODES OF MEANINGFUL ACTION

I encountered these virtual and affective dynamics for myself in conversation with social entrepreneur Mary Elizabeth Goodell at Robust Coffee on Chicago's south side one gray summer day.[9] As we talked about her experience as a twenty-something employee of one social enterprise and the starter of another social business, this one related to fashion, she quickly cut to what may be the most immediate challenge of any changemaker: where to insinuate a meaningful story into the circulations of company communication. Although this question sounds at first like practical concerns broached by MBA seminars, TEDx Talks, social innovation blogs, MailChimp newsletters, and even in academic rhetorical theory, her question related more to the affective and virtual dynamics of late modernity.[10] On the one hand, a social impact company generally enjoys an organic reason to tell its story: to raise awareness for a worthy cause. On the other hand, Goodell and her colleagues know that they are inserting this story into an enormous circulation of similarly pro-social messaging. Should they inscribe these stories on the product labels of their fashionwear? Should they embed these stories several layers down in their marketing materials? What placement of these stories, Goodell wondered, would produce empathetic consumers or cynical shoppers? She was noting an easy-to-overlook paradox of persuasive storytelling in an era dense with commercial messaging: the more direct and transactional the storytelling is, the less effective it might become. One might have a story to tell about an undeniably personal and objectively admirable project (to use Wolf's criteria) and yet construct an affective structure that results in a peculiar kind of disengagement.

This problem represents a communicational equivalent to Clayton M. Christensen's "innovator's dilemma," or the disconcerting experience of well-managed companies who find that, for all their success in manufacturing, marketing, and distribution, they have somehow become vulnerable to unlikely competitors. Indeed, the better a successful company is at delivering high-quality goods or services to a client, the likelier they are to suffer upset at the hands of an upstart company whose innovative technology creates a more broadly accessible approach to lower-quality versions of those same goods and services. Social entrepreneurs, too, face a dilemma, though their unlikely but disruptive competitor is not a person so much as an affect. Let us call their quandary a dilemma of disaffection. The more expert they become in telling their company story, the more likely their stories are to sound slick or inauthentic and thus to produce disaffection and disengagement in their audiences.[11] This chapter argues that social entrepreneurs have to think about how their stories do more than transmit meanings; they also circulate structures of meaningfulness, which we might refer to, using the modal terminology of rhetorical theory, as *modes of engagement*.[12]

Rhetorician and media scholar Eric Jenkins proposes in his discussion of modes that communicators think less about the content and style of a given message and more about how that message enables action and interaction.[13] His proposal contrasts with the customary construal of communication of, say, the information systems model, which envisions the sender-receiver-message triad as a kind of self-enclosed field of action. Jenkins's proposal also contrasts with more complex rhetorical models of communication, which show how artful discourse generates influence within the constraints of a specific situation. In contrast, Jenkins describes modal rhetoric as functioning more like the parts of a flower than the elements of a text. Just as a plant bends towards the sun and opens its blossoms to wasps, so company storytelling embodies a posture towards the world's problems and possibilities.[14] Jenkins would call this communicable posture a mode, borrowing from the terminology of the 17th-century philosopher, Baruch Spinoza, who defined modes as ways of affecting and being affected.[15] Put differently, modes are ways of interacting, ways of comporting, ways of paying attention. You cannot directly discern a mode, though you can apprehend it, if you look for what it makes possible. A good gardener, for example, apprehends the modes at work within a raised bed—in particular, the mode that enables nectar production and energizes pollination.

A social media user can learn to apprehend a mode in a digital ecology. Cyber modes function as what Jenkins calls "manners of engagement" that "circulate across media platforms, producing a recognizable structure," which sundry participants can enter and use as a creative space.[16] He gives as an example the Win/Fail Blog, on which people post pictures of ironically epic failures or surprising victories in everyday life. Modes have scripts for participation, but the expressions they energize are as varied and as unpredictable as the pictures people put on the Win/Fail blog. Apprehending a mode is a little like recognizing the image embedded in a Magic Eye photo. If at first you cannot see the image, people will give you all sorts of advice. *Try looking at the image with your peripheral vision. Try focusing on the glass pane in front of the image. Let your eyes go soft. Focus on the middle distance. Stand close to the image. Stand far from the image.* How you see, in other words, is as important as what you see. Indeed, the images that people submit to the Win/Fail blog are themselves a way of seeing life as a wry contest. So long as they conform to this script, the particulars of each picture matter little.[17]

From the perspective of social entrepreneurs, some modes are more meaningful, more contributive to social problem-solving, than others. But cultivating an active, vibrant, hopeful manner of engagement is not simply a matter of telling moving stories. Feeling better will not make the world better—of course.[18] I want to raise the farther point that compelling stories can result in audiences' believing themselves civically engaged, solely on the basis of their enthusiasm or indignation or sorrow. As Rice has pointed out, compelling communication can unwittingly produce what she calls "the *exceptional political subject*"—that is, someone who feels involved, but who is not actually making a difference.[19] Think of ever-proliferating NGOs in countries like Haiti. The people running those organizations might feel themselves to be enormously strengthened by the altruistic passions that get them out of bed every morning and behind their bureaucratic desks. But their social passions, spread across Haiti's some ten thousand NGOs have arguably done a great deal more harm than good to the society they seek to help.[20] Involvement in these organizations appears to be a species of what Lauren Berlant calls "cruel optimism," in which people stay attached to what is detrimental to themselves and others, lest an affective structure be lost that seems to provide purpose.[21] Keeping an NGO running might thus entail passionate *dis*engagement from the social and ecological problems that its employees had originally hoped to resolve.

In the four case studies that follow, I examine how well-known social entrepreneurs have told their organizational stories, engaging their constituents in a mode of meaningful action. My case studies come in pairs, the first two (Joshua Silver and Jordan Kassalow) representing the nonprofit end of the social entrepreneurship spectrum, and the second two (Blake Mycoskie and Neil Blumenthal) representing the for-profit end. Each of these entrepreneurs is in some way addressing the global vision crisis in which some 285 million people worldwide lack needed eye care.[22] Although these speakers tell their stories at varying levels of eloquence, I do not offer these cases as models of rhetorical excellence. Instead, I show how these storytellers use modal rhetoric to provide traction within the sometimes difficult-to-sustain comportments of meaningful projects. But despite their sometimes conspicuous success in constructing financially sustainable and socially influential organizations, they constantly feel the press of the disaffection dilemma. Because modes become palpable at the intersection of discourse and relationship, I use these case studies to pay close attention to the character of the encounters and the shape of the stories that the social entrepreneurs anticipate. For each company storyteller, I ask what sort of community the story invites and how closely the story asks potential participants to follow a script in order to be engaged.

CASE STUDY: JOSHUA SILVER AND ADSPECS

Joshua Silver's TED Talk about the global eye care crisis, featuring his own invention, the Adspecs self-adjusting eyeglasses, offers a rationalized transmission of problem-solving information. It seems at first hearing as if his notably short talk functions more like a plainspoken demonstration speech than the impassioned address we are accustomed to from the TED stage. Unlike so many such talks, Silver does not offer what Benjamin Bratton calls "a combination of epiphany and personal testimony (an "epiphimony" if you like) through which the speaker shares a personal journey of insight and realisation, its triumphs and tribulations."[23] Silver does not tell his audience about the Damascus-road moment when he got his idea, as light fell from the torn heavens. Nor does he narrate his dogged persistence through a dozen failed prototypes before happening on the effective model by happenstance. He establishes no compelling emotional connection with the people he helps, not even by showing pictures of himself standing with an arm around smiling, newly assisted developing-worlders. But upon closer examination, Silver's talk does encourage an emotional comportment in his audience, and that affective involvement becomes apparent when they spontaneously erupt in applause halfway through his speech. He does, in other words, provide access to an affective structure, a mode of action. Sorting out the exact character of the encounters and relations this mode entails will take closer examination of the shape of his storytelling.

Professor Silver opens his TED Talk by stating the problem, after the established manner of rational decision-making procedures. “I’m going to tell you about one of the world’s largest problems and how it can be solved.”[24] After asking how many audience members require eyewear, he goes on to assert that although the World Health Organization claims that something like a billion people in the world need eye care, his TED Talk experiment “proves” the number should be more like half the world’s population.[25] He then asserts that vision impairment in the world presents challenges across numerous sectors of cultural engagement: health, economics, education, as well as all those parts of existence we lump under “quality of life.” He then presents his hypothesis that the true scarcity is not eyeglasses (which are plentiful and cheap), but rather optometrists: sub-Saharan Africa sees something like one optometrist per eight million people.[26] What is needed, he argues, is a pair of glasses that eliminates the need for optometry through self-prescription. In the next minute of this talk, he offers a quick, if slightly ungainly, demonstration of the adjustable specs: “Okay I’ve made the glasses to my prescription, and um, I’ve just—there we are. And, um, well, I’ve now made some glasses. That’s it.”—to which his audience responds with enthusiastic applause.[27]

A modal approach to Silver’s storytelling suggests a different sort of question than that asked by an information systems model of communication. Instead of asking how Silver manages to get his information from sender A to receiver B to create this emotional response C, we should ask what kind of audience posture is his talk creating and what kind of action is his talk enabling that audience to do. Provisional answers to these questions become apparent in the kind of script his story provides for audience participation in the project. For example, near the end of his speech, he puts up a slide full of phrases that indicate obstacles faced by those who wish to solve the eye-care crisis in the global south. “How do you distribute? How do you work out how to fit the thing? How do you have people realizing that they have a vision problem? How do you deal with the industry?”[28] These questions recapitulate the economic and educational and infrastructural challenges of putting glasses on the noses of a billion people by 2020. His proposed resolution to these problems he encapsulates with characteristic brevity: “And the answer to that is—research. And what we’ve done is to set up the Center for Vision in the Developing World here in the University. If you want to know more, just come and have a look at our website."[29] In other words, Silver's talk addresses an implied audience of science enthusiasts, whose role in this story is to await eagerly the latest developments in the far-removed world of the scientific laboratory.

Silver does not merely offer a concentrated example of speechmaking within the information systems model of communication. Instead, he calls forth the emotional responsiveness of his audience, but without giving them much of anything to do in regard to the problem. They sit in their TED Talk seats, feeling excited, hopeful, optimistic, and engaged. But because their enthusiasm is enacted through spectatorship merely, their involvement is tightly circumscribed. Perhaps these audience members might say their impassioned interest helps raise awareness for new ophthalmological prospects of their developing world counterparts. But the conditions of this excited awareness entail a gap between the TED Talk audience and the research in opthalmic laboratories for developing-world near- and far-sightedness. There may be an even larger gap between the "aware" audience member and the developing world spectacle wearer. In Silver's telling, developing-world citizens do not need broad-based, collective, civic-minded effort. They do not need government agencies or health infrastructure; they do not need a better job training organization or even a better job market. What they primarily need is technology that adapts and enhances their individual capacities. Sell the underprivileged person the glasses for a reasonable price, let her fix them to her liking, get herself a job—and the social problem is gone.

What are we to make of Silver's modal effectiveness as a storyteller giving access to others to a meaningful project? First, we need not be perturbed by Silver's relative ineloquence. Indeed, a modal analysis can even commend his storytelling for not exaggerating the capacities of language. Peters has noted that in late-modernity, we have too much reverence for the capacity of communication to generate oneness of soul between otherwise separated parties; and talkative social entrepreneurs, with their urgent need to build and maintain networks of interpersonal relationships, may be especially prone to this.[30] Perhaps Silver's slight detachment and awkwardness evokes a kind of relational encounter in which what matters is not so much interpersonal identification as responsiveness to the capacities of the other.

A corollary of this de-emphasis on language is that Silver's story makes less use of tropes than other case studies in this chapter. Instead, he forwards the communicative power of objects, especially of glasses. Communication scholar Thomas Rickert speaks of how all sorts of things (and not just humans) can exhibit "a responsive way to reveal the world for others, involving affective, symbolic, and material means in our attempts to reattune or transform how others inhabit the world in a way that leads them to act (or not)."[31] Communication happens, in other words, not just through language, but through objects, or anything that influences other people's way of being in the world. We might think of the spectacles as a material figure of speech, a sort of technological plot point in Silver's story, revealing and enhancing access to a mode of meaningful action, but always in obedience to two rules: do what furthers individual agency, and maintain technological objectivity. In any case, social entrepreneurs would do well to learn from Silver that opening access to a mode through storytelling should take seriously the rhetorical possibilities in objects. Participation in a mode, after all, is an unavoidably material arrangement.

CASE STUDY: JORDAN KASSALOW'S VISION SPRING

In 2001, Jordan Kassalow started a company called Vision Spring that has subsequently trained some 5,200 indigenous opticians, whom they call "Vision Entrepreneurs," across four continents. Vision Spring's social enterprise model provides these technicians eye-screening materials and ready-made reading glasses to sell for $4. Founded in 2001, the social enterprise has since grown to the point that it has distributed some 360,000 pairs of glasses. Impressively, the company is addressing the problem of vision impairment in lower-income countries through education (training indigenous women to be opticians) and economics (providing affordable eye glasses). The model does have problems. For one thing, because the company needs to sell some five million pairs of glasses to be financially self-supporting, the organization depends heavily on philanthropic donations—and perpetually seeking donations can be organizationally sapping.[32]

Fundraising, though, is only one way that Kassalow has exercised his gifts in public communication. Besides addressing TEDx, the Clinton Global Initiative, and the World Economic Forum, he has also helped develop the global Health Policy Program on the Council on Foreign Relations, directed the NGO, Helen Keller International, and founded Scojo New York, a ready-to-wear eyewear company. Having won numerous awards for social innovation from organizations such as the Skoll Foundation and the Aspen Institute, he is a widely respected, highly successful, and passionately articulate proponent of socially entrepreneurial problem-solving for the world-wide vision impairment crisis. But for all his impressive artfulness, I should like to argue that Kassalow deals with the threat of disaffection by giving his hearers a feel for a mode of meaningful action.

Kassalow likes to tell a hiking adventure story when he experienced what felt like an encounter with the cosmos, an experience that mediated a dark epiphany. I use the term *epiphany* because it evokes a religious sensibility, which Kassalow himself encourages through his narration, which borrows from a familiar frame story, the sacred pilgrimage in quest of illumination. Unlike other storytellers in this chapter, Kassalow speaks in what rhetoricians would call a hypotactic style, that is, a style of discourse that relies upon the subordination, apposition, and hierarchy that we associate with complexity and eloquence. He is the most writerly of the communicators I analyze. His hypotactic style accords well with his hierarchical, somewhat exalted, view of human life in relation to the universe up there or out there. But despite his reference to "personal angels" in the conclusion of his speech, his exhortation finds its energy not from transcendent or religious insight, but from immanent and secular energies. Indeed, the first things his story of pilgrimage and illumination does is to defy the authority of the divine or cosmic sender of the dark epiphany he experiences:

> When I was 23 years old I spent two months in the Alaskan wilderness with two close friends. Midway through the trip, we found ourselves deep in the Brooks Mountain Range pummeled by horizontal rains that drove us into our tent. After two days of being stuck inside the tent, I had enough and decided to venture out by myself.[33]

Kassalow gave his buddies instructions about when to retrieve him in case he got mauled by a grizzly bear, and then he took off climbing. He does not catch pneumonia in the rain, nor does he see a grizzly, much less get mauled by one. But he does hear from the cosmos that his life is insignificant. The message he receives is communicated by what he calls "the universe" via a brutal experience of natural discourses: the vast impersonality of the Brooks mountain range and the fierceness of a horizontal rainstorm. It seemed to Kassalow "that the whole universe was conspiring against me, telling me that I didn't really matter. And I hated that message. I knew I mattered. I knew deep in my marrow that I did matter. But frankly, I didn't really know how or why."[34] Consequently, Kassalow repudiates the conventional communication situation that the spiritual pilgrimage usually leads to—in which a seeker tries to become an audience for an epiphanic message—and rejects the message and the message-giver. What he eventually finds is an epiphanic experience of his own making, an experience that functions less like a message than like a comportment, or a manner. He tells this story not so much as a message from the gods as a field of affective involvement that proves highly shareable.

Kassalow then describes a second pilgrimage, this one while pursuing an ophthalmological degree. Traveling with a team of fellow students and an experienced teacher in rural Mexico, he encounters a blind boy carrying a Braille book. A few minutes of examination suggests that the boy is not blind, only terribly nearsighted. Kassalow goes through their inventory of pre-fabricated glasses and finds a pair that will correct the boy's -22 myopia.

"As I placed the glasses on the boy's nose, I watched as the blank stare of a blind person transformed into an expression of unadulterated joy—I was witnessing someone seeing his world for the first time."[35] While looking into the newly bespectacled eyes of that happy seven-year-old boy, Kassalow experiences what he calls "the first sign of true happiness in my life. It really rocked me." He adds, "And I remember, at that moment, looking up and saying to the heavens, 'See I do matter.'"[36] But that moment of communication with the universe is incidental. His briefly defiant prayer bears hardly at all on what he now finds himself enabled to do. All that matters is that he has found the mode of meaningful action.

As I did with Silver's story, let me ask, what kind of relationship or encounter does Kassalow's story envision as a condition for participation? In a word, the encounter he envisions is unrelentingly individualistic. For Kassalow, the would-be participant in a life of meaningful action must take a lonely risk. That risk entails acting as if one's life were strong and provident: he narrates how he put eyeglasses on the face of an impoverished boy, as if this personally altruistic action were significant in the grand scheme of things. No divine guidance comes first; he simply does it because he wants to (or because he has to in the requirements of his graduate study). And then, the epiphany comes, a powerful recognition of his own importance. In almost Augustinian fashion, Kassalow advances a *fides quarens intellectum*—faith in pursuit of understanding—approach to finding vocational satisfaction. His story suggests that first taking an action as if one had the guiding illumination leads to an epiphanic experience as a guide for future meaningful action. Elsewhere, he notes, "This was a defining experience in my life–it was a beautiful exchange of value. I provided this boy with sight, and he provided me with a keen sense of purpose. I decided then and there that if I could replicate that moment 1,000 times over I would have led a meaningful life."[37]

The second analytic question I am asking in this chapter's modal analysis pertains to the kind of script that Kassalow's story offers others as a guide for affective involvement. The nature of this script becomes clear especially in his conclusion:

> In closing, I just want to implore all of you to be open to finding how you matter. Push yourselves to find your true purposes. Put yourselves in situations that foster that discovery. And when something does stir your passion, ignite your heart, dilate your pupil, listen closely to those feelings. Be aware that there are going to be lots of countervailing forces that are going to suppress those feelings, because following your passion is clearly not the easiest path in life to take. In fact, it often leads you down roads that are trackless without handles. But don't let that deter you. Create your own roads and tracks and handles. And open those tracks for other people to follow. And I can guarantee you that in

> the long run, personal angels will guide and support you through that journey. And miraculously, that path will ease over time. This diligent pursuit of your passion will lead you to a clear sense of purpose and happiness. I know it has for me. And I know it has for the countless people that we've been able to touch through Vision Spring.[38]

The most important aspect of Kassalow's storytelling is that he leaves the script open-ended. He encourages people to be the creators of their own roads, and to, in turn, "open those tracks for other people to follow." This negotiates a complex dialectic between subjective faith (you have to create your own road) and objective assistance (you also need a word of confirmation from outside yourself). If you have only the subjective faith, you lose the mode. If, on the other hand, you insist on having the angelic epiphany before taking any risk, you are naively assuming that the universe is your personal life coach. Between the poles of personal faith and the confirming epiphany, Kassalow helps to make apparent the dynamics of a meaningful project. Unlike Silver's storytelling, which limited the kind of modal engagement to something like enthusiastic spectatorship, Kassalow's storytelling leaves a great deal of room for his audience members to take up with a mode of meaningful projects however they wish to. They might support Vision Spring; they might start their own company. They might simply take up a meaningful avocation. His practice suggests a maxim: just as commercial companies benefit when their advertisements create generalized desire for consumer products, so social entrepreneurs might be said to benefit when their messaging creates a generalized desire to do something that matters.

How does Kassalow's epiphanic parable come off after modal analysis? We can commend him for allowing a warmly personal route and generously open-ended access to a mode of meaningful projects. But his individualized approach does make disparate levels of access to the mode almost inevitable. He himself seems alert to this dangerous possibility, especially when he posits reciprocity between his own achievement of life purpose and the nearsighted boy's enjoyment of optical clarity. "I gave him his vision," Kassalow says, "he gave me my purpose."[39] But still, the boy "gives" unintentionally and is not himself particularly empowered by the exchange. The man achieves; the boy receives. The man and the boy both come into a kind of happiness, but only one of them is empowered to be a giver. In other words, Kassalow's story gives himself (and perhaps his TEDx audience) more access to the mode of meaningful action than the boy will probably enjoy.

CASE STUDY: BLAKE MYCOSKIE'S TOMS

This chapter moves now from the sphere of nonprofit to for-profit social entrepreneurship, where TOMS's CEO, Blake Mycoskie propels consumers into another approach to the disaffection dilemma, a somewhat scripted, but intensely collective action. Mycoskie is the 2006 pioneer of the buy-one-give-one (B1G1) social enterprise model, which has subsequently become widely used by numerous companies.[40] He came by the idea while vacationing in Argentina, playing polo and enjoying South American merlot. One day, he ran into a couple of social workers that were traveling around from orphanage to orphanage doing shoe donations. Mycoskie, on a whim, agreed to go along with them and had an enormously good time—so good in fact that, although he was a business man who had already started five different companies, he now recognized what he took at the time to be his life mission: to put shoes on the feet of the needy. His newfound friends were getting their donated shoes from families in Buenos Aires, circulating the wealth of urban families to the suburban families living in impoverishment. All of Mycoskie's entrepreneurial instincts ran against the philanthropy model. He realized that he could ask for money from his family and friends only so long before his revenue stream dried up. But what if there were a way to start a for-profit company that enabled him both to give shoes to indigent kids and draw enough revenue to be economically sustainable?

Mycoskie's answer to this question has created an oft-told tale in the annals of social entrepreneurship, a tale which has subsequently offered many shoe shoppers a way into a mode of meaningful projects. Here is one such account told to an audience gathered for the Global Leadership Summit in 2010:

> Um, so the idea I came up with, you know, almost, you know, over 4 years ago now, um was instead of looking to charity to solve this problem, what if we looked to business. And what if I started a for-profit shoe company, where every time I sold a pair of shoes I could give a pair away. One for one. And that way there'd be no formulas, no percentages. Just very simple. You buy a pair of our shoes, and we give one to a child that needs a pair. And we started four years ago, and that's still what we do today.[41]

I believe it is customary in transcriptions like this to scrub verbal-cluttering "ums"; but I wanted to include them here, because they exemplify Mycoskie's improvisational style, his winsome informality, his emotional immediacy. In contrast with Kassalow's more conventionally eloquent register, Mycoskie's plain style may feature little ornament; but it packs a great deal of emotional power, as witnessed by the enthusiasm of shoppers for buying his products. Thanks to all their shopperly affective investment, TOMS has grown far beyond the precarious start-up it once was, becoming an enormously successful enterprise, half of whose stock is owned by Bain, Inc.[42]

But long before TOMS became the corporate force that it is today, Mycoskie spotted an isolated, but powerful piece of evidence that his storytelling had proven affectively powerful. He tells the story this way. He was at an airport, trying to negotiate the last-minute details of getting his ticket, when he suddenly spotted, for the first time, a person wearing TOMS in public. Of course, he had seen his family and friends sporting shoes with the brand's pale blue flag on the heel; but here was a woman whom he did not know, wearing a bright red pair of the company's alpargatas.

> And so I have to ask her, right. And so I say, "Excuse me, I just love these red shoes that you're wearing. You know, what are they?" And she looks at me, and her eyes widened. She goes, "TOMS! TOMS shoes." Now I'm trying to play it cool, right. So I'm doing the electronic kiosk. Well, she didn't like that. She literally grabs my shoulder, pulls me aside, says, "You don't understand. This is the most amazing company in the world. When I bought this pair of shoes, they gave a pair to a child in Argentina. And there's this guy. He lives in Los Angeles. I think he lives on a boat." And I mean—she started telling me my life story, word for word, with like more passion than my mom tells it. I mean, it was—and I knew at that moment, if this woman was going to stop what she was doing at an airport to tell what she thought was a stranger, you know, that this was really gonna, gonna spread.[43]

Mycoskie's enormous success in social enterprise traces in part to his realization that, even if he is TOMS' chief storyteller, he cannot be the company's only storyteller. His story has to circulate across sundry media and with countless, highly shareable affective investments. The woman with the red shoes—Mycoskie never does catch her name—is a synecdoche, a part of the whole, standing in for the growing tribe of TOMS shoe-wearing world-savers. This collectivity shows up in the Twitter talk about #iamtoms, along with the company's blog's pronouncement that "TOM is not a single person, it is the idea that the decisions we make today can help build a better tomorrow. Concerned with the world beyond yourself? You're TOM. Making decisions that echo into the future? You're TOM. Together, we're building something greater."[44]

Not only is the collectivity of Mycoskie's storytelling important, but so is the script it provides for future involvement by others, a script that might be described as both elegantly simple and tightly constrained. Nothing could be simpler to understand than buying shoes to give shoes. But that simplicity constrains potential involvement: you buy the shoes, or you are not involved. Mycoskie has wagered heavily on the B1G1 prescription, which has seen such conspicuous success in the shoes-for-shoes exchange. 2011 saw the inauguration of TOMS sunglasses, whose purchase triggers a gift of various optometrist services in the developing world, thereby attaching the brand to the global vision predicament. Three years later, a coffee-for-clean-water initiative opened: for every bag of coffee purchased by a North American shopper, a village in the developing world receives 140 liters of fresh water (Roberts). A year later, TOMS tried a purses-for-pregnancy-kits product line, followed by a Standup Backpack line exchanging for an anti-bullying seminar. Critics of the company have, in some cases, expressed admiration for these innovative expressions of do-gooding expression, noting for example that TOMS is enriching the kind of provision it offers. Instead of merely dumping products in a developing world country, the company is exploring possibilities for meeting more complex social needs.

But this rather prescriptive invitation for would-be participants in TOMS's mode of meaningful action has cost the company some of its otherwise impressive consumerly affective investment. Multiplying product lines makes a certain sense, especially within a logic of profit maximization, but the proliferating lines have not given either TOMS or its consumers a remarkably different story to tell. Indeed, the story has begun to lose some of its earlier cohesiveness. The connection between a bag of coffee purchased and 140 liters of water donated, for example, feels strained in comparison with the exchange of shoes for shoes. In the company's most recent B1G1, a shopper gets a smart-looking backpack while someone else (perhaps a principal in a suburban elementary school) receives professional development regarding bullying. Digital media analysis using Google Trends suggests that as the B1G1 attachment becomes more strained, consumer enthusiasm drops. Google Trends' comparison of the search term "TOMS shoes" and with search terms for later products flatlines the coffee, the sunglasses, and the purses and backpacks at 1 or less on an index of 100.[45] Little wonder that Mycoskie compares the TOMS model to a "greatest hit," but then, adds a little wistfully, "Maybe after five years of singing the song they love so much, they almost begin to hate it, because that's all anyone wants to hear" (Buchanan). That combination of fixation and contempt sounds like a particularly pertinacious instance of Rice's exceptional subject.

In any case, the better TOMS has gotten at telling the B1G1 story, the more Mycoskie has had to deal with disaffection. Some people, of course, hearing this story, continue to feel energized to take up new and interesting projects. They feel, like Mycoskie himself, empowered to start another product line, form a completely different social enterprise, create pitch contests for other social entrepreneurs, etc. Shoppers like the woman with red shoes may well have excepted themselves from any activity but buying another pair of shoes. Some consumers have taken just that route to an almost embarrassing degree, like the tweet that boasted, "#toms one for one. I think I'm getting close to one hundred for one hundred. #iamtoms."[46] The divide between what Mycoskie's stories enable him to do and what they enable his beneficiaries to do is even more marked when it comes to an Argentinian child who receives a donated pair of TOMS: the story scripts her almost entirely into exceptionality as far as TOMS's mode of meaningful action is concerned. The disaffection dilemma makes this sort of disparity a difficult-to-avoid aspect of socially entrepreneurial storytelling.

CASE STUDY: NEIL BLUMENTHAL'S WARBY PARKER

It is possible, even likely, that eyewear shoppers do not know the brand Warby Parker as a socially entrepreneurial project. They may simply know the company as the producer of chic, relatively inexpensive, dark-framed glasses, a company enjoying meteoric rise from a quirky start-up in 2010 to a $1.2 billion company in 2015. But it is highly unlikely that any social entrepreneur is unaware of the company's social mission, given the seeming omnipresence of Neil Blumenthal, one of the company's founders who has become an internet video phenomenon, telling his company's story on *Fast Company*, PFSK*, Yoski*, *Inc.,* and *99U*. Blumenthal cuts a non-flamboyant figure. Unlike the other storytellers analyzed in this chapter, Blumenthal's stories allow both for collective and yet unscripted access to the socially entrepreneurial mode.

Here is the story of Warby Parker's genesis that Blumenthal tells every chance he gets. The idea for the start-up came after one of his friends left a pair of glasses in an airplane seat pocket. Complaining about replacing a $700 pair of glasses got these friends talking about the weird expensiveness of eyewear. Blumenthal had some knowledge of the eyeglasses industry, having worked for five years for Vision Spring (under Kassalow) before going to business school at Wharton. So, he knew that glasses could be made for as little as a few dollars. Why do glasses frames and prescription lenses add up to the cost of a high-end cellphone? The friends did some investigation and found that the eyewear market was dominated by an Italian corporation called Luxottica. What if the four of them launched a disruptive business that sold smart-looking glasses as inexpensively as possible? And what if, in the interests of cutting directly to the consumer, they sold these glasses online? It took them a year and a half to design the frames, create their brand and model, articulate their mission and values, and build the website. When they launched in 2010, they met with astonishing success and nailed their retail goals for the entire year within three weeks.

Self-deprecating without being self-ingratiating, Blumenthal is an unprepossessing but quietly competent communicator. His clothing (selvedge jeans and untucked shirts), language choices (understated style), and delivery (flat Manhattan accent, unexcitable, sometimes ironic, pitch range) all cue people to participate in a manner of engagement that is at once *collective* (Blumenthal appears to be a native collaborator, in contrast with the many solitary entrepreneurs that dot the start-up landscape) and *open-ended* (his low-key delivery leaves room for others to take what action they will). His manner evokes a constantly humming attentiveness to things others miss, but he is quick to pull others into his mode of attentiveness as well. He knows how to slow down his quick delivery through strategic verbal clutter, the discourse particles like "Right?" He'll say, "For us, we could never understand why glasses cost as much as an iPhone, right?"[47] and when they learned about Luxottica's near monopoly, "it made sense to us on why customer experiences weren't awesome, why prices for glasses have been rising considerably, right, over the last 20 years or so. . . . Right, we weren't going to wholesale our product to another company that was going to retail it and mark it up three to five times."[48] This word inserted throughout his story not only makes a plot point recognizable without making it conspicuous, but also extends a hand to the audience, inviting their involvement in the project. It is a discourse particle that becomes a rhetorical question that becomes a tacit invitation to get involved in a manner neither overbearing nor prepossessing.

Blumenthal's storytelling thus makes extensive use of a tacit and explicit figure of speech known as litotes, or understatement. Often, litotes depend on irony to convey what something is, not only by under-reporting it, but also through strategic ambiguity. (For example, telling an angry friend, "What you're about to yell *might* not be the best thing right now" is such an understatement.) In a presentation for PFSK, a marketing consultancy company, Blumenthal told his company's story:

> We launched in February to features in *Vogue* and *GQ*—February, 2010. And the company took off like a rocket ship. We hit our first year's sales targets in three weeks. It was complete mayhem. We sold out of top 15 styles in 4 weeks. We spent all night answering the phones, responding to emails, and it was exhilarating, but we underestimated demand a bit."[49]

That "a bit" is, again, mildly ironic—and the crowd's laughter suggests that they are in on the joke. Conventionally, tropes of emphasis such as litotes are used to establish the importance of an idea or event. But Blumenthal uses understatement in a non-hierarchical fashion as a way to quietly and obliquely connect consumer fashion with company philanthropy. Blumenthal uses understatement, not just to earn the goodwill of the audience through unprepossessing speech, but also to cue listeners to investment in the mode of a meaningful project like Warby Parker's social enterprise. His speech and delivery do not suggest a vast and brooding interior life as the essential condition for world-betterment (something akin to Kassalow's encounter with the universe), nor does he tout multiple product lines like Mycoskie's multifarious B1G1 programs. Nor does his understatement insist (as Silver's does) on One Right Way to fix this problem. Instead, he allows people maximal freedom for how they wish to engage the mode of meaningful projects.

There is, admittedly, a metaphysical flatness to Blumenthal's discourse: he does not hear from the universe; he does not defy the vast impersonality of the cosmos and announce to God that his life matters. Blumenthal likes to talk about smart marketing as if it were nothing more than an operationalizing of the Golden Rule. This linkage of marketing and ethics uses understatement to lessen the edginess of each: the marketing does not look too shrewd, nor the Rule too difficult. "We took an approach that's just like, *what would we intuitively want to wear?* But also, *how would we want to shop for these glasses?*" Later, he adds in another characteristic remark: "And we constantly found ourselves asking those types of questions. And we ended up articulating it into one of our core values, which is to treat others the way that we want to be treated."[50] It is as obvious and accessible as that.

But this use of understatement not only makes the innovative feel accessible, it also makes preparedness for the unpredictable possible. By pulling back on bold emphasis, Blumenthal designs a flexible discourse capable of changing directions and engaging the constantly, uncontrollably surprising. For example, his storytelling does not cast him as a David-like figure contending with the Goliath of the Luxottica corporation, tempting as that comparison might have been. He does describe Warby Parker as an industry disruptor, but he also confesses that his company's Davidic persona could itself become Goliathan.

> And frankly, as we think about the future, we actually are more scared of four guys sitting on a college campus thinking up some drastic way to disrupt our business than we think about the big companies trying to disrupt us. Because there are few examples of the company being disrupted that ends up disrupting the disruptors. (That's a lot of disruption.)[51]

Blumenthal's understated discourse cues audiences to look for what cannot exactly be looked for. There are too many variables. The context is too complex. The changeableness too fast. Understatement cues an involvement that is personally involved without being objectively sovereign. Given the highly collective nature of changemaker organizations, Blumenthal's storytelling achieves its greatest effect along complexly networked interactions, beginning well before the storyteller addresses his audience, continuing long after he drops the mic and walks away.

The openendedness of the company's invitation to live variously into a manner of engagement appears again in Blumenthal's account of how Warby Parker developed a communication plan. How is Warby Parker supposed to talk about their ethical investment in their employees, alertness to environmental impact, concern for consumer experience, contribution to the global vision crisis, and all without overwhelming the distracted shopper? "There were just a bazillion different messages there. And the question was, would people hear those messages? So we spent a lot of time just thinking about, how can we create a hierarchy here? Because you only have a few moments with potential vendors, potential customers, potential partners—how are you going to get that message through?"[52] Warby Parker's solution to this problem was to lead with design information: the first thing people want to know about glasses, after all, is whether they look good or not. Then, Blumenthal explained, the company would communicate the surprisingly low cost of its frames. And, finally, the company communicates its pro-social mission: "We thought that during that initial purpose, most people aren't thinking about the social mission. And it's probably not driving that initial purchase. So, that's often the last thing that you hear about us. Not that it's not really important to us, and not that it's not what motivates me to come to work every day. But it wasn't the first thing that we need to tell customers."[53] Only when a customer receives through the mail a try-it-on box with five frames to check out, does the company make it clear about the B1G1 plan: for every pair of Warby Parkers purchased, the company gives away another pair to someone in need. Blumenthal uses the business-minded language of prioritization. But his understated communication also shows a readiness for an unpredictable opportune moment.

His discourse evokes an analogy with a circular labyrinth for prayer-walking. In a labyrinth, the prayer-walker moves around and around on a path that goes either in towards the center or out towards the perimeter. Sometimes, the walker's path takes her quite close to the center, other times veering her outwards. If she focuses too singly on the center, she loses the value of what can be encountered on the perimeter. If she ambles along on the perimeter, she loses contact with the center. Warby Parker's core identity as a social enterprise is at the center of a labyrinthine communicative experience. Pro-social activities, consumer benefits, sterling organizational traits—all these appear, so to speak, at various points along a labyrinthine trail, as digital experience brings the shopper into acquaintance with the company. But the company does not and indeed cannot definitively structure people's experience. Shoppers might, after all, encounter various aspects of the company through magazine advertisements, in a list of B Corps, on their optometrist's office wall, on the side of the Warby Parker bus driving through Topeka, Kansas, and who knows where else. Indeed, the risk in Blumenthal's approach to narrating engagement with the mode is that his stories might have so light and so diffuse a touch that people are unaware of any sort of project in the works at all. The great strength in his approach, however, is that in contrast with the scripted engagement of Mycoskie's outspoken B1G1 plan, Blumenthal's storytelling cues a diffusely collective engagement whose do-gooding is objectively, materially consequential without being personally overbearing.

