When I Look at the World: Bono's Transformation of Social Justice

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When I Look at the World:  
Bono’s Transformation of Social Justice

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Abstract

An abstract of the thesis of Katharine Koster for the Arts & Sciences Honors Program.

Title: When I Look at the World: Bono’s Transformation of Social Justice

Bono, the lead singer of U2, has built a reputation as a champion of political issues, such as publicly taking a pacifist stance against the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and as a prominent social activist, especially known for working with Amnesty International. However, Bono’s lobbying to save the continent of Africa from its economic downward spiral bridged social justice with politics. Bono headed the American branch of the Drop the Debt/Jubilee 2000 campaign, co-founded his own non-profit group DATA, and is responsible for the success of the ONE campaign in the United States.

As a celebrity, Bono uses his connections to influence his fanbase using U2 lyrics and performances. He also politicks with government officials and impresses them with his expert knowledge, tuning his argument to suit his audience. These tactics, combined with ceaseless passion and a grassroots movement, have made Bono the most effective social and political activist of the 21st century. Bono inspires others to take up a crusade and defend it using all of their power. If the rest of humanity were to follow his example, social justice would be a realized necessity in this new millennium.
When you look at the world

What is it that you see?

- Bono

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**Dedication:**

To Susan Michalczyk, for giving me the freedom to explore an untraditional topic, the estimable contributions of a rock star, and for encouraging me to dream while making me productive.

To Bono, the inspiration for this work.

And to my family, friends, and professors who encouraged and guided me in this process.

Thank you.
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I. Introduction

“What the fuck can you do?  I’m an Irish rock star!” Bono quipped during his speech to 3,000 executives in Washington, D.C. on February 3, 2006.¹ None of the high-powered administrators seemed offended by his offbeat exclamation, since most were dedicated fans of the rock-star-turned-activist and his group U2, the Biggest Band in the World.²

Bono, pronounced BAH-noh, is arguably one of the most recognizable celebrities in the music industry, as the frontman for 21-time Grammy-award-winning³ Irish rock band U2, whose albums have gone platinum 130 times over,⁴ but most recently as the spokesperson for the ONE campaign to fight poverty which he was promoting at the February 3 event, and for DATA, his organization that lobbies for debt relief, assistance in fighting AIDS, and fair trade for Africa. Bono has been a critical ambassador for these programs, lobbying politicians in the U.S. capitol, France, Great Britain, and other countries, in addition to everyday people around the world, in an effort to highlight the dire state of emergency in Africa.

Though currently the most famous, being the voice for the poor of Africa is only the most recent of Bono’s crusades in political and social activism spanning the past 26 years. Since the conception of U2, Bono has been the main lyricist, and has habitually used U2 concerts and song

lyrics to make his audience aware of such varying social injustice issues as the conflict in Northern Ireland⁵ and the imprisonment of Burmese resistance leader Aung San Suu Kyi⁶. He has famously supported organizations and charities such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International.⁷

It is not too surprising that a celebrity, such as Bono, with a rags-to-riches background, would want to help the underprivileged by promoting a charity or two. But Bono is an extreme case of the “rock star with a conscience,” as he calls himself.⁸ He is zealous, extremely persistent and dedicated to his causes, working full-time for their advancement while his career and family have taken a backseat. Bono is known for his charisma, his passion, and his ability to spread his enthusiasm to the public. What pushes him to work ceaselessly for projects outside of his own career? And what makes him so successful at championing his causes as an activist, moreso than most famous activists?

In my thesis, I will explore the various social and political causes Bono has championed over the past three decades, focusing principally on his substantial work for eliminating extreme poverty in Africa. I will demonstrate how he assists these projects and how successful he is in his endeavors. I will also analyze the aspects of his life and personality that drive him and enable him to be such a strong advocate for so many others. Finally, I will show why Bono is the model for celebrity activism, for going above and beyond the call of duty to help those in need, for inspiring others with his hopefulness and positivism, spreading his enthusiasm to

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⁵ See section: “Bono’s First…”
⁶ See section: “Bono’s Lyrics”
⁷ See sections: “Amnesty International…” and Appendix A
policymakers and the general public about the good we are all capable of, and for showing what
can be accomplished by succeeding in his efforts. These qualities exemplify the traits that must
be within the leaders of the 21st century in order to achieve the necessary changes in
humanitarianism for a world that has lost its faith in big ideas and that is unreceptive to the old
methods of philanthropy. Bono is vitally important to the new face of humanitarianism because
he instills hope in our jaded world, a hope that is not false or empty, because he has shown what
can be accomplished.
II. Father & Mother

To fully understand the workings of Bono’s persona which fuel his desire to change the world, one must go back to what initially formed his personality – to the place any good analyst would suggest – his childhood, specifically his relationship with each of his parents, and the impact of their interfaith union upon him.