TELLING THE TALE WITHOUT MISSING THE MODE

I began this chapter by sharing from an interview with a Chicagoland entrepreneur. Let me conclude with another. In conversation with the folks at Lime Red Studio, I learned from Emily Lonigro that she sees her work as a consultant for other mission-focused companies not merely in terms of direct, strategic communication with clients, but rather as an engagement with the context and conditions that give rise to the work. "I feel like my job is to build the ecosystem that my business exists in, and then mine will be successful. . . . Our businesses are built on our networks. It's like a forest."[54] That, I think, is what this chapter has been after: to notice the networks, to apprehend the ecology, to acknowledge the enfolding and sustaining forest. Lonigro's observation about what some communication theorists describe as "affective ecologies" does sidestep conventional business communication advice.[55] Such advice, driven largely by an information systems model of communication, tends to overlook what Doug Foster calls "a particular shared socio-economic space," providing a portal into a "cultural mode" that is neither governmental nor corporate nor philanthropic, but is distinctively socially entrepreneurial.[56] What makes storytelling challenging in such a space is that social entrepreneurs cannot be satisfied with using compelling messaging to create a desirable social reality; they also need to populate that reality. Changemaker storytelling, in other words, has to generate storytellers who know how to use narration to navigate modes of meaningful engagement.

Here is the upshot of this story-ridden chapter: it is possible to make a message and miss the mode. It is possible for social entrepreneurs to focus overmuch on how to tell a story with emotional power and yet to forget how a story gives access to an energizing mode. No story can engineer a mode, of course, any more than one tree or one organism can control an ecology. The forest, after all, encompasses and conditions the tree. Modes are virtual, rapid, mobile, and constantly surprising. But if changemakers ignore their presence and focus instead on the supposedly much more controllable aspects of public relations and marketing, they may well miss the ways that such messaging relies upon its adjacent modes.

We might sum up the findings of this chapter by arranging these company storytellers within different boxes of a four-square matrix of meaningful projects, as shown in Figure 1.1, in which the shape of stories intersects with the relations they invite.

Each square field of action within this matrix of meaningful action entails a sometimes precarious attempt to stay adjacent to significant work. I would argue that the box on the lower right is, at least from the perspective of Wolf's theory of meaningfulness, the most desirable in that it both allows for openendedness in pursuing significance and seeks a measure of accountability by being collective.

But like all matrices, this one conceals as much as it reveals: the interaction in this diagram looks flat, conceptual, disembodied, even though modal involvement has to be a three-dimensional affair: people experience modes in everyday life as material creatures making their way through a world of recalcitrant problems. Even so, the matrix does make apparent the modes that are otherwise difficult to apprehend. To borrow an analogy from optometry, we might say that each of these storytellers offers vision correction for those who struggle to discern the mode of social entrepreneurship's meaningful project. Kassalow's and Silver's storytelling, for example, helps to correct for modal farsightedness and nearsightedness among participants who struggle to connect a large and far-off social aspiration within a single way of seeing the

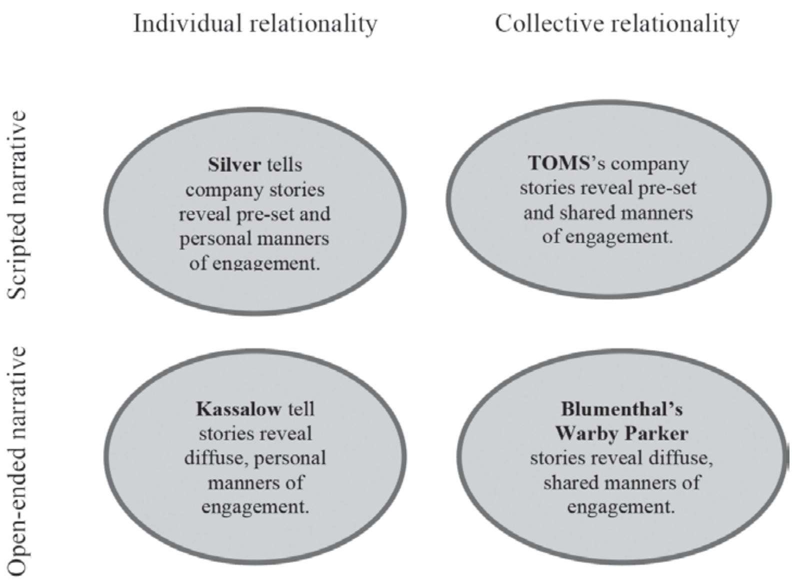

Figure 1.1: The Modal Dynamics of Company Stories

world. In contrast, the two B1G1 enterprises discussed in this chapter offer help for cause fatigue: Mycoskie and Blumenthal offer a bifocal corrective, neither focused wholly on buying stuff nor wholly on giving philanthropically, but keeping both in view at the same time.

I began this chapter by asking the ancient question, *What does a worker gain from toil?* One of Qoheleth's lesser known answers to this question goes as follows: "There is nothing better for mortals than to eat and drink, and find enjoyment in their toil."[57] There is a refreshing humility in that insight: not even social entrepreneurship can save the world, but social entrepreneurs can nonetheless take—and through their storytelling, share—satisfaction in their toil. Perhaps that is the genius of changemaking business—its capacity to make vocational satisfaction palpable and shareable. Wolf writes that meaningful projects entail "living in a way that is partly occupied by and directed towards the preservation or promotion or creation of value that has its source outside of oneself," which in turn enables toil to "be understood, admired or appreciated from others' points of view, including the imaginary point of view of an impartial indifferent observer."[58]

Sharing meaningfulness, however, may be harder now than at any other time of history for the simple fact that there are so many, many projects calling for understanding, admiration, and appreciation in late-modern society—an observation which brings us to the attentional economics of this book's next chapter. Modes are indeed difficult to notice, but not simply because they are non-empirically observable; they are also hard to notice, because noticing *anything* is extraordinarily difficult in the distractedness that pervades late-modern societies.

NOTES

1. Ecclesiastes 1:3 New Revised Standard Version.
2. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).
3. Wallace Stegner, *Crossing to Safety* (Modern Library, 2002), 207.
4. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
5. Social theorist Toby Miller, for example, notes that large cultural forces today spuriously drive people into one of two social roles, either as noble, democratically minded citizens dedicated to civic flourishing or as self-interested pragmatists who make choices based on market-driven cost-benefits analysis. *The Well-Tempered Self: Citizenship, Culture, and the Postmodern Subject* (John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 129. Miller adds, "There is a superficial fit between these models if one presumes that the sphere of government embraces those areas that the market could never cover (for example, laws of property and standing defense forces),

but the purely laissez-faire economy is a myth" (129). See also Susan Wolf, *Meaning in Life and Why It Matters* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2010). Todd May, *A Significant Life: Human Meaning in a Silent Universe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). Bernard Williams, "The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality," in *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge, University Press, 1973).

6. Wolf, 13.

7. *Ibid.*, 29.

8. *Ibid.*, 9, 26, 31–33.

9. Mary Elizabeth Goodell (social entrepreneur), interview by author June 20, 2017.

10. Popular discussions of organizational storytelling emerge in authors such as the following: Adam Bluestein, "How to Tell Your Company's Story," *Inc.*, accessed July 6, 2017, http://www.inc.com/magazine/201402/adam-bluestein/sara-blakely-how-i-got-started.html. Dan and Chip Heath, "The Myth About Creation Myths," *Fast Company*, accessed July 6, 2017 https://www.fastcompany.com/58773/myth-about-creation-myths. David K. Williams, "Top 10 List: The Surprising Origins Of 10 Major American Brands," *Forbes*, accessed July 6, 2017, http://www.forbes.com/sites/davidkwilliams/2013/01/20/top-10-list-the-surprising-origins-of-10-major-american-brands/#3ee5f6cf180f. Scholars also address the subject: Pradeepa Wijetunge, "Organizational Storytelling as a Method of Tacit-Knowledge Transfer: Case Study from a Sri Lankan University," *International Information & Library Review* 44 no. 4 (2012): 212–223. Wijetunge, by discussing the role of the tacit in organizational narrative, comes to close to the modal focus of this chapter. Rhetorical theorizing about narrative often traces to Walter Fisher's discussions of story and discourse in *Human Communication as Narration* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina, 1989).

11. This observation proceeds somewhat counter to the storytelling advice of MBA seminars, TEDx Talks, social innovation blogs, MailChimp newsletters, and rhetorical theory. Popular discussions of organizational storytelling emerge in authors such as the following: Adam Bluestein, "How to Tell Your Company's Story," *Inc.*, accessed July 6, 2017, http://www.inc.com/magazine/201402/adam-bluestein/sara-blakely-how-i-got-started.html. Dan and Chip Heath, "The Myth About Creation Myths," *Fast Company*, accessed July 6, 2017 https://www.fastcompany.com/58773/myth-about-creation-myths. David K. Williams, "Top 10 List: The Surprising Origins Of 10 Major American Brands," *Forbes*, accessed July 6, 2017, http://www.forbes.com/sites/davidkwilliams/2013/01/20/top-10-list-the-surprising-origins-of-10-major-american-brands/#3ee5f6cf180f. Scholars also address the subject: Pradeepa Wijetunge, "Organizational Storytelling as a Method of Tacit-Knowledge Transfer: Case Study from a Sri Lankan University," *International Information & Library Review* 44 no. 4 (2012): 212–223. Wijetunge, by discussing the role of the tacit in organizational narrative, comes to close to the modal focus of this chapter. Rhetorical theorizing about narrative often traces to Walter Fisher's discussions of story and discourse in *Human Communication as Narration* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina, 1989).

12. Nancy Struever, *Rhetoric, Modality, Modernity*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Celeste M. Condit, “Race and Genetics from a Modal Materialist Perspective,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94, no. 4 (2008): 383–406 Jenkins, “The Modes of Visual Rhetoric,” 443.

13. Jenkins, “The Modes of Visual Rhetoric,” 443.

14. *Ibid.*, 446, 448.

15. Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1988), 49–50.

16. Jenkins, *The Modes of Visual Rhetoric*, 443.

17. Jenkins, 442–443, 445–452.

18. Even if a story makes an audience feel hope or happiness or relief from buyer’s remorse, as Ahmed has pointed out, these feelings do not indicate the arrival of social justice. Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 22.

19. *Distant Publics: Development Rhetoric and the Subject of Crisis* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, 2012), 5, 66–67. What makes this exceptionality hard to correct is not so much express emotion as tacit affect. I am making a distinction here between feelings as taggable emotions and affects as inarticulate sensations. This distinction between feeling and affect draws on Brian Massumi’s notion that feelings are subjective, describable emotions—joy, sadness, hope, greed—while affects are pre-subjective, pre-reflective, pre-linguistic energies. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002, 23–28.

20. Michael Mattheson Miller, dir. *Poverty, Inc*. 2014 www.netflix.com/title/80017992; Timothy Schwartz, *Travesty in Haiti*.

21. “What’s cruel about these attachments, and not merely inconvenient or tragic, is that the subjects who have x in their lives might not well endure the loss of their object or scene of desire, even though its presence threatens their well-being; because whatever the content of the attachment is, the continuity of the form of it provides something of the continuity of the subject’s sense of what it means to keep on living on and to look forward to being in the world.” Lauren Berlant, “Cruel Optimism,” *The Affect Theory Reader* eds. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 94.

22. “What is the Global Action Plan?” International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness https://www.iapb.org/advocacy/who-action-plan/focus-challenges. Blake Mycoskie is something of an outlier in this group, in that opthalmological services are only one part of the TOMS model of social enterprise.

23. Benjamin Bratton, “We need to talk about TED,” *The Guardian* (December 30, 2013), accessed July 5, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/30/we-need-to-talk-about-ted.

24. Joshua Silver, “Adjustable Liquid-Filled Eyeglasses,” TED Talks, accessed on July 5, 2017, https://www.ted.com/talks/josh_silver_demos_adjustable_liquid_filled_eyeglasses.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. It actually took a few viewings of the speech for me to understand that when Silver says, "Now I can see that man running out up there and—that man running out over there," he must be talking about figures on exit signs and not about people departing his speech early. "Okay I've made the glasses to my prescription, and um, I've just—there we are. And, um, well, I've now made some glasses. That's it." Joshua Silver, "Adjustable Liquid-Filled Eyeglasses."

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.* If we do accept Silver's invitation to check out the website of the Centre for Vision in the Developing World (CVDW), we find that again the "real action" is not in the language and design, but in the Adspec device. In short, the webpage invites watching, but not participation. The apparently hurriedly designed site offers a single-column homepage, complete with lots of white space and a few photos so large that they compel the viewer to focus on one thing at a time, first text, then photos, then text, then photos, etc. Admittedly, the variegation of the site slightly increases as the viewer clicks further. There is a two-minute graphic of the slides from Silver's TED Talk, a link to his conference papers, and more links featuring write-ups on refraction methods, correction methods, and lens technology. The organization's communication functions rather like Silver's speech, being designed to be as transparent as an eyeglass lens.

30. John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 30–31.

31. Thomas Rickert, *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), 186–187.

32. Aneel Karnani, Bernard Garrette, Jordan Kassalow, and Moses Lee, "Better Vision for the Poor," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (Spring 2011), https://ssir.org/articles/entry/better_vision_for_the_poor.

33. "Founder's Story," Vision Spring, accessed July 5, 2017, http://visionspring.org/founders-story/.

34. Jordan Kassalow, "Vision = Happiness: Jordan Kassalow at TEDxColumbiaSIPA," TEDx Talks, last modified March 8, 2013, accessed July 5, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnVm5X9-XIY.

35. "Founder's Story," Vision Spring.

36. *Ibid.*

37. "Founder's Story," Vision Spring.

38. Jordan Kassalow, "Vision = Happiness: Jordan Kassalow at TEDxColumbiaSIPA," March 8, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnVm5X9-XIY.

39. Kassalow, "IdeasLab 2014."

40. Chapter 4 discusses a range of companies that make use of the B1G1 model.

41. "Blake Mycoskie - The Global Leadership Summit, 2010," last modified on April 12, 2012, accessed on July 6, 2017, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5OCcD4qbk8. The analysis in this section of the essay is indebted to Craig E. Mattson, "A Better Feeling for Making the World Better? TOMS's Tropes and the Buy-One-Give-One Mode," *Rhetorical Society Quarterly* (2017).

42. Clare O'Connor, "Bain Deal Makes TOMS Shoes Founder Blake Mycoskie A $300 Million Man." *Forbes* April 20, 2014. n. pag. Web. 5 March 2017.

<http://:www.forbes.com /sites/clareoconnor/2014/08/20/bain-deal-makes-toms-shoes-founder-blake-mycoskie-a-300-million-man/#4c6f0c763875>.

43. Blake Mycoskie, interview by Ellen DeGeneres, *Ellen,* last modified October 7, 2011, accessed July 5, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57TOTx5UEpA.

44. "I Am Building a Better Tomorrow by ______________." This post was originally found on the company blog, which has since been taken down. https://www.toms.com/stories/culture/i-am-building-a-better-tomorrow-by-________________-iamtom. Traces of this same discourse can be found on Pinterest. https://www.pinterest.com/pin/32721534767777703/?lp=true.

45. The shoe line, in contrast, soared as high as 100 in 2012 and has maintained an average of 23 to the present day. "Toms shoes." *Google Trends*, accessed on June 14, 2017. https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&q=TOMS%20shoes. These analytics are attempting the nearly impossible: to gauge the relentlessly mobile dynamics of internet user affect. Social Mention gauges this synchronically, while Google Trends analyzes the phenomena synchronically. Each has its strengths: Social Mention explicitly measures affect; Google Trends does not. On the other hand, Google Trends has the benefit of offering more information and with a more complex visual display.

46. @jilljillb98. " #toms one for one. I think I'm getting close to one hundred for one hundred." Twitter, 28 May 2014, 7:17 p.m., Web. 9 March 2017. <https://twitter.com/jilljillb98/status/ 471837638681313280>.

47. Neil Blumenthal, "Warby Parker's Neil Blumenthal: How We Turned $120,000 Into a Billion-Dollar Eyeglass Brand," *Inc. Video*, accessed on July 5, 2017, https://www.inc.com/neil-blumenthal/how-we-built-a-billion-dollar-eyeglass-brand.html.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Neil Blumenthal, "Neil Blumenthal: Brand Building Through Narrative & Vulnerability," *PFSK*, accessed on July 5, 2017, https://vimeo.com/66192517.

50. Neil Blumenthal, "Warby Parker's CEO on Disruption and Consumer Experience" Columbia Business School, last modified on March 28, 2014, accessed on July 5, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BFLO6RTr9o.

51. Blumenthal, "Warby Parker's Neil Blumenthal," *Inc. Video*.

52. Neil Blumenthal, "Neil Blumenthal: 3 Lessons Learned From Building Warby Parker," *99U*, http://99u.com/ videos/25315/neil-blumenthal-3-lessons-learned-from-building-warby-parker. ed cite info.

53. *Ibid.*

54. Emily Lonigro (social entrepreneur), interview by author, June 20, 2017.

55. An important discussion of ecological construals of communication appears in the work of Jenny Edbauer, "Unframing Models of Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (2005): 5–24. Edbauer's discussion of "affective ecologies" notes that often communication scholars think of communication situations in terms of a collection of speakers, hearers, and occasions. Put these things together, and you have a a communication situation, in other words. But Edbauer proposes instead "a framework of affective ecologies that recontextualizes rhetorics in their temporal, historical, and lived fluxes" (9).

56. "Social Entrepreneurship: Exploring a Cultural Mode amidst Others in the Church of England" in *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Change*, 181.

57. Ecclesiastes 2:24 New Revised Standard Version.

58. Susan Wolf, *Meaning in Life*, 28–29.

Chapter 2

How to Raise Awareness (To Create Attendance)

DEPRIVATIONS OF AWARENESS

What problems should command the most urgent attention of social entrepreneurs? Material scarcities of food or water or shelter might convincingly vie for the top of any Must Attend-To List. But Todd Gitlin raises another, arguably more basic, predicament: distractedness. He notes that "in the face of avoidable violence, disease, inequality, oppression, poisoning, and other global afflictions, it makes sense to worry about the public cost of media bounty, to fear that it distracts from civic obligations, induces complacency and anesthesia, and works to the advantage of oligarchs."[1] Richard Lanham's *The Economics of Attention* makes a similar point, describing cognitive deprivation, or what he calls "the human attention needed to make sense of information," as a great scarcity of our time.[2] When I asked social entrepreneur Laura Zumdahl (CEO, New Moms) what problem keeps her awake at night, her answer reflected the attention economics of late modernity: making her brand pop out in a crowded marketplace. "How do you do that," she asked, "in relationship to just the regular factors of running a successful small business at the same time?"[3]

A case could be made that social entrepreneurship is about attention before it is about anything else. The peculiar complexities of what Chapter 1 referred to as the mode of meaningful projects require agile and innovative thinking, yes, but also sustained attention, a practice which William James famously defined as "the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought."[4] To let a social problem take possession of the mind, to apprehend that the problem is clearly and vividly consequential, to stay with the problem for months and years on end, despite distractions from many other possible trains of thought—all that requires what Wayne Wu's comprehensive investigations of attention describe as a practice of cognitive gatekeeping, extraneous data filtering, and selection of a focus for taking subsequent action.[5] What could be more basic to social problem-solving? And yet what could be more difficult when "our virtual, split-screen, and nomadic era is eroding opportunities for deep focus, awareness, and reflection"?[6] The very hybridity of social entrepreneurship seems to make the economics of attention fraught: the both-and logic of paying attention to profitability *and* social impact seems frustrated by Maria Konnikova's observation that "[w]hen it comes right down to it, there is no such thing as free attention; it all has to come from somewhere."[7]

But even if changemakers can agree that public distractedness is a central predicament of our time, they will find it harder to agree how to broach the problem. There is, for example, significant disagreement on whether attention is a largely structural or individual problem. Thomas de Zengotita sees us as stuck in a "blob" of mediation, and Gitlin can see no way out of the predicament of over-mediated distractedness, beyond some sort of apocalyptic event—"a catastrophic breakdown of civilization."[8] For Gitlin and Zengotita, bringing change to today's attention economics would take large-scale structural transformation. Other writers today, however, address distraction individualistically. Maggie Jackson, Winifred Gallagher, and Daniel Goleman, for example, urge late moderns to "take charge of your attention," arguing that human attention "can be trained, taught, and shaped, a discovery that offers the key to living fully in a tech-saturated world."[9] Siding with these writers on attention, many social entrepreneurs have made awareness-raising a part of their organizational mission:

- HungerU (from Farmers Feeding the World) avows a mission "to raise college students' awareness of nutrition and food security issues."[10]
- *Native Tongue*, a B1G1 magazine, makes both foodies and fast food eaters aware of the accessibility and usability of fresh ingredients on Chicago's southside.[11]
- Change Food, an educational forum, seeks to "help raise awareness and educate consumers about problems and solutions to our food and the food system."
- Food MythBusters dedicates itself to "spread the real story of our food, debunking persistent myths about sustainable food and farming," using digital media and "grassroots events."[12]
- Cultivate London's "horticultural social enterprise" buys deserted city lots, plants raised beds, sells vegetables, and offers local garden instruction—all in order "to have a long-term impact on the lives of young people and

change the way Londoners think about their fresh produce and where it comes from."

- Chicago's Blue Sky Bakery's job-training program seeks to cultivate what it calls "edible consciousness" in order to address, not so much food insecurity, but the joblessness that depresses a neighborhood.[13]

Awareness-raising is big in social entrepreneurship: I might have listed other attention-capture projects for problem after problem across the globe. These changemaker organizations design their messaging and operations assuming that late-modern citizens are, quite simply, too distracted for the common good.

CRITICISMS OF AWARENESS-RAISING

But does awareness-raising discourse do the good that social entrepreneurs hope for? Julie Beck, an *Atlantic* writer, thinks not. She questions "the nebulous phenomenon of 'raising awareness' for diseases."[14] Jonathan Purtle and Leah Roman, writing for *American Journal of Public Health*, argue that not enough assessment has been done on the actual effectiveness of health-related raising of awareness.[15] *WhyDev* writer Allison Smith is even more blunt: "There are many good reasons for charities to be on social media, driving traffic to their website and encouraging donations among them, but any time the vague rationale of 'awareness' is thrown around, it probably means things haven't been thought through."[16] This skepticism about what we think we are doing when we raise awareness finds echoes in contemporary studies of attention. As one psychologist has complained, "we know only marginally more about attention than about the interior of a black hole."[17] Although Jesse Singal concedes in *New York Magazine* that ours is "something of a golden age of awareness-raising," the practice itself "doesn't accomplish all that much. The underlying assumption of so many attempts to influence people's behavior—that they make bad choices because they lack the information to empower them to do otherwise—is, except in a few cases, false."[18]

Perhaps responding to these criticisms, some social entrepreneurs are designing business meliorist projects in which awareness-raising is not central to their company operations or communications. The Warby Parker case study in Chapter 1, for example, treats consumer awareness for the global ophthalmic crisis as less important, at least at first, than marketing chic glasses compellingly. Like Blumenthal, Jeff Le Blanc of the social enterprise Out of Print Clothing seems confident that selling a quality product, far more than raising social awareness, enables companies to do good.[19] I encountered much the same sensibility while interviewing Zumdahl, who sounds more eager for people to buy her company's candles out of love for a well-made product than out of love for the altruism of her company's mission. As we drank strong joe at a coffeehouse, she spoke a little wistfully of a different attention on economics than that of our own time:

> A beautiful place to be in the world would be that you could come to this coffee shop and you could buy stuff and you would have no idea that they have this great social mission, employing people with criminal records or of doing job training. . . . But we would just come because it's a great coffee shop, and we'd just get coffee and it really wouldn't matter, but we would just be enabling good work, through using our dollars in ways that we would in normal life. But that there would be a business environment where people could, organizations could thrive like that. And we wouldn't actually have to know. And part of the reason I like that is because I don't think everybody is going to get on board with the social mission, as much as I wish they would in the world.[20]

DILEMMA OF SALIENCE

Although I can understand Zumdahl's fatigue with having to capture attention by touting one's own social mission, my own reservations about awareness-raising discourse trace to what might be called the dilemma of salience. This quandary arises when a social entrepreneur's strategic communication about some pertinent problem results in audience obliviousness instead knowledgeability. Something like this dilemma registers in a parody of cause-related marketing on *Saturday Night Live* (SNL) that mocked the zany ways that businesses attach themselves to sundry social concerns.[21] Responding to that sketch, brand consultant Max Lederman asks, "Has Brand Purpose Jumped the Shark?" In other words, has business communication exhausted the possibilities for awareness-raising in an era when (as the SNL folks imply) "brand activism is ham-handedly overplayed and increasingly asinine."[22] Lederman goes on: "There's an ingrained cultural skepticism around brands—our industry has been making fabricated claims and counter-claims for decades—that only gets worse with the deluge of advertising that seeks to intrude into everyday lives. It should be no surprise that when done well, a brand's purpose ads will draw out naysayers. When done badly, those naysayers will draw out their knives."[23] Or they might simply turn to the consoling distractions of binge-watching ad-free television, thereby dodging awareness-raising discourse altogether.[24] In any case, direct efforts to raise awareness can easily result in inattention instead.

In order to understand the ground conditions of this dilemma, we have to turn to the history of attention. In one sense, of course, attention itself seems to have no history: people have been worrying about how distracted everybody is for millennia.[25] Three thousand years ago, the Hebrew sage Qoheleth complained that the eye never has enough of seeing nor the ear of hearing.[26] Half a millennium later, Plato's Socrates jokingly deprecated himself as someone easily distractible by speeches, like an animal led around by a fruit-laden branch and then went on to worry about what a brand new communication technology—the pen—would do to people's capacity to listen and attend.[27] Half a millennium still later, Jesus admonished a friend that she was "worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing."[28] Nearly half a millennium later—but still more than fifteen hundred years from us—Augustine bemoaned the fact that "Even sitting at home I can be hypnotized as a fly is snatched from the air by a lizard or as it blunders into a spider's web."[29] Humans, whether in the fourth century B.C.E. or the twenty-first century thereafter, share an anxiety about distraction. Does that not suggest that attention is a practice whose character, though elusive to conceptual or empirical description, remains essentially constant?

But there is one important difference between our experience of distraction today and the experience of attenders three thousand years back. Although the ancients lamented human distractibility, they did not see attention as a technical problem, or what Michel Foucault would call "the target of social regulation at a given moment."[30] "Awareness," as something to be socially managed, traces in part to the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who came to the conclusion that what unites our perceptions with the realities of the world was innate cognitive categories. Somehow our cognitions are exactly suited to make sense of the world, even given the fragmentary nature of our experience. Eventually, post-Kantian thought questioned the fit between our knowing and what we are trying to know: "Once the philosophical guarantees of any a priori cognitive unity collapsed (or once the possibility of imposing a unity on the world became untenable), the problem of 'reality maintenance' gradually became a function of a contingent and merely psychological capacity for synthesis or association."[31] The post-Kantian solution? Pay better attention.

Across the academic aisle, in the sciences and social sciences, nineteenth-century biologists and psychologists were making a very similar argument. They noted first that vision entailed more than receiving the impress of the world; to see was to select and frame and exclude and focus. "For most authors," notes Jonathan Crary, "attention implied some process of perceptual or mental organization in which a limited number of objects or stimuli are isolated from a larger background of possible attractions."[32] Joining this chorus of academics, cultural leaders in business and education began to realize that perception was no passive activity but was instead an active project in world-organization. Gradually, the notion spread that the practice of attention could hold the world together for the self.[33] Much like the attentional gurus cited above—the Jacksons and Konnikovas and Gitlins of our digital age—these pre-digital moderns asserted that concentrating was "the means by which an individual observer can transcend those subjective limitations and make perception *its own*."[34] "Awareness" had become a thing to be captured and measured and engineered and normed, or as Crary put it, "a scientific object and a social problem."[35]

The nineteenth century, of course, saw the development of many distracting new devices—the phonograph, the telephone, the telegraph, etc.—technologies that made modern citizens as nervous as the pen had once made Plato. Faced with all this cultural noisiness, factory floor managers still needed their workers to run machines in a focused and productive manner for long hours on end. Teachers in their classrooms needed students to concentrate closely; sales personnel needed shoppers to notice their product in a world becoming proliferated with commercial messages. The lesson that the cultural leaders of the time took from this predicament of public distractedness was that attention could and should be detached from its material context and situated within the attender. Awareness could be abstracted from its context. What people cognitively attended *to* could be extricated from what they were materially attending *on*. When attenders and their attentions became what they are still felt to be today—objective carriers of capacities to be engineered, raised, honed, gauged, sharpened—awareness became an inward psychological phenomenon, detached from the surroundings, the environments, the atmospheric conditions that make social and ecological problems so difficult to resolve. By separating attention from our enfolded, surrounded, embedded experience of the world—or what I will call *attendance*—awareness-raising discourse too often fails to change people's fundamental interactions with the very cultural predicaments that social entrepreneurs wish to ameliorate.[36]

THE POSSIBILITIES OF AMBIENCE

Imagine a neighborhood where the market is controlled by fast-food chains and over-priced "food-and-liquors" corner stores. A social service provider might persuade an unemployed single mother that her children would do better in school if she would shop elsewhere so they could eat food filled with enzymes. But she still has to somehow drive an hour through bad traffic to find fresh ingredients.[37] Just the thought of that drive makes her sit in her chair, staring out the window, abstracted. The awareness-raising discourse fails to work in this hypothetical scenario, not because the message-makers have failed to capture attention. Indeed, they may well have leveraged an information systems model of communication to target their message precisely to the parent. And yet, there that mom still sits with all the needed information in her head, too overwhelmed to act. How might change be brought about in this situation?

The information systems model of communication tends to rely for its changemaking power on some variation on what Everett Rogers would call Diffusion of Innovations (DOI).[38] If, for example, this mom's attitude towards shopping in better stores needed to change, the social entrepreneur might seek to get the woman's neighbors on board, perhaps by finding neighborhood opinion leaders, who are able to use effective channels of communication, such as a public-television spot or a community bulletin board or appearances in local religious organizations. It may take these leaders time to persuade the mom of the viability and value of shopping at Jewel-Osco rather than at a food-and-liquor. But gradually, person by person, group by group, acceptance for the new idea is supposed to spread.[39] DOI is useful for explaining why inefficient or initially undesirable innovations become widely accepted, innovations such as QWERTY typewriter keyboards, humming refrigerators, and hard tomatoes.[40]

But this approach to social change underestimates how woven individual awareness is with the material, the affective, the social, and the digital. DOI seeks simply to capture attention for information. But, although information is a vital, integral part of bringing change to a complex situation, that information itself arises from and is wrapped up in physical and emotional and ideological and infrastructural and technological dimensions of any given situation.[41] Think for a moment of the digital technological dimensions of a food desert. When an opinion leader shouts across sundry media platforms, "This food desert problem is big—we have to act!"—she may be thinking of Facebook and Snapchat and GroupMe as useful tools for getting an important word out. For her, the digital is a means to an end: broadcasting information. But she is forgetting that the digital is far more than a device. When a piece of technology vibrates in a hip pocket, when an Apple watch glints data with the turn of a wrist, when a cloud platform synchronizes revisions to a committee document across sundry laptop screens, all these entail an immersion in digitality. That immersiveness itself, as Gitlin explains, is communicative, quite apart from any information transmitted by a particular device:

> Even as we click around something *feels* uniform—a relentless pace, a pattern of interruption, a pressure toward unseriousness, a readiness for sensation, an anticipation of the next new thing. Whatever the diversity of texts, the media largely share a texture, even if it is maddeningly difficult to describe—real and

unreal, present and absent, disposable and essential, distracting and absorbing, sensational and tedious, emotional and numbing."[42]

It would be easy to read this despairingly. It is also possible to read this as a way that the digital, if attended to laterally, can provide cues to the omnipresence of the digital. One gift of wearable technology—Fitbits, Bluetooth devices, Google glasses, Apple watches, glucose monitors, even the smartphones in the back pockets of our hip-huggers—is to tacitly coach us how to *work with* the hidden but very material fiber-optic structures behind the drywall and bricks of our homes and workspaces, connecting us to other elements in the atmospheres around our lives.[43] But though digitality entails an immersion, it can also tutor us to attend to other immersions, other more collective, more physical experiences, that make problems like food scarcities hard to correct.

Although communication theory tends to construe information as if it were something distinct from the information sender or the information receiver, the digital information that constitutes our daily life, as Rickert notes, "vitalizes our built environs and the objects therein, making them 'smart,' capable of action."[44] We are becoming aware, too, that other dimensions of our experience—physical spaces, embodied functions, institutional infrastructures—are like digital technology actors. To put the matter bluntly, our environments, and all that they comprise, *do things*. The atmospheres, the ecologies, the systems that constitute daily experience are not neutrally, passively subject to humankind; these surroundings act back on us.[45] This chapter attempts to figure out what being attuned to such immanent, immersive experience might suggest for the practice of socially entrepreneurial communication, especially in four organizations case-studied in the following: Change Food, The Common Market, AllGreen, and the Kisan Network.

The practitioner may well wonder, "I get it. Everything's connected. But how do I run a company with that information?" In other words, attending to the activity of ambient backgrounds seems to foreclose human intention and action. I find help with this question in the work of Bruno Latour, a theorist cited in this book's Introduction and often associated with Actor-Network Theory (ANT). Latour would suggest that the social entrepreneur enters into a complexly networked relation with other people, things, institutions, places, and forces, each of which is an actant with potential effect on the overall network. What social entrepreneurs can do, then, is to get involved in a process that makes interaction with surrounding structures and forces possible, a process that ANT theorists call *translation*.[46] Translation here is not the action of one person converting one word's meaning into another; but it does describe a process in which social entrepreneurs can be active, engineering connectivity among actants that might not otherwise appear related.[47]

CASE STUDY: CHANGE FOOD

Change Food has successfully mounted a series of TEDx Manhattan events from 2011 to 2015, featuring a pantheon of charismatic speakers on the subject of food-related predicaments in late-modern society. "Our food system is broken," notes the main webpage of this nonprofit organization, "Let's change it. Together."[48] The organization describes its mission this way: "Change Food is a grassroots movement creating a healthy, equitable food system. We provide various levels of expertise to organizations that are not getting sufficient support yet are creating real, replicable change. In addition, through conferences, events and special projects, Change Food raises public awareness and connects various parts of the food movement."[49] The most conspicuous way that the organization has addressed the crisis of food insecurity is through its series of lectures "Changing the Way We Eat," which (according to the organization itself) not only "sparked discussion and spread ideas for improving the food system" but also earned more than 6 million views online.[50]

This, surely, is a feat of attention economics. And yet, Change Food's TEDx changemaking project is vulnerable to the same critiques leveraged against TED Talks in general, especially that such awareness-raising discourse manages to achieve little social progress.[51] TED, of course, is the thought-leader speech-making organization founded in 1984, whose titular acronym stands for *technology, entertainment*, and *design*. TED Talks, and their more localized variants, TEDx Talks, have (according to Antonio Compagnone) joined a larger discourse that seeks to render academic discourse obtainable and accessible to lay audiences.[52] They have, in short, made use of a winsome and effective variation on the information systems model of communication. Even so, pundits have questioned whether TED's wifty proclamations of the salvific possibilities in technology and innovation actually do bring change.

The problem here is that the environments that condition our social problems are not constituted by information alone. There is, admittedly, gratification in simply knowing information about what is going on with a social problem. But even if such information helps to generate empathy, it can also detach a TED audience member from the situation. The listener can be knowledgeable without being involved. To cite but one example: Change Food talks are good at extracting, out of all the melee of competing media messages, Laurie David's "gigantic parenting epiphany" experienced while "sitting at my kitchen table." They are good at showing the salience of this epiphanal information, that families should sup together.[53] But real change, argues critic Benjamin Bratton, "is not about 'personal stories of inspiration,' it's about the difficult and uncertain work of demystification and reconceptualisation: the hard stuff that really changes how we think."[54]

An ambient approach to changemaking discourse would paraphrase that criticism to say that real change requires that we change, not just how we think, but how we stand in relation to the complex dynamics of a problem's environment. Real change and hard stuff, in other words, take time—although audiences might miss that fact given the relative brevity of TED Talks. Even one of the Change Food speakers wryly mocked this brevity: "So, I've been asked today to speak briefly about why it's important to rebuild our infrastructural system and how to do it—in nine minutes."[55] There is nothing essentially wrong with brevity, of course. But what Bratton calls real change takes time, because it involves the slow disconcertment—the putting-out-of-concertedness—of factors that have long been cooperating to create the problem and the gradual re-concertment of these factors into a more sustainable, livable, human ecology.

Critics have also complained that TED speeches "blur the boundaries between profit and nonprofit activities and thus help create a new hybrid market for 'celebrity-academic-entrepreneur-innovators.'"[56] Put differently, despite their seeming apolitical cast, the talks tend to be neoliberally individualistic. Even when the talks are not individualizing, they make collectives assume passive, spectatorial roles in relation to a problem.[57] This is not to say that an appeal to individualism is bad per se—only that individualistic approaches to problem-solving tend to efface the ways that collectives unwittingly conspire to create social problems. "Rather than actually engaging the audience collectively in critical thinking via a political-economic analysis of structural problems, stories of success and resilience shape the narrative, which then, in turn, frame 'solutions' but not broader actionable projects, let alone any kind of 'movement.'"[58] Tobias Denskius and Daniel E. Essur conclude that, "It behooves scholars of international development and communication alike to identify more effective gateways for incursions into hegemonic structures as opposed to betting on the next technological tool or platform promising structural change through visual consumption."[59]

Change Food, for all their effectiveness in creating a brief, powerful point of focus, participate in an awareness-raising discourse that has itself become enormously distracting and at times debilitating. Rebekah Nagler notes that people "who reported greater exposure to contradictory information [from nutritionally focused studies] also reported greater levels of nutrition confusion. In addition, greater confusion was associated with greater backlash, and there was evidence of a significant indirect path linking exposure to backlash through confusion."[60] Popular culture now registers this distractedness and confusion. Consider the food-preoccupied stand-up comedy of Jim Gaffigan:

> We have all been told for various reasons that we are not supposed to drink cow's milk. First, the suggested replacement was soy milk. After that it was discovered that soy milk is all estrogen and we are not supposed to drink it if we would prefer that our newborn sons have testicles. Then we were told to drink rice milk, which, understandably, was revealed to be identical to drinking a huge glass of liquid carbs. Then we were told drink almond milk because, apparently, almonds make milk. However, if you have a nut allergy, you should drink hemp milk, which is supposedly like a nut-free almond milk made from rope. Eventually it will be unanimously decided that we should drink the healthiest milk of all, which is a natural form of milk that is big in Europe, called "cow's milk."[61]

Gaffigan is hardly the lone voice laughing in the wilderness about contradictory health-related awareness-raising; many pop-cultural prophets have arisen, mocking and denouncing the contradictions of food-related discourse.[62] Such comedy works by the same performative logic as the broader discourse of awareness-raising. Rickert notes that "a comedian extracts what is funny from life and the world to make an audience laugh"; awareness-raising discourse extracts from a situation vital information, betting that focus on salience will create change.[63]

But note the rhetorical wisdom of Gaffigan's humor: he rightly implies that earnest announcements of salience actually diminish attention, because they ignore the complex, tensioned ecologies from which their information arises. Gaffigan points out the contradictions between commendations of soy milk one day and goat milk the next. When they are each made the One True Way, they become silly and distracting. But when different kinds of milk are seen as elements within an ecology of natural life and human health, they may be seen as tensioned, but related. Everybody needs to eat and drink healthily, but not everyone's body can handle (just as not everybody's budget can afford) every dietary recommendation. The physiological and environmental factors that shape healthy nutrition, in other words, include far more factors than the cognitive and informative.

Indeed, more recent developments suggest that Change Food may itself be questioning the sufficiency of merely raising awareness. In 2016, the organization relinquished their license to do TEDx events in Manhattan and instead began developing what they called Change Food Fests, several-days-long events that not only offer compelling talks, but also host conversations between presenters and presented-to. Although the Fests will still feature lectures, another express aim of these events is networking farmers and businesspersons together towards the end of shared problem-solving on food-related scarcities. The events cultivate more experiential events and more collective interactions among the various participants.[64]

How do we describe the change in Change Food? The organization is still preoccupied with awareness-raising, still focused on educating people about contemporary food-related issues. But whereas they used to extract people's awareness, urging the salience of certain pieces of information, they now are helping people recognize their attendance on physical and social factors in natural and cultural life, even before they are attending *to* them. It is probably better and more accurate to describe this organization's shift in terms of a process of translation, an articulating-together of elements that otherwise would not be recognizably networked. Change Food switched from the lecture format to a more experiential format, leveraging digital mediation to give people a chance to begin, in small ways, to *move with* farmers and other eaters. Even more importantly, Change Food disclosed ways that not just information and digitality, but also the natural world of soils and seeds, precipitation and fertilizers, are immanently adjacent to people's lives. Our social media and digital devices can obscure for us the way that we are always enfolded by the natural world. Digitality can feel like a cocoon. But Change Food's change in format helped to make clear that our lives are mediated not just by the communication technology that makes six million views of TEDx videos possible, but also by the movements of wind and rain, sun and dirt, from which bodies arise and towards which they tend.

CASE STUDY: THE COMMON MARKET

This chapter turns now to a second organization, The Common Market, which helps people to notice how institutions attend on us at all times, shaping our nutrition and health.[65] Tatiana Garcia Granados and Haile Johnston founded the East Park Revitalization Alliance in 2003, communicating with their publics, not through artfully designed, exquisitely edited TED-styled talks, but rather through a highly experiential discourse. The organization's early work in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood of Philadelphia sought to raise awareness among (especially younger) food consumers, helping them to notice better, healthier foods. Helping to reorient people in relation to each other and in relation to their natural environments, the East Park Revitalization Alliance pursued transformation of neighborhood culture, one Honeycrisp apple at a time. The awareness raised was fuller and more embodied and embedded than that experience by Change Food's TED Talk audiences, but the Strawberry Mansion project was still largely focused on effecting social change through education.

But like Change Foods, the Strawberry Mansion folks underwent a sort of conversion experience. In the mid 2000s, Granados and Johnston began asking more systemic questions about the institutions and ideologies and economies operating in the background of their charitable work. Instead of trying to raise the awareness of individuals and communities, they started to pay attention to a network that was, in a sense, already attending on them: the unfair infrastructure and market distribution of food produce. Merely informing citizens about this unfairness had arguably done some good in Philadelphia, but individual awareness is only one part of a whole complex environment of factors, all of which were shaping Philadelphians' relation to the problem of food distribution. Citizens in the City of Brotherly Love might be well-educated about or oblivious to the injustice of their food systems, but that awareness or unawareness would not fundamentally alter their relationship to the problem of food distribution.

Taking a systems approach to food distribution helped make clear that significant change in broad regions required helping family-owned farms to interface with what the Common Market people came to call "anchor institutions" such as schools, universities, and industrial workplaces. In 2008, the organization began to connect the cafeterias of such institutions with small farms. This was an act of vital attention on the part of the Common Market personnel, as they noticed connections between people on tractors to people in cafeterias. But it was also an act of innovation: the Common Market created linkages among parties that would otherwise not enjoy direct contact. In so doing, the Common Market became a self-described mid-Atlantic "nonprofit regional food distributor."[66] By creating new associations among food producers, distributors, and consumers, they helped social and environmental and infrastructural entities recognize that they were adjacent to each other. By mapping systems, they were able to network farms with workplaces and academic institutions and hospitals, locating an unexpected relatability among these institutions, and circulating better food among more people than would ever have set foot in their charity programs in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood.

The Common Market's network-building seems like a move away from awareness-raising altogether. By shifting their organization's attention to trucks and packaging and spreadsheets and timetables, the Common Market seems to have left behind a personal approach to communication and gone on to a non-communicational, non-relational, non-attentional approach to societal change. But it is more accurate to say that they have intensified the relationality of their work. They have, in short, helped to bring about a translation of human beings and institutional entities that were not perceptibly, practicably related before. Again, as with Change Food, this translation happens through a process at once discursive and material: they have shown through compelling messaging, not just how individual people attend to a social problem like food distribution, but also how institutions constrain and enable that relationality. Making changes in how these institutions attend on each other and on the residents of a region helps to make possible not just a change in the public's attention, but also in the public's attendance, or its relationship with the physical and social and infrastructural conditions of food justice and sustainable distribution.

CASE STUDY: THE ALLGREEN GROUP

So far, I have discussed two kinds of environmental factors—natural worldliness, and institutionality—that are always attending on us, whether we are attending to them or not. Changing our engagement with those encompassing realities holds promise for how we attend on the wicked problems of our time. Because we have been talking about food justice, we have necessarily, though perhaps unwittingly, begun to notice another encompassing milieu in which we live and move: the movement of goods. Strange as it sounds, the movement of goods around the planet is itself a part of the ecology that constitutes our lives—and, in some cases, causes some of our thorniest problems.[67] In my two remaining case studies in this chapter, I should like to notice the ways that the networked circulation of goods can be an enormously consequential atmospheric force that constrains how late-modern citizens relate to various large-scale problems.

In order to better understand the processes that go into logistics and fulfilment, I interviewed Richard Roche, a logistics entrepreneur in Elgin, Illinois, who spent the early part of his career offering supply-chain consultancy to companies like Caterpillar, John Deere, Navistar, and Whirlpool.[68] He now serves as a Business Catalyst for an organization called One Collective, an incubator for developed and developing-world entrepreneurships.[69] Roche also serves as a company senior advisor for a fulfillment service, the AllGreen Group, which describes itself as a "3rd Party Logistics company that saves our clients money & creates long-term value in their supply chain."[70] Although most of AllGreen's business goes towards helping with freight invoice auditing, contract negotiation, and cargo insurance for developed-world clients, the company is also a social enterprise in that it does fulfilment work in the service of artisans in developing-world countries.[71] The AllGreen Group also provides logistical support to companies like Badala, Hand & Cloth, Beto's Coffee, and a.ku designs.[72]

During my visit to the incubator where Roche does his work, I also met AllGreen's president, Robert Kostelny, who showed me the small holding area where the company keeps artisanal products awaiting retail. Constructed out of narrow lumber framing, stretching from floor to ceiling, the area looks very provisional, fenced in as it is with chicken wire. Through the wire, small crates of scarves and saris and throws are visible. As we were leaving the holding area and the basement, Kostelny stopped and opened a cardboard box full of finely crafted wooden lampstands made by a developing-world craftsman. Without a fulfilment service, that woodcarver's exquisite work could not be partnered with an electrician who can add the electrical components, could not partner with a package expert who could wrap the lanterns with sufficient care and attractiveness for retail, could not connect with a department store. By creating a network that notices these solitary entrepreneurs in developing world countries, AllGreen and companies like them, make sustainable business possible for otherwise isolated artisans. Artisans ordinarily try to circulate their goods through what Roche calls a friends-and-family network. With a little luck, their business might grow a little. But without connection to a series of networks for branding, shipping, packaging, and retailing, the artisan's tiny business has little chance to scale.

Moving these goods into sustainable markets cannot simply be a matter of catching the eye of North American shoppers. Although some parts of the network involve conventional attention-capture and awareness-raising through cause-branding, the circulation of goods created by this company is not reducible to an awareness-raising project. After a company like Badala has made a deal with a developing-world artisan to sell a Badala-exclusive design, fulfilment services seek sales channels for the products, both through an online presence and through wholesalers. Meanwhile, the products that they will be selling are shipped to Elgin, where the AllGreen Group warehouses them in the basement of the One Collective building. While Badala is handling the branding and marketing and placement of the products, AllGreen handles the storage, sorting, packaging, and shipping.[73] AllGreen's fulfilment work does what this chapter has been calling translation, by revealing the potential connectedness-for-good of things and people and infrastructures and processes.

I quickly felt the force of logistical thinking in Roche's ways of talking about communication. He tends to see information as attachable to shippable goods. Imagine a developing-world artisan who has designed a sari or a coverlet. Unable to sell many such goods in her own impoverished region, she needs somehow to capture the attention of someone who could sell the product in a thriving market. That someone might turn out to be a tourist or a mission-trip volunteer, who then packs a suitcase full of the exquisitely made goods and goes home with a story about the artisan and her children. Alongside the process of moving goods, Roche explains, is a parallel communicative process of packaging and shipping a story. But as that emotionally compelling story gets told and retold, it begins to get worn out, perhaps not unlike a cardboard box that has been shipped too many times. As the audience's attention begins to flag, the artisan and the storyteller have to decide which logistical details to change: either they can change the design of the product, or they could change the packaging of the story. But the company cannot simply keep shipping out the same message.

Roche is alert to the fact that entrepreneurs cannot move their products without a good story, nor can they tell their story if the products are not well-styled. His example helps make clear how mutually involved are information and product circulations. He sees logistics and circulation as entailing more than the transmission of goods from A to B to C to D. For him, logistics and communication are tightly woven, each propelled by the other. One might take from this the insight that every package Roche helps to ship is attached to a story that will manage, or fail to manage, to capture attention. But the insight I am pointing to in this chapter is that logistical circulation of socially entrepreneurial goods has in itself an affective energy from which a story leaps forward as compelling.[74]

Consider this analogy: when a UPS truck stops outside your house, you feel a heightened interest, maybe even a measure of excitement, at the sight of that cardboard box being carried up the walk. Something about the movement of that box on its long, tortuous, and procedurally byzantine journey from some as-yet unknown source, *moves* you, too. The movement of the box and the movement of interest and attention that you feel are akin somehow—even before you know what is in the box. The package contents might be banal or unwanted; but if they happen to be desirable, their affective appeal is closely bound up to the fact that this thing arrived by delivery. The whole affective experience would be quite different if you had simply picked up the contents of the package at a nearby Target or Walmart. Roche's fulfilment services, too, have drama embedded in them; the shipping procedures and logistics mechanisms are dramatic, not just in the sense of being interesting, but in the sense of being actants.

But there is a farther role played by these circulations of stories and goods, an unexpectedly morally consequential role. AllGreen's social entrepreneurial operations create counter networks to some of the darkest circulations of our time: human trafficking. Runaway children are picked up in cities, hooked on opioids, and coerced into a dark matrix of slavery. Emigrants are packed into dangerously crowded and overheated tractor trailers with the promise of crossing a national border without notice. Parents enter prostitution in hopes of feeding their children. Human trafficking's bitterly effective transport across a network of dangerous engagements evokes a shadowy side to the power and agency of economic circulations today.

AllGreen does not make human trafficking a conspicuously salient concern of its messaging, although one of its web pages does say, "We believe that Business can be done with a purpose. That's why we give back our services to several non-profits selling products to impact the lives of those affected by human trafficking."[75] But by creating circulations of goods that seek human flourishing, the company provides counter networks to slave-trafficking circulations. By helping to circulate the handmade goods of women who have escaped sex trafficking, AllGreen helps advance circulations that function athwart the slavery circulations that criss-cross the global economy.

AllGreen's logistics do not seek to hide, but rather to reveal the networks upon which they depend. A prostitution network depends, in contrast, on obscuring the complex relationality that makes it function. Nobody buying sex wants to know where a prostitute comes from or how many children she (or, in some cases, he) cares for, or what sort of imprisoning conditions are endured in the brothel. The effectiveness of the exchange depends upon its reductionism to a speciously reciprocal exchange: money for sex. But when companies like AllGreen afford alternative employment to developing-world women, they not only associate them with productive networks, but they exemplify the value of network transparency.[76] Logistics entrepreneurship, by developing the ambient rhetoric of full-disclosure circulations, offers new ways for people to stand in relation to enslavement networks.

CASE STUDY: THE KISAN NETWORK

From the moment sleepy citizens first thumb aside an Android screen on their way to the bathroom in the morning to the last insistent, vibratory notification ten minutes after they fall asleep, they experience digitality not only as something to attend to, but also as something attending on them. Technology's presence in developed-world experience is often immersive and intelligently collaborative. But for developing-world citizens, that immersiveness and that artificial intelligence are not always immediately apparent. The distractedness of simply trying to find one's next meal obscures the presence of digital mediation's surroundings. Digitality is there, but not palpably, accessibly, manageably. Enter, the socially entrepreneurial company that formed the Kisan Network, which helps to make available a digital ecology to its customers.

We turn now to a fourth example, a logistics company called the Kisan Network founded by Sanjay Agarwalla and his son Aditya Agarwalla. The Agarwallas and their colleagues spotted something resembling a malfunctioning sender-receiver model of communication between Indian farmers and their urban counterparts, the restauranteurs and other food retailers. In the past, the senders (that is, the farmers) had to trust a middleperson to connect them to the marketplace (an auction also known as the Mandi) and often suffered gouging from that mediator. With the Mandi being between thirty and sixty miles away from the farm, the farmer sometimes had to depend on several mediators, which entailed more loss of money as the mediators set the price for the crops and determined their own cut (sometimes higher than 11% of the profits). In this system, the mediators were both the channel and the noise. They made the connection possible, but they also created static in the transmission. On the other end of the line, the receivers (that is, the restauranteurs needing to buy food) were often uncertain about the quality of crops they would be receiving and were perhaps just as much in the dark about the cost of the food as the farmers were.[77] Agarwalla himself describes the problem in attentional terms: “The problem was a lack of awareness . . . in the physical radius around their village, they’re not aware of the best price for their goods.”[78] All that was needed for DOI, in other words, was a cybernetically improved system of messaging between sender and receiver, raising awareness on both ends of the line. Agarwalla’s app enables “sales between the farmers and institutional buyers lowering costs on the buyers’ end and securing better deals for the farmers.”[79] The Kisan Network, at least at first glance, has successfully diffused innovations among farmers and retailers, thus creating social change. Behold, social change in rural India via the information systems model and DOI!

Still, I think there is a richer, more ambient way to account for what this company is achieving. Agarwalla’s innovation, I would argue, entails more than simply transporting information, raising awareness, and diffusing innovation. Think about this incongruous sight for a moment: a rice farmer stands knee-deep in water, thumbing data into his phone. Does the cellular technology seem Photoshopped onto the scene? But smartphones are increasingly ubiquitous, even in rural parts of India. Imagine your way to the other end of the transaction for a moment: envision the urban restauranteur, the market seller, the morning shopper. They are, not surprisingly, holding cellphones in their hands; but they are also holding something else rather surprising in a time of globalized food transport: hand-cultivated crops.

What makes this interaction of rudimentary agriculture and urban businesses possible? Quite simply, the pervasive presence of digitality. For these struggling farmers and these distracted city-dwellers, the conditions of possibility for a small-farm-grown piece of food is cellular technology, which in this case enables a benevolent collaboration between rice-growers and rice-shoppers. Agarwalla and his company are doing more than directing the attention of individual farmers or directing the gaze of city shop owners. They are also making apparent an attendance among people and natural environments and institutions and digital networks. Notice, too, that there is a suasive element to Kisan’s making-manifest of digital technology: they want the businesses and restaurants to attend on their network, rather than on the conventional networks composed of personal, perhaps corrupt mediators. The company is, in a sense, making its network more desirable than other, more traditional systems for selling farmed goods.[80] That, too, is what Rickert would call ambient rhetoric.

Before the Kisan Network, the farmers and perhaps the sellers, too, may have felt most closely attended by the natural and social environments. But this social entrepreneurship has translated the process of growing and selling food into an interlocking series of small processes, hooking all those processes into a sustainably attendant matrix. All these processes make apparent to farmers and buyers a new environment to navigate, a new set of cyber-pathways to traverse. In the past, the farmers engaged the soil, the rain, and the seeds; those elements constituted the environment most closely attendant on them. For all the goodness of the natural world, its attendance on humans can be overwhelming and brutalizing, too. Now, the Kisan Network discloses for farmers and restauranteurs a digital environment that can be gentler, more accessible, and more navigable than the natural spaces of their lives.

CONCLUSION

Awareness-raising discourse may be so pervasive in part because it feels good to pay close attention. It feels improving to have one's consciousness elevated, one's awareness raised. But there is a cost in submitting to the practices and technologies that sharpen and refine and extend our attentional capacities, especially when we submit the self to be monitored or even, in the age of the Fitbit, to monitor itself.[81] Such engineered attention, as Crary shows, is not sustainable: the more urgently that cultural leaders have urged people to pay attention, the more distractedness became a problem. The more powerful the technologies of attention-production became, the more vulnerable to hypnosis, daydreaming, distractedness, and exhaustion people proved to be.[82] Today, social entrepreneurs face this dilemma of salience even in their own vocations, which threaten to overwhelm them in a world of total work. Crary refers to "a permanent low-level attentiveness" in which "the loosely connected machinic network for electronic work, communication, and consumption has not only demolished what little had remained of the distinction between leisure and labor but has come, in large arenas of Western social life, to determine how temporality is inhabited."[83] Today's aggressive norms of attentiveness—underwritten as they are by technologies and ideologies of self-monitoring—may actually exacerbate social problems.

What is bad for the individual attender is arguably even worse for society and the natural environment. The engines of capitalism require consumers to be awake for as often as possible, but the technologies that keep humans awake also endanger the world. Crary notes that "24/7 is inseparable from environmental catastrophe in its declaration of permanent expenditure, of endless wastefulness for its sustenance, in its terminal disruption of the cycles and seasons on which ecological integrity depends."[84] Given that the press and demands of individualistic attention can be so personally fatiguing and so environmentally deleterious, this chapter has suggested other attendances which social entrepreneurs might help their distracted publics to navigate.

This chapter has searched out the attentional work of social entrepreneurs, studying their organizational communication not only via information distribution, but also via translation of physical, institutional, logistical, and digital processes into engageable networks. Social entrepreneurs quite simply do something else with human attention besides capturing it, monetizing it, constraining it. They find ways to hook human attention into networks of involvement for social good and ecological sustainability. Instead of using digital tools to extract attention for abstract information, social entrepreneurs can, as the case studies in this chapter have shown, use digital media to engage the immersive conditions of human lives, altering how people recognize themselves in relation to various predicaments.[85] Because this process can be bemusing and bewildering, social entrepreneurs, as this next chapter will detail, often find themselves turning to third-party experts for wisdom in engaging the circulations of wicked problems of the day.

NOTES

1. Todd Gitlin, *Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002), 120.

2. Richard Lanham, *The Economics of Attention: Style and Substance in the Age of Information* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 7.

3. Laura Zumdahl (CEO of New Moms), interview by the author, June 19, 2017.

4. William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2 (New York: Dover, 1918), 403–404.

5. Wayne Wu, *Attention* (London: Routledge, 2014). Reviewing neuro- and psychological research, as well as phenomenological analysis, Wu offers an exhaustive summation of attentional literature and concludes that attention is selection for the purposes of taking action. Wu says, that the empirically sufficient condition of attention—or what a neuro-psychologist has to see in order to be able to say, *Yes, that right there,* that *is attention* is quite simply selection. In analytically precise language, Wu explains, "Subject *S* perceptually attends to *X* if *S* perceptually selects *X* to guide performance of some experimental task *T*, i.e., selects *X* for that task" (39). In support of this attention-as-selection-for-action claim, Wu martials neural research's account of attention, despite the fact that neural scientists often assume a mechanistic understanding of attention, claiming that the phenomenon results from a neural competition between different spikings in the brain—whichever focus earns the most

spikings, in other words, gets attention. Wu argues that neural spiking "gives rise to attention *when it serves the selection for task*" (71).

6. Maggie Jackson, *Distracted: The Erosion of Attention and the Coming Dark Age* (New York: Prometheus, 2009), 25.

7. Maria Konnikova, *Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes* (New York: Penguin, 2013), 73.

8. Thomas de Zengotita, *Mediated: How the Media Shapes Your World and the Way You Live in It* (New York, Bloomsbury, 2005); Gitlin, *Media Unlimited,* 208. "As for the media as a whole, what could stop the flood but a catastrophic breakdown of civilization?" (Gitlin 208).

9. Maggie Jackson, *Distracted*, 25; Susan Cain, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* (New York: Crown, 2012); Winifred Gallagher, *Rapt: Attention and the Focused Life* (New York, Penguin, 2009), 28; Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: How the Internet Is Changing the Way We Read, Think, and Remember* (London: Atlantic, 2010); Daniel Goleman, *Focus: The Hidden Driver of Excellence* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013). The quoted matter is from Jackson, *Distracted,* 25.

10. Farm Journal Foundation website, accessed July 31, 2017, http://www.farmersfeedingtheworld.org/.

11. Native Tongue website, accessed July 31, 2017, https://www.nativetonguemag.com/.

12. Anna Lappe, "About," Food Mythbusters, accessed July 31, 2017. http://foodmyths.org/sample-page/.

13. "Blue Sky Bakery & Café," accessed August 3, 2017, http://blue-sky-bakery.org/. To Blue Sky's credit, this job-training social enterprise offers far more than awareness-raising discourse.

14. Julie Beck, "What Good Is 'Raising Awareness?'" *The Atlantic* (April 21, 2015), accessed July 31, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/04/what-good-is-raising-awareness /391002/.

15. "Health Awareness Days: Sufficient Evidence to Support the Craze?" *American Journal of Public Health* 105 no. 6 (June 2015):1061–5. Accessed July 31, 2017. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih. gov/ pmc/articles/PMC4431079/.

16. "Raising Awareness of Why We Don't Need More Awareness," *WhyDev* (April 1, 2014), accessed July 31, 2017, http://www.whydev.org/raising-awareness-of-why-we-dont-need-more-awareness/.

17. Stuart Sutherland, "Feature Selection," *Nature* 392 (March 26, 1998): 350. I will not in this chapter address the neuropsychological distinctions that obtain among terms such as *awareness*, *consciousness*, and *attention*. For the unscientific purposes of this chapter, I use these terms more or less interchangeably, as they are used in the literature on awareness-raising.

18. "Awareness Is Overrated," *New York Magazine* (July 17, 2014), accessed July 31, 2017, http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2014/07/awareness-is-overrated.html.

19. Christopher Marquis, Andrew Park, "Inside the Buy-One-Give-One Model," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (Winter 2014), 32–33.

20. Zumdahl, interview by the author, June 19, 2018.

21. Tim Nudd, "SNL Imagines an Immigration-Themed Cheetos Ad in Brutal Sendup of Inclusive Advertising," AdWeek website (February 12, 2017), http://www.adweek.com/creativity/snl-imagines-an-immigration-themed-cheetos-ad-in-brutal-sendup-of-inclusive-advertising/.

22. "Has Brand Purpose Jumped the Shark?" *Campaign US* (March 1, 2017), accessed August 2, 2017, http://www.campaignlive.com/article/brand-purpose-jumped-shark/1425781.

23. Ibid.

24. The phenomenon of television binge-watching has caught the eye of business theorists who note the pronounced personal problems created by watching too many episodes of *Game of Thrones* or *The X-Files*. Lindsay Dodgson, "Problems caused by binge-watching could go even deeper than previously thought," *Business Insider* http://www.businessinsider.com/tv-binge-watching-can-damage-your-health-2017–9. Regarding cause fatigue, a gender-focused study of responses to cause-related messaging found evidence that pro-social discourse can exhaust people's capacities to respond meaningfully. "Women Are Strongest Believers in the Power of Supporting Causes," Center for Social Impact Communication, Georgetown University, http://www.theagitator.net/wp-content/uploads/OPR_SM_GT_WomenCauses.pdf.

25. Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention. Spectacle. and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 17.

26. Ecclesiastes 1:8.

27. Plato discusses the dangers of writing indirectly in *Phaedrus*, trans., Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co), 79–84. Regarding the overwhelmingness of digital media see, Gitlin, 15–24.

28. Luke 10:41–42, NRSV.

29. Augustine, *Confessions*, Translated by Garry Wills (New York: Penguin, 2006), Book. 10, Chapter 36.

30. Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext, 2001), 171. Pre-moderns understood attention as a not-very-important part of cognition, but "a marginal, at best secondary problem within explanations of mind and consciousness that either did not constitutively depend on it or in which it was one of a constellation of equally significant and mutually dependent faculties" Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press) 18.

31. Crary, *Suspensions*, 14–15.

32. *Ibid*., 24.

33. By the 1870s, Crary notes, attention was "consistently being attributed a central and formative role in accounts of how a practical or knowable world of objects comes into being for a perceiver" (21).

34. Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 5.

35. *Ibid.*, 13, 17, 23–29. Nikolas Rose speaks similarly of "the birth of a new form of expertise, an expertise of subjectivity" whom he refers to as "'engineers of the human soul.'" *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self,* 2nd ed. (London: Free Association Books, 1999), 3.

36. This paragraph's discussion of attention is indebted to Crary, especially 12–13.

37. Jason Moosikkammol (lead writer for *Native Tongue*, a socially entrepreneurial magazine) interview by author, July 13, 2017.

38. Appropriating the work of an earlier sociologist, Gabriel Tarde, Rogers develops the concept of diffusion as "the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system." Everett Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations,* 5th ed (New York: Free Press, 2003), 41–42, 5. Jati Srivastava and Jennifer J. Moreland, "Diffusion of Innovations: Communication Evolution and Influences," *The Communication Review*, 15, no. 4 (2012), 297.

39. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 35–38.

40. *Diffusion of Innovations,* 8–11, 147, 157–158, 159–161.

41. I am indebted to Rickert for these insights about the multiple agencies at work in a rhetorical situation. See especially, *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2013), xviii, 116.

42. Gitlin, 7.

43. Catherine Gouge and John Jones, "Wearables, Wearing, and the Rhetorics that Attend to Them," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 46.3 (2016): 199–206.

44. Rickert, 1.

45. *Ibid*., 3.

46. For discussion of ANT's idiosyncratic understanding of translation, see Latour, 108, as well as Darryl Cressman, "A Brief Overview of Actor-Network Theory: Punctualization, Heterogeneous Engineering & Translation," PDF, April, 2009, http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Cressman-ABriefOverviewofANT.pdf.

47. Steve D. Brown, "Michel Serres: Science, Translation and the Logic of the Parasite," pre-publication draft on Academia.edu, *Theory, Culture & Society,* 19.3 (2002), 4.

48. Change Food website, accessed July 31, 2017, http://www.changefood.org/.

49. *Ibid*.

50. "TEDxManhattan: Changing the Way We Eat," Change Food website, accessed July 31, 2017, http://www.changefood.org/projects/tedxmanhattan/.

51. Evgeny Morozov, "The Naked and the TED," *New Republic* (August 1, 2012), accessed July 31, 2017, https://newrepublic.com/article/105703/the-naked-and-the-ted-khanna. Thomas Frank, "TED Talks Are Lying to You," *Salon*, (October 13, 2013), accessed July 31, 2017, http://www.salon.com/2013/10/13/ted_talks_are_lying_to_you/.

52. Antonio Compagnone, "The Pragmatics of Spoken Academic Discourse in the Framework of TED Talks: A Case Study," *Utrecht Studies in Language & Communication* 29 (2016), 71–72, 87. For discussion of the popularity, power, and rhetorical significance of TED Talks, see Paul Stob's book review of *Talk like TED*, *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101 no. 1 (February 2015): 311–314.

53. "Dinner Makes a Difference: Laurie David at TEDxManhattan," TEDx Manhattan, last modified Apr 2, 2011, accessed July 31, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzB0BDstCI0.

54. "We Need to Talk about TED," *The Guardian* (December 30, 2013), accessed July 31, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/30/we-need-to-talk-about-ted.

55. “Rebuilding our Food System Infrastructure: Michael Conard at TEDxManhattan,” TEDx Manhattan, last modified May 31, 2011, accessed July 31, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8lC6xxaX7g.

56. Tobias Denskus & Daniel E. Esser, “TED Talks on International Development: Trans-Hegemonic Promise and Ritualistic Constraints,” *Communication Theory* 25 (2015), 181.

57. *Ibid.*, 178, 182.

58. *Ibid.*, 178.

59. *Ibid.*, 183.

60. “Adverse Outcomes Associated With Media Exposure to Contradictory Nutrition Messages,” *Journal of Health Communication*, 19 (2014), 35.

61. Jim Gaffigan, *Food: A Love Story* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2014), 101.

62. But for other popular examinations of contradictory food-related studies see, John Oliver, “Scientific Studies: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)” Last Week Tonight, accessed August 2, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Rnq1NpHdmw. See also “This Is Why Eating Healthy Is Hard (Time Travel Dietician),” *Funny or Die*, accessed August 3, 2017, http://www.funnyordie.com/videos/74dd9afee2/time-travel-dietician-this-is-why-eating-healthy-is-hard. For yet another example, consider the furor created by the Netflix documentary *What the Health?* See Ileana Lobkowicz, “Go Vegan or Go Home: Netflix’s ‘What the Health’ Explores Diet and Disease,” *The Gavel* (August 2, 2017), accessed August 3, 2017, http://www.bcgavel.com/2017 /08/02/go-vegan-or-go-home/.

63. Rickert, 160.

64. For example, they are considering offering dinners shared, not in a conference ballroom, but on farms themselves. “Change Food Fest 2018,” Change Food website, accessed August 2, 2017, http://www.changefood. org/events/change-food-fest-2018/.

65. The following background information on The Common Market derives from several sources: “East Park Revitalization Alliance,” East Park Revitalization Alliance website, accessed August 3, 2017, http://epralliance.org/about-us/mission-and-history/; Colleen DeBlaise, “This Philadelphia Entrepreneur Is Helping Fix a Broken Food System,” *CNBC*, accessed August 3, 2017, https://www.cnbc.com/2017/06/14/this-philadelphia-entrepreneur-is-helping-fix-a-broken-food-system.html; “About The Common Market,” The Common Market website, accessed August 3, 2017, https://www.thecommonmarket.org/about/the-common-market. The videos embedded in the CNBC and Common Market websites provided valuable information as well.

66. “About The Common Market,” Change Food website, accessed August 2, 2017, https://www.thecommonmarket. org/about/the-common-market.

67. Consider the example of rapid and voluminous circulations of drugs in the United States, circulations with pervasive consequences impossible to trace to any one person or set of persons.

68. Roche, interview by author, July 18, 2017.

69. For security reasons due to the international nature of Roche’s work, his company’s website does not include names or profiles of some administrators in the company.

70. "Who We Are," AllGreen website, accessed August 3, 2017, http://ag-sc.com/.

71. "Business with a Mission," AllGreen website, accessed August 3, 2017, http://ag-sc.com/.

72. *Ibid*.

73. Roche, interview by the author, July 28, 2017.

74. Rickert 160. "On this account, rhetoric cannot be reduced to the intent—deliberate or posited—to persuade, for we have to include the larger background, including our activity against which the particular assemblage of elements comes to be seen as suasive" (160). Regarding the circulation of emotions and objects, see Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion,* 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2015), 5.

75. "Business with a Mission," AllGreen website, http://ag-sc.com/.

76. Rickert, 189.

77. Much of the information about the company's background in this section of the essay comes from Jonathan Sheiber, "Y Combinator-Backed Kisan Network Is Transforming the Rural Indian Agricultural Market," *Tech Crunch* (March 9, 2016), accessed August 3, 2017, https://techcrunch.com/ 2016/03/09/y-combinator-backed-kisan-network-is-transforming-the-rural-indian-agricultural-market/.

78. "Y Combinator-backed Kisan Network Transforming the Rural Indian Agricultural Market," Techcrunch website (March 9, 2016), https://techcrunch.com/2016/03/09/y-combinator-backed-kisan-network-is-transforming-the-rural-indian-agricultural-market/.

79. Forbes website, https://www.forbes.com/profile/aditya-agarwalla/?list=30under30-social-entrepreneurs.

80. As Michel Callon would describe this feisty, somewhat agonistic mode of networking: Kisan has "to build devices which can be placed between them and all other entities who want to define their identity otherwise." Otherwise, their constellation falls apart. "Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay," in *Power. Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge*. Sociological Review Monograph, 32, Edited by John Law (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 208.

81. "What is important to institutional power, since the late nineteenth century, is simply that perception function in a way that insures a subject is productive, manageable, and predictable, and is able to be socially integrated and adaptive." Crary, *Suspensions of Perception* 4.

82. *Ibid*., 14, 65–72.

83. *Ibid.*, 77–78.

84. Crary, *24/7* 10.

85. Changemaking discourse can thus become "a responsive way to reveal the world for others . . . in our attempts to reattune or transform how others inhabit the world in a way that leads them to act (or not)." Rickert, *Ambient Rhetoric*, 186–187.

Chapter 3

How to Address Complex Audiences (To Speed Circulation)

CHANGEMAKER CONSULTANCY

Not all social entrepreneurs, as I have just discussed, understand their vocation in terms of raising awareness and educating the public. Many posture themselves as changemakers, as system-disruptors, as relentless problem-solvers, and—in a sensibility that endears them to academics like me—as life-long learners. Given the complexity of their hybrid organizations, they constantly seek expertise that will help them make the structural changes that will make the world better, not least when it comes to communication practice. I encountered the social entrepreneur's life-long-learner posture while interviewing Charlie Branda, the founder and president of the social enterprise Art on Sedgwick, who turned the tables on me and asked for assistance—specifically, the help of my Persuasive Speaking students during the fall semester of 2017—in designing some public presentations she was expecting to have to deliver on behalf of her company. Both my interview with Branda, as well as my students' consulting work with her gave evidence for her citizenly concern for the flourishing of her neighborhood. Her conversation-starting projects suggested a conviction that improving neighborly communication could help "correct the soul of a citizenry damaged by liberalism, television, the market, technocratic reasoning, therapeutic discourse, and consumer culture."[1]

Branda is hardly alone among entrepreneurs in seeking out help with communication. Changemakers, as it happens, consult a great deal, both as consultants and as clients. Faced with the communicationally overwhelming conditions of late modernity, social entrepreneurs turn for expert advice to firms now proliferating across the social business scape, including organizations like NESST, Blended Profit, 180 Degrees Consulting, Aperio, Good Company Ventures, Root Capital, and the Social Enterprise Consulting Lab of Unite Sight.[2] This chapter is interested in how these consultants' expertise commends an inhabitable way of standing in the midst of a social problem. If cultural predicaments are today too multidirectional, too overdetermined, too digitally emergent to be addressed by concentrated, unitary measures, then what is needed may be a communicable sociability—that is, a contagious way of relating—in which people make countless small modifications for the good of ordinary life in communities.[3]

RHETORIC ON SEDGWICK

At least at first, though, it might not be clear why changemakers like Branda would need to seek out other people's communicational expertise at all. Branda quickly showed herself to be a compelling and quick-spoken conversationalist, alert to nonverbal cues, apt at appropriating her interlocutors' wording, accustomed to using dialogue to negotiate the standpoints of people who live on Sedgwick Avenue. She began our interview, as so many skilled communicators do, with a vividly personal story.

One day she heard gunshots across the street from her home, where she had lived for a decade. Unacquainted with the victimized family, she felt unable to offer meaningful condolences. As she put it, she did not even know where to take a casserole. She further suspected that all of her neighbors, both the affluent on the south side of the street and the less affluent on the other, would feel similarly out of touch with each other. So Branda, a one-time commercial banker, determined to secure abandoned real estate on the avenue in order to open a studio called Art on Sedgwick. Her hope was that if diverse children could make things together, all kinds of people in the neighborhood would not only take care and pride for where they live, but come to communicate with each other more generously and with more understanding.

Accordingly, Branda has developed projects such as the "My Street, My Voice, Our Story" initiative, in which neighborhood children interviewed each other, took each other's photographic portraits, and digitally impressed these images on kites. Later, they flew the kites in a big green space, holding aloft each other's aspirations. Art on Sedgwick also launched a campaign called "You Make This Place Beautiful," posting portraits of local people on public school fencing. When I stopped and stared for awhile at the "Before I Die" chalkboard on an abandoned building across the street from Art on Sedgwick—a place for passersby to jot a note about yearnings and ambitions—I was impressed that Branda is good at getting people to tell their stories, getting their voices heard in the neighborhood.