Bono’s parents were from two different sects of Christianity in Ireland; Catholicism (to which his father belonged) and the Church of Ireland (a Protestant denomination to which his mother belonged and in which Bono was raised) had an enormous influence over him for much of his childhood. Ireland is well-known for its ties with the Catholic Church, but a good portion of its Northern population is made up of Protestants with ties to the Church of England. Hatred between these different factions has long been the cause of terrorism and fighting in Northern Ireland. Therefore when Bono’s parents, who grew up in inner-city Dublin, far from the northern part of Ireland, fell in love, they encountered resistance to their union. However, neither Bob Hewson nor his lovely bride Iris was very religious, and according to Bono, “…they saw the absurdity of the fuss made over their union.” His own parents’ recognition that the tension caused by religious differences was unnecessary and even harmful led Bono to become more tolerant and spiritual, though not specifically religious. Their “apathy” allowed Bono to think more freely about his own choices in religion: “I have to accept that one of the things that I

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9 See Section “Bono’s First...” for more on this conflict.
picked up from my father and my mother was the sense that religion often gets in the way of God.”

Bono especially experienced the tension caused by their marriage in his boyhood. He attended a Protestant primary school with the religious minority of children in Dublin but always felt out of place there because the others were more “posh” than he. Ironically he felt equally out of place with the Catholics in his neighborhood even though they were his friends. Paul was conscious of “a vague feeling of not belonging that in his more reflective moments, when it couldn’t be camouflaged by the activity of daily life, grew quite acute.”

Currently when Bono refers to his religious habits, he says he feels as comfortable in an African-American Baptist church singing gospel music as he does in a Church of Ireland cathedral just listening to Scripture. He values his own personal relationship with God, through prayer and reading the Scriptures, above any loyalty to a particular category of religion. He has taken his sense of not belonging and being caught between different denominations and changed it to a universal acceptance of belonging wherever he feels the presence of God, not only within certain religious institutions.

The conflict in Northern Ireland stands as a prime of example of Bono’s point of view on “religion getting in the way of God” because the people’s common belief in Jesus Christ was not the main focus of the conflict; the focus centered on the specific religious sect of the people, and that difference lay in the earthly organizations, not with God. Bono’s religious tolerance and impatience with religious extremists led him to take this up as one of his first political causes: to protest the fighting and terrorism in Northern Ireland.

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11 Assayas 31
His spiritual open-mindedness has also inspired his current promotion of the concept and artistic design “Coexist” by Piotr Młodozeniec:\textsuperscript{14}:

\textit{QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.}

Fig. 1: “Coexist,” Piotr Młodozeniec. \url{http://www.coexistonline.com/index.html}

This design, which Bono has featured on the giant video screens at his concerts in recent years, represents a desire for peace and tolerance in religion, especially among the three major world religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. During performances of “Love, Peace, Or Else” at U2 shows, Bono has also been sporting a white bandanna with the symbols of Islam – the crescent moon, Judaism – the star of David, and Christianity – the cross superimposed on the word Coexist, on the C, X, and T, respectively.

Bono’s personal relationship with God has always been the one thing Bob Hewson admitted that he envied about his son. Bono’s father lacked a strong faith in God, although he called himself a Catholic. Nevertheless he was proud of Bono and U2 for proclaiming their faith to the masses, and he was intrigued by Bono’s confidence in God and his ability to hear God talk.

\textsuperscript{14} Hutchinson, Kevin. “Can’t We All Just Coexist?” \url{@U2} 11 July 2005, 10 May 2006 \url{http://www.atu2.com/news/article/src?ID=3995}
to him through the Scriptures or his instincts. In contrast Mr. Hewson found his ears to be deaf to any communication from God.\textsuperscript{15}

This is just one of many differences between Bob Hewson and his son Paul (Bono). Bono’s strained relationship with his father seems to have had a powerful impact upon Bono’s outlook on life, with such a strong desire to change the world and an equally strong belief that he could do so. After his mother’s death, when he was only fourteen, Bono he lived with his father and his older brother. The shock of seeing her collapse at her father’s grave stayed with him throughout these formative adolescent years.