But Branda nonetheless confesses that public communication is a challenging project. What she shared with my Persuasive Speaking course, when we stopped by Art on Sedgwick on a Saturday morning in September, 2017, sent them to the resources of classical rhetorical theory and the readings and conversations of our class. Accordingly, they asked what the timely message might be, what stasis kept neighbors from engaging with neighbors, what emotions Branda might appeal to to argue for support of the common good, what exigence should drive her rhetoric. How, for example, might Branda persuade well-off families to support an art program designed to unite the neighborhood across socioeconomic lines—especially when such families pay good money to send their children to wealthy schools such as Catherine Cooke or Franklin Fine Arts Center in order to keep them away from other students attending the less privileged Manierre Elementary School in the same neighborhood? How can she heal the communications of a neighborhood when mothers and school children and gang members experience the boundaries of Sedgwick Avenue in ways that no city map could delineate. (Some children blithely cross intersections that, for gang-related reasons, other children dare not approach at all.) Although my students' use of classical rhetorical theory encouraged a careful examination of local contexts and communal prejudices, they did not at first reckon with digitality's complication of Sedgwick's rhetorical situation.

THE DILEMMA OF SIMULTANEITY

Branda's comments hinted at another set of pressures that also challenged conventional rhetorical and communicational theory. "The truth is, I think everybody's so busy just keeping up with their life. . . . [P]eople have jobs and there's a lot of economic pressure, and they have families and . . . they don't have time to sit down and think about what the real situation is."[4] Branda's observation suggests that alongside the challenge of human prejudice is the overwhelming simultaneity of everyday work schedules that never quite synch with the semesterly grid of local schooling, not to mention the ups and downs of the global economy and the regular disconcertments of news cycles in an encompassing world of digital messaging. Many things that overwhelm us today seem, at first and second glance, good for human life and exchange. Jobs ask our best efforts, even if we find ourselves doing work for many more than forty hours a week. Children's programming leverages them into new competencies, even as it makes their parents feel like Uber drivers. Globalization makes astonishing connectivity possible, even as digital technology widens gaps between people sitting right next to each other. But what makes these things overwhelming is their simultaneity. Their all-at-once-ness, at one and the same time, holds promise and threat: they promise friendship and community, challenge and achievement; but they also reveal the chafing contact that communication so often suffers. At the center of this snarl of aspiration and difference, good intentions and bad, inadvertency and overwhelmedness are the practices and devices of human exchange—practices and devices that do not usually make lived experience simpler or fuller.[5]

Our communication tools, and the distracted way of being that they carry with them, decenter our sense of time and place. The problem-solving deliberation that Branda calls the Sedgwick folk to requires a certain settled, centered situation, a place where people can come together and consider possibilities together. A specific avenue, a particular neighborhood would seem ideal for this conversational figuring-things-out. But as Ronald Greene notes, digital life "disrupts the preferred temporality of rhetorical deliberation."[6] Not only is it difficult to find schedulable time in our harried situation for the communicative exchange that an entrepreneur like Branda seeks, but there are, in fact, too many "times" going all at once. Harried participants inhabit simultaneous and conflicting schedules, as their peripheral attention constantly registers devices that vibrate, screens that flicker, threads and posts that stream on all the peripheries of their talk.

For every speech Branda gives, for every art project her studio produces, there is another tweet, another YouTube video, another *Tribune* article with a story of violence that makes neighborliness seem risky. Call it the dilemma of simultaneity: artful communication requires that one speak in a timely and contextually appropriate way, and yet digital mediation ensures that no matter how aptly one speaks, there is always another message that counters that timeliness with another. The omnipresence of digital mediation pervades many seemingly boundaried neighborhoods with boundaryless energy fields. In Branda's attempts to communicate the "us-ness" of Sedgwick Avenue, virtual connectivity pervades the neighborhood without having much to do with the street itself or its residents.

I will use Michael Warner's term and call this diffusely shared space a public. Note that it is not *the* public in the politician's sense of that term—"The public has spoken!"—but *a* public, a virtual entity that "comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation."[7] One cannot organize a public by municipal regulations, nor count its attendance with a clicker, nor trace its boundaries by cartography; instead a public organizes itself emergently, contingently, unexpectedly. No social entrepreneur can, in other words, tell a public to kindly sit down and pay attention. The only thing to do with a public, so to speak, is to wade into its undifferentiated, constantly changeable flow, like Instagrammers or Pinteresters who surf the posts and re-postings of their feeds, feeling all the while how awash they are in a current of digitality.

ADDRESSING A PUBLIC, ENTERING A CIRCULATION

Despite the seeming unimportance of individual communicators in such a flow, I think Branda's impulse to seek other people's communicational expertise (in this case, the growing competence of undergraduate scholars) is right in at least this sense: we can learn how to engage publics communicationally and relationally. Publics are, after all, audiences, in a sense, even if they are what Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst would call *diffused audiences*.[8] But this audience does not function like other gatherings, other assemblies, or even the watchers of a mass-mediated event. Two March Madness bingewatchers, who meet incidentally after a game at a fast-food counter, can establish a certain commonality within minutes on the basis of their having watched the same game at the same time, even if not in the same place. Diffused audiences are, in contrast, wholly estranged from each other.[9] In digital space, an asynchronous public merges "strangers through participation alone."[10] The one thing diffused audiences share is concentration on a set of texts.[11]

Think of the way that millions of Twitter users pay attention to the gulf stream of tweets, re-tweets, direct-messaging, and likes. That public of tweeters is only possible because of widespread engrossment with the Twitter platform. "Because a public exists only by virtue of address, it must predicate some degree of attention, however notional, from its members."[12] Perhaps what most sharply distinguishes a diffused from a simple or mass audience, is that in such virtual collectives, "everyone becomes an audience all the time."[13] These members of a diffused collective cannot be reached through direct, intentional transaction, because they are neither localized nor globalized, neither public nor private, neither focused nor distracted.[14] "Being a member of a diffused audience is not necessarily to be in a position of receiving a message from a producer of messages; it is not like being *addressed* by a producer."[15] Instead, these audiences are *virtual* in the sense that what defines them is how they relate (through a kind of neighborliness with discourse) rather than who they are. Their virtuality is constituted by what Jenkins calls "structures of relation."[16]

When pursuing change in a neighborhood, it would seem that the communicational tools closest to hand are practices like forming coalitions, serving as mediators in intercultural dialogues, tending the talk of a neighborhood, forging a network of institutions, and caring for the communicative practices of a community. But what communicative action is available to an entrepreneurial communicator like Branda, when workplace demands and domestic changeability and affective globalism and digital mediation conspire to create a protean circulation of messaging and being-messaged? When neither "an actual addressee (an empirical audience, a known receiver) nor an implied addressee (an audience as persona or figurative effective of discourse) can exhaust the possible interactions among strangers made possible by circulating discourses," how might business meliorists help bring unwitting and unrelated subjects into involvement with the discourses of social entrepreneurship?[17]

This chapter's answer appeals to a variant on a Marxist concept called interpellation, a communicative process that occurs when a discourse calls out a subject in such a way that the subject recognizes itself as already belonging to a discourse, to an ideology. Louis Althusser's famous example of this process describes a police officer shouting, "Hey you!" to someone on the street: the man turns, and in the act of acknowledging being spoken to, sees himself as a responsive citizen—in a sense, *becomes* a responsive citizen—beholden to the authority of the state. This communicative process explains why a great deal of marketing and advertisement addresses viewers in the second person; the message "hey-you's" the person as already belonging to the apparatus and ideology of consumerism. In the case of social entrepreneurs, interpellation might hail constituents to recognize themselves as a part of the public of business meliorism.[18]

The difficulty with this concept is that, at one and the same time, it gives too much authority to a discourse (Branda cannot just interpellate people at will by calling, "Hey you, Sedwick neighbor!") and underestimates the material and affective stubbornness of people's ordinary lived experience. People's lives are bigger and sloppier than any of the discourses they live in, any of the messages they attend to, whether in their jobs or their schools or their gangs or their neighborhoods.[19] Furthermore, they are often members of unwitting and highly mobile publics. "The diffuse and circulatory path of a public," writes Greene, "is potentially infinite, and the indefinite others to whom texts are addressed exist as strangers who do not know with whom they interact."[20] To try to interpellate this audience in a sovereign, direct, focused way would be like trying to speak to everyone on Facebook at once. No one person's posts can dominate the interactions of a digital platform, because diffused-audience interactions are too multidirectional, too numerous, and too estranged from each other to be assembled into a unified sender-receiver situation.

But this chapter argues that one viable approach to this problem for social entrepreneurs like Branda is to create a temporary posture, an affective comportment, that people can take up and put down as they move among the callings of their lives. This sort of interpellation would work primarily in a circulation of being cited and re-cited, performed and re-performed.[21] Social entrepreneurs who accept this way of thinking would need to see their construction of and participation in a shareable comportment as proleptic, anticipatory, now-and-not-yet. As Judith Butler notes, "The mark interpellation makes is not descriptive, but inaugurative. It seeks to introduce a reality rather than report on an existing one; it accomplishes this introduction through a citation of an existing convention."[22] Such an interpellation does its work, its patient, persistent, even relentless work, even when no one turns around to the "Hey you!" of a communicator like Branda. (Indeed, the comportment does its influencing work, even when Branda herself says nothing.)[23] Such posture-construction is an elusive and multilateral task, one that almost certainly requires the assistance of third-party experts. Practitioners like Branda would be wise to seek consultants, then, not simply to learn how to become better public speakers themselves, but also to catch and learn to convey an affective manner, which, if adopted, helps souls recognize themselves, here and there, now and then, as participants in business meliorism.

I have selected the case studies of this chapter among consultancy organizations who are representative third-party experts. I have selected them, in other words, not on the basis of their particular programs so much as the fact that they use three typical approaches that social entrepreneurs are likely to run into. My first case study of the creative advertising agency, School, shows how a disseminational-constructivist model of communication catalyzes the affective posture of *knowing sincerity* towards big social problems. Lime Red Studio, in my second case study, practices a dialogical communication model that brings with it an affective sensibility, *attachable authenticity*, that enables a company to be comfortable in its own identity while being open to others' as well. Finally, my third case study traces a tendency within an algorithmic model of communication, a tendency towards optimization, which translates into an affective sensibility that I will call *intertextual asperation*.[24] As these consultants at B Lab use their communicational expertise to help other companies to recognize themselves relating to the world in this changemaker fashion, such enthusiastic self-recognition contributes to the spread of changemaking as a virtual comportment.[25]

As this chapter's conclusion will suggest, rethinking socially entrepreneurial consultancy also suggests a different role for expertise in the conversations of late-modern democracy. Instead of construing expertise as a prior possession of certain astute individuals (brand designers, consultants, certifiers), which can then be passed on to other studious individuals (such as earnestly altruistic corporate executives) and eventually used to gather and direct a potentially powerful collective (a company's target audience) to solve a social problem (an epidemic in Rwanda), expertise is a collective living arrangement for citizenly companies who learn to see themselves as inhabiting a shared posture towards and within business meliorism.

CASE STUDY: SCHOOL'S DISSEMINATIONAL DISCOURSE AND THE TWEE SUBJECT

The field of brand consultancy is often dominated by data-driven findings.[26] But School, a Boulder-Colorado-based creative agency does not lead with numbers; it leads with maxims. All the way through the company's website, the browser encounters slogan after slogan: "Purpose is the new digital." "The power of purpose is a massive competitive advantage." "We believe the experience is the message." "If you want to rock the world, all you need are the right people and and not enough time." A page simply, if crudely, entitled "#giveashit," includes the following: "Three words carved into our ethos. A reminder to be better. To do better. That good enough sucks. We believe that purpose is the new digital and that good is the new cool. We believe that brands are made up of people who are responsible for people."[27] These aphorisms are, as it turns out, characteristic of the rhetoric of the CEO of the firm, Max Lenderman, who has a gift for artful, quirky, blunt, and memorable phrases that appear calibrated for rapid circulation within the conversations and communities of brand design and management. At a Denver conference for 99U Local, Lenderman frames his talk, "How to Try and Give a Shit," with a series of short sayings, such as "Go on a (hard) adventure," "Study your craft and practice often," and "Toil in Meaninglessness."[28] His blog posts feature smartly framed clauses such as, "The situation is hopeless but not serious," and a Lenderman article in *AdWeek* asserts, "Embracing peculiarity can be a strong creative force."[29]

These aphorisms give evidence for School's tacitly commended communication model. Because School's consultancy puts greater trust in the resources of short-form language choices and vivid rhetorical and aesthetic experience than in the acuity of numbers and metrics, its maxims function like what ancient rhetoricians would call "commonplaces," or opinions held by a community, things that people quite simply say without thinking. In that sense, the communication modeled by the company tends toward the communal, the collective, the constructivist. In order for this style of consultancy to be efficacious, others have to contribute to the power of these maxims by reciting and circulating them. The company uses a similarly collectivist and constructivist communication model in its "Night School" for busy brand developers, a workshop that sounds like a massively interactional, collectively constructed jam session, "a 24-hour brand hack" that "brings our strategists and creatives together in a rapid ideation and prototyping session to solve brand problems, create solutions and get inspired within an abbreviated format."[30]

But not all of School's communication is as performative and constructivist as the communication theory I have drawn on throughout this book. Although the School website uses the pronoun "we" quite liberally, the most frequently cited voice is Lenderman's own. The website describes him as a "principal" at School, and he certainly is a principal voice in disseminating the company's ideas to its mass audience.[31] Furthermore, he appears to be positioning himself also as something of a prominent guru in the world of brand management, not least in his two books *Experience the Message: How Experiential Marketing Is Changing the Brand World* and *Brand New World*.[32] In these books, Lenderman unites "aspirational capitalism" with "a great humanitarian mission" in a way reminiscent of David Sessions's description of contemporary stand-ins for public intellectuals.[33] Similarly, Daniel W. Drezner contrasts a Lenderman-style communicator with a conventional public intellectual in this way:

> Thought leaders develop their own singular lens to explain the world, and then proselytize that worldview to anyone within earshot. Both public intellectuals and thought leaders engage in acts of intellectual creation, but their style and purpose are different. Public intellectuals know enough about many things to be able to point out intellectual charlatans. Thought leaders know one big thing and believe that their important idea will change the world.[34]

Lenderman's thought-leader disseminational tendencies emerge in the company's promises to help companies "tell the world" and "rock the world" and even "change the world," phrases which evoke powerful idea-transmission on a broad scale.[35] Whether the reader is taken with Lenderman's one, big, world-changing idea or not, his communicative style raises a question about School's communication model: why is it that some elements of the company's rhetoric seem to commend a constructivist model of communication, while others function unilaterally through dissemination to mass audiences? Is School's commended model of communication schizophrenic, sometimes disseminational, sometimes constructivist?

I think an answer to these questions can be found in the affective sensibility that accompanies the communication practice that the company tacitly commends. Along with its sometimes disseminational, sometimes constructivist modeling of communication, School advances an affective sensibility, a way of standing in relation to the world's wicked problems, that has some resemblance to what Marc Spitz's book calls *Twee*, but enjoys a closer approximation to what Jesse Thorn and others have called the "new sincerity."[36]

Conversations about sincerity often trace back to Leon Trilling, whose literary study traces sincerity to its early modern appearance among early modern Elizabethan courtiers, capitalists, and Shakespearean characters—not least Polonius, who in *Hamlet* tells Laertes, "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."[37] In later modernity, this sincerity eventually gave way to the fatigued flippancy of postmoderns with the result that writers like David Foster Wallace have called for a return to sincerity.[38] Fitzgerald cites not only Wallace, but writers like Michael Chabon and Jonathan Franzen and Zadie Smith for writing newly sincere "popular books with a strong sense of morality."[39] It is that knowing sincerity that School's messaging commends as an affective stance for business meliorists.

When School announces with an apparently straight face, "We want to change the world through advertising, marketing and innovation"; when the company website features #giveashit videos with messages about empathy, fathers, and Earth Day; when CEO Lenderman sports twee baby blue eyeglasses and a grinning, self-mocking shrug, the company performs an aesthetic sensibility in which (as Franzen writes) "the emphasis on sincerity and authenticity that has arisen has made it un-ironically cool to care about spirituality, family, neighbors, the environment, and the country."[40] The company's constant emphasis on purposefulness clearly reinforces what Spitz calls "a passion project . . . a force of good and something to live for."[41] Admittedly, such passion projects can be highly suspect in a cynical time when "the very purity of the ideas of altruism and sacrifice has become the easy target of ridicule and rejection."[42] But then, the knowing sincerity that Lenderman's School presents is all about braving the ridicule and rejection of cynics. James Parker might almost have been speaking of Lenderman when he wrote for the *Atlantic,* "He is easily ironized because he comes, in a sense, pre-ironized."[43]

That combination of passion project and knowing sincerity helps to explain the apparently contradictory combination of disseminational and constructivist communication models in School's messaging. An advocate for a passion project in a skeptical world needs to offer a Lenderman-style monologue at once (to cite Parker again) "passionately affronted and defiant" and sporting "an actual moral application."[44] On the other hand, if the company's ideas are to spread, they cannot be the property of a sovereign CEO, but must instead be a collective project. In other words, School does commend both a disseminational and a constructivist model of communication, but these models together carry with them a discrete, if complex, comportment towards social problems.[45] Whether a dissemination (or, for that matter, a constructivist) model of communication will itself solve wicked problems is highly dubious. But a model can be, after all, a material net to catch an aesthetic sensibility, in this case the affective stance embodied in knowing sincerity. School's attempt to communicate a sensibility takes a gamble that a highly amenable stance towards world problems, a stance that is at once grandiose and humble, earnest and arch, vainly promise to enable companies not to make the smooth, sovereign movements that will effect change, but rather to make the numerous adjustments that, in aggregate, just might make world-change for the better possible.

CASE STUDY: LIME RED STUDIO'S AUTHENTIC DIALOGUE

When social entrepreneurs turn to business incubators like 1871 or 2112 in Chicago, they underscore the vital role that mentoring conversation plays in the cultivation of effective company communication, not least in the social enterprise sector. For $250 a month, for example, an entrepreneur can do start-up work in 2112's enormous warren of desks and tables and screens and chairs, benefiting not only from the open-office floor plan that allows for business-to-business conversations, but also from the seasoned mentors who rove the floor, offering their consultation. I stopped by for a visit to this incubator in May 2017 and interviewed Jason Moosikkamol, the head writer for *Native Tongue.* As Moosikkamol explained, the magazine faces a steep communicational challenge: how to address, at one and the same time, urban foodies and people in food deserts. But this is just the sort of communicational challenge for which an incubator like 2112 promises entrepreneurs a chance "to pick the brains of various industry veterans" in order to "receive advice from those that have been there before."[46]

It was, in fact, one of 2112's mentors, Cardona-Maguigad of Lime Red Studio, who had introduced me to the folks at 2112. He had encouraged the visit during a close conversation at the offices of Lime RED. There, Cardona-Maguigad (the Director of Design Strategy) and Lonigro (the president of the company) welcomed me to a space where they regularly work through communicational problems with clients, across a much scribbled-on table and in a corner where the walls were covered with markered phrases and sticky notes. In short, they put me into the middle of a communication situation not unlike that into which they invite the heads of companies and marketing divisions from social enterprises in the greater Chicagoland.

When I explained to them the problem-frame of my book project, they immediately launched into a series of stories about how they were living out the problems I was writing about: "That's why we are in this work that we do," Cardona-Maguigad explained. Social entrepreneurs are overwhelmed by the tremendous range of choices that comes at them. To make matters more complicated, social entrepreneurs are trying to address enormously distracted audiences in a networked and (to use a repeated phrase in the interview) "gigged-up" economy, where everybody is moving quickly, though never as quickly as the technology. It would seem, then, that the way to get communicative control in such a bewildering milieu would be to turn to the fixity and reliability of numbers. But instead of unfurling statistical analyses, Lonigro and Cardona-Maguigad draw people into three-hour-long conversations.

Lime Red thus grounds their work in close conversational exchanges with clients, adhering to a dialogic model of communication. As John Durham Peters has pointed out, this model has become the preferred model of communication in liberal democracy today, a status enjoyed by older, reciprocal, conversational approaches of communication since ancient Greece.[47] In Plato's dialogue, the *Phaedrus*, Socrates encounters an enthusiastic young man who has just heard a speech in the city, a speech which we might designate as close to a TED Talk as Athenians would see. But Socrates explains that thoughtful conversation transcends a more quantitative, by-the-numbers, mass-mediated approach to public and private life.[48] Such a Platonist notion finds contemporary expression in the fact that dialogue is still today "held up as the summit of human encounter, the essence of liberal education, and the medium of participatory democracy."[49]

In keeping with this dialogic approach to communication, Lime Red has worked through patient conversations with a Chicago art program whose marketing plan had once targeted its messaging to kids aged 6 to 12, whom the organization believed to be their target audience. But the Lime Red consultants pressed them on this point: *why* are you addressing kids? Because, explained the program director, we want to pull their parents in—and parents pay the bills. With a Socratic persistence, the Lime Red folks came back asking the *why* question. Finally, after an extended exchange and a lot of audience-mapping exercises, the company figured out that what was truly distinctive about their company was the creation of family experiences—not just experiences for kids in hopes of getting the parents to pay the registration fee, but a shared creative experience for the whole family. Instead of thinking of this art program as a place to drop off kids and get on to some other task, this organization offered parents and children a way to share memorable time making things together.

In another instance of dialogical consultancy mixed with socially entrepreneurially concerns, Lonigro started a lobbying group called Mom Plus Baby. As someone intensely invested in woman-run business, she wanted to advocate for women entrepreneurs, who find that their client pool dries up if they have a baby. This was clearly a timely lobbying organization, but not without its troubles. To address these troubles, Lonigro and her peers engaged in sustained dialogue about the organization and gradually discovered, in a morass of issues and sub-issues and (to use her word) "spindly" sub-sub-sub issues, that there was a semiotic problem afoot. The term "mom" had somehow come to suffer negative connotations in the world of business. It was a dramatic realization. Even the parents around the table did not introduce themselves as moms, but as women. This sort of terminological discovery can be hard to work towards without the kind of patient conversation that Lonigro models with her clients.

I got the sense that the folks at Lime Red could tell stories all day about insights mined through slow, smart, sustained conversation. At the same time that they practice this dialogic model of communication, they also engage, and help their clients to engage, a diffuse culture of digital communication, a culture that requires multidirectional interactions, far beyond the one-on-one exchanges characteristic of dialogic communication. Indeed, Lonigro and Cardona-Maguigad often seemed relatively unconcerned where the line of their company's "self" ends and where the self of another company begins. Their messaging was not just about creating a conversation between their consultancy and a struggling company; their discourse reached beyond tight organizational boundaries in multiple directions.

For example, as I mentioned in my Introduction, Lonigro explained that she had come to see her consultancy as a way to care for the ecology of social business more broadly, and not just the well-being of her own company. She also described to me how training and collaborating with her own employees has come to be a matter of preparing them not just for work at Lime Red but also for work in other organizations. Her company's communication with clients and employees alike, in other words, suggests a porousness of institutional lines, as well as a multi-laterality of conversations. Lime Red points to a collectivity and diffuseness of speaking and hearing, performing and attending. Their expert consultancy participates in complex audiences and diffuses publics in regard to the wicked problems of late modernity.

How does this consultancy reconcile both its dialogic and multidirectional models of communication? The short answer is that their modeling of communication conveys an affective stance that we might call attachable authenticity. Traditionally, to commend authenticity is to pursue an interpersonal ethic along what Martin Buber calls the "narrow ridge" between the self and the other, that space where the integrity of one self is maintained but not without regard for another.[50] Brand consultants, it would seem, can help companies and their constituents to find something like this existentially demanding between-space, where they become more fully who they are even as they engage others more effectively. A dialogic model thus seems to underwrite marketing wisdom for social entrepreneurs: when selecting a cause for a company to attend to, "the single most important factor is that it is perceived as authentic by shoppers."[51] At the same time, such an ethic has real limitations, especially in a culture where the authenticity seems fleeting.[52] Corporate entities, no less than individuals, experience the diffuseness of authenticity's value, especially in a time when brand identity can be hard to locate. As Andrew Turner notes, "What authenticity relates to in terms of branding is this simple concept: brands are no longer the property of the businesses they represent; they are the property of the consumer."[53]

Companies need to be authentic; they also need to be highly connective, able to interact with unexpected parties. Lime Red deals with these apparently opposing needs simultaneously. They conduct dialogic communication in quest of authenticity, but this highly attachable authenticity is an affective comportment, rather than an interior character. What Lime Red helps companies discover is not so much their true self, whatever that might mean, so much as their capacity to connect to other entities in fresh and sustainable ways. Discerning such fresh and sustainable connections requires close, careful, respectful, reciprocal exchange. It also requires an expertise in an organizational comportment that authentically, connectably, interacts with people, institutions, and problems.

CASE STUDY: THE ASPIRATIONAL SUBJECT OF B LAB'S ALGORITHMS

In October of 2017, Google Maps briefly provided, for any user searching for driving instructions, a parallel offering of walking instructions as well. The foot route also featured a cupcake graphic indicating how many calories would be burned by walking instead of driving. Google received such strong pushback on this apparently pro-social initiative that they withdrew the imposed walking directions and cupcake caloric counts in the course of a day.[54] As unpopular as the Google Maps initiative proved to be, the project did at least highlight the everyday prevalence of algorithms. These plans for automatic decision-making seem to offer everyone today a promise of efficient data management, even in the midst of information inundation.

Beyond helping people to handle a great deal of information quickly and easily, algorithmic technologies do two other things: (1) they recommend a model of communication that involves non-human participants and based on optimized automaticity, and (2) they translate optimization into an affective relation with the world that I will call *aspirational*. Besides the ill-fated Google initiative to improve their users' health through walking, algorithms also shape the experience of Fitbit users, runners with GPS watches, dieters using smartphone weight-loss apps, exercisers squinting at treadmill calorie counters. In each case, algorithms tacitly suggest a posture towards experience that suggests the dubious notion that human beings and natural life are technocratically perfectable. But the larger and more important point for this chapter's discussion is that companies like Fitbit, Garmin, and Google are helping people to recognize themselves as aspirants and therefore to pay close attention to the discourses of personal betterment through information optimization. In this chapter, we have been noticing the ways that socially entrepreneurial consultants use dissemination or dialogue to help companies to attend to discourse on business-driven betterment. We turn now to an organization that uses algorithmic interfaces to interpellate companies and their constituents in the discourse of business meliorism.

Founded in 2006, B Lab's 501c3 assesses other companies' social and ethical adequacy, awarding to companies who can demonstrate their social responsibility the title "B Corps," a kind of company distinct from, though often confused with, the governmental designation "benefit corporations." Despite their strenuous assessment criteria, B Lab took less than a year to accredit their first nineteen companies, which suggests that the diffuse public of ethically alert companies that they engaged had already been paying attention to the discourse on business-driven world-betterment even before the B Corp insignia showed up on a consumer product for the first time (as it happens, on a bag of King Arthur flour). For the next half a dozen years, B Corp companies continued to pop up across the corporate landscape in the United States and around the world, including in countries such as Australia, Denmark, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and the Netherlands.[55]

The affective comportment that B Lab commends is not something that they themselves have produced, but rather something that they are rendering more visible, regular, and organized.[56] There is, after all, a kind of circularity to the B Impact Assessment: it seems unlikely that any company would not take the test that was not already persuaded of the importance of being certified as an ethical company. There is no determinate accounting for how those companies came to that conviction; they make up what this chapter has been calling a diffused audience, a virtual collective. But B Lab uses algorithms to make these companies' attention to business meliorism a recognizable cultural thing.

It may not be immediately clear to the reader, even so, why a case study on B Lab belongs with the two preceding ones. The third-party experts discussed in the first two case studies approach companies from the front end of brand design, whereas this consultancy comes along after a company's brand and operations are in place. But is B Lab's recommended model of communication *communicational*? Instead of the dissemination and constructivism of School's model or the dialogue of Lime Red's interpersonal exchange, B Lab proceeds by machinic processes. When a company's principle medium is an algorithm, how does that company perform anything remotely like speech and response? In what follows, I will explore B Lab as a company whose expert assessment helps other companies to recognize themselves as business meliorists. The company's algorithms function communicatively, not just by rhetorical selection and stylistic emphasis—not, that is, just by helping companies to differentiate their brands from that of less altruistic corporations—but also by generating more deliberate, more corporately self-aware interactivity with the discourse of business meliorism.

THE ARGUMENTS OF ALGORITHMS

Communication scholars now insist that algorithms have a communicative, even a persuasive, dimension. Nathan Johnson argues, "Investigating the rhetoric of classifications, standards, protocols, and algorithms is an important part of understanding modern rhetorics."[57] Not only do algorithms communicate by transferring information, but as Chris Ingraham argues, they also practice persuasion by granting status to information. "Algorithms can be seen as rhetorical insofar as they exert a persuasive influence upon what is held to be important or true in our social, cultural, political, and economic interactions." In this way, algorithms function rather like style in a message, shaping the *how* and the *what* of a data-driven discourse. The audience for an algorithmic communication is asked to gauge validity, notes Ingraham, as "the product of a particular set of parameters designed strategically to lead toward a particular kind of result."[58] As an act of persuasive communication, an algorithm may be as situationally responsive as other sorts of messages: "as the input changes, depending on how the code's rules value that input's nuances, the results likewise change, sometimes considerably."[59]

Algorithms, then, might be said to function within a communication model, especially as they "make a rhetorical argument for what factors matter in order to persuade their 'audience' that their resultant outcome is the best, truest, or most important."[60] For example, at what Ingraham calls the *macro-rhetorical* level of algorithmic communication, "arguments are made for algorithms as the best, most efficient, appropriate / consistent / reliable / disinterested / precise / and accurate *means* for reaching the various ends to which their automation might be directed."[61] The B Impact Assessment practices this sort of discourse-about-its-discourse with these descriptions of its features:

- Positive Impact Focused—practices that intentionally address a social or environmental issue are measured, not practices that simply comply with existing laws or norms.

- Comprehensive—a company's operational practices (including workers, suppliers, manufacturing practices, and governance) and the company's products/services are measured because both are important in understanding a company's effect on the world.
- Adaptable—there are over forty versions of the Assessment that are tailored to a company based on size (number of employees), sector, and geography.[62]

This sampling of selling-points supports a larger argument not just for the desirability of the B Impact Assessment specifically, but more broadly for the desirability algorithmic certification *per se*. The insignia that comes with becoming a B Corp (or acquiring Fair Trade or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design [LEED] status, to cite two other examples) helps to cut through the noise of the business-scape today, to show companies, their employees, their constituents, their consumers, and their networked communities that this certified organization seeks to be, not the best in the world, but rather "best for the world."[63]

Another way that B Lab behaves argumentatively emerges in the questions asked in the B Impact Assessment. Each question is weighted according to the size and type and geography of the company being assessed, each differentiated according to the following categories: Governance (queries having to do with company mission); Workers (queries regarding concerns such as health insurance provision and salary equality); Community (queries pertaining to volunteering, charitable giving, and political inclusiveness); Environment (queries regarding such practices as waste management and sourcing for office supplies); and Impact Business Models (queries having to do with ethical treatment of consumers). A conspicuous rhetorical characteristic of the test is its length: at a single sitting, the test-taker would need at least an hour and a half, and perhaps as much as three hours, to complete the assessment. Most test-takers will take far longer. In contrast with the choppy, fragmentary inputs of digital mediation, this test asks companies to slow down and settle into a patient consideration. The B Impact, in other words, constructs a space of meeting and consideration that returns to what Greene has called "the preferred temporality of rhetorical deliberation."[64]

Some questions ask for relatively straightforward information: "If you lease your facilities, have you worked with your landlord to implement/maintain any of the following?"—with choices being as follows: "Energy efficiency improvements," "Water efficiency improvements," "Waste reduction programs (including recycling)," "None of the above," and "N/A—Company does not lease majority of facilities." On the other hand, in this same section of the test, the businessperson is asked to calculate "Total energy used from renewable resources (Gigajoules) during the last 12 months"—a computation which would require researching and gathering documents as evidence, as well as some fairly complex computation.[65] Not only does the assessment practice its own persuasion, but it asks participants to mount their own rhetorical efforts, building a case for their own company's ethicality.

B Lab maintains that any score above zero is "good," because it shows that a company is having *some* positive impact beyond industry standards.[66] But, in order to be certified as a B Corp, a company needs to earn 80 points out of 200, that is, a score of 40%. The only rationale that B Lab gives for requiring a score of 80 is that it requires that a company be proficient in more than one category of ethical business. A given business might score well on environmentalism, but poorly on employee-management. But to get a score of 80, the company must do well in at least one of the other three areas. B Lab's assessment instrument, however, does not function as an autonomous experience: it is followed up by a visit from B Lab technicians who discuss the test findings, often with the result that the applicant has to change their score, which is, after all, based on self-reported evidence.[67] After the company finally does achieve a passing score, its application work is not yet done: it must also alter its own company charter to make the changes permanent (or to file with their state's benefit corporation requirements), to sign B Lab's Declaration of Interdependence, and to agree to B Lab Term Statement (regarding annual fees). Every subsequent two years, companies must re-up their B Corp certification.

But if we concluded that B Lab's algorithms were primarily arguing a point, then we might simply look behind their stylistic moves for ideological tendencies and processes. Uncover the hidden motives through rhetorical analysis—and call it a day. But it is not clear that B Lab is trying simply to argue a point.[68] They are not, in other words, trying to argue something like, *This ethical stuff we're talking about is super important!* They *are* saying that, of course. But they are also seeking to disciple companies to the discourse of business meliorism. Put differently, the Impact Assessment's algorithms help companies to recognize themselves as aspirational and, in so doing, helps them to attend to the circulation of messaging on making the world better through business-focused problem-solving.

The Aspirations of Algorithms

How is B Lab going about this affective labor of communicating a contagious posture? The digitality of algorithms not only enable an argument; they also enable complex interactivity. For one thing, algorithms allow computing devices to merge with human-to-human or, in this case, business-to-business interactions. Bringing digital technology into human interactions is not analogous to simply ushering more people into a communication situation, like finding seats for theatregoers arriving late to a dramatic production. Computers do not insinuate themselves into a conversation like unexpected guests. Instead, the digitalizing algorithms rely upon and open up interactivity in all directions.[69]

Questions on the B Impact Assessment entail (what Warner calls) interactions "far beyond the scale of conversation or discussion" and, in fact, tends "to encompass a multi-generic life-world organized not just by a relational axis of utterance and response but by potentially infinite axes of citation and characterization."[70] Algorithmic communication involves participants in a social and technological environment in which the "rules" for how to live together center not on who speaks and who listens (as might be the case in a conventional communication situation), but rather on how the connecting, chaining, and cross-referencing of texts makes a shared digital space.[71]

For example, the Impact Assessment and its algorithmic calculations create interactions with a company's digitally embedded documentation and with the many supporting web documents that B Lab itself provides to assist in the certification process. In order to answer questions about the threads of a company's many relationships, the test-taker must interact with employees, consumers, shareholders, supply-line distributors, and other participants in the life of the corporation. This spreading, easily shareable interactivity helps not just the company president who is taking the test, but also the company as a whole to recognize itself as attentive to the discourse of ameliorative business. Even after the company has completed the exam, the interactivity continues to spread, as B Lab representatives examine the test and discuss it with the test-takers. James Jasinski might describe such interactivity as *intertextuality*, which is the notion that "[a] text or an utterance always exists and, hence, must be studied and/or understood in relation to *other* texts and utterances."[72] By keeping that interactivity among texts and people wide open, B Lab involves companies in the seemingly incessant flow of business meliorist discourse.

Beyond allowing for more complicated, more networked relations to take shape, digital mediation also invites what Lev Manovich would call a fractal and modular perspective on communication: "Media elements, be they images, sounds, shapes, or behaviors, are represented as discrete samples (pixels, polygons, voxels, characters, scripts). These elements are assembled into larger-scale objects but continue to maintain their separate identities."[73] The B Impact Assessment's questions are modular in that they can be assembled into a test appropriate for a large, West Coast fashion apparel company or into a test appropriate for a small, Midwestern tool and dye manufacturing plant. This capacity to use and re-use media objects (in this case, previously scripted questions), citing and re-citing them in individualistically or contextually appropriate ways, also makes it possible for the Quick Impact Snapshot score to be calculated through comparison with (or citation of) thousands of other companies' scores.[74] This modularity might sound at first like a high-efficiency move, a quick and accurate way to handle a lot of data, making it adaptable to many different kinds of situations. It is that. But algorithms do more than help B Lab to adapt their message to diverse audiences (like a speaker changing jokes or illustrations depending on what city she is speaking in). These algorithms also enable a kind of interpellation: thanks to modularity in algorithmic processes, B Lab's digital mediation of assessment calls out many different kinds of companies as altruistic organizations who take responsibility for world-betterment.[75] The assessment, in other words, helps companies to recognize themselves as in a public of intertextually aspirational subjects.

For example, we might think that a chiropractor's office and a brewery could have very little in common when it comes to taking responsibility for social problems. But the algorithmically managed modularity of B Lab's questions calls to them both as potentially attentive to the discourse of business meliorism. A chiropractor's office, for example, might not earn many points in the environment section of the exam, simply because the office, by the very nature of its already light footprint, takes few ecological precautions. But that same company might receive stellar marks in the community section (thanks to its provision of frequent support for community volunteers). Algorithmic modularity allows for that business to recognize itself as participant in business-focused problem-solving discourse. A craft brewery, on the other hand, may find that its concern for water and hops makes it naturally concerned for the environment, even if its answers in the employee relations section of the Impact Assessment earn only a modest score. Perhaps the brewery might not be discriminatory against women or minorities, but its bureaucratic policies may be too loose or informal to provide the information essential for a high score. Perhaps the brewery holds committee meetings over a beer at the end of the week and so are never able to take minutes on these conversations. But the modularity of the Impact Assessment permits each company, at least potentially, to become a B Corp.

There is an important sense in which the B Impact Assessment routinely lifts the eyes and flares the attention of aspirant companies for something beyond the test itself. For example, as important and as rigorous as the Assessment is, B Lab concedes the following: "The B Impact Scores presented in this report are also self-reported and unverified and are thus of limited use for benchmarking. B Impact Scores typically decline by a material amount after review by B Lab, typically as a result of misunderstanding of questions, not misrepresentation of answers."[76] B Lab concedes its own fallibilism. The test may be expertly designed, but the algorithm makers do not position themselves as gods of data, high and lofty in their sacrosanct engineering studios.

Instead, they admit that "the Assessment is far from being perfect, and it is possible that a significant change in the company is not perfectly correlated with the number of points earned. We would love your help on reweighting items that you feel should be worth more."[77] Such a concession draws potential test-takers into seeing themselves as matter-of-fact participants in an assessment which itself participates in the larger discourse of business meliorism. The companies are positioned, in other words, not just as students, but as contributors to the design of the test—returning this chapter once more to the back-and-forthness of performance and spectatorship in a diffused audience.[78] Of course, none of these exchangeable roles or shareable capacities would be possible apart from the automaticity of the algorithms, which creates some distance (and perhaps some humility) between the designers of the test and the test itself. In the space opened up by algorithmic processes, designers and takers of the test assume a more level footing as co-aspirants for business meliorism.

B Lab also acknowledges a larger, aspirational vision for business amelioration today than mere certification of individual companies:

> We know that only a small percentage of the companies that use B Lab's tools will likely become certified B Corps, but we also know that all companies—large and small, public and private—can benefit from measuring what matters to them and what matters to their shareholders and customers in improving social impact and sustainability. In a generation's time, this work will help establish a culture in business where all companies measure and manage impact with the same rigor as they do profits.[79]

From overwhelming start to rigorous finish, the B Impact Assessment uses algorithmically managed processes to interpellate aspirant companies into participation in business meliorist discourse. The intertextual experience of taking the test nearly replicates the involvements that B Lab believes should be characteristic of ethical business—which may be why test-takers comment on the way that the Impact Assessment educated them on things they should care about: "Every time we go through the B Impact Assessment," notes Karen Parolek of Opticos Design, "we find a few more things to focus on."[80] But it's not just what the company learns about what it really should have in its policy manual that counts here, but also what the company learns about the thick weave of involvements it should aspire to. The elaborate algorithmic machinery draws a company into attentiveness to business meliorism by translating expertise into an affective stance towards the world, helping to produce an aspirational involvement in business-focused problem-solving. In short, the certification process coaches capacities for encounter and interaction, for affecting and being affected. Intertextual aspiration as a company's comportment towards vital social and ecological problems is not finally an internal quality to be demonstrated or certified, but rather an enjoinment to a network of engrossments and encounters.

CONCLUSION

For a book focused on the communication practices of social entrepreneurs, this chapter is conspicuously uninterested in the usual concerns of communicative exchange between companies and their complex audiences: how to target a message to a niche, how to position a brand, how to select the most appropriate channel, and so forth. But acknowledging the diffuseness that inevitably accompanies digital mediation, I have been attending less to the direct transactions of speakers and hearers than to what George Kennedy has called “the energy inherent in communication.”[81] His energy language strikes me as a viable way to talk about the affective comportment that accompanies a communication model put to expert use. Accordingly, this chapter has shown how dissemination, dialogue, and algorithms bring with them a way of relating to social and ecological problems. I have construed communicative expertise not as a top-down project in which a guru explains to a client how to finesse a connection with a complex audience—as if expertise were merely a matter of powerful senders transmitting to naïve receivers. In a world in which speakers and hearers, performers and spectators, are constantly changing places, expertise is a shared evocation, or what Jenkins calls a “collective expression of modes and their affections.”[82]

Let me borrow and adapt an analogy from Greene to explain, in a summative way, how brand consultants and their communication models help companies to recognize themselves to be capable of an affective stance potentially good for business meliorism. A neighborhood like Sedgwick, with its coffee shops and restaurants and schools and stores and businesses (not least, the social enterprise Art on Sedgwick) relies upon the frequent arrival of consumers and citizens who will notice its signs and patronize its organizations. The Chicago Transit Authority’s Brown Line fulfills this need by regularly dropping off riders near Sedgwick Avenue. Without these riders’ awareness of the street and its surrounding neighborhood companies and organizations, the avenue would not flourish economically. In the field of business meliorism, brand consultants understand, so to speak, how to run the trains on time in order to transport attenders towards encounters with the discourse of social entrepreneurship.[83] Not only do these consultants perform their express purpose—helping companies address their own constituencies with greater effectiveness and social responsibility—but they also increase the likelihood that more companies will recognize themselves as attenders to the discourse of making the world better through business-focused problem-solving. In other words, these companies speed the circulation among their clients and their constituents of adoptable and shareable comportments—or what we might call their living arrangements with social and ecological problems.

I began this chapter with Branda's work with Art on Sedgwick and her quest for consultancy and expertise capable of helping her to help her neighbors recognize themselves as problem-solvers on Sedgwick Avenue. In conversation with students in a Persuasive Speaking course, she was looking for a way to cultivate participants in the very ameliorative discourse that animates her own social enterprise. Most socially mindful businesspersons, of course, do not seek the aid of undergraduate students; most seek the aid of professional brand agencies like School or Lime Red Studios or certifying agencies like B Lab. And when they do encounter these third-party experts, they also encounter communication models that transport a sensibility or a sociability that enables interaction with and among virtual publics. Audiences today are not, after all, simply noses to be counted, demographics to be charted, recipients to be reached. They are diffuse but productive collectives, often estranged from each other, but always attentive to some set of discourses.

Branda's work is preoccupied with the healing of the polis, or at least the micro-polis of a neighborhood like hers. The question of whether communicational experts are essential to this task of healing democracy is a question that might have concerned Plato, whose Socrates warned Phaedrus away from naïve adherence to the cultural experts of his day; it is also a question that interests Plato's descendants who warn contrarily of *The Death of Expertise*.[84] But the question of this chapter has not been whether social entrepreneurs should attend to expertise (they almost certainly will in any case), but rather how affective experience of consultancy enables an *attending on* discourse about knotty social problems. This expertise, in other words, is more than a programmatic way of fixing social problems; it is instead a living arrangement with the hard problems of late modernity. The skill at play here is not about a one-and-done repair job, but is instead about figuring out how to keep a company and its constituents immanently and amelioratively connected to predicamental conditions.

Admittedly, such communication does not always entail the debate and deliberation that many social theorists associate with effective and ethical political communication. If we focus on dissemination or dialogue or algorithms as the equipment by which we solve our problems, we neglect Jenny Rice's wise observation about the ways that our well-intended public discourse can paradoxically generate more discourse and less engagement.[85] Dissemination, dialogue, and algorithms are not tools merely. They are transport systems; they are logistical services. And what they deliver is a kind of affective sensibility, a way of being sociably capable of engrossment with the rapidly circulating discourses of business meliorism. In this way, the collaboration between socially minded companies and third-party consultancies helps to accelerate and circulate shared expertise in a collective manner, whose wisdom may be only gradually realizable and yet pervasively resourceful in contemporary democracies. Making this visible to companies and their constituents may require, however, more than the problem-solving discourse that we so often associate with democratic conversations. In this next chapter, we turn to another style of discourse that holds promise for helping social entrepreneurship maintain its idiosyncratic presence in societies across the world.

NOTES

1. Ronald Walter Greene, "Rhetorical Pedagogy as Postal System," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 434. I encountered this conviction in conversations with Laura Zumdahl, for example, who showed such eagerness for academic research on socially entrepreneurial communication that she proposed making this book a reading project among her employees. Richard Roche also showed enthusiasm for the importance of communication, even going so far as to ask me to come and serve on a committee designing a communication plan for his entrepreneurial incubator.

2. "Consulting," NESST website, https://www.nesst.org/consulting/. Blended Profit website, http://www.blendedprofit.com/perspectives/the-professional/consultants/. 180 Degrees Consulting website, http://180dc.org/about/social-impact/. Aperio website, http://www.aperio.ca/. Good Company Ventures website, http://goodcompanyventures.org/. "Advise," Root Capital website, https://www.rootcapital.org/our-approach. "Social Enterprise Consulting Lab," Unite Sight website, https://www.uniteforsight.org/social-enterprise-consulting.

3. Although the previous chapter's discussion of Rickert shows my dependence on his thought for engaging ecological problems, I found my footing in this chapter's argument while reading Jia Tolentino *New Yorker* essay about solving the problem of sexual assault on college campuses. She traced the ecological approaches of the Sexual Health Initiative to Foster Transformation (SHIFT), whose "idea is that small structural adjustments to student life could change how students interact with one another—help them find their moral compass more easily, feel more at home on campus, have some obstacles cleared out of their path. These humble expectations can seem deflating. But SHIFT makes a powerful argument that sexual-violence prevention must embrace the ordinary and the particular. Its programming suggestions may matter less than its potential to transform how people think about the problem." "Safer Spaces," *New Yorker* (February 12 & 19, 2018), 40.

4. Charlie Branda, interview by the author, July 13, 2017.

5. As John Durham Peters notes, "'Communication,' whatever it might mean, is not a matter of improved wiring or freer self-disclosure but involves a permanent

kink in the human condition." Peters, *Speaking into the Air* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999), 29.

6. Greene, 437.

7. Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 66, 9.

8. In what follows, I conjoin the sociological theory of Warner with that of Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst, who call for a "redefinition of what an audience *is* and what it *does*." *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance* (London: Sage, 1998), 39. I take Warner's notion of a public as a virtual collective to align conceptually with Abercrombie and Longhurst's notion of a "diffused audience." *Publics and Counterpublics*, 68–76.

9. Warner, 74–76. Abercrombie and Longhurst might make less of this estrangement than Warner does, but it is implicit in their insistence that diffused audiences are neither strictly global nor strictly local (44).

10. *Ibid*., 75.

11. Warner describes such a collective as "the kind of public that comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation" (66).

12. *Ibid*., 87.

13. *Audiences*, 68.

14. *Ibid*., 44.

15. *Ibid*., 75.

16. Jenkins, *The Modes of Visual Rhetoric*, *447*.

17. Although these organizations are not themselves strictly socially entrepreneurial companies, they nonetheless exemplify what Light would call "moderately entrepreneurial organizations" or "intermediary organizations" that "harvest particularly promising ideas" and offer highly entrepreneurial organizations "an important marketplace for matching entrepreneurial ideas to specific opportunities." Paul C. Light, *In Search of Social Entrepreneurship* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2008), 212.

18. Althusser discusses this concept in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays,* trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 117, 175, 179. For my discussion of interpellation throughout this essay, I also rely on "Interpellation," *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies*, ed. James Jasinski (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001), 320–321.

19. "Interpellation is an address that regularly misses its mark, it requires the recognition of an authority at the same time it confers identity through successfully compelling that recognition." Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 33. See also her discussion of what is in excess of discourse (28).

20. Greene, 436.

21. Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 33

22. *Ibid.*

23. "Interpellation must be dissociated from the figure of the voice in order to become the instrument and mechanism of discourses whose efficacy is irreducible to their moment of enunciation." Butler, *Excitable Speech,* 32.

24. I am grateful to my colleague Bethany Keeley-Jonker for this insight into algorithms' tendency towards optimization.

25. This move, so critical to this chapter's argument, traces to Greene, who details how academic instruction in rhetoric has a "postal dimension" in that it can transport subjects who recognize themselves as addressable by a public's discourse. I contend something similar, that socially entrepreneurial third-party experts can deliver up, or at least contribute to, a diffused audience of attenders to the discourse on business meliorism. "Rhetorical Pedagogy" 434, 441.

26. Emily Lonigro Boylan (social entrepreneur), interview with author, June 20, 2017.

27. "Three Words Carved into Our Ethos," School website, https://www.schoolhelps.com/give-a-shit/

28. "How to Try and Give a Shit," Vimeo website, https://vimeo.com/144952609.

29. "Ad Biz: Hopeless but not Serious," https://www.schoolhelps.com/ad-biz-hopeless-but-not-serious/. Max Lenderman, "Want to Produce Craft Beyond the Norm? Hire Confident Oddballs," *AdWeek*, January 18, 2016.

30. "Welcome to Night School," School website, https://www.schoolhelps.com/night-school/.

31. A disseminational message seeks a mass audience, which as media sociologists Abercrombie and Longhurst point out, does not share the same location (they consume School's clients' advertisements in separate households and office spaces), indirect (School's companies and their audiences interact only obliquely with the messaging), quotidian (School seems profoundly aware that the world is crammed with commercial messages—hence their emphasis on quirkiness), and more distracted (watching a commercial advertisement might happen in the middle of a noisy party). *Audiences*, 58.

32. *Experience the Message: How Experiential Marketing Is Changing the Brand World* (New York: Caroll & Graf, 2006). *Brand New World: How Paupers, Pirates, and Oligarchs are Reshaping Business* (HarperCollins, Canada, 2009).

33. Sessions's review of Daniel Drezner's *The Idea Industry* writes darkly, "The purpose of the thought leader is to mirror, systematize, and popularize the delusions of the superrich: that they have earned their fortunes on merit, that social protections need to be further eviscerated to make everyone more flexible for 'the future,' and that local attachments and alternative ways of living should be replaced by an aspirational consumerism. The thought leader aggregates these fundamental convictions into a great humanitarian mission. Every problem, he prophesies, can be solved with technology and rich people's money, if we will only get our traditions, communities, and democratic norms out of the way." Although the grip of the superrich is not apparent on School's website, the emphasis on hard work, the future focus, the aspirational capitalism, the optimism about social problem-solving are all uncannily present in Lenderman's rhetoric. "The Rise of the Thought Leader," *The New Republic*, June 28, 2017, https://newrepublic.com/article/143004/rise-thought-leader-how-superrich-funded-new-class-intellectual.

34. *The Ideas Industry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 9.

35. “About,” School website, https://www.schoolhelps.com/about/. “Night School,” School website, https://www.schoolhelps.com/night-school/. https://www.schoolhelps.com/purpose/.

36. Jesse Thorn, “A Manifesto for the New Sincerity,” Jesse Thorn’s Blog, *Maximum Fun,* March 26, 2006, http://www.maximumfun.org/blog/2006/02/manifesto-for-new-sincerity.html.

37. *Sincerity and Authenticity*, The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures (Harvard University Press, 1972).

38. David Foster Wallace, “The View from Mrs. Thompson’s,” *Consider the Lobster* (New York: Little Brown, & Co., 2006).Regarding the passing of sincerity, Trilling noted that “we play the role of being ourselves, we sincerely act the part of the sincere person, with the result that a judgement may be passed upon our sincerity that it is not authentic.” Trilling’s study, though it explains the replacement of sincerity by authenticity can hardly be read as an affirmation of postmodern irony. *Ibid*., 11.

39. Jonathan D. Fitzgerald, “Sincerity, Not Irony, Is Our Age’s Ethos,” *The Atlantic.* November 20, 2012, https://www.theatlantic. com/entertainment/archive/2012/11/sincerity-not-irony-is-our-ages-ethos/265466/.

40. “About,” School website, https://www.schoolhelps.com/about/. “More #giveashit videos,” School website, https://www.schoolhelps.com/give-a-shit/. “Sincerity, Not Irony, Is Our Age’s Ethos,” November 20, 2012, https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/11/sincerity-not-irony-is-our-ages-ethos/265466/.

41. Marc Spitz, *Twee: The Gentle Revolution in Music, Books, Television, Fashion, and Film* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2014), 13.

42. Stephen Webb, *The Gifting God: A Trinitarian Ethics of Excess* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 7.

43. “The Twee Revolution,” *The Atlantic,* http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/07/the-twee-revolution/372273/.

44. “The Twee Revolution,” *The Atlantic.*

45. For a discussion of brands that commend a social comportment, see Craig E. Mattson, “Buying Stuff, Saving Lives—A Critical Account of Product (RED)’s Economics of Attention,” *Southern Journal of Communication* 77.3 (July–August 2012): 216–238.

46. “Become A Mentor,” 2112 website, http://2112inc.com/page/become-a-mentor.

47. John Durham Peters, “The Gaps from Which Communication Is Made,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 11.2 (1994), 118–119.

48. “The Gaps,” 121.

49. *Speaking in the Air,* 33.

50. For discussion of Buber’s concept of the “narrow ridge,” see Maurice Friedman, *Encounter on the Narrow Ridge: A Life of Martin Buber* (Paragon House, 1998).

51. Cause Good website, https://causegood.com/blog/cause-branding/.

52. Authenticity increasingly feels diffuse across cultural and political sectors. Accordingly, Taylor summons his readers to a cultural conversation about “the meaning of authenticity. . . . The struggle ought not to be *over* authenticity, for or against, but *about* it, defining its proper meaning. We ought to be trying to lift that culture back up, closer to its motivating ideal” (73). We can see in Taylor’s yearning

for a dialogue about the "proper meaning"—that is, a conversational clarification about the semiotics of authenticity—his adherence to a communication model in which senders address receivers, exhorting them to be their best selves. But as Taylor himself laments, "an extraordinary inarticulacy" surrounds authenticity as a moral ideal: "Its opponents slight it, and its friends can't speak of it" (18). Why? Taylor, as a moral philosopher, has his own explanations for this inarticulacy. But from the communicational perspective of this chapter, and in relation to social commerce in particular, I would like to suggest that authenticity is difficult to define as an explicit moral ideal because it is more of an affective relationship than anything. We know authenticity when we feel it, even when it is difficult to speak of it expressly. *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

53. "What is Brand Authenticity?" *Beneath the Brand*, http://www.talentzoo.com/beneath-the-brand/blog_news.php?articleID=13665.

54. Gianluca Mezzofiore, "Google Removes Maps Feature Showing Calories and Mini-Cupcakes after Huge Online Backlash," *Mashable*, October 17, 2017.

55. Information about B Lab's history can be found on "Our History," B Lab website, https://www.bcorporation.net/what-are-b-corps/the-non-profit-behind-b-corps/our-history.

56. I am here echoing Greene's insight that some communicational expertise—in his case, public speaking pedagogy; in this case, certification assessment—"deliver" people punctually to be attentive to public discourses. Greene, 442.

57. Nathan R. Johnson, "Information Infrastructure as Rhetoric: Tools for Analysis," *POROI,* PDF, http://ezproxy.trnty.edu:2149/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=5&sid=4e7d38f9–1fba-49a3-b5ac-a3257eed34fc%40sessionmgr4010&hid=4104, 2.

58. Chris Ingraham, "Toward an Algorithmic Rhetoric," in *Digital Rhetoric and Global Literacies: Communication Modes and Digital Practices in the Networked World*, eds. Gustave Verhulsdonck and Marohang Limbu, Advances in Linguistics and Communication Studies (IGI Global, 2014), 63.

59. Ingraham, 64

60. Ingraham, 63.

61. Ingraham, 71.

62. "What Makes the Assessment Different than Other Systems?" B Lab website, http://bimpactassessment.net/how-it-works/frequently-asked-questions/the-basics#what-makes-the-assessment-different-than-other-systems.

63. "B Corps are Best for the World," *The Blog: Voice of the B Corporation Community*, B Lab website, https://www.bcorporation.net/blog/b-corps-are-best-the-world

64. Greene, 437.

65. Information about the assessment can be found at B Lab's website on the downloadable PDF, "Print Impact Assessment"; but it is available for registrants for the B Impact Assessment only.

66. The easiest place to find the information included in this chapter about B Lab's assessment is to read their "Frequently Asked Questions," *B Impact Asessment*, http://bimpactassessment.net/how-it-works/frequently-asked-questions.

67. *B Impact Assessment,* http://blab.force.com/bcorp/assessmentreview?aid=a03C000000 NnqllIAB&id=a03C000000Nnql lIAB. In order to see this text, the reader has to register for the test.

68. After all, they say explicitly that their test "is scored automatically and in real time so that at the conclusion of the Assessment it is immediately possible to review the results." Although B Lab does not explain everything about how the questions are weighted, the assessment explains enough that one gets the sense that its forbearance is less a disguise or legitimation than a selection for avoiding information overload. "How Is the Assessment Scored?" B Impact Assessment, http://bimpactassessment.net/how-it-works/frequently-asked-questions/the-b-impact-score#how-is-the-assessment-scored.

69. This discussion of the relationality of machines is in Lev Manovich, *The Language of the New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2002), 27ff.

70. Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002), 63.

71. As Warner notes, "It is not texts themselves that create publics, but the concatenation of texts through time. Only when a previously existing discourse can be supposed, and a responding discourse be postulated, can a text address a public." "Publics and Counterpublics," 64.

72. *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*, 322.

73. Lev Manovich, *The Language of the New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2002), 30.

74. "Who Is in the Benchmark Group for the Quick Impact Snapshot?" Frequently Asked Questions, https://www.bimpactassessment.net/how-it-works/frequently-asked-questions/the-b-impact-score.

75. This resembles Althusser's "interpellation," except that the subject being called forth is a corporate entity. See also "Interpellation," *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*, 320–321.

76. *B Impact Assessment,* http://blab.force.com/bcorp/assessmentreview?aid=`a03C000000 NnqllIAB&id=a03C000000Nnql lIAB. In order to see this text, the reader has to register for the test.

77. "My B Impact Score only Increased by a Few Points, but Our Impact Has Increased Dramatically. What Happened?" Frequently Asked Questions, http://bimpactassessment.net/how-it-works/frequently-asked-questions/the-b-impact-score#my-b-impact-score-only-increased-by-a-few-points,-but-our-impact-has-increased-dramatically.--what-happened.

78. Abercrombie and Longhurst, 77–98.

79. "Measure What Matters: Announcing a New Partnership between the Case Foundation and B Lab," The Case Foundation website, http://casefoundation.org/blog/measure-what-matters/?nabe=6116754236899328:1&gclid=CjwKEAiA_9nFBRCsurz7y_Px8xoSJAAUqvKCzuOC1j8Sc07r1_Fe7ucga1_jjSDHW0UPu0Qd5awXyhoC4dHw_wcB&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F.

80. "Step One: Assess Your Impact," B Impact Assessment, http://bimpactassessment.net/how-it-works/assess-your-impact.

81. George Kennedy, "A Hoot in the Dark," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 25.1 (1992), 2.

82. Jenkins, *Special Affects,* 187.

83. Greene uses the image of a post office to describe how rhetorical instruction (in our case, brand consultancy or strategic communication advice) shifts people to the discourse of a public. Greene, 435.

84. Thomas M. Nichols, *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters* (New York: Oxford, 2017).

85. Jenny Rice, *Distant Publics: Development Rhetoric and the Subject of Crisis* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 5.

Chapter 4

How to Give a Gift (To Make a Public)

THE PROBLEMS WITH PROBLEM-SOLVING DISCOURSE

The Trump victory in the presidential election of 2016 was good for business at Lime Red Studio's social enterprise—but not in the way that the Trump administration seems to have envisioned.[1] The upswing in Lime Red's business, in other words, was not due to a general economic surge from having a businessman in the White House. Instead, as the company president, Emily Lonigro, explained, the increased profitability was due to people's accumulating sense that business and politics have more to do with each other than previously thought. Well before the election, one of her entrepreneurial projects had struck some of her constituents as an unfortunate mixing of business and politics. They wondered, in short, if attaching business power to voting power would be bad for democracy. But then in 2016, the political landscape changed, and people started to think more complexly about the political implications of their business contracts. Lonigro's company thus reversed the usual route between business and politics: instead of pursuing state and federal policies that might somehow prove good for business, her social entrepreneurship offered a passage from business-focused problem-solving to political engagement.

Such a non-legislative social engagement is arguably more than ever necessary in an era when traditional political action can feel choked by misanthropic individualism and digitally mediated atomism and fierce tribalism; in such conditions, socially entrepreneurial problem-solving offers a passage towards everyday citizenship even for people beyond public office and outside the public sector.[2] Given the complexity of their organizations and missions, social entrepreneurs have to get good at listening patiently, speaking aptly, compromising shrewdly, collaborating provisionally, and bargaining collectively. In other words, although socially entrepreneurial work may have little do with voting or lobbying or canvassing, such organizations, with their complex infrastructures, hybrid missions, and persistent social mindedness, engage in proto-political communication engagement. Whatever the focus of their particular company's mission, social entrepreneurs are all working on a similar communicational project: to improve everyday participation in civic-minded conversation.[3]

For the skeptic, this rather sunny account of things may raise a question of how business-minded entrepreneurs attach citizenly engagement to profit maximization without contaminating one with the other. Can I plausibly appeal to a psychological or spiritual explanation for this strange behavior, perhaps positing that social entrepreneurs feel concern or guilt or empathy or a yearning for justice? I suspect that they themselves might reach instead for a more neutral language, describing an impulse just to figure things out, to solve mysteries, to fix stuff. For example, social entrepreneurs talk about their vocation by discussing "long-standing social problems," searching for "opportunities in problems," and casting themselves in Sorin Grama's terms: "I'm not a do-gooder, I solve problems."[4] The language of problem-solving is hardly unique to changemaker companies, of course: talk about problems and solutions pervades academic fields as disparate as cognitive psychology, mathematics, sociology, medicine, education, and—the field in which this book is embedded—communication studies.[5] Beyond the academy, problem-solving discourse can also be important in political life, not-for-profit organizations, and health care.[6] But social entrepreneurs appear to be idiosyncratic in their commitment to attach business operations and communication to social problem-solving.

Problem-solving sounds like a politically and ethically neutral discourse that works roughly on the information systems model. Whatever empathy or compassion or guilt or religious fervor initially moves social entrepreneurs to respond to an exigency, their discussion with sundry stakeholders seems to move into an emotionally neutral decision-making space in which senders and receivers exchange messages and feedback. Discussants observe some variation on Robert's Rules of Order, giving a chairperson power, carrying motions by majority vote, and deferring to a minority's right to speak without determining the decision's outcome. This discourse tends to avert emotions by proscribing irrelevant comments, privileging instrumentalism, and negotiating critique through a combination of tolerance and dispute.[7] To avoid offending discussional decorum, deliberative speech often undervalues the freshness of rhetorical elements such as *copia* (discussants are tacitly encouraged to speak concisely), irony (the problem's seriousness seems to forfend anything but earnestness), narrative (discussion's reciprocal ethic and emphasis on turn-taking discourages meandering stories), and so on.[8]

Problem-solving discourse, though it often assumes dynamics similar to a personal conversation, tends to aspire for dispassionate, even depersonalized deliberation.[9]

A performative or constitutive model of communication, such as I have been pursuing throughout this book, however, counters such a dispassionate approach to communication and thus corrects some of the deficiencies of problem-solving. In contrast, an information systems model of communication treats the problem as a referent for the message being transferred between senders and receivers. The problem is assumed, in other words, to be simply "out there," awaiting discussion and resolution. Rationalized communication consequently too easily devolves into technocratic communication, which in turn becomes obsessed with what Ronald A. Heifetz calls *technical problems*, or predicaments whose solutions we already have and need simply to apply.[10] Because problem-solving discourse proves to be high on procedural carefulness but low on creativity, its deflationary efficiency sometimes produces a hair-of-the-dog approach to cultural predicaments: *what got us into this or that mess can get us out as well, if only we do it more and faster*.[11] Social entrepreneurs, who share this rather technocratic perspective, might be tempted to advocate in a community for a solution that makes little sense to the community itself because the solution ignores complexities that it cannot.[12] As recent scholarship on rhetoric and affect would suggest, cultural predicaments are not isolated, boundaried events; they are not, in other words, like computational questions on standardized tests—abstractable from their surroundings.[13] They are instead affective clusters of porous encounter and multilateral relation, in which *this* gets stuck to *that*, which is attached to *those*, all of which are clustered with *these*. Problems are like publics, because both are, as the last chapter would have it, circulative.

For example, when the 2010 earthquake struck Haiti, the crisis may have struck North Americans as a new, clearly delineated, objectively addressable problem: the displaced urgently needed tents and water; buildings and roads suddenly needed repair; the sick and injured abruptly needed medicines and surgery; and, as public discourse at the time suggested, the suffering urgently needed American feelings. Then President Obama put it this way: "a disaster of this magnitude will require every element of our national capacity—our diplomacy and development assistance; the power of our military; and, most importantly, the compassion of our country."[14] Later in the same address, he added: "Yet even as we bring our resources to bear on this emergency, we need to summon the tremendous generosity and compassion of the American people."[15] This insistence upon the role of American emotion in the intervention recalls that diplomacy, development, and military involvement have been linked with benevolent emotions in the past. Indeed, the United States has again and again used benevolent regard for the welfare of Haitians to attach military intervention to economic assistance and cultural development, even when these interventions came with other feelings as well, such as racist contempt, nationalist arrogance, and mercantilist greed.[16] The seemingly isolable problems of the 2010 earthquake were attached, often by feelings, to sundry unsavory factors, some of which traced to the United States.

President Obama's suggestion that emotion must play a significant role in the relief effort does raise the question of what part public feelings play in a cultural predicament and its hoped-for resolution.[17] The history of deleterious interventions in Haiti suggests that the complexly constituted problem to which President Obama drew attention was not a predicament easily resolvable by compassionate action.[18] But drawing on Ahmed, I would argue that feelings serve as a kind of glue holding together a cluster of seemingly unrelated events and power arrangements and human affections. Because emotions propel much of what happens in human life, the earthquake begins to look less like an isolable problem and more like a circulation of past and present encounters—not least a circulation of past interferences of the United States and other colonial powers in Haitian life. Later interventions would thus have to engage a circulation, diving into an affective gulf stream flowing from what Ahmed would call "past histories of contact, unavailable in the present" and towards new encounters, new attachments, new futures, new communities.[19] Every chapter in this book has been identifying a dilemma faced in affectively complex milieus. This chapter's equivalent might be referred to as the dilemma of predicamental intervention.

Such a dilemma raises an important but sticky question for social entrepreneurs: how should they intervene culturally and politically, if the problems that they address participate in circulations whose flows precede and exceed a specific suffering or deprived community?[20] The only way to intervention meaningfully on a bad circulation is to create another, more liveable circulation. The social entrepreneur cannot freeze (much less eradicate) the flow of events and people and objects and forces that constitute a social predicament. But instead of *fixing* the problem, in both senses of that unfortunate terminology, the changemaker might instead *un*fix, or detach, people and objects and forces from the circulation and re-attach them to another. Creating a circulation will entail discursive action that we might call articulation. Articulative action includes within it the disarticulation of people, objects, places, and problems and the rearticulation of all these in a new circulation.[21]

THE UNSETTLING POSSIBILITIES OF GIFTING

I have a squeamish observation to make: social entrepreneurship has already found a way to create such articulations with the language of gifting. I admire so much the plucky and smart language of problem-solving; it feels strongly resistant to the potentially patronizing or even disingenuous language of gift-giving. But I think *something* must be made of many social entrepreneurs' stubborn use of this problematic terminology of gift. As the critiques below will show, gifts are impossible to account for theoretically: they seem to transform, even as we hold them in our hands, into other accoutrements of the neoliberal economy: loans, trades, debts, payments, investments. And yet, their continued presence in business meliorist exchange—not least in the incorrigibly generous maxims and operations of social entrepreneurship—suggests "that something more than reciprocity must prevail."[22]

Instead of concluding that social entrepreneurs and their publics are slicksters or dupes, I should like to argue that what they are doing is starting new circulations. Gifts are, after all, circulatory, no less than problems. By disarticulating and rearticulating people, objects, places, ideas, and forces, the gifting style, as I will call it, cannot eradicate problems. But it can create new, propulsive attachments that represent what this chapter will call (following Michael Warner) a counterpublic.[23] Problem-solving discourse and the information systems model of communication might help to mainstream social entrepreneurship. The strangeness of gifting rhetoric allows practitioners to honor perhaps the most neglected calling of business meliorism, to protect the alternative publicity of social entrepreneurship. The world needs social business, and the world needs it weird. Gift language cannot be entirely reduced to neoliberal exchange.

THE GIFTING STYLE IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social entrepreneurship makes extensive use of gift discourse, as skimming across its many discourses will quickly suggest. One crowdfunding organization, for example, calls itself Global Giving to describe how it partners with nonprofits and companies to address education needs in countries like Botswana.[24] Other times, gifting is integral to an organization's mission: JustGive, a social giving platform, describes its mission in the language of generosity by saying, "Giving is a core human behavior. It enables us to build relationships and show that we care. . . . We are passionate about helping everyone experience the joy of giving."[25] For other companies, gift-giving discourse appears in their marketing communication. Baby Teresa's website notes, "Giving is a way of life for many of us and here at baby teresa [sic] we're no different. We're proud of the fact that our baby grows are now worn on over 40 countries worldwide. We also donate 25% of our profits towards charities that empower women during pregnancy, birth and parenthood. Wherever they are in the world."[26] Still other companies put giving into their company operations. BetterWorldBooks, whose slogan is "Now getting is giving," practices a B1G1 model like TOMS—or like Yoobi, whose B1G1 program donates school supplies to needy students. "You buy. Yoobi gives."[27]

I encountered a vivid evocation of gifting's importance to social entrepreneurship while buying a cup of coffee at a TOMS retail store on a late-winter Chicago morning. On the west wall of the store, a series of pillow-sized letters spelled out the word "GIVE." I introduced myself to the barista, who proved herself primed to talk about the company's donative business. What she had to say not only confirmed what I had learned in my own rhetorical analysis of the company's mode, but also conveyed the company's affective stance of enthusiasm and optimism for making a difference through social business.[28] As the 2006 originator of B1G1 social enterprise, TOMS has continued to enthuse about the practice of giving. Company CEO Mycoskie claims, "Giving is what fuels us. Giving is our future. It's the core of our business."[29] Accordingly, TOMS has a "Chief Giving Officer," issues a "Giving Report," and claims that "Giving is fundamental to everything we do . . ."[30] Their website sports tabs for "How We Give," "What We Give," and "Where We Give," describes "Giving Partners" who help to distribute "The Gift of Shoes," "The Gift of Sight," "The Gift of Clean Water," and "The Gift of Safe Birth"—each of which describes a commodity or service donated upon the purchase of a TOMS product.[31] TOMS has not only multiplied product lines; the company has offered an exemplar to other B1G1 social enterprises, which have spread rapidly across the pro-social business scape from Warby Parker to Bixbee, from One World Play Project to Bombas, from TOMS to Roma, from Smile Squared, from Figs to Better World Books, from Project 7 to Out of Print Clothing, from Love Your Melon to Kutoa, from WeWood to This Bar Saves Lives and Twice as Warm.

CRITIQUES OF GIFT & EXCHANGE

But as I have been hinting, there are significant counterforces to the rhetoric of generosity, many of which trace to a longstanding critique of philanthropy in the Western tradition. Although reflection on generosity is at least as old as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, most modern critiques of giving trace eventually back to the ethnography of researchers like Marcel Mauss, whose insights have propelled theoretical and critical work on the concept of the gift by Millard Schumaker, Jacques Derrida, Sara Ahmed, and Pierre Bourdieu. For Schumaker, "sharing without reckoning" is a mode of back-and-forth exchange that "seeks a kind of balance between what one gives and what one gets and is therefore a mechanism for sustaining justice in human relationships and a guard against exploitation."[32] Derrida is less sanguine: it is impossible (he argues) to give if so-called givers receive benefits back from giving: the gift returns and ceases to be gift at all.[33] Webb sums a Derridean-style critique by asking how giving can generate "relationships of expectation and commitment without becoming another form of buying and selling"?[34] In other words, how will business meliorist gifts *be* gifts if their givers are looking for returns? Cultural theorists like Sara Ahmed sharpen the critique of gift still further by arguing that in wealthy Western countries, "giving" can be an action taken "only insofar as it is forgotten what the West has already taken in its very *capacity* to give in the first place."[35]

Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* seems relatively unperturbed that the gift is a polite fakery: for him, a gift "never ceases to conform to economic calculation even when it gives every appearance of disinterestedness."[36] Interestingly, Bourdieu examines gift theory not primarily as a way to explain gifts, but rather as a way to explain gift *theorists*—especially his anthropological predecessors (like Mauss and Bronislaw Malinowski) who sought an objective account of what was "really going on" when people gave gifts to each other. Mauss argued that gift-giving in ancient cultures and in contemporary island societies creates obligations that the recipient must fulfill. Bourdieu agrees with this claim but adds a performative dynamic that anthropologists have tended to overlook: the gift is significantly defined by the performative space that opens between giving and returning gifts.[37] With this space in mind, Bourdieu sees the gift as a kind of theatrical performance that has to be carried off convincingly.[38] In other words, the gift is a social performance, a polite fakery disguising self-interested exchange. For Bourdieu, the gift remolds economic exchange, disguising it, but without obviating its obligatory character.[39] In that sense, there is no structural difference between giving someone a gift and putting someone in debt.[40]

Bourdieu would not have been surprised, in other words, when, not five years after TOMS inaugurated the One for One model, the shoe brand Skechers launched its B1G1 project, BOBS shoes.[41] The company's advertisements have featured spokespersons like Brooke Burke Charvet, sitting with careful, well-coiffed casualness on an elegant couch in a sunny room: "BOBS by Skechers. Look good. Feel good. Do Good." Critics mocked the campaign as "Skechers's Amazing Toms Shoes Rip Off" and panned BOBS for inauthenticity.[42] Complained Simon Mainwaring: "by mirroring the TOM's concept so blatantly, Skechers not only showed a lack of creativity and originality, but they left themselves wide open to accusations of disingenuous social concern."[43] Although Bourdieu would note that TOMS's motives are no more pure than BOBS's, he might also agree that BOBS's stylistic actions were off key: they do not evoke relation with their beneficiaries in the deft way that TOMS does through their frequent imaging of Mycoskie kneeling to put shoes on kids' feet. Bourdieu helps to make clear how there can be an enormous difference in the kind of social space that the two actions stylistically evoke.[44] His account of gift, though, functions as a detraction of the language of gifting.