The loss of his mother that brought him face-to-face with tragedy enhanced his compassion towards others who had experienced equally disturbing tragedy in their lives. It also forced him to confront the senselessness of death and made him passionate about preventing death and needless suffering. Bono explained, “A rock star is someone with a hole in his heart almost the size of his ego,”\textsuperscript{16} and Bono’s ego is notoriously large. Bono has never elaborated on the significance of this hole, yet one can wager a sound bet that it is from the loss of his mother as a boy. Since his teenage years, he has fought to fill this hole with attention, fame, rebellion, and by helping others (and in turn filling his heart by feeling like a good person).

Iris’s death left Bono in a house of three aggressive male personalities, constantly in collision and at odds with one another. His father refused to speak about his mother after she had died, so the family’s grieving process lacked closure. As Bob Hewson fought to bottle up his emotions, Bono tried desperately to release his feelings, but was forced into suppression of all emotion. Eventually, Bono became filled with bottled up rage: “The death of my mother really affected my confidence. I would go back to my house after school, but it wasn’t a home.

\textsuperscript{15} Assayas 25
\textsuperscript{16} Assayas 115
She was gone…I felt abandoned, afraid. I guess fear converts to anger pretty quickly. It’s still with me.”17 He would fight with his father and brother, sometimes to a frightening extent, once almost hitting his brother with a knife. Over time he realized that his anger was due topent-up grief.

Bono is also a prime example of the younger-child syndrome. His only brother Norman was eight years older than he, and this large age gap did not foster a close relationship. As the younger child, Bono behaved quite differently from his brother, Norman, who was the good, obedient child. Paul chose to rebel: “Norman listened to Bobby, Paul didn’t or at least didn’t pay attention.”18 Norman also chose to continue the family career of being a salesman, which Bono could have pursued. Later in life he commented that in a way he too has become a salesman of sorts: of melodies and ideas, a more imaginative and risky path.

Bono sees many similarities in his relationship with his dad and those between his Irish friends and their fathers, along with one striking difference. While his friends’ experiences were unpleasant and sometimes even physically abusive, they had sympathetic mothers to turn to, to calm their rage and temper their rebellion, whereas Bono believes that he had no one to help him deal with intense emotions:

If you meet up with two of my best friends, Gavin and Guggi, sometime, you’ll find that their two fathers gave them a lot more abuse than mine….But what separated them, I guess, is that they ran from the scold of their respective fathers to the bosom of their mothers. And I probably would have too, but she wasn’t around. So that created its own heat, and looking back on it now, some rage.19

17 Assayas 12
18 Dunphy 20
19 Assayas 10
Luckily, Bono successfully channeled his anger and energy into U2 and songwriting. Later on by effecting a positive influence on others and by turning 180 degrees away from what he had felt were his dad’s ideals, Bono as with so many other artists before him, crafted positive results from his father’s harsh treatment.

Referring to growing up with his father, Bono says, “…it was just a combative relationship.” Bono and his father never got along well, especially while Bono was living under his roof, due in large part to Bob Hewson’s cynical outlook on life, which Bono found particularly distasteful: “My father acted kind of jaded…nonplussed. It was an act, but the world just couldn’t impress him. So as a kid I wanted to be the opposite.” Bono believes that his father’s cynicism and distrust of the world stemmed from his tough experiences growing up in Dublin in a working-class family. As was typical of working-class Dublin life in the 1920s through the 1940s, “the script had been written for Bobby, not by him” and left no room for imagination. He was pulled out of school early, even though he was a promising student, because his family needed him to earn money. Bob’s father had tuberculosis, and as a child of the Depression, Bob succumbed to an attitude of fear and distrust in his life and a lust for security, and avoided all risks and thrills. Renouncing his own dreams, Bono’s father went on to discourage his sons from having big dreams, never pressuring Bono to try to achieve greatness in his life, never expressing his pride for Bono’s later accomplishments. He also did not acknowledge any belief in his son’s ability, choosing to remain critical, although Bono admits he