CRITIQUE OF PHILANTHROPY AND CHARITY

I am not yet done with the naysayers of gift. Adjacent to the heavy-hitting theoretical critique above is the ethical and pragmatic analysis of the work of charitable organizations. In the realm of international development, consider, for example, the critique of Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett's of "helping" that injures, as well as the damning account by Timothy Schwartz of harmful charity in Haiti; these authors point to ways that even well-intentioned philanthropy can create power imbalances.[45] More pragmatically, some thinkers now argue that philanthropic organizations should relinquish some of the assumptions and practices regarding giving. Dan Pallotta argued in a March 2013 TED Talk that contemporary conceptions of philanthropy have too often divorced self-interested business strategies from charitable action. This divorce has handicapped not-for-profits: by segregating doing good from doing well, they have banned not-for-profits from cultivating profits, rolling out effective marketing, taking innovative risks, requiring immediate success, attracting self-interested investors.[46] It would seem that Americans have somehow scrubbed from their notions of philanthropy a good deal of the practicality that they incorporate into their business projects.

In a vein similar to Pallotta, Sir Ronald Cohen argues that, instead of asking after a project's generous intentions, we should ask after its material impact. The lessons learned from venture capitalism and entrepreneurship suggest the wisdom of asking pointedly after the results of charitable donations. Return on investment matters. We cannot conduct nonprofit work on a weirdly abstracted plane of unilateral action, in which the giver and the beneficiary have no expectations for each other. Robert White, the Chief Program Officer at Chicago's Cara, argues similarly that not-for-profit organizations can no longer depend on conventional gifts: "from here on in, we're going to be earning our way. Contributions, once seen as donations, are increasingly being replaced by investments with an expected rate of social return."[47] In this same vein, Andrew Watt notes:

> More philanthropists, particularly those with very high net worth, increasingly approach causes and giving like true venture capitalists. They are less inclined to make multiple gifts to several causes over time, or establish legacy vehicles to fund causes into perpetuity. Their motivations are deeply personal and they are increasingly ready and willing to leverage the bulk of their wealth to social

> innovation to generate transformative results that they can experience in their lifetimes. The onus is on fundraisers to think like these entrepreneurs and pay attention to the big issues.[48]

Such organizations will be just as serious about quantifying and assessing those returns as any analyst at Standard and Poor's. For them, the enterprise must be reciprocal: there must be a give and take, a back and forth, a quid pro quo. Inputs must be traceable to outputs, investments to returns. But the assumption that every action, no matter how generous it seems, must eventually be unmasked as a reciprocal exchange brings this chapter back to the question of how gifting as an act of communication might create new sorts of relation and perform new sorts of attachment.

Given all these criticisms, both from theorists and practitioners, it is not perhaps surprising that some socially minded companies are reluctant to cite generosity as their organizational *raison d'être*. Perhaps for them, gift discourse smacks too much of CSR, which touts its own generosity by promulgating programs for "giving back" to their communities—while keeping profit-maximization central to the corporate mission. At times, social entrepreneurships prefer to use morally neutral language. Take, for example, Giving Keys, which, after describing itself as "A Pay It Forward Company—an allusion to unilateral generosity made popular in a feature film of the same name—nonetheless explains, "We're not a nonprofit, we're a social enterprise. So instead of raising donations, we sell products to provide jobs."[49] Companies like this might imply that socially entrepreneurial work makes provision for others, but without requiring provision for themselves. They give, in other words, so that giving will no longer be necessary.

But note that the critiques just reviewed tend to reduce gifts to an informational exchange, a transmission between senders and receivers.[50] I want to counter this reading of B1G1 messaging as a cover for *quid pro quo* exchanges, in which a company gives only when it gets. If that reading were right, then the communicative act of giving would be nothing more than an instance of what Warner calls the "ideologization" of discourse as dyadic deliberation.[51] In other words, gifts would function just like collective bargaining with its negotiating and compromising and swapping via problem-solving discussions. But to conflate gift-giving with problem-solving in this way would be to fall into a circular argument that assumes all giving in any society is finally about getting.[52] B1G1 companies, on such a viciously circular argument, are simply another example of that universal dynamic in which any apparent generosity should be distrusted as an attractive style covering an unfortunate substance.[53] A more performative understanding of gift would agree with Webb that "[w]hat giving does is what it says, so that language and act are fused together."[54] The gift, in other words, is a material swap and a stylized performance.[55] It is not always easy to discern this doubleness in gifting, because the two poles of materiality and style often switch places. As Lanham might say, a performative understanding of communication assumes that style acts substantially and that substance performs stylistically.[56] In the next two sections of this chapter, I study gifting's performance in socially entrepreneurial discourse by taking two passes at the gift theory tradition, the first tracing from the thought of Aristotle towards Erving Goffman, the second tracing back to the New Testament and reaching forward to Friedrich Nietzsche and Georges Bataille.[57] My aim is to show how the attachments that gifting generates in social business are circulative and generative.

EXCHANGE AND ATTACHMENT IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL GIVING

Aristotle's discussion in Book 4 of his *Nicomachean Ethics* addresses more than one term relevant to this chapter's discussion, though I will focus on two terms in particular, *liberality* and *magnanimity*. *Liberality* may be the closest equivalent to contemporary terminology of generosity, a term pertinent to small or large occasions when a giver offers a givee a gift.[58] Aristotle described magnanimity, or greatness of soul, as an inclination to act nobly with a consciousness of one's own nobility. Although some critics have found the magnanimous person hard to live with—brilliantly capable in a crisis, perhaps, but an unpleasant companion for quotidian life—naming the virtue does give language for aspirational dimensions within social business today.[59]

The *Nicomachean* insists that the liberal person "will not give to just anyone, so that he may be able to give to whom he ought and when and where it is noble to do so."[60] In other words, giving happens in the reciprocal exchange we have been so far attributing to deliberative discussion. For Aristotle, such exchange happens best when the giver is virtuous and the beneficiary is deserving. In many ways, his theory of moderate, prudentially calculated generosity could stand in for the whole of the Greco-Roman tradition. The Roman statesman Cicero, for example, argues in his essay, *On Moral Obligations*, that an ethic of liberality should be shaped by a strong sense of prudent mutuality. Giving to others does not diminish what you yourself have—so long as you do not give away all that you have or give to those who do not deserve it.[61] But the Greco-Roman discussions of liberality also help locate other operational norms of giving communication within B1G1 companies.

Take, for example, the changemaker enterprise, the Kno Clothing company, which seeks to be fiscally sustainable by negotiating an Aristotelian mean between stinginess and prodigality. On the one hand, Kno does not make profit maximization its primary goal: they are not stingy. On the other hand, their mission to eliminate American homelessness does not ignore Kno's own economic constraints: they are not prodigal. Even though they give 50 percent of their profits to address homelessness, they maintain an accountability to investors and employees that keeps them from giving exorbitantly or arbitrarily.[62] A Stanford study suggests that companies like Kno generally keep their retail prices below $100. "Though the [B1G1] model is not incompatible with higher prices, the cost of donations increases as the price of the product increases, so it becomes more difficult to operate a true buy-one-give-one model."[63] This company's commitment to a balanced, accountable, but still generous practice of giving appears to describe communication as a dyadic exchange that fits tidily into the discourses of liberal democracy. Such giving, in other words, does not transgress liberal ideals such as equality and fairness and prudence.[64]

But Aristotle's discussion of magnanimity encourages another sort of take on Kno's giving. Unlike liberality, magnanimity does not emerge in the mean between stinginess and spendthriftness, but instead in the mean between attributing greatness to something that is not actually great and overlooking greatness in something that actually is. Crisp summarizes this virtue and its concomitant vice clearly:

> The great-souled person will think himself worthy of great honor at the right times, for the right reasons, and so on. . . . The person with the excessive vice—vanity—will be someone who thinks himself worthy of great honor at the wrong times, for the wrong reasons, and so on; while the person with the deficient vice of smallness of soul will fail to think himself worthy of great honor when he should, and so on.

What then is the peculiar magnanimity to which social entrepreneurial companies should aspire? I would describe this accomplishment as attaching things to each other that are too often kept apart in late-modern society.

The CSR discourses discussed in the Introduction attach apparently unrelated concerns, such as profit-seeking and charitable donations. This linkage is often described in terms of a "triple bottom line" or "doing good by doing well." But my analysis of the Product Red campaign suggests that CSR does not always carefully examine the character or fittingness or style of the attachment they effect between business and meliorism, perhaps because the originary aim of the corporation is to increase shareholder value, while the meliorist project remains perpetually additive.[65] In contrast, social entrepreneurs, who incorporate in order to ameliorate cultural scarcities, are self-conscious in their linkage of liberality and profitability. Their giving enables deliberate linkage. Although their donation may be the clothes or shoes or glasses or water that they give to developing-world citizens, their company's *gift* may be the connection between vital concerns often sundered in late-modern society, such as the connection between industry and philanthropy, as well as the connection between doing good and doing well. In an AT&T commercial, Mycoskie says, "I always thought that I would spend the first half of my life making money so I can spend the second half of my life giving it all away. And one of the defining moments of my life was when I realized that I could do both at the same time with TOMS."[66] What makes companies like TOMS magnanimous is not the quite possibly dubious donation of thousands of pairs of shoes, but rather that startling hyphenation of business and charity.

Another way to describe this *ampersanding* of otherwise separate concerns would be to identify social entrepreneurial linkages not just between concepts and practices, but between people as well. Erving Goffman's gift theory describes this connectability in terms of indicators, or what he called tie-signs, of the non-obligatory identification of a relationship. Believing that "mutual treatment occurs within a framework of identification," not necessarily of obligation, he studied the rituals of giving in order to spot how gifts construct our identities and relationships.[67] Not that obligation is absent from these relationships: people who enjoy committed or incidental relationships with others sense an ongoing obligation to give off indicators as to the character of their relationship. If you are with a date at a party and suddenly give a high five to someone else's date, you feel pressure to offer some backstory, perhaps about the success of a recent collaborative project at work. This relational connection, Goffman argued, reveals itself through "displays, alignments, and expressions" such as holding hands or standing near a person or exchanging lingering looks—or giving gifts.[68] In any case, these indicators tie together two ends of a relationship, not just by communicating a message, but instead "how their conduct while in each other's presence can contain evidence about their relationship."[69] When a woman takes the hand of her date, she is trying to define their social relation; she's trying to say perhaps that theirs is a romantic relation. When she offers an expensive gift a few months later, she is not primarily trying to get a gift in return; she is saying instead, "We're serious, committed, in love."[70]

What this gift theorizing helps us see in social entrepreneurship is that B1G1 companies are good at constructing tie signs between developed-world and developing-world citizens. Take, for instance, SoapBox Soaps, a one-for-one company that donates a bar of soap for every soap product purchased. The company was started in 2010 by David Simnick, who as a college student made soap in his own kitchen. As an intern for various companies, and then later as a contractor for USAID, he noticed that international aid organizations needed to teach hygiene and to provide soap. To this end, he dreamed up a social enterprise: "SoapBox Soaps was born, and the rest is in the suds!"[71] Clicking to "Learn More" reveals Soapbox statistics that a bar of soap can save as many as 3,000 lives and "so when you buy, we give soap, it's as simple as that."[72] They announce that "Soap=Hope" and they assure customers that "Together with your support and with amazing partners like Sundara we are able to make a world of difference across the world!"[73] They describe work with Sundara as doing "just amazing work, making a world of impact through every single bar of soap." In Goffman's terms, the company's mission to donate in the developing world creates tie-ins with disadvantaged world citizens. Soapbox Soaps notes, "We donate in a way that helps instead of hurts, that empowers the local community and creates long-term change. That's why we team up with local aid partners and support them in the work they do to benefit the local community and economy,"[74] Companies like Soapbox observe a decorum for company giving that entails an avowal of immanent relation with the communities they seek to assist.

Social entrepreneurship's magnanimity and tie-signs recall Martha Nussbaum's argument for the civic importance of emotions in the development and administration of various sectors of society. For her, a "compassionate imagination" is essential for the cultivation of "compassionate institutions [that] are intensely concerned with tragic predicaments and their prevention."[75] Benevolent affections—generosity and magnanimity among them—at the institutional level are important, because institutions act back on the individuals who formed them, tutoring them in care for other citizens. People's capacity to be generous, Nussbaum might say, is "profoundly influenced by the ways in which institutions situate people in relation to one another."[76] Because institutions provide a kind of civic pedagogy, they shape what citizens desire, what they care about, what they repudiate.[77] In short, institutions "can either promote or discourage, and can shape in various ways, the emotions that impede appropriate compassion: shame, envy, and disgust."[78] The good news for socially entrepreneurial gifting is that although the relentless logic of neoliberal exchange would seem to squeeze out institutional magnificence, social entrepreneurship's gifting action has proven remarkably resilient.[79]

A Bourdieu-like reading of social entrepreneurial gifting assumes that its style is unavoidably attached to self-interested economic exchange. The two are in a fixed relation. But notice how in the previous analysis socially entrepreneurial feelings unfixes this relationship by creating new attachments. For many social businesses, generous company operations (the supposed "style" of their marketing in Bourdieu's interpretation) serve less as a cover for self-interestedness (the supposed "substance" of their operations, again on a Bourdieu reading) than a backstage function. In other words, these companies actually downplay or even disguise their generosity. One way to read this would be to say that they are simply reversing Bourdieu's critique, putting what he would call their generous "style" in the background and foregrounding what he would call the economic desirability of their product, thus putting the "substance" of their operations up front. This switch implies that *quid pro quo* need not be the true source, the actual substance, of their stylized actions. Another and, for my part, better way to interpret this move is to say that social entrepreneurships loosen their attachment to economic self-interestedness (without getting rid of it entirely) in order to open up new possibilities for other kinds of attachments.

Let me cite a representative example: Common Bond has focused on impact investment and therefore takes pains to establish their business operations as fiscally legitimate. Common Bond describes itself as "a tech-enabled lender that helps lower the cost of your student loans. We're innovators, creators, movers, shakers, numbers geeks, and finance freaks. We're people just like you, who were frustrated by the high rates and poor service that cost us extra money and caused us extra stress. We knew there had to be a better way. So we created one."[80] Common Bond's hoped-for disruption, at least in its up-front messaging, centers on offering a better product, a better loan, than other lender companies—not on offering a philanthropic service to developing-world children. To describe their giving as a cover for self-interested action, as Bourdieu might, is to ignore that such companies, in a sense, foreground their business-focused self-interestedness. But it follows that, if either generosity or self-interestedness can legitimately be seen as the origin of social entrepreneurial operations, then neither *has* to be the origin. Bourdieu's reductionist unmasking of gift as a *quid pro quo* dyadic exchange is itself unmasked. Socially entrepreneurial gifting does not fix itself on a substratum of self-interestedness, but makes that self-interestedness just one of the many styles of engagement to which it attaches. This enables these kinds of companies to attach, or articulate, cultural concerns (including the suffering, scarcity, unemployment, disease, oppression, and abuse that often preoccupy social entrepreneurship) that might otherwise be relegated to other sectors of late-modern society.

THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL GIVING

There is another strand of gift theory in the Western tradition, whose emphasis is not on exchange and attachment so much as excess and circulation. When the Greek poet Hesiod advises princes, "Love those who love you and help those who help you. Give to those who give to you, never to those who do not"[81]—he sounds like a straight man for that most memorable of teachings on giving, the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus, in almost comic fashion, reverses the conventions of classical culture by recommending unilateral generosity: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?"[82] This expression of gift theory counsels excessiveness and unilaterality. In contrast with the prudent equilibrium sought by Greco-Roman gift theory, the New Testament emphasizes the one-way extravagance of sunshine and rainfall.[83]

This strand of gift theory has some perhaps unexpected descendants, among them Nietzsche. Although the ideas of the nineteenth-century philosopher and the teachings of a first-century rabbi could hardly be farther apart ideologically speaking, they both recommend an extravagant and unilateral generosity. For Nietzsche, giving displays strength, as opposed to charity, which reveals weakness. "I give no alms," writes Zarathustra, "For that I am not poor enough."[84] On Nietzsche's telling, when people give, they should give lavishly as an exhibition of personal power. In Webb's vivid synopsis, "The brinksmanship of squandering displaces sacrifice as strength confronts weakness and health opposes weakness."[85]

A less individualist, less brinkman-like, but no less materialist, account of giving-as-strength emerges in the economic theory of the twentieth-century thinker Georges Bataille, who describes company giving not as dyadic exchanges, but rather as circulatory squanderings. Any system, notes Bataille, receives more energy from the world than it knows what to do with, more than is needed to stay alive: "the excess energy (wealth) can be used for the growth of a system (e.g., an organism); if the system can no longer grow, or if the excess cannot be completely absorbed in its growth, it must necessarily be lost without profit; it must be spent, willingly or not, gloriously or catastrophically."[86] Gifting is here theorized not as something a company might do because it hopes to receive a return, but because it has already received more than it knows what to do with. Extravagance is primordial to the exchange.

How might this view of giving as extravagance help locate a counterpublic dimension in social entrepreneurship? In the previous section, I focused on these organizations' marketing in order to show how their gifting language performs attachment. That marketing's gifting style, however, does not evince a Jesus-like or Nietzschean extravagance and tends instead towards a simple and straightforward register: *Buy this product, and we'll donate another one.* This discourse could hardly be more spare, more efficiently directed to the attention deficit of consumers today. But the stylistic extravagance of social entrepreneurship does become apparent, if not in its messaging, then in its infrastructure and operations.

It sounds strange to refer to an infrastructure as stylized. But, as Robert Hariman suggests, style is a regulating manner, a comportment, a decorum; and these companies' infrastructures *do* embody a rhetorical style.[87] Running a hybrid organization dedicated simultaneously to profit-making and to well-doing requires the entrepreneur to engage and advance a style of engagement. The style becomes recognizable in a constantly divided attentiveness between doing good and doing well, or among people, planet, and places, or however else a changemaker company describes its complex mission. That divided attention entails a comportment, and a heavy one at that, not just for company executives, but also for ordinary personnel. In contrast with an ordinary, profit-maximizing company, which requires only that its staff carry out the company operations efficiently, a social entrepreneurship entails employees who perform, in their own everyday comportment and procedures, the organizational mission. That extra layer of performative responsibility entails a kind of extravagance.

This second strand of giving theory with its Nietzschean emphasis on unilaterality coaches us to spot extravagant generosity in socially entrepreneurial partnerships. For example, some of this extravagance appears in the organization's sheer complexity. Warby Parker sells eyeglasses at an impressive rate; they also negotiate a complex collegiality with the developing-world partner not-for-profit organization, Vision Spring, in a project that stretches itself to work with local "vision entrepreneurs" (peripatetic developing-worlders who diagnose bad eyesight and distribute pre-fabricated reading glasses). Baby Teresa sells baby clothes and donates them; but easy as it may be to sell the goods, it is substantially harder to recruit people to distribute the donations. Those time-consuming and infrastructurally demanding operations are, from the perspective of conventional business, avoidable inefficiencies, even squanderings. But this excessive action helps social entrepreneurship address problems that other sectors find themselves unable to address. Indeed, the inefficiencies of gifting help make apparent how the efficiencies of State, Corporation, and Foundation contribute to the needs that socially entrepreneurial companies incorporate to address.[88]

But this kind of gifting is not only excessive; it is also circulative, as the example of the Naked Hippie B1G1 company exemplifies. A brief explanatory word about pricing: most social enterprises make their donations possible through raising their prices, manufacturing products more cheaply, or increasing the volume of sales.[89] Baby Teresa and Smile Squared, for example, charge customers a pretty penny for their products, which enables these companies to afford their donations. Warby Parker manufactures its eyeglasses less expensively than competitor companies working with

Luxxotica; and that thrift funds their donations. Out of Print sells their products at a low rate to move their goods faster, which in turns supports their giving.[90] In contrast with these conventional social enterprises, Naked Hippie takes a more extravagantly unilateral approach, donating all of their earnings to provide micro-loans to developing-world citizens. Not until those microloans are paid back does the company see any profit. Naked Hippie's gifting flows from what Bataille would call the principle that "there is within us, running through the space we inhabit, a movement of energy that we use, but that is not reducible to its utility"—adding that "we can disregard it [the energy], but we can also adapt our activity to its completion outside us."[91] Naked Hippie seems to have embraced Bataille's seemingly paradoxical preachment for extravagant gifting.[92]

In the previous section, I discussed the way that gift-as-exchange could be redescribed as gifting-for-attachment. Gifting does not just create an enactment of self-interested exchange; it creates conditions essential for articulating otherwise scattered concerns together. Gifts make this attachment possible, because they locate a social space prevenient to instrumentalist exchange. A similar move might be pursued in this section's discussion of gift-as-excess. Not only do gifts function extravagantly; they also create a circulation. One anthropological example of this circulation emerges in Lewis Hyde's description of *Kula* in which necklaces and armshells move on a circuit of islands covering as much as two hundred miles. When someone brings a necklace to a home, the householder would hold onto it only until she or he had discerned an artful way to present it to someone else on another island. "The Kula gifts, the armshells and necklaces, moving continually around a wide ring of islands in the Massim archipelago. Each travels in a circle; the red shell necklaces . . . moved clockwise and the armshells . . . moved counterclockwise."[93] Although the necklace or the armshell tends to be treated with great reverence, the object is less important than the circulation. Similarly, B1G1 companies have, however imperfectly, propelled their company operations with gifting's circulation.[94] As Hyde would say, the gifting keeps on the move, circulating from hand to hand. The communicative form of socially entrepreneurial generosity is circulatory.[95]

The fact that such giving produces circulation suggests a proleptic experience of gifts: they are both here and not here, both now and not yet. The gift's circulation, in other words, creates a kind of future, more specifically what Warner would call "a placeholder for a future public."[96] The style thus functions in what might be called a now-and-not-yet anticipation. Social entrepreneurship's operations, in other words, "allow participants in its discourse to understand themselves as directly or actively belonging to a social entity that exists historically in secular time and has consciousness of itself, though it has no existence apart from the activity of its own discursive circulation."[97]

B1G1 operations, at their best and most extravagant, evoke a circulation of goods in what Douglas Hofstadter would call a strange loop. A strange loop transforms a linear movement into a hierarchical movement. So, for example, selling and buying is a linear movement: a product moves from A to B. But selling and buying *and donating* is a hierarchical movement upward: a product moves from A to B so that A becomes C, over and over again. Now, a social entrepreneur's struggles to make donations work overseas suggest that he or she is trying to enable the company's arrival at C so that it is somehow actually a return to A, ready for B all over again. The desired endpoint of the company's operations, in other words, is always and again the starting point of the operations. Strange loops are perpetual.

Webb has argued that "to have both excess and reciprocity, we need an endless narrative (one that does not end where it begins)."[98] Perhaps the closest approximation of this emerges in a first-century epistle by the Apostle Paul to a church community in Philippi. Writing to this conspicuously generous community, Paul offers such muted gratitude for their liberality that one commentator has described the letter as "thankless thanks."[99] But careful consideration of the apostle's letter suggests a shrewd dodging of Greco-Roman norms for giving, norms which almost always created an obligation out of keeping with the kind of church community that Paul was trying to encourage.

> [i]n the social context in which Paul and the Philippians find themselves, the giving and receiving of gifts is implicated in widely recognized expectations governing the relationship between giver and receiver. Unless Paul commented on this practice, the Philippians would have understood their giving and Paul's receiving in the terms of the dominant culture. This would have substantially altered their relationship with Paul. The apostle, however, has re-narrated the context in which the Philippians find themselves.[100]

Paul did not, in other words, want to position the Philippians as his benefactors, not because he was embarrassed, but because he wanted to sidestep the sometimes vicious cycle of obligation that the classical world created between givers and receivers, in which each party smilingly competed for advantage over the other. Instead, he hailed them as excessively generous givers, who squander their resources without demanding return. The New Testament's account of unilateral giving thus gets not just at gifting's excess, but also its capacity to construct a counter-culture of unilateral givers. Socially entrepreneurial gifting also holds promise for constructing and addressing an alternative public of sundry parties—entrepreneurs, clients, consumers, shareholders, activists, and others—drawing them into a circulation of business meliorism.

WHY COUNTERPUBLICITY MATTERS

I have been suggesting in this chapter that the uniqueness of social entrepreneurship's contribution can be recovered by focusing not on problems so much as gifts. This attempt to preserve social entrepreneurship's counterpublicity might not feel vital to some readers, who see mainstreaming social entrepreneurship as a route for preserving business meliorism in late-modern society. Use of mainstream problem-solving discourse, for example, has arguably been good for social entrepreneurship, helping its discourse to be recognizable and proliferative. In an era riven by ideological disagreements, social entrepreneurship's apparently non-ideological capacity to fix stuff offers a peaceable mode of cultural engagement. Whatever the problem-solver's party affiliation or religious conviction, a problem's solution is—a problem's solution, full-stop.

But it should be noted that social entrepreneurship has been reinforced not only by problem-solving successes, but also by evolutions in other, more powerful discourses in liberal society today, especially in governmental policy, corporate initiatives, and philanthropic projects.[101] As social entrepreneurship goes mainstream, it also becomes vulnerable to appropriation by the State, the Corporation, and the Foundation. This absorption of social entrepreneurship would almost assuredly make these other sectors more democratic, more egalitarian, more socially responsible. But the distinctness of social entrepreneurship's contribution to democratic life would also be lost. The study of changemaker gifting helps locate a counterpublicity that makes social entrepreneurship unique and sustainable, not despite, but rather *because* of the pronounced differences between the gifting style and the deliberative style. Gifting invites articulation, connection-making, attachment, and circulation. Problems invite debate, discussion, advocacy, and bargaining. These communicative practices tend to constitute our sense of what democracy looks and sounds like, but gifting's form makes a significant political contribution by hyphenating and circulating otherwise sundered concerns and publics.[102]

NOTES

1. "Donald Trump Says He'll Run America Like His Business," *Fortune*, April 27, 2016. http://fortune.com/2016/10/27/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-business-management/.

2. For a discussion of these and other frequently discussed concerns in late modernity, see Charles Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity* (Harvard University Press, 1992), 1–12. Andrew Sullivan, "America Wasn't Built for Humans," *New York Magazine,* September 19, 2017, http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/09/can-democracy-survive-tribalism.html. For an account of everyday discourse as citizenship, see Robert Asen, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90.2 (May 2004), 203–204. This chapter's take on changemaker company engagement differs from those who see politics as comprising only certain acts. As Asen notes, "Even regular voters can vote only periodically, and most people cannot undertake volunteering as a full-time job. By contrast, discourse practices suggest a frequency and sustainability to civic engagement. Taking discourse seriously means treating discourse expansively. Discourse may entail talk, but it also involves other modes of symbolic expression" (207). Social entrepreneurs can only vote now and then, but they can give all the time if that is a part of their company operations. The gifting style, I would argue, is one answer to the how question of how changemaker companies enact democratic engagement.

3. Marilyn McIntyre, *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009). Sherry Turkle, *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age* (New York: Penguin, 2015). Sakyong Mipham, *The Lost Art of Good Conversation: A Mindful Way to Connect with Others and Enrich Everyday Life* (New York: Harmony Books, 2017).

4. University of Notre Dame website, http://precollege.nd.edu/summer-scholars/entrepreneurship-problem-solving-and-social-impact/. "Solving Problems with Social Entrepreneurship," Peoria Magazines website, http://www.peoriamagazines.com/ibi/2010/jun/solving-problems-social-entrepreneurship. MIT Sloan School of Management website, http://mitsloan.mit.edu/newsroom/articles/for-mit-students-an-entrepreneur-in-residence-with-developing-world-experience/?utm_source=mitsloantwitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=grama.

5. Robert J. Sternberg, Peter A. Frensch, *Complex Problem Solving: Principles and Mechanisms* (Hove, East Sussex: Psychology Press, 1991). Arthur Engel, *Problem-Solving Strategies,* Problem Books in Mathematics, ed. Paul R. Halmos (New York: Spring, 1991). Charles Edward Lindblom and David K. Cohen, *Usable Knowledge: Social Science and Social Problem Solving* (Yale University Press, 1979). Paul Cutler, *Problem Solving in Clinical Medicine: From Data to Diagnosis*, 3rd ed. (LWW, 1998). Nola J. Heidlebaugh, *Judgment, Rhetoric, and the Problem of Incommensurability: Recalling Practical Wisdom*, Studies in Rhetoric & Communication, ed. Thomas Benson (University of South Carolina, 2001). Peter Liljedahl, Manuel Santos-Trigo, Uldarico Malaspina, Regina Bruder, *Problem Solving in Mathematics Education* (Springer, 2016), by Adam Kahane, *Solving Tough Problems: An Open Way of Talking, Listening, and Creating New Realities*, 2nd ed.

(Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2007). Communication scholars from every county in the vast state of communication studies—from cybernetics to phenomenology, from sociocultural anthropology to socio-psychological media studies, from semiotics to rhetoric—unite, in Robert T. Craig's telling, on the task of solving problems. Craig, "Communication Theory as a Field," *Communication Theory* 9.2 (1999), 199–161.

6. Carola Salvi, Irene Cristofori, Jordan Grafman, and Mark Beeman, "The Politics of Insight," *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* 69.6 (June 2016): 1064–1072. Caryn D. Riswold, "What America Needs in 2008: Educated Problem-Solving and Kitchen Table Values," *Political Theology* 8.4 (Oct 2007): 429–441. Vladislav Valentinov, Martina Bolečeková, Gabriela Vaceková, "The Nonprofit Response to the Migration Crisis: Systems-Theoretic Reflections on the Austrian and Slovak Experiences," *Systemic Practice & Action Research* 30.6 (December 2017): 651–661. Allyn Walsh, Ainsley Moore, Jennifer Everson, Katharine DeCaire, "Gathering, Strategizing, Motivating and Celebrating: The Team Huddle in a Teaching General Practice." *Education for Primary Care* 29.2 (March 2018): 94–99.

7. Hariman describes these decorous elements this way: "(a) the rules of conduct guiding the alignment of signs and situations, or texts and acts, or behavior and place; (b) embodied in practices of communication and display according to a symbolic system; and (c) providing social cohesion and distributing power." "Decorum, Power, and the Courtly Style," *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 78 (1992), 156. The norms I described in deliberative discussion derive from consideration of a representative group decision-making theory in Randy Hirokawa and Dennis Gouran, "The Role of Communication in Group Decision-Making Efficacy: A Functional Perspective," in *Communications in Transition*, ed. Mary Mander (New York: Praeger, 1983): 168–185.

8. But even when emotion's role in problem-solving discussion is muted, it can become palpable at moments when feelings of irritation and boredom and anxiety begin to shape otherwise dispassionate discourse. Take, for example, the familiar difficulty of attending closely to what someone else is saying in a group discussion. To put the matter with blunt simplicity: it is much easier to create a neutral space for people to talk than it is to listen to those people talk—especially when they talk on and on. Problem-solving discourse privileges efficiency and practicality; people's contributions to deliberation often do not. Thomas Princen has summarized efficiency as "getting more benefit for a given effort or of investing less to get the same outcome"—which sounds like the aims of problem-solving deliberation. *The Logic of Sufficiency* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 10. As Princen explains, "Efficiency claims abound, often unquestioned and unexamined. Perhaps most pernicious is the power of the efficiency principle to justify public policies, especially those that skew benefits towards the powerful and away from the weak" (13). I trace my own reflection on the difficulty of patiently, tolerant auditorship to David Bentley Hart, who critiques impatience among supposedly long-suffering intellectual circles, the postmoderns. See his *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 420–423.

9. The problem-solving exchanges of our time help to warrant Michael Warner's argument that construing "public discourse as conversation obscures the importance of the poetic functions of both language and corporeal expressivity in giving

a particular shape to publics." *Publics and Counterpublics* (Brooklyn, NY: Zone, 2002), 115.

10. They "are technical because the necessary knowledge about them already has been digested and put in the form of a legitimized set of known organizational procedures guiding what to do and role authorizations guiding who should do it." *Leadership without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1994), 71–72.

11. If the only context for creative speech and generative thought is what Stephen Webb calls "the slim basis of self-centered agency," discussants may find genuinely creative thinking difficult. Like a legislative body that spends all its energy on maintaining entrenched partisan lines, deliberative conversation, framed only in an ethic of fairness and equality, finds it difficult to speak in fresh ways. *The Gifting God: A Trinitarian Ethics of Excess* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 5. Citing Walter Lowe and Paul Piccone, Webb traces the way that the assumption that everyone is basically self-interested becomes a cultural dogma that shuts down original thinking. "Any critique, too easily accepted and propagated, can become a hindrance to further thought and action. Criticism can function to limit the imagination and legitimate the present situation, as well as to alter and challenge that which is taken for granted" (5). Regarding what I am calling the hair-of-the-dog approach to problem-solving, Wendell Berry has decried "the homeopathic delusion that the damages done by industrialization can be corrected by more industrialization"—or, to name an ideology closer to social entrepreneurship, that the damages done by neoliberal consumerism can be corrected by piling on the neoliberal consumerism. "The Future of Agriculture," *It All Turns on Affection* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2012), 91.

12. For example, Mulgan speaks approvingly of giving "a community what it needs, not what it expects or even knows that it wants." That sounds like good and responsible community-developing work—unless it entails people working from outside the community rather than in affiliation with the community to immanently engage the besetting predicaments. "Cultivating the Other Invisible Hand of Social Entrepreneurship," *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 77. In response to technocratic problem-solving, an impressive literature has arisen around community-based participatory research, defined as a methodology that "engages the multiple stakeholders, including the public and community providers, who affect and are affected by a problem of concern. This collaborative approach to research equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings." Carol R. Horowitz, Mimsie Robinson, and Sarena Seifer, "Community-Based Participatory Research From the Margin to the Mainstream Are Researchers Prepared?" *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association* 119.19 (May 19, 2009), 2633. This approach to problem-solving in communities does not give experts or technicians or scholars the last word, but instead seeks to work through to a shared understanding with community members, thereby conducting democratic deliberation, not least in conflict resolution. "Disagreement was often an opportunity for the researchers to show their good intentions to work with the community—to listen, negotiate, modify their thinking and approach, and arrive at consensus—and

in some cases allowed community members to learn about and gain appreciation for rigorous scientific methods." Jagosh, Justin, Ann C. Macaulay, Pierre Pluye, Jon Salsberg, Paula L. Bush, Jim Henderson, Erin Sirett, Geoff Wong, Margaret Cargo, Carol P. Herbert, Sarena D. Seifer, Lawrence W. Green, Trisha Greenhalgh, "A Realist Review for Health Research and Practice," *Milbank Quarterly* 90.2 (2012), 335. Rickert argues for communication practice to take into account "our material environment, things (including the technological), our own embodiment, and a complex understanding of ecological relationality." *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2013), 3.

13. A naïve view of problems assumes that they generate emotional responses simply by being what they are. But problems are not simply "out there" awaiting solution. They are generated by emotional relationships towards certain objects. "Emotions are both about objects, which they hence shape, and are also shaped by contact with objects." Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion,* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 7. Jenny Edbauer Rice helpfully explicates this for rhetorical theory's traditional response to problems: "we find that 'deliberative spaces' do not neatly originate with a kairotic exigence that sparks multiple voices responding to each other. Rather, as Ahmed argues, public spaces comprise numerous articulations between images, discourses, and feelings. "The New 'New': Making a Case for Critical Affect Studies," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (94.2) May 2008, 209–210.

14. "Text of remarks from President Barack Obama on Haiti earthquake," The Christian Science Monitor website, https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-News/2010/0114/Text-of-remarks-from-President-Barack-Obama-on-Haiti-earthquake.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Ahmed discusses how "slides" and attachments between emotions and bodies proceed in affective economies. *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 44–49. For a devastating critique of U.S. intervention in Haiti—intervention that bundled together compassion and militarism, generosity and racism, benevolence and mercantilism—see Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Picador, 2012), 204–264.

17. Just before final submission of this manuscript, Jamie Landau and Bethany Keeley-Jonker published an article discussing Obama and civic pathos: "Conductor of Public Feelings: An Affective-Emotional Rhetorical Analysis of Obama's National Eulogy in Tucson," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 104:2 (2018): 166–188.

18. I have already had occasion in my Introduction to cite Paul Farmer, *Haiti after the Earthquake* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011). Timothy Schwartz. *Travesty in Haiti: A True Account of Christian Missions, Orphanages, Fraud, Food Aid and Drug Trafficking* (Booksurge Publishing, 2008). Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Picador, 2012)—all authors who address the shortcomings of developed-world intervention in developing-world problems.

19. *Cultural Politics of Emotion,* 7.

20. As Jenny Edbauer Rice asks, "how can we critically intervene in those rhetorics that are powered through affective linkages and articulations?" "The New

'New': Making a Case for Critical Affect Studies," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94.2 (May 2008), 210.

21. I use Barbara Biesecker's term *articulation* to refer to discourse's capacity to attach elements together that might not otherwise articulate (like sundry bones hooked together by a joint). Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from within the Thematic of 'Différance' *Philosophy & Rhetoric* Vol. 22, No. 2 (1989), pp. 125–127. Borrowing from Stephen Webb, I describe the giving discourse of B1G1 social enterprises as *gifting,* a communicative process at once material and circulatory, affective and rhetorical. *The Gifting God,* 11.

22. John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999), 59.

23. *Publics and Counterpublics,* 65–67.

24. Global Giving, company website, https://www.globalgiving.org/.

25. Just Give, company website, https://www.justgive.org/about-us/index.jsp.

26. Baby Teresa, company website, https://babyteresa.com.au/donation-sites/.

27. Yoobi, company website, https://yoobi.com/pages/our-story.

28. Craig E. Mattson, "A Better Feeling for Making the World Better? TOMS's Tropes and the Buy-One-Give-One Mode," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* (2017).

29. "Giving Report," http://www.toms.com/static/www/pdf/TOMS_Giving_Report_2013.pdf.

30. *Ibid.*

31. TOMS website, http://www.toms.com/.

32. *Sharing without Reckoning: Imperfect Right and the Norms of Reciprocity* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press: 1992), 24.

33. Jacques Derrida, "Given Time: The Time of the King," Trans. Peggy Kamuf, *Critical Inquiry* 18 (Winter 1992). For there to be gift, not only must the donor or donee not perceive or receive the gift as such, have no consciousness of it, no memory, no recognition; he or she must also forget it right away [a l'instant]." Derrida, "The Time of the King" (16).

34. Webb, 6.

35. Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 22.

36. *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge, 1977), 177.

37. Imagine a recipient of a birthday present, say, a porcelain flower vase. If this recipient turned around the very next day and gave a gift in return, the quickness of the turn-around makes it feel like checking an item off a to-do list, as if the recipient of the vase chafed under the need to return in kind. Such quickness, so far from showing gratitude or appreciation, would slight the giver. Or consider a recipient who upon receiving the vase, reciprocates with a nearly identical vase. This performance would be equally impolite; it would transform the gift into a swap. There would be nothing technically unethical with these gift exchanges, but they would represent a failure of style.

38. At the same time, he implies a contempt for what Webb synopsized as a "symbolic subterfuge" (39).

39. Webb, 39.

40. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 192.

41. Simon Mainwaring, "TOMS vs. BOBS: How Skechers Shot Themselves in the Foot," *Fast Company*, October 21, 2010, http://www.fastcompany.com/1696887/toms-vs-bobs-how-skechers-shot-themselves-foot. Cotton Timberlake, "Skechers Chases Toms Seeking to Woo Do-Good Millennials: Retail," *Bloomberg,* August 2, 2012, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012–08–02/skechers-chases-toms-seeking-to-woo-do-good-millennials-retail.

42. Morgan Clendaniel, "Skechers's Amazing Toms Shoes Rip Off," *Good,* October 11, 2010, http://magazine.good.is/articles/skechers-s-amazing-tom-shoes-rip-off. A representative critique reads this way: "Skechers would have done far better to copy TOMS in a different way. They should have sat down and thought through what they stand for and then acted on that with equal generosity. Then would consumers have a way to connect with the brands that warranted admiration. As it stands, consumers can do little but shake their heads at such transparent and self-serving motives." Mainwaring, "TOMS vs. BOBS," For other criticisms, see Simon Mainwaring, "TOMS vs. BOBS: How Skechers Shot Themselves in the Foot," *Fast Company*, October 21, 2010, http://www.fastcompany.com/1696887/toms-vs-bobs-how-skechers-shot-themselves-foot. Cotton Timberlake, "Skechers Chases Toms Seeking to Woo Do-Good Millennials: Retail," *Bloomberg,* August 2, 2012, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012–08–02/skechers-chases-toms-seeking-to-woo-do-good-millennials-retail.

43. Timberlake, "Skechers Chases Toms Seeking to Wood Do-Good Millennials: Retail."

44. As helpful as Bourdieu's gift theory is, however, his reductive account of giving, which translates gifting into a tactical maneuver merely, a translation made possible by his own compelling use of sociological style. Webb notes of Bourdieu that a part of the persuasiveness of his theorizing relies upon "a heroic disenchantment that would see exchange as the basis of all giving." There is, perhaps, a certain panache in being a theorist brave enough to look at the impersonal universe without flinching. But we should not deny the role of style in making that theorist's argument compelling, any more than Bourdieu would have us ignore the role of style in gift exchange. Bourdieu, in other words, critiques one rhetorical style by adroit use of another. While taking rhetorical style seriously, this chapter explores possibilities for another sort of gifting discourse that does not reduce merely to the fatigued binary of style versus substance. "Bourdeiu has succeeded in perpetuating the oldest philosophical polarization: style and substance, form and function, rhetoric and truth." Webb, 41

45. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012). Schwartz, *Travesty in Haiti:* A True Account of Christian Missions, Orphanages, Fraud, Food Aid and Drug Trafficking (Booksurge Publishing, 2008).

46. "The Way We Think about Charity Is Dead Wrong," Lecture, TED, March 11, 2013. https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pallotta_the_way_we_think_about_charity_is_dead_wrong.

47. "From Giving to Investing, Social Enterprises Change the Philanthropic Paradigm," January 19, 2017, http://redf.org/from-giving-to-investing/.

48. Qtd. in Sean Norris "80 Nonprofit Trends for 2016," *NonProfit Pro*, February 9, 2016. http://www.nonprofitpro.com/article/80-nonprofit-trends-for-2016/all/.

49. *Pay It Forward,* Warner Bros. film, directed by Mimi Leder. The Giving Keys, https://www.thegivingkeys.com/pages/impact.

50. The dyadic construal of gifting makes a surface-level sense. Communication theorist Peters, for example, describes communication as an exchange, a mutual offering, which sounds a good deal like an account of gifting as transfer. *Speaking into the Air,* 7. Paul Camenisch similarly elaborates the parts of an "unearned benefit received from a donor": the gift must be something of worth, entail a giver's deliberate bestowal, and address a givee who receives the benefaction without either thinking herself deserving or expecting to remunerate. Camenisch notes that a gift "brings into being a new moral relationship between recipient and donor, part of which consists of recipient obligations to the donor and the acceptance of limits upon the use of the gift." Again, note the similarity to reciprocal exchange. "Gift and Gratitude in Ethics," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 9.1 (Spring, 1981), 2.

51. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 115.

52. Webb identifies just such a circularity in Bourdieu's argument that giving is a cover for economic exchange merely. "Of course," notes Webb, "Bourdieu has presupposed what he set out to prove, that the only real economy is the material one" (41).

53. That this argument is circular is not surprising from one angle: all meaningful arguments are in a sense circular, depending upon assumptions that must be simply posited in order for the argument to proceed. But in this case, the circularity appears to be vicious: "Such a totalizing critique not only appeals to the contemporary sentiment of cynicism but also further contributes to the marginalization of giving as a wasteful, redundant act with little or no positive social relevance." *Ibid.,* 41.

54. *Ibid.,* 16.

55. The practice of giving entails a style, as Webb puts it, "[g]ift-giving, after all, is not only a physical act, but also rhetorical; it is a form of self-expression and a way of communicating with others, as well as a means of distributing goods outside the usual operations of the market." Gifting, in Webb's words, "both embellishes (in a trivial sense) and profoundly alters the ordinary and expected trading of goods and information." *Ibid.,* 8, 16. "It is all a question of style," notes Bourdieu, confirming Webb's description. Bourdieu adds that "in this case timing and choice of occasion, for the same act—giving, giving in return, offering one's services, paying a visit, etc.—have their own particular moments; the reason is that the lapse of time *separating* the gift from the counter-gift is what authorizes the deliberate oversight, the collectively maintained and approved self-deception with which symbolic exchange, a fake circulation of fake coin, could not operate" *Outline of Theory in Practice*, 6. This reading of gift encourages me to study gifting's style as what Hariman would call "an analytical category for understanding a social reality." "Decorum, Power, and the Courtly Style," *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 151.

56. As Lanham notes, “Style and substance, fluff and stuff are loose and baggy categories but useful ones even so. . . . Confusingly enough, though, such pairings describe both the world and what we think is important in it, so the opposites in each pair can change places in a wink. If you are a car designer, for you the style of the car will be the substance. If you are a philosopher, ‘what you think about things’ will be the ‘things’ of your world.” *Economics of Attention* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2006), 157.

57. I am indebted to Webb for parsing the tradition of gift theory in terms of two dominant traditions, one focused on reciprocity, one on unilaterality (13–16).

58. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011), 1119b25–1122a18.

59. Roger Crisp notes as much in his sympathetic rendering of magnanimity: “Many have found aspects of the portrait of the great-souled person in the Nicomachean Ethics repellent or absurd.” “Aristotle on Greatness of Soul,” *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Richard Kraut (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 158. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1123b-1125a35.

60. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1120b.

61. Bremmer, *Giving: Charity and Philanthropy in History* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 7.

62. Piyush Mangukiya, “KNO Clothing — Eradicating Homelessness One Cloth at a Time,” *Huffpost* blog, September 1, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/piyush-mangukiya/kno-clothing-eradicating-_b_944054.html.

63. Marquis and Park, “Inside the Buy-One Give-One Model,” 31

64. For a discussion of such “bourgeois virtues” see Deidre N. McCloskey, *The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2007).

65. A brief story makes clear the unexamined attachment. The first time that Wendell Berry visited the campus of Duke University, he saw a statue of James B. Duke, whose pedestal featured the word “industrialist” on one side and, on the other, the word “philanthropist.” Berry had a sudden intimation of the difference between the powerful president of the American Tobacco Company bronzed on the pedestal and Berry’s own grandfather, a small tobacco farmer. Powerful industrialists like Duke, Berry realized, made the vocations of small farmers well-nigh impossible even as industrialism made impressive civic donations possible. “If you can appropriate for little or nothing the work and hope of enough such farmers, then you may dispense the grand charity of ‘philanthropy.’” “It All Turns on Affection,” 13.

66. “Changing the World One Step at a Time,” *CNN*, Defining Moments, Interview, September 26, 2008.

67. *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), 188, 195.

68. *Ibid*., 193.

69. Ibid., 195.

70. David Cheal refers to these as “approach and avoidance rituals.” *The Gift Economy* (London: Routledge, 1988), 22.

71. "Our Story," Soapbox Soaps website, https://www.soapboxsoaps.com/pages/our-story.

72. Soapbox Soaps website, https://soapboxsoap.myshopify.com/pages/mission

73. "From Helpless to Helping," Soapbox Soaps website, https://soapboxsoap.myshopify .com/blogs/soapbox-blog/from-helpless-to-helping.

74. Soapbox Soaps website, https://www.soapboxsoaps.com/pages/mission.

75. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 403. Nussbaum reviews a longstanding argument in political philosophy—an argument in which Plato, Aristotle, and eventually Kant are key interlocutors—that asks whether compassionate generosity would be needed at all, if we could correct the legal structures that make injustice possible. Her response is that we cannot do without either compassionate individuals or benevolent institutions. She explains further "that we are unlikely to live under perfect institutions, and that even if excellent institutions should come into being, they will need the support from people in order to be stable. We must, therefore rely on compassionate individuals to keep political insights alive and before our eyes." *Ibid.,* 404.

76. *Ibid.,* 405.

77. It should be added that Nussbaum's construal of emotions is not as affective or rhetorical as the account of emotions assumed in this chapter. Nussbaum sees emotion as cognitive, that is, as a way of thinking and making judgements about something's value. *Upheavals in Thought,* 22. Emotions in this chapter, in contrast, have followed Ahmed's theorizing, which reads feelings as neither inside nor outside the head, but rather out among and between people and things. *Cultural Politics of Emotion,* 8–12.

78. *Ibid.*

79. Barman's empirical research supports a claim that companies seek to gauge social value by other measures than market criteria. *Caring Capitalism: The Meaning and Measure of Social Value* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 17–24. The term *magnificence* is Aristotle's, which in his parlance sounds closer to what we mean today by philanthropy in that it entails a large-scale liberality. As Aristotle explains, one's magnificence is always generous, whereas one's generosity can sometimes be directed towards too small of an occasion to be truly magnificent. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1122a20–1123a30.

80. "Who We Are," Common Bond, http://scholly-commonbond-scholarship-contest.webflow.io/.

81. Qtd. in Bremmer, *Giving: Charity and Philanthropy in History*, 6.

82. Matthew 5:43–46, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

83. Admittedly, the New Testament offers some overlap with a Greco-Roman emphasis on reciprocal generosity. Jesus does not deny that givers will be rewarded, and Jesus' follower, Paul, adheres to an almost Aristotelian prudence when he commends giving sensibly based on budgetary limitations. For example, in calling the Corinthian communities to give to other needy churches, Paul explains, "I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. As it is written, 'The

one who had much did not have too much, / and the one who had little did not have too little.'" 2 Corinthians 8:13–15. NRSV.

84. Qtd. in Webb, 60.

85. Webb, 60.

86. Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*, Vol. 1, Consumption (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 21.

87. This claim draws on Hariman's argument that decorum includes "the rules of conduct guiding the alignment of signs and situations, or texts and acts, or behavior and place" and is "embodied in practices of communication and display according to a symbolic system," which is capable of "providing social cohesion and distributing power." "Decorum, Power, and the Courtly Style," 156.

88. Of course, sociability can cut like a double-edged blade. Take, for example, TOMS's initial plan to use ecologically friendly shoe bags instead of shoe boxes: that would seem to be a move towards altruism. Indeed, Mycoskie's first retail partner, Nordstrom, agreed to the plan, but then found the bags to be utterly chaotic in the warehouse. What started out as some pretty good sales in the first week, plummeted to almost no sales in the second week. And by the third week, I got a call asking us to come pick up all of our shoes and all of our bags, 'cuz they'd no longer do business with us. . . . It took us two years to win over the support of this retailer and to finally get back in the stores. And I assure you, when we did—no bags. Boxes! Mycoskie's parable warns against the neglect of accountability and sociability in keeping with gift theorists as far back as Aristotle, who have insisted that giving cannot so deplete resources as to make further giving impossible. "TOMS & the Future of the One for One Movement," South by Southwest Interactive conference (March 7–11, 2014).

89. Marquis and Park, 30.

90. *Ibid*., 31.

91. Bataille, 69.

92. "We need to give away, lose or destroy," he urges, "But the gift would be senseless (and so we would never decide to give) if it did not take on the meaning of an acquisition." The folks at Naked Hippie similarly recognize that giving is a way of "acquiring a power." *Ibid*.

93. Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: Creativity and the Artist in the Modern World, 2nd ed.* (New York: Vintage, 2007), 16.

94. Gifting cannot, in other words, reduce to an isolable object, which may be why TOMS turns its donations into verbs—even referring to a donated product as a "give." "Another new product launch: Which means another new give!" http://www.toms.com/what-we-give.

95. "The only essential is this: the gift must always move. There are other forms of property that stand still, that mark a boundary or resist momentum, but the gift keeps going." *Ibid.*, 4.

96. *Publics and Counterpublics*, 130.

97. *Ibid.,* 105.

98. *The Gifting God*, 32.

99. Ernst Lohmeyer qtd. in Stephen Fowl, "Stephen Fowl, "Know Your Context: Giving and Receiving Money in Philippians." *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 56 (2002): 57.

100. Fowl, 57.

101. Geoffrey Mulgan identifies three emergent tendencies among these powerful discourses: governments across the world have tended to decentralize their policies and their oversight; corporations "have become more demanding about the ethical standards of business"; and charities have begun to alter how they pursue revenue, especially by criticizing what Mulgan calls "traditions of paternalistic charity" arguably guilty of "creating unequal relationships of dependence." Mulgan, "Cultivating the Other Invisible Hand of Social Entrepreneurship: Comparative Advantage, Public Policy, and Future Research Priorities" in *Social Entrepreneurship,* 78–79.

102. My hesitancy to reduce socially entrepreneurial gifting to mere democratic discussion advocacy is that such advocacy gets quickly stuck in a combative zone in which one side must win and another lose. Company operations do entail what Hariman calls "the stylized enactment of motives in discourses that both structure our perceptions and are structured by situations," but this enactment need not happen "according to dynamics of conflict." Hariman, "Decorum, Power, and the Courtly Style," *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 163.

Epilogue

On Being Entrepreneurial with the Social

This book has addressed the question, *What enables the entrepreneurial to be social?* What keeps business-minded problem-solving, with all of its creativity and practicality and strategy, from devolving into the morally flattening pursuit of more and more profitability? Or, in a phrasing a little closer to this book's theoretical discussions, how might socially entrepreneurial discourse tell what Stephen Webb calls "stories that do not end where they start"?[1] My argumentative throughline has insisted that the affective, digital, and political ground conditions of late modernity require business meliorists to rethink their models of communication. I have commended a move from a transmissive to a performative model. Business meliorism, as I have demonstrated, is enjoying a surge of mainstream popularity. But that very success may be its undoing, if its peculiar gifts are conflated with CSR-as-usual. The best way to keep the entrepreneurial social is to track its public communication as closely as possible to the immanent, affective structures of rhetorical life today.

Much the same might be asked in reverse: *How can business meliorism be entrepreneurial with the social*? Social entrepreneurship, in fact, complicates what scholars often mean by "the social," locating subtle, but numerous elements at play within a domain of human undertaking that seems simple and stable.[2] In a sense, business-animated problem-solving has shown how every sector is social, at least in Bruno Latour's sense, "not as a special domain, a specific realm, or a particular sort of thing, but only as a very peculiar movement of re-association and reassembling."[3] Social entrepreneurship, as my case studies have suggested, entails surprising constellations, novel mediators, and new networks, and thus disconcerts the sectoral relations and involvements of late modernity. But such disconcertment also evokes the question of how social entrepreneurship might *re-concert* the various agents of meliorism in contemporary societies.[4]

Working with recent communication theory influenced by affect scholarship, I have traced the movements of diffuse associations or concertments, such as modes, apparatuses, infrastructures, and gifts, showing how they bear with them the energies that are elemental to communication. Diane Davis, for example, insists that communication arises from the always prior fact of our mutual affectability: before we speak or write or tweet, we are impressionable, affectable, vulnerable. Pat Gehrke calls this "being-communicating," or "a relation that is the sheer being-in-relation": in other words, relationship, community, society—or what this epilogue is calling simply the social—does not have a pre-established structure, but is instead emergent whenever at least two things bump into each other and enter into relation. It is from that bumping and being bumped into that communication happens. When someone or something calls to us—another way to speak of an encounter—we cannot but respond. We might respond by turning away; we might answer, "Yes?" But one way or another, we cannot help being affected any more than we can help affecting in return—even when the affecting and being affected happens with extra-personal entities like modes or apparatuses or ideologies or ecologies.

Accordingly, this book has been examining aspects of primordial affectability, especially by trying to broach affectability structures and attentional habits and communication models and counterpublics. Just as we are already communicating (and being communicated with) even before we personally speak, so company modes and structures are communicative even when they cannot be traced solely to one entrepreneur's personal agency or even to intersubjective connections. If social entrepreneurship suggests that modal action is more consequential than transactional communication (see Chapter 1), if immanent attendance matters more than individual attention (see Chapter 2), if the transmission of expertise matters less than an engagement with a viral circulation (see Chapter 3), if the cultivation of generous counterpublics matters even more than the resolution of problems (see Chapter 4)—then this new kind of business proffers good ideas for how we organize our lives, how we form relationships, how we develop our association, and how we theorize communication as a way of being entrepreneurial with the social.

BACK TO THE BUS

I began this book by contrasting two different vehicles for business meliorism, a bus and a moped. As an example of bus-styled, large-transport meliorism, I cited Bono and Bobby Shriver's cause-related marketing campaign to address the problem of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, and noted that such CSR-style discourse tends to resort to a transmissive information systems model of communication. I compared this with the moped-style engagement of an NGO like Many Hands for Haiti (and its attendant social enterprises), where the vehicle does not so much transport as navigate. The moped, I noted, is not a way to send a message so much as a way to be a message, a difference which tends to align it with a constitutive or performative construal of communication. In many ways, this project has repudiated the notion that business meliorist messaging is "just marketing." Describing such messaging as a decoration for information tends toward an instrumentalist approach in which the reason to take up social business is to differentiate one's brand, to stand out in a crowded marketplace, to secure position in the minds and hearts of consumers.

In contrast, analyzing social entrepreneurial communication from a performative perspective has enabled the case studies at the heart of this book to suggest fresh approaches to questions about storytelling, attention economics, viral circulations, and wicked problems. Instead of duplicating the counsels offered by trade blogs and TED Talk-style gurus and MBA programs, this book's approach to moped business meliorism suggests the wisdom of going to the far side of conventional business communication solutions. Without ignoring those tactical concerns altogether, I have attempted through rhetorical analysis and qualitative interviewing to discern comportments that enable social entrepreneurs to stand with strength and flexibility in relation to the wicked problems of our time. By neither absolutizing nor repudiating the tactical, this book makes a modest ethical gain in the conversations about business meliorism in contemporary society. This epilogue will attempt to make concrete the counter-intuitive counsels of a performative approach to changemaking communication from the back of a moped.

But after so many different kinds of social enterprises throughout this book's case studies, I have to concede that my initial comparison of the bus and the moped is too simplistic. For one thing, the moped does have some bus-like transmissive tendencies; as my discussion of third-party experts in Chapter 3 suggested, even performative models of communication *convey*. Ronald Greene notes that "Transportation makes possible the delivery of persons, commodities, and material bodies, on the one hand, while communication delivers messages, letters, texts, and meanings, on the other."[5] He adds, "The interaction between communication and transportation is so taken for granted that increasingly we can deliver weapons of mass destruction as letters and messages as airplanes and 'smart bombs.'"[6] The arrival of a bomb in a mailed package—is that an act of transmissive communication or performative communication? The answer seems to be yes to both descriptions.

In the field of social entrepreneurship, a company like One Collective or an incubator like 2112 also transports virtual, or affective, entities by accelerating a logistical fulfillment of people who recognize themselves as business meliorists.

On the other hand, what I called the bus of corporate altruism has some moped tendencies, at least in its sometimes performative character. Product (RED)'s communication, for example, although it seems a quintessential example of information-driven CSR, is as performative as any of the socially entrepreneurial discourses I have explored throughout this book. Imagine, for example, a shopper walking out of Starbucks holding a RED-branded coffee. That conscious consumer is called to a complex comportment as a buyer of stuff and a saver of the world. But the coffee drinker's own identity is not centered in either the buying or the saving; what counts is her participation in a circulation, a flow of discourse too large, too mobile, too diffuse for her shopperly self to possess them psychologically. If somebody asks about the red parentheses on the side of her cup, she can, of course, explain what Starbucks donates to the Global Fund. But she can also say nothing and remain simply an ordinary consumer of coffee. This perpetual toggling between buying and saving, entails a contagious savvy, a way of standing towards the sub-Saharan AIDS crisis. That communication is nothing if not performative. All that to say that, although social entrepreneurship might be the next generation of corporate social responsibility discourse, social business's tentacular involvements comprise not just start-ups and mid-size companies but transnational corporations as well.[7]

CRITICAL THEORY AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

My framing of the central question of this book—*How can social entrepreneurs tell their company stories in distracting conditions to complex audiences about overwhelming problems?*—does betray a disciplinary bias for linking the entrepreneurial and the social by means of the communicational. It is, I am strongly suggesting, communication that makes the magic happen when it comes to business-focused problem-solving. This claim contrasts somewhat with those critics of business meliorism who see ideology or economics as the primary drivers of doing good and doing well. Such critical theorists tend to assume that, when it comes to social entrepreneurship, we have seen it all before.[8] How did charity become integral to our economic system, asks Žižek, and not just an odd, altruistic thing that we do on certain occasions? How is it that old-timer capitalists made money and then gave some of it away, while the conscious capitalists at Starbucks try to do both in the same gesture?

I respect critical theorists for conducting an indispensable mode of academic inquiry and critique. In a way, my more gradualist argument builds on their work: for the political and ethical reasons they have persistently mentioned, and for the sake of those whose resistant but neglected voices often get ignored in the global business-scape today, we in the powerful north and the wealthy west simply cannot continue to do business as we have for too long, dependent on logics of efficiency without regard for sustainability, addicted to self-interestedness without regard for mutuality, and propelled mindlessly by globalism without regard for place. At the same time, we cannot *not* do business, at least not without denying our contingency as creatures who must consume to live or ignoring our fellowship with other creatures dependent upon mutual exchange. My analysis of companies like Bright Endeavors (supporting the philanthropic organization New Moms) or Clean Slate (partnering with Chicago aldermen and the job-training organization Cara) examines changemaker rhetorics that, instead of replacing, seek to unravel and then re-weave the tightly delineated threads of politics, enterprise, and citizenship that make up liberal democratic society today.[9]

This book's decidedly non-revolutionary stance towards neoliberal capitalism will no doubt fail to impress advocates for radical cultural transformation. But in response, I point to evidence that entrepreneurship has not, in all cases, absolutized profit-making measures.[10] From a conventionally suspicious critical theory perspective, this is difficult to account for: when the market engages any sector of human life, what could the critic expect but a hostile takeover of all other values by neoliberal ambitions? In a time when economics has taken an affective turn, when digital circulations have accelerated to a viral pace, when more or less unified societies have become fragmented into sundry tribes, changemaker companies have managed to reweave citizenship and business in surprising ways.

Furthermore, by constantly looking suspiciously behind the phenomena, in order to spot the neoliberal contaminant, the critical theorist fails to look *ahead* of it, to trace social entrepreneurship's sometimes unprecedented communicative engagements. "When faced with new situations and new objects," the Žižek-styled critic "risks simply repeating that they are woven out of the same tiny repertoire of already recognized forces: power, domination, exploitation, legitimization, fetishization, reification."[11] But consider the broad range of organizational structures examined in the four previous chapters. Blue Sky Bakery is a 501c3 non-profit organization that provides worker training, but also aims to be an economically viable business, a neighborhood coffee shop. Bright Endeavors's candle-making company is subsidiary to the not-for-profit organization, New Moms. Warby Parker is an independent for-profit social enterprise that makes donations to the non-profit organization, Vision Spring, which itself conducts socially entrepreneurial work in the developing world.

Given the complexity and diversity of socially entrepreneurial infrastructures, a whole service industry has now arisen in order to meet the needs of social entrepreneurs: accelerators like 2112 and One Collective provide mentoring to missional start-ups; brand consultants like Lime Red Studios and School stand in the gap between digital overwhelmedness and purpose-driven entrepreneurship; assessment agencies like B Lab and Fair Trade USA provide third-party certification of a company's ethical responsibility. I suppose that the sheer diversity of organizational forms spawned by business meliorism could represent nothing more than the metastasizing of neoliberalism. But is it not equally plausible that conjoining the social and the entrepreneurial is compelling business-minded folk to be inventive—and not just in finding new ways to sell a microwaved hamburger or market a diaper?

THE PROBLEMS WITH THE PERFORMATIVE

Still, after a book-length exploration of the virtues of a performative model of communication for keeping business meliorism productively strange, I have to concede some shortcomings in that model. Although I may have sidestepped the baldest forms of instrumentalism in marketing discourses today, I might nonetheless fall into another sort of instrumentalism by attributing to public communication a magically performative potentiality. I have said that communication *constitutes, attends, generates, gifts*—all of which verbs attribute a great deal of power to discourse. Have I not construed changemaker communication as a potentially sovereign tool for creating conditions suitable for the profit of more social business?[12]

It is almost reassuring to recall, then, the humbling and corrective dilemmas that social entrepreneurs encounter in the uncanny spaces of late modernity; performative communication does not eradicate, but seeks out living arrangements with, the quandaries that have erupted in each of my chapters:

- Dilemma of disaffection: Company storytellers need to influence their audience, and yet, in an age of proliferate and artful stories, expert discourse can be weirdly counterproductive. Increasing the artfulness of a story can make it sound more slick and thus generate disaffection in the audience.
- Dilemma of salience: Social entrepreneurs must raise awareness for the cause that propels their company; they must also capture attention for their company's brand. But as the history of modern attention-capture shows, the more tightly social awareness is focused, the more vulnerable the attender becomes to disassociation.

- Dilemma of simultaneity: As any public speaking teacher worth her *kairos* will tell you, good speech requires discourse that responds to its time and place. But when "times" and "places" are constantly pervaded by digital mediation, the timeliness of even the most carefully designed message will inevitably be countered by other arguably equally timely messages at the same time.
- Dilemma of intervention: When messages and subjects move in a circulation that exceeds any given communication situation, what is the intervention point for a business-focused problem-solver? How does the changemaker say "This company incorporates, now, for this problem here?"—when the crisis to which she points is flowing at torrential speed?

These are not dilemmas that can be eliminated by a sovereignly artful narration of a company mission or by a magical capture of public consciousness or by freezing the circulations that make up meliorist collectives. How else could these dilemmas be eliminated than by somehow fixing in place all the dynamic mobility of affection and discourse and technology and community? Still, I believe my study has shown a performative account of communication, informed by affect theory, to be more theoretically adequate than an information-systems approach to social business and its messaging. What I still need to do is to discuss the riskier ideas, the counter-intuitions, that these case studies offer to readers. Although a university press book like this primarily addresses professors and their students, this work also carries accountability to practitioners within the field of social entrepreneurship, people patient enough to follow the plodding descriptive analysis of this book, and yet harried enough to ask, "So what? and then, "What now?"

COUNTER-INTUITIONS ABOUT COMPANY STORIES

Storytelling is often assumed to be the primary communicative form for the social entrepreneur. In both communication theory and in marketing, advertising, and consulting, narrative now enjoys an exorbitantly lauded place in the portfolio of available communicative practices.[13] My interviews with company administrators like Robert White at Cara and Emily Lonigro of Lime Red Studios, emphasized how indispensable storytelling is perceived to be for organizational action. Sometimes, this storytelling centered on institutional self-advocacy, as when fundraisers narrate the company's projects in compelling fashion. Cara, for example, has to tell its company story at the pace of its own ongoing evolutions, adapting its narration to the different kinds of audiences addressed on any given occasion—which for White raises the very practical question of how to tell an organization's story when different parts of that organization are supported by revenues from ideologically different sources (private, right-leaning donors on the one hand, for example, and more public, governmental grants, for another example). At other times, social entrepreneurial storytelling centers on another sort of advocacy. Lonigro sees her vocation as a social entrepreneur as a calling to tell stories on behalf of disempowered groups. In her case, she formed a lobbying group for woman-owned businesses. Light notes the importance of "advocacy both in creating new opportunities for action and in defending new ideas from attack. . . . At the very least, advocacy must remain part of the skill set that entrepreneurs bring to their task, whether as a primary component of the change effort or as a holstered weapon, so to speak, that must be brought to bear to achieve durable policy change."[14] In both cases, then, whether for narrating one's own company or for civic-minded storytelling on behalf of others, changemaker communicators assume that they must get good at telling stories.

But I think the case studies throughout this book suggest the unsettling notion that broadcasting an authentic company story is less *telling* than is often imagined. The case studies in Chapter 1 focused on the ways that Neil Blumenthal and Jordan Kassalow and Blake Mycoskie use stories to create collaboration—and decried the ways that Joshua Silver fails to do so through his slightly frumpy discourse. My analysis was not particularly literary: I was primarily interested in how their storytelling gives access to audiences to a mode of engagement. But it is important to point out that the often epiphanal narratives that social entrepreneurs resort to arise from rhetorical short forms, which are just as important as the longer-form narratives. Sometimes, often perhaps, stories are simply too long to bring change. A disconcerting trope can be more powerful than an engrossing tale.

The B1G1 concept is after all, a trope of brevity, even something of an aphorism, along the lines of what "What goes around, comes around." B1G1's brevity gets enacted in company slogans: "Turn your dining out into helping out," says MealShare. "Buy a pair," says Warby Parker, "give a pair." Roma chimes in, "For you. For all."[15] The Product (RED) Manifesto, which might be described as a forerunner of the B1G1 campaign also excelled in short-form rhetoric: "ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL. THEY ARE NOT. . . . WE WANT TO GIVE THEM THE PILLS. AND WE CAN. AND YOU CAN. AND IT'S EASY. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS UPGRADE YOUR CHOICE." Indeed, these companies' short-form discourses are as commercially important, in an attentional deficit society, as their CEOs' company stories or the sometimes protracted testimonials that Amazon consumers reviewers write. People may not stick around for a 55-minute Blumenthal workshop online. They can grasp, in the barest moment, what it means to buy one and give one.

Another place where short-form rhetoric emerged as important in my case studies was in consultancy discourse. Max Lenderman, for example, is a one-man factory for such sayings: “Purpose is the new digital.” “We believe that brands are verbs not nouns.” “If you want to rock the world, all you need is the right people & and not enough time.” And then, of course, there is the pervasive School hashtag, #giveashit. In my interview with the consultants at Lime Red Studios, Cardona-Maguigad shared another powerful short-form rhetoric that he uses to describe that company’s work: he took a marker and drew an x-y axis on the table where we were conducting our interview. On the y axis, he drew an arrow from the zero point almost vertically, an arrow representing where digital technology in a digitally mediated (or as he put it, “gigged-up”) culture was headed—straight upwards. Then he drew another arrow, starting from zero and hovering horizontally just above the x axis. This, he explained, was what people knew about digital technology. It is difficult to imagine a more disconcerting rendering of technological disconcertedness than Cardona-Maguigad’s two arrows.

Are these tropes *stories*? Aphorisms, slogans, hashtags, and arrows may arise from a story (like the moral of a tale). They may also create conditions for a story (giving an idea for a novel one might write or a company one might start). But they do not seem to be strictly stories themselves. A story vectors from instigating action to rising action and climax and then back again in the denouement: there is a movement from ordinary experience to something extraordinary and then back to the ordinary. But a hashtag or a maxim seems to burst up from the present moment, giving the hearer an unusually pregnant sense of the Now as a space to think and talk and feel and weigh and experience. To use an old formulation, the short-form discourse may be *in* a story without being *of* it.[16]

But are these short-form discourses to be trusted? As Hariman acknowledges, “A conventional response to these aphoristic tendencies is to hold them up as signs of cultural decline. Whatever happened to originality? What good can come of short attention spans?”[17] To some critics, B1G1 discourse can sound clever and yet reductively individualist, like what Sarika Bansal has called “the undeniable power of the ‘one,’”—which, as it turns out, is easy to deny.[18] The skeptic of short forms may also dismiss the brevity in socially entrepreneurial discourse as a sampling of sampling. In an age arguably cursed with frantically parodic and highly disposable discourse, speed and disposability, along with hyper-brevity, are the concerns of Todd Gitlin, who observes devastatingly, “The onrush of the media torrent—the speed of its images on the screen, its sentences on the page, and its talk over the air—as well as the quickness with which images move through space and the velocity of its product cycles—all these speeds depend on an overall social speed-up and are but its most visible features.”[19] If social entrepreneurship is to address civic problems, here seems one problem desperately needing solution: the desperate hurry of late modernity. Instead of cultivating quick and clever discourse, then, why not carry on the time-honored custom of telling a tale? Props to Blumenthal and Mycoskie and Kassalow! Whatever their company's social impact, their stories are at least helping cultivate a longer public attention span.

Of course, as Gitlin himself notes, this supposedly dangerous brevity is not a recent invention.[20] Short discourses are older even than the Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament and are characteristic of such important philosophers as Nietzsche and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Instead of asking whether we should trust the impulse within socially entrepreneurial discourse short-form discourses, we might ask what these discourses are doing. One of the qualities of a quotable phrase, as Hariman notes in a review of two Gary Morson books on short-form rhetoric, "is that the words must be able to function as a free-standing text outside of their original context."[21] This, I think, is one of the performative functions of the apothegems of socially entrepreneurial marketing, that they allow phrases, at one and the same time, to have a context (the company and its discourses) and to launch from that context for use in other contexts as well. That in-but-not-of-ness is an important habit, especially in a discourse that depends upon contagiousness and virality.

Social entrepreneurial rhetoric often functions, as I argued in Chapter 2, to give access to multifarious constituents to a mode of engagement. Although I focused on Blumenthal's storytelling, I might just as easily have described his discourse as a constellation of shorter rhetorics. I noted, for example, that he uses understatement, or litotes, a figure of speech that frees his listeners to speak in their own voices and their own ways. Blumenthal's long stories may invite powerful identification and empathy and offer compelling encouragement and motivation, but his use of understatement exhibits a kind of insistent deference to his audience. He asks people, in other words, not just to admire him or to feel their commonness with him or even to agree with his precise counsels, but rather to take up a meaningful project of their own devising. Mycoskie, too, narrates his audiences into modal participation, though with a different trope, synecdoche, which connects otherwise unconnectable concerns: buying and giving. Within his stories, too, there are tight figures of speech that unlock consumer capacities to get in on a collective comportment towards social problems. As people engage a company's mode, they need not replicate these powerful speakers' tropes; they may, in fact, improvise upon the companies' mode in a way that Blumenthal and Mycoskie could never have predicted, like someone adapting a meme for wholly idiosyncratic purposes. A not insignificant aspect of socially entrepreneurial storytelling is its proffering of short-form rhetorics. In that case, the "liftability" of business meliorist discourse is a genuine virtue.

When Gary Morson discusses short-form discourse, he tends to contrast better and worse versions of similar figures. For example, he contrasts the apothegm and the dictum in this way:

> The short works I call apothegms appeal to those who find the world to be fundamentally mysterious. No matter how deeply we probe, we uncover still greater enigmas. Apothegms contrast with dicta, which not only regard all significant questions as answerable but also claim to have finally answered them. For dicta, the world is a riddle that has been solved, while for apothegms it is a mystery leading to ever deeper mysteries.[22]

In similar fashion, the short-form rhetorics of social entrepreneurship also invite us to the practice of judgment about whether or not something is worthy of further exploration. Take, for instance, that briefest mode of discourse, the statistic. When RED says its monies have improved the wellbeing of over 90 million Africans since 2006, that sounds impressive; it also sounds a little like a short-form answer to an irreducibly long-form question. Statistics, in other words, can function like Morson's dicta, shutting down inquiry, closing down exploratory conversation. But further consideration of these dicta might reward inquiry with wisdom. (What, for example, does "impacted" mean? And how does this compare with the number of those newly infected?)[23] If social entrepreneurs wish to be of help to liberal democracy and global citizens, they may well wish to consider leading the way in using short forms that invite deliberation and elaboration.

But I think there is a farther and less obvious good in saying that we should tell fewer tales and use more tropes. The business communication experts of our time may tempt us to laud story as a performative spellbinder. But are narratives the only path to enchantment? Further, is enchantment a desirable communicative goal, if by "enchantment," we mean eliminating difference, delay, gaps, friction, and the other uncomfortable conditions that constitute so much of the vitality of human life?[24] The short form recalls us to the fortunate inefficacy of communication. Social businesspersons might be tempted to aspire for rhetorical wizardry, especially after watching Kassalow do his amazing narrative thing. But the short forms of such discourse remind us of the sometimes happy infelicity of performatives. We may need more disruption more than we need enchantment.[25] Just as it would not be good for us if all of our prayers were answered, so it is good that not all of our performatives achieve their promise.

COUNTER-INTUITIONS ABOUT PAYING ATTENTION

A second commonsense assumption challenged by this book's case studies pertains to the exalted role late moderns give to the concentrated attender. Western societies have often placed a high value on individual attentiveness: narratives about cultural figures such as the scientist and the detective place a premium on the skill for noticing what others have missed.[26] Their silence or taciturnity often registers this knack for concentration and observation, only after which they may break into speech, explaining how they made their astonishing discoveries. Not surprisingly, then, the persuasiveness of the socially entrepreneurial project traces in part to its participation in the myth of the superbly attentive individual, the alert innovator and changemaker, who is first a noticer then a communicator. Bill Drayton has argued, for example, that business-animated problem-solving depends on psychological events within the individual entrepreneur: "The driving force here is the fact that such a person is emotionally, deeply committed to making change through the whole of society. Once one understands that this commitment itself is the driving force, then everything else follows."[27] This psychologizing of entrepreneurship translates into an individualizing of attention, too. A part of what makes the entrepreneur special is a cognitive capacity or, we might say, a quality of soul, that expresses itself through capacities for imaginative concentration. The individual entrepreneur's attentiveness, in other words, seems indispensable for cultural transformation. Tatiana Garcia Granados and Haile Johnston, for example, noticed that one of the obstacles to public health and better nutrition is inattentiveness to the systems that distribute food, so they started the Common Market. Sanjay Agarwall and his son Aditya Agarwall notice that Indian farmers lack the communicational technologies and networks needed to get a fair price for their crops; so they start the Kisan Network.

Socially entrepreneurial attention thus begins with the quasi-heroic figure of the alert innovator: changemakers are noticers; they spot problems and opportunities and solutions that others miss. But in order to carry out these plans, they have to help others to be noticers as well.

Here, we recur to a special kind of performative communication known as interpellation, a process discussed in Chapter 3 that hails a person into self-recognition within a discourse. For social entrepreneurs, in particular, such interpellation calls out to shoppers as *conscious* consumers. By helping them to attend to themselves as "woke" participants in a changemaker project, social entrepreneurs also help consumers to attend to predicaments in the world. The question that Judith Butler raises about interpellation, however, is whether the subjects that are summoned into being by a powerful "Hey you!" have any capacity to do interpellation of their own.[28] To recognize oneself in keeping with a discourse is to be disempowered, colonized, by that discourse: the subject becomes the effect of communication. Hence, Butler speaks of the "need to offer an account of how the subject constituted through the address of the Other becomes then a subject of capable of addressing others."[29] I think my case studies in Chapter 2 take this one step farther and suggest the need not just for an articulateness on the far side of an alert response to "Hey you!" but also an articulateness that is itself attentive. Closing the gap between communication as conveyance of information and communication as conduct also closes the gap between communication as a creator of attention and communication as attention itself.

Social entrepreneurship, like many projects in late-modern society, generally construes attention as something that either precedes or follows discourse. Such a division of attention from discourse is hardly an innovation of social entrepreneurs. The literatures on speech and attention, both ancient and modern, suggest that speech may create attention, but not that speech could *be* attention. See Aristotle on how speech brings something before the audience's eyes; read Giambattista Vico's exposition on the importance of rhetorical trifles for holding audience attention; or spend time with Chaïm Perelman's discussion of how speech can mediate presence for what is absent.[30] All these evoke the commonsense idea that discourse and attention are related but separate practices. But the case studies in Chapter 2, especially those focusing on systems and infrastructures and networks, suggest that attention and discourse are co-inherent: to attend to a network entails a kind of communicative participation in the network; to tell others about the network is to pull them into an attentiveness to it. That co-inherence becomes useful for certain kinds of problem-solving. Michael Polanyi's phenomenology of attention is famous for remarking that "we can know more than we can say" but perhaps less famous for adding that we also say more than we know.[31] As a result of this constantly blurry relation between saying and knowing, between discourse and attention, "certain kinds of discourse are able not only to capture but also to condition attention as an instrument for discovery and deliberation."[32] Closing the gap between speech and awareness, in other words, "can . . . be cognitively and deliberatively useful for solving problems in bewildering, fragmented conditions."[33]

All right, the social entrepreneur might reasonably ask, how does one create such discursive attentiveness? If we grant Chapter 2's case studies their evidence that individual attentional capabilities do not exist apart from political and economic ecologies that enable them to function and flourish, how can the social entrepreneur generate communication-as-attention? The short answer is that—she cannot. It is not within the individual communicator's gift, in other words, to generate this discursive attentiveness, because it arises spontaneously from the collective, institutional, infrastructural, ideological, and affective conditions that constitute everyday experience. What the changemaker can do, however, is to map these conditions, tracing their connectivity, limning their immanent productivity.

One case study in Chapter 2 provided an exemplar of this network cartography. The Common Market was started by social innovators, Granados and Johnston, who had originally attempted to raise individuals' awareness about good eating, but who eventually recognized it was their own organization whose attention needed changing. Put differently, they started to ask about the institutions and ideologies and economies that constituted the background of their attentional work. What they learned was that, while they were trying to get people to pay attention to better food choices, they were themselves being *attended on*—pushed on, pulled by—unfair food supply infrastructures and market distribution systems. This realization took a fair amount of attentiveness in the usual sense of the word (Granados and Johnston are clearly astute people), but bringing social change required more than their cognitive brilliance and psychological focus; it also required learning how to act in collaboration with the impersonal systems that attended on them, pressing, yanking, constraining, lifting them from all sides. Chapter 3 called this immanent attendance—a collective full-on contact with the personal, infrastructural, natural, technological, and corporate conditions that constitute a social problem.

Social entrepreneurs, then, might do their best and most important work, not when they simply raise awareness in the conventional sense, but when their communication cultivates what Jenny Rice calls "network inquiry."[34] The aim of the website discourse, the goal of the public presentation, the aspiration of the promotional video, the telos of the tweet, then, would not be to establish a personal noticing of a social problem. Instead, social entrepreneurial communication should enable audience members to (in Rice's terms) "to trace, collect, uncover, and follow" what is going on in the networked conditions that make a predicament possible and, in some cases, persistent.[35]

One of the drivers of individualistic and psychologistic awareness-raising discourse is the hope that attentiveness will lead to empathy and that empathy will lead to change. Liberal democracy's commitment to free speech and a free press derives in part from the conviction that being a citizen requires being attentive, especially to information. But, as Rice notes, publicmindedness often entails passion as well, thanks to the widespread habit of "making feeling a prerequisite to publicness and to public rhetorical action."[36] She critiques this notion for the way it can cause disengagement: "If I do not feel pulled toward the site of crisis, then my distance marks [what might be reasonably called] a legitimate stance in the larger rhetorical situation."[37] In other words, if awareness-raising discourse has not created feelings such as pity or sorrow, I may quite understandably opt out of this or that civic involvement. Hence, Rice's concern (and, one would think, that of the social entrepreneur as well) to generate network-tracing discourse that does not inadvertently legitimize withdraws from civic action.[38]

But there is, arguably, another problem with making individual attention and feeling the ground of social entrepreneurial action. If the changemaker communicator must be the energy source for public attentiveness and public feeling regarding some public problem, such communication creates exhaustion for the changemaker herself. Light notes that "social entrepreneurs are expected to persevere without pause, sometimes without a living wage to support them. It would be no surprise if they exhibited high rates of physical and emotional duress that go with pursuing their vision."[39] Of course, social entrepreneurs do this voluntarily, sometimes out of love for projects that give them deep personal satisfaction. But given the ways that vocations provide personal meaning to their adherents, such exhausting attentiveness may bring this discussion back to Lauren Berlant's cruel optimism: one can after all invest an enormous attentiveness in a project that will prove destructive to the attender herself.[40]

COUNTER-INTUITIONS ABOUT EXPERTISE

Chapter 3 explored the communicationally disconcerting notion that instead of a tidy speaker-audience-message triad, social entrepreneurs engage a fulsome circulation of discourse. How is the changemaker supposed to communicate compellingly, persuasively, when everyone they are addressing is swirling along in a gulf stream of other messages? A part of what makes this question so bedeviling is that we can hardly think of persuasive communication outside of a quest for identification between speakers and audiences. Ever since Kenneth Burke forwarded the doctrine that identification, not persuasion, should be the primary definer of rhetorical action, communication scholars have assumed that communication is ultimately a project in achieving identification between the self and the other.[41]

> A is not identified with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is *identified* with B. Or he may *identify himself* with B even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so. In being identified with B, A is 'substantially one' with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another.[42]

Burke shows how the magic is done through communication, a potentially enchanting discourse just waiting for a social entrepreneur, who righteously hankers for societal unity instead of polarizing politics. But the case studies in Chapter 3 may suggest that discourse does not always (as Burke might say) compensate for division. Sometimes, indeed, identification, not division, is at the root of their problems. Explaining this counterintuitive idea will take some doing.[43]

Communication consultants seem to stand outside the discourse they advise about (in this case, about social entrepreneurship). Crossing this gap to work collaboratively with their clients often entails identificatory discourse: experts, in other words, have to be at once knowledgeable and approachable, specialized and universalizable. The discourse of expertise seems then to require identification. Companies like Lime Red or School seem to have to find ways to communicate expert information to social entrepreneurs winsomely so that those entrepreneurs can themselves become experts in relation to their audiences, who may, in turn, become experts (for still other audiences) in regards to social and ecological problems. Expert consultants and entrepreneurial consultees take their place on a chain of rhetorical identification, linking speakers and audiences who become speakers to yet more congregations of hearers, and so on *ad infinitum*.

The logic of that division between consultants and consultees, however, does not work well with companies like School, Lime Red Studio, and B Lab. Although they appear to be *addressing* social entrepreneurs rather than *being* socially entrepreneurial themselves, my case studies suggested that expert consultancy is itself a species of business-animated social problem-solving. They are, in other words, already closely identified with those whom they supposedly address across a gap of expertise. They are addressing a consequential social problem: how to create constituents for socially entrepreneurial discourse. Without such constituents, business meliorism loses its distinctiveness and liveliness. Like the rhetorical scholarship and instruction that Greene examines, expert consultancy "produces, circulates, and delivers communicative souls to the discourses of a public," in this case, the public of social entrepreneurship.[44] The communication models of intermediary organizations like B Lab do more than transmit data and meaning; they also generate and circulate audiences upon which the discourse of social entrepreneurship relies. Third-party communicational experts are not actually "third-party" at all; their consultancies construct apparatuses that gather people around discourses of making the world better through business.

The difficulty with the conventional notion of consultancy-by-identification is that it assumes that people begin at a critical distance from each other and are only brought into collaboration through compelling discourse. Such an assumption construes people as separated by enormous gaps in experience, but capable of meeting in linguistic exchange, especially through cognitive, rational, and critical discourse. Diane Davis traces a different social ontology, one in which people are already always mutually affecting and affected by each other, even before they get around to speaking and listening.[45] Their contact points are material, affective, and embodied. Consequently, there is a radical affectability, even suggestibility—"something like the ability of addressed language to induce *motion* in *people*, even when the addressor says nothing"—that a conventional conception of expert consultancy leaves out.[46] But Davis argues that primordial involvement with each other has to be broken before a definitive and ethical sense of the other *as other* can emerge. "What suggestibility suggests, in other words, is that identification is not simply rhetoric's most fundamental aim; it's also and therefore rhetorical theory's most fundamental problem."[47] Consultancy that merely cultivates identification, in other words, might be exaggerating the rationality of rhetoric, to the exclusion of its more affective and performative dimensions.

It sounds perverse to say that being on the same page with someone else may be the problem or to say that communication helps us achieve disunity as a cure for an overly close identification. But think, by way of example, for a moment of the various aspects of vocal production, including force, pitch, and time. Each of these aspects represents a set of choices for how loud to speak, what range of pitches to share, how quickly to speak; they are all choices that make up a storyteller's particular vocal quality. In conventional public speaking courses, students are taught to make vocal choices that support an overall strategic aim. The speaker should only speak loudly, should vary pitches, should vary pacing only as much as will help to create identification between the speaker and the hearers.

In the case studies of public speaking I examined in Chapter 1, however, there were a few vocal transgressions. Think of Professor Silver—in some ways the least charismatic of the speakers—who chose to say nothing at all for stretches of his TED Talk. Think, too, of Blumenthal's rather inflectionally flat delivery so sharply contrastive with his high-octane introductory music. Think of Mycoskie's sometimes excessive verbal clutter. What if we interpret these somewhat transgressive vocal choices as making room for felt difference between speakers and hearers? What if we interpret these "flaws" as giving cues that the storyteller is experiencing a surplus of affect? What if vocal inadequacies, either loudness or quietness, highness or lowness, speed or cessation, indicate a productive too-much-ness? What if this overwhelmedness enables distance and novelty in a speaker/audience relation that might otherwise submerge into sameness and perhaps even indifference? When vocal delivery skirts an out-of-control-ness, that manner communicates that more is going on in a company's mode than rational, controlled, entirely prescribed engagement can afford—and that something invites the audience to get involved innovatively and productively as well.[48]

I think Davis is right to warn about a potentially smothering oneness in place even before we seek identification and collaboration. Disconcerting as it may be to say that consultancy may rely upon “a *failure* of identification, an interruption in narcissistic appropriation,” I see it as a vital counter-intuition that socially entrepreneurial communication needs to create division in order to make space both for the other and for the unexpected communicative action of the other.[49] Communication that seeks identification between speakers and hearers may inadvertently communicate that experts have somehow discovered an expert way to feel about something. Aligning emotions, between consultants and consultees, between entrepreneurs and constituents, between any speaker and any hearer, may actually prove unproductive. Indeed, what happens between you and me—even more than what happens within either of us—helps you and me to *be* us in all of our potentially creative and productive idiosyncrasies. The communicative goal of consultancy may not be to replicate a psychological event in as many audience members as possible, but rather to enable others to engage with the world and each other in fresh and unprecedented ways.

COUNTER-INTUITIONS ABOUT GIFTING

Chapter 4 dealt with the relative merits of problem-solving and gift-giving discourse in socially entrepreneurial projects. There is, as I argued in that chapter, a commonsense distrust among social entrepreneurs for altruistic language and a marked preference for the language of problem-solving. Problem-solving discourse seems to offer a more quantitative gauge of social value. But some wicked problems are so tenaciously woven into a community that to eradicate the problem might do harm to the community itself. (Something like this happens when an economic development project results in gentrification.) Furthermore, problem-solving language is so pervasively used across late-modern society that its use by social entrepreneurs might represent both a mainstreaming move and a loss of the distinctiveness of social entrepreneurship. The loss of those peculiarities can spell the loss of social entrepreneurship’s role as an idiosyncratic community alternative to other publics in democratic societies.

What is remarkable about the gifting style is that, on the one hand, it resists the complete authority of the market logics of late-modern capitalism and that, on the other hand, it holds on to the ameliorative focus of accountable relationships. As Chapter 4’s analysis showed, however, companies that make use of gift-giving messaging and operations vary notably in whether they emphasize the excesses of unilateral generosity or the reciprocal exchanges of giver/givee relations. This variation eludes both the suspicious critique of theorists like Slavoj Žižek and the naïve claims of altruism of neoliberal boosters. Instead, the gifting style breaks up customary binaries between quid-pro-quo and pay-it-forward cultural logics. These companies' use of gifting language does not offer a window into the true character of their company, nor does it, contrarily, offer a beguiling veil hiding the company's inner essence. Instead, it helps to cultivate democratically valuable counterpublics.

Consider the tri-colonic plain style of the Nouri company:

YES THIS IS A PEANUT BUTTER
AND WILD CHERRY BAR
IT ALSO FEEDS A CHILD IN NEED

SUPER DELICIOUS APPLE
CINNAMON SPICE BAR
IT ALSO FEEDS A CHILD IN NEED

BY FAR THE BEST CHOCOLATE
AND CREAMY CASHEW BAR
IT ALSO FEEDS A CHILD IN NEED.[50]

In each of these tri-colons, the first two phrases appear in dark, large typeface with the last phrase being smaller and in a less conspicuous white font. The company skillful directs momentary focus, foregrounding practical business exchange—appealing to consumers first on the basis of the delectability of their goods rather than on the basis of their project's altruism—but Nouri also expands the logic of exchange to a yes-and logic that sounds like improvisational theatre. The relationship between giving and getting here seems to be noncompetitive. *Yes, our product is awesome—and selling it helps us care for hungry communities.* This improvisational logic hints at the excess that becomes possible with the ampersand, the extravagant connectibility of the hyphen, the extensions of yes/and-ing.

But lest we exaggerate the performative power of the gift, the deconstructive thought of Jacques Derrida points out the constraints of the gifting style. Consider again this apparently obvious truth: in order for there to be a donation, someone has to give something to someone. And yet, Derrida notes, this economic arrangement makes a donation impossible.[51]

> If there is gift, the given of the gift (that which one gives, that which is given, the gift as given thing or as act of donation) must not come back to the giving (let us not already say to the subject, to the donor). It must not circulate, it must not be exchanged, it must not in any case be exhausted, as a gift, by the process

> of exchange, by the movement of circulation of the circle in the form of return to the point of departure. If the figure of the circle is essential to the economic, the gift must remain aneconomic.[52]

Otherwise, he argues, it will fall into the usual economic round of investment for the sake of returns.[53] Addicted to just such an economic arrangement, business discourse ceaselessly strategizes, organizes, structures, and seeks to predict. But when a company speaks of "giving," it is speaking of something that cannot be strategized and structured without ceasing to be a gift.[54] This would seem to make the gift unmanageable for business enterprise.

Social businesses, however, are committed to what conventional business sees as unstrategizable, unstructurable, unmanageable and therefore eminently ignorable: the marginalized, the disabled, the devastated, the exploited. Social business's use of gifting language reflects its commitment to the overwhelming. In that sense, the disconcertment that gift generally creates is precisely the right terminology for describing how social entrepreneurship seeks to disrupt business as usual. But the rhetoric of gift is also exactly wrong, if by *giving* the social business seeks any sort of return.

The counter-intuition that gift terminology introduces into social entrepreneurship is the destabilizing but constitutive possibility of the religious. As Webb notes, Derrida's deconstruction of gift betrays reticence about the theological: he spends a great deal of time elaborating all the problems with giving and receiving to avoid the impossible-to-explain character of gifting. "His discourse is underwritten by a strategic (and yet essential) hesitation or indecision that enables him to prolong what he does not want to say. To account for the gift, to theorize its destination, is to reject the gift altogether, yet the gift demands some sort of response."[55] Social business sometimes exhibits a similar reticence about matters religious. Of course, in some cases, religious confession and practice are seen as instrumentally supportive of social business.[56] Religious belief might, for example, motivate the pursuit of social justice; religious institutions might provide space for socially entrepreneurial pursuits. But at other times, religiosity is seen as obstructive to social business.

TOMS' Mycoskie, for example, has affiliated with conservative evangelical Christians. But when *Jezebel* blogger Irin Cameron asked, "Why Is TOMS Partnering With An Anti-Gay, Anti-Choice Group?" Mycoskie apologized, professing his prior ignorance of the ideological commitments of the organization. "It was an oversight on my part and the company's part and one we regret." Mycoskie went on to affirm "equal human and civil rights for all." But though Mycoskie's Chief Giving Officer, Sebastian Fries refers to TOMS as a "secular company," Tiny Sparks podcaster Amy Costello searched out further partnerships between TOMS and evangelical Christian organizations in Africa, including World Vision, Feed the Children, Operation Blessing International, and Bridge2Rwanda. Mycoskie may be comfortable representing his company in front of mega-church audiences (such as at Willow Creek's Global Leadership Summit), quoting the Bible in support of his One for One Model, and giving thanks to churches for their partnership—but when it comes to other spaces of public communication, it seems best to him, all things considered, to appropriate the language of secularism to refer to TOMS.[57]

Other B1G1 companies need not have Christian-friendly CEOs in order to feel something of this difficulty. The fact that such companies deploy a gifting style indicates their impatience with the morally flattening discourse of reciprocal exchange. Gifting aspires for more than *quid pro quo*. But as Charles Taylor notes, language that provides moral lift can also occasion cross-tensions between ordinary, utilitarian experience and extraordinary, aspirational aims.

> We are in conflict, even confusion, about what it means to affirm ordinary life. . . . We are as ambivalent about heroism as we are about the value of the work-aday goals that it sacrifices. We struggle to hold on to a vision of the incomparably higher, while being true to the central modern insights about the value of ordinary life. We sympathize with both the hero and the anti-hero; and we dream of a world in which one could be in the same act both.[58]

The gifting style, because it relies upon the paradox that the giving precedes the gift, the giver, and the givee, confronts the social businessperson with disconcertment and tension. I do not think it adequate to settle the matter by simply saying "A little religion can help some people do what they need to do." Nor does Mycoskie's repudiation (or perhaps privatization) of religion seem helpful. The tensions cannot be dodged. Perhaps there is some help in recognizing, as Taylor notes, that both the religionist and the secularist feel this push-me-pull-you between our commitment to the manageably ordinary and our hankering for something full and purposeful. "Rather than one side clearly possessing the answers that the other one lacks, we find rather that both face the same issues, and each with some difficulty."[59]

What social entrepreneurship needs is a way of talking about giving that does not collapse generosity into a personal pain point nor convert giving into a cost-benefits calculation. As Webb notes, when we give generously, we do give something up. But that giving need not occasion self-harm. Similarly, when we give generously, we do receive returns, but not necessarily returns that can be predicted or measured.[60] How is the social entrepreneur to negotiate this oscillatory tension? I am unconvinced that she can combine the aspiration of the former with the pragmatism of the latter without the help of one theology or another.[61] But in any case, business meliorism is done disservice by a "culture [that] seems stuck, imagining the gift as either pain or reward; we are unable to overcome or synthesize this polarization."[62] Averting this unfortunate dualism is important to the project, which Chapter 4 suggested as integral to social entrepreneurship, that of forming companies that not only make donations in the conventional sense, but also providently form counterpublics of innovative givers.

CONCLUSION

Near Pignon, Haiti, there is a large gully through which runs the river Bouyara. Traversing that gully requires taking a suspension bridge built by a North American organization called Bridges to Prosperity. It is an impressive construction with powerful stone abutments at either end, with wooden treads across the gully that give the structure more flexibility and toughness than a concrete formation might have in an earthquake. The bridge does not permit much more than foot traffic, though the Haitians themselves are deft enough to ride their motorbikes across. (I have a North American friend who once rode his bike across the bridge and said, afterwards with a breathy kind of reverence, "I can do anything.") When I first set foot on the bridge, I was anxious, because the bridge conditions had deteriorated, due to a hurricane that had savaged the wooden treads and the wire mesh netting on either side. I took my first half dozen steps clinging to the cables slung at waist height along the bridge. This precaution turned out to be inadvisable. Because everyone else on the bridge was walking at a different gait, the treads swung at a different slope and speed than the cables. Hanging on tightly to the cables felt psychologically essential, but proved to be physically dangerous. When I let go of the cables and started to take step after step on my own, but still roughly in keeping with the other bridge walkers, I was able to both find my own stride and to move in sync with everybody else slung like me across the gully's sky.

Bridges to Prosperity recognized that some development needs are too diverse to be addressed simply by making resources available.[63] Instead bridge-building approached Haitian needs by honoring the citizens' capabilities to get work, to acquire schooling, to form friendships, to obtain and cultivate land, to co-inhabit with the natural environment. Instead of transferring resources about, they made it possible for Haitians to move *themselves* about and, in the course of doing so, to exercise their capabilities creatively, freely, innovatively, wisely. Social entrepreneurship enables people to deploy their capabilities in unlooked-for ways. They run a bakery in Les Cayes. They practice and cultivate agronomy in Pignon. They educate parents on the campus of Many Hands for Haiti.[64] Whatever they do, they sling a bridge across the gaps between people and their potential.

Perhaps the metaphor of bridge-building too quickly evokes visions of interpersonal communication: *let us build bridges*, *not walls*, etc.[65] But this book's longest-running argument has addressed not the interpersonal, but the public dynamics of socially entrepreneurial communication. I have been arguing that such discourse goes beyond queries about organizational storytelling, attention-grabbing, audience-targeting, and problem-solving to the farther questions of modal engagement, immanent attendance, circulation engagement, and counterpublic cultivation. There is, I believe, a parable for this movement in tossing cables across a gully, pulling on the ropes to guess at their security, laying treads in a complex negotiation of counterforces and collaborative energies, and finally modulating posture and gait with others on the bridge.

Because social entrepreneurship functions rhetorically and affectively, it tends to trigger capacities in people, capacities to associate, innovate, generate, and affectively invest. The energy that drives social entrepreneurship, in other words, arrives with an openness, a diverse applicability, that people can interact with diversely as consumers, activists, employees, beneficiaries, policy makers, and religionists. In that sense, social entrepreneurship has a politics: its envisioned society would "guarantee to all citizens a basic set of opportunities for functioning, in some central areas of human life that are likely to prove important for whatever else the person pursues."[66] It has been a part of the challenge of this book to describe this action as a complex but learnable mode of collective engagement. But whatever else they do, social entrepreneurs have proven themselves capable of the lift and grace of my little friend, the kite-maker who looked at bits of trash and saw instead a latent buoyancy and, in otherwise airless conditions, a thing of impossible levity.

NOTES

1. Webb, *The Gifting God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 138.

2. Barman, *Caring Capitalism: The Meaning and Measure of Social Value* (New York: Cambridge, 2016), 7–8.

3. Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (New York: Oxford, 2007), 7.

4. Latour describes this as "the intuition that associations are not enough, that they should also be composed in order to design one common world." Latour, *Reassembling the Social,* 259.

5. Ronald Walter Greene, “Rhetorical Pedagogy as a Postal System: Circulating Subjects through Michael Warner’s ‘Publics and Counterpublics,’” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88.4 (November 2002), 435.

6. *Ibid*.

7. This paragraph’s discussion of RED’s performativity relies upon Craig E. Mattson, “Buying Stuff, Saving Lives—A Critical Account of Product (RED)’s Economics of Attention,” *Southern Journal of Communication* 77.3 (July–August 2012).

8. He asks how good it is that “we buy commodities neither on account of their utility nor as status symbols; we buy them in order to render our lives pleasurable and meaningful.” He cites as an instance of this a 2009 CSR campaign put forward by Starbucks that peddled an ethic of care for the environment, for the flourishing of developing-world coffee farms, and for participation in the Starbucks community. Slavoj Žižek, *First as Tragedy Then as Farce* (London: Verso, 2009), 52–54.

9. The images of unraveling come from Latour, *Reassembling the Social,* 247.

10. I learned to make the critical, explanatory move of showing how social entrepreneurship disrupts customary cultural logics—from studying Emily Barman’s *Caring Capitalism* discussion of how social projects measure social worth in late modernity through diverse metrics. Intriguingly, these metrics do not correspond tightly to a social versus economic binary. Such a binary would, she explains, describe the measure of social value in one of two ways: “Either the definition of a social project, as a criterion of worth, should shape the meaning and metrics of a field’s measuring device or the irresistible force of the economy, either wholesale or as the sectoral site of the social project, should lead to the privileging of market metrics” (19). Barman’s empirical research suggests that neither of these is true: the “tools, techniques, and technologies unexpectedly vary in the presence of market indicators, including their use of money as a metric and their incorporation of shareholder value as a criterion of worth” (19).

11. Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 249.

12. When Blumenthal or Mycoskie tell their company stories, are they not generating more moneymaking changemaking in order to create a business context in which their own kind of company is likely to thrive? I am indebted to Judith Butler for this cautionary analysis of performative communication theory. Her book *Excitable Speech* examines what, for example, pornography or hate speech might be said to be doing. Drawing on Austin (as I did in this book’s Introduction) she notes the performative capacity of injurious communications, but adds: “many such speech acts are ‘conduct’ in a narrow sense, but not all of them have the power to produce the effects or initiate a set of consequences. . . . A speech act can be an act without necessarily being an efficacious act.” What she leverages in this observation is that speech is not magical. Speech often leaves a gap in which someone wounded by the speech might respond. “I wish to question for the moment the presumption that hate speech always works, not to minimize the pain that is suffered as a consequence of hate speech, but to leave open the possibility that its failure is the condition of a critical response.” In the case of social entrepreneurship, of course, I am not interested so much in communication that injures, but rather communication that calls others

to join in on the project of business-focused problem-seekers to do good. If the social entrepreneurial storyteller were capable of sovereignly calling others out as changemakers, through what lapsed Calvinists might be inclined to call irresistible grace, then the struggles of social entrepreneurs to communicate would not make much sense. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 16, 19.

13. Few theorists in communication theory are so associated with narrative as Walter Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1989). For popular accounts of the story see, Donald Miller, "An Introduction to the StoryBrand Marketing Framework," Story Brand website, https://storybrand.com/about/. Adam Bluestein, "How to Tell Your Company's Story." *Inc.* February, 2014. www.inc.com/magazine /201402/adambluestein/sara-blakely-how-i-got-started.html.

14. Paul C. Light, *The Search for Social Entrepreneurship* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 2008), 206.

15. Meal Share website, http://mealshare.co/. "The Whole Story Begins with You," Warby Parker website, https://www.warbyparker.com/buy-a-pair-give-a-pair. Roma website, https://romaboots.com/.

16. I am indebted to Webb's discussion of Derrida's theorizing of gift for this notion of something that, in a sense, gives the moment to be experienced. *The Gifting God*, 68–71.

17. Robert Hariman, "New Wine in Old Bottles: Quotations and the Rhetoric of Fiction," Review Essay, *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99.2 (2013), 233.

18. Sarika Bansal, "Shopping for a Better World," *New York Times*, May 9, 2012, https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/09/shopping-for-a-better-world/.

19. Todd Gitlin, *Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002), 103.

20. Gitlin concedes, "As with political rhetoric, skeptics may object that shorter and simpler are not necessarily shallower. Streamlining, as Italian designers know, can make for elegance. 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' clocks in at a mere ten words, fewer than the bottom-scraping average for our best-sellers of 1976, and a more rounded and sonorous ten words are hard to imagine" (100).

21. Hariman, "New Wine in Old Bottles," 235.

22. *The Long and the Short of It: From Aphorism to Novel* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 20.

23. According to 2016 statistics, there are more than 25 million people living with AIDS in Africa overall; in eastern and southern Africa, there were about 790,000 newly infected. "Global HIV and AIDS Statistics," Avert (September 1, 2017), https://www.avert.org/global-hiv-and-aids-statistics. I am relying for this discussion in part on my colleague's Dave Klandermann's assistance and on McCloskey's *The Rhetoric of Economics*, 112–138.

24. "The impossibility of connection, so lamented of late, may be a central and salutary feature of the human lot. . . . To 'fix' the gaps with 'better' communication might be to drain solidarity and love of all their juice." John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999), 59.

25. What I am reaching for is akin to Diane Davis's argument that some figures are disruptive figurations. They compel an astonishing encounter with what cannot be mediated, but which still makes affective appeal. What such figures do is to interrupt comprehension, creating a kind of ethical crisis, requiring response. *Inessential Solidarity: Rhetoric and Foreigner Relations* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 37ff.

26. Craig E. Mattson, "Wimsey to *The Wire*: Distracting Discourse and Attentional Practice," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100.1 (February 2014), 33.

27. Qtd. in Light, 7. Drayton's individualism drives not just his conception of the entrepreneur, but also of the entrepreneur's constituents. In describing the "citizen sector," Drayton argues, "The idea that one can become a change maker, not just an object, is highly contagious. And the energy that anyone so empowered brings to bear is extraordinary." "The Citizen Sector Transformed" *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Social Change*, ed. Alex Nicholls (New York: Oxford, 2008), 49.

28. *Excitable Speech* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 25–26.

29. *Ibid.*, 26.

30. Debra Hawhee's "Looking into Aristotle's Eyes: Toward a Theory of Rhetorical Vision," *Advances in the History of Rhetoric,* 14 (2011): 140. Giambattista Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time,* trans. Elio Gianturco with *The Academies and the Relation between Philosophy and Eloquence,* trans. Donald Phillip Verene (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1990), 15. Chaim Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 117.

31. Regarding knowing more than we can say, see Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Gloucester, MA: Peter smith, 1983), 4; *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1962), 95. Regarding saying more than we can know, see Polanyi's description of times when "the tacit and the formal fall apart, since the speaker does not know, or quite know, what he is talking about." *Tacit Dimension,* 87.

32. Mattson, "Wimsey to the Wire," 33.

33. *Ibid*.

34. *Distant Publics: Development Rhetoric and the Subject of Crisis* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg, 2012), 172.F

35. *Distant Publics,*174.

36. *Ibid.*, 167.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Distant Publics*, 172.

39. *The Search for Social Entrepreneurship*, 211.

40. "Cruel Optimism," *The Affect Theory Reader,* eds. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 94.

41. Burke spends a great deal of time in *A Rhetoric of Motives,* for instance, showing that allegedly un-rhetorical concerns and aesthetic texts actually fall under rhetorical consideration in that they seek identification, hide division, and induce cooperation among audiences being addressed. See especially his chapter, "The

Range of Rhetoric," *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1950), 3–46.

42. *Ibid.*, 21.

43. Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 33.

44. "Rhetorical Pedagogy as Postal System," 435.

45. *Inessential Solidarity*, 2

46. *Ibid.*, 33.

47. *Ibid.*

48. I am indebted for this counsel to Joshua Gunn for his reflections on transgressive speech, where he argues that eloquence is that capacity "to bring audiences to the precipice of bliss or vengeance but without abandoning the limits of language. Hence the cry, the grunt, the scream, and the yawp represent an inability to control one's tone and one's body in turn—they represent falling off the cliff of control." Here, I am turning his descriptive observation into a kind of norm for modal discourse: if the storyteller wants her audience to engage the affective structure of the mode, she has to be eloquent in Gunn's sense, using voice (or some other communicative element) to take the audience into direct contact with affective experience. "On Speech and Public Release," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 13.2 (2010), 20.

49. *Inessential Solidarity*, 35.

50. "NOURI Bars are a Healthy Snack with a Conscience," *Gourmet News,* June 12, 2014, http://www.gourmetnews.com/nouri-bars-healthy-snack-conscience/.

51. "Given Time: The Time of the King," *Critical Inquiry* 18.2 (Winter, 1992), 166–167.

52. *Ibid*.

53. *Ibid.*, 167.

54. For this noting of business's commitment to the orderly and plannable, in contrast with the chaotic and unmanageable energy of the gift, I am indebted to Webb's commentary on Derrida: "For Derrida, the extravagance of the gift (*don*) makes it a particularly suitable symbol for the 'other' and all the problems of understanding otherness in general. If understanding can only know that which is regular, balanced, and proportional, then the excess of the gift is a threat to the measured categories of understanding." Webb, *The Gifting God,* 68.

55. Webb, *The Gifting God,* 79.

56. Rukmini Banerjee, "Religion and Social Entrepreneurship: What's Faith Got to Do with It?" May 8, 2014, Ashoka website, https://www.ashoka.org/en/story/religion-social-entrepreneurship-what%E2%80%99s-faith-got-do-it. Roger Spear, "Religion and Social Entrepreneurship" *Values and Opportunities in Social Entrepreneurship*, eds. Kai Hockerts, Johanna Mair, and Jeffrey Robinson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 31–51.

57. "Blake Mycoskie—The Global Leadership Summit, 2010," YouTube, April 12, 2012.

58. Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 24.

59. *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 726–727.

60. Webb, *The Gifting God,* 158.

61. For discussion of the dilemmas of secular discussions of gift, see John Milbank, “The Ethics of Self Sacrifice,” *First Things*, March 1999.

62. *Ibid*.

63. Martha Nussbaum critiques the political notion that “a good constitution should specify a basic social minimum that should be available to all citizens”—e.g., making sure that high-speed internet or iron-free water plumbing or fresh-food markets are on hand for anyone who desires them. Nussbaum, *Upheavals in Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 416.

64. This effort to strengthen and extend human capability aligns with Amartya Sen’s concerns for making resources available to those citizens to do with what they will. He theorizes that societies should seek to advance the capabilities of their citizens—or as one commentator puts it, Sen honors “the moral significance of individuals’ capability of achieving the kind of lives they have reason to value.” Thomas Wells, “Sen’s Capability Approach,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://www.iep.utm.edu/sen-cap/.

65. John Stewart, *Bridges Not Walls: A Book About Interpersonal Communication*, 11th ed. (McGraw-Hill, 2011).

66. *Ibid.*, 416.

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About the Author

Craig E. Mattson resides with his family in Midlothian, Illinois, a south suburb of Chicago, and teaches communication and media production at Trinity Christian College. In support of research and writing about business meliorism, Mattson benefits from collegiality across the Chicagoland's broad network of socially minded enterprises.