20 Assayas 19
21 Assayas 8
22 Dunphy 14
23 Dunphy 14
24 Assayas 30
was an unruly teenager who made life difficult for his father.\textsuperscript{25} Interestingly enough Bob Hewson’s cautious and discouraging attitude produced the opposite effect on his rebellious son. Bono explains in \textit{Rolling Stone} magazine that “by telling me never to have big dreams or else, that to dream is to be disappointed, he made me have big dreams.”\textsuperscript{26} In fact, Bono would later take inspiration from Martin Luther King, Jr., who championed believing in one’s dreams for the betterment of the world. Ironically his father became partly responsible for his success as a performer and as a humanitarian, through his constant taunting and pressuring of Bono as a failure. The effect was similar to reverse psychology as Bono began to tackle any challenge and face it head on, surpassing all expectations: “[My father] took the Dublin position of ‘My son, the fucking idiot’….Any risk you were taking, he’d just look at you with his eye raised and would just shake his head in disbelief at your stupidity…So after years and years of things not utterly falling apart as he was expecting, he became kind of bemused at his own bad weatherman.”\textsuperscript{27} His father’s cynicism fostered a driving optimism in Bono, building his self-confidence and the belief that he could change the world for the better. Bono’s large yet earnest personality ricocheted off his father’s protective wall of disillusionment and picked up energy to become a force in and of itself – one that has had the power to move 60,000 at a concert and to sway the minds of political leaders around the world.

In addition to Bono’s ability to excel in spite of antagonism and taunts, Bono appears to have inherited several qualities from his father, his charisma and world-renowned charm, both of which allow him to captivate audiences be they 2 million or a single individual. This charm is

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} Wenner 50-51
\item \textsuperscript{26} Wenner 51
\item \textsuperscript{27} Assayas 21
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
vitaly important to the humanitarian work Bono does, as he must use his “celebrity currency”\textsuperscript{28} to gain an audience with influential political figures and then work to convince them of the importance of his cause. He also inherited his “way with women” from his father, finding himself very comfortable with them, and they with him:

Women loved him. He was completely charming and he was great company. And as long as you didn’t want to get too close, he was happy. I think he could reveal himself to women a lot easier than to men, which is something I probably have in common with him. I think he was a very great friend. He had a lot of women friends. And I do too. So there must be something there.\textsuperscript{29}

Bono also received his father’s political wisdom, which he has put into practice working with global leaders and figures in Washington: “He was very wise politically. He was from the left, but you know, he praised the guy on the right,”\textsuperscript{30} just as Bono is friends with Bill Clinton but fraternizes with President George W. Bush despite voiced protests from his liberal friends and assistants that in doing so he would be “making a deal with the devil.” Bono understands, as his father had, that both sides need to be involved in order to make any progress and that simply appealing to one narrow view cannot effect successful change.

Only a year after his diagnosis of cancer, Bono’s father passed away in 2001. His sickness and death serve as the impetus for two songs about their strong relationship: most recently the Grammy-winning “Sometimes You Can’t Make it on Your Own,” written after his dad’s death for the U2 album \textit{How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb}, and “Kite” from \textit{All That You

\textsuperscript{29} Assayas 22
\textsuperscript{30} Wenner 51
Can’t Leave Behind, presumably written when he first found out that his father had cancer. In ‘Kite,” Bono sings:

I wonder what is gonna happen to you
You wonder what has happened to me
I’m a man – I’m not a child
A man who sees the shadow behind your eyes
Who’s to say where the wind will take you?
Who’s to say what it is will break you?
I don’t know where the wind will blow.31

A song of uncertainty, it also expresses hope for meeting his father again after death, and urging him to go on peacefully and let go of the world. Whereas, “Sometimes…” is a song reflecting on Bob’s life before he died, through which Bono urges him to reach out for help instead of letting go. The son hopes that his father will not remain so distant and independent. Bono seems to suggest the possibility of reconciliation as well:

We fight all the time
You and I… that’s alright
We’re the same soul…
I don’t need to hear you say
That if we weren’t so alike
You’d like me a whole lot more….
You’re the reason I sing!
You’re the reason why the opera’s in me!...32

With time for reflection that the past several years have given him, Bono seems to have come to a greater understanding of his father’s life and its lasting effect on him. This song summarizes Bono’s relationship with his father: that it was one of heartache and stress because they were two ferocious personalities clashing all the time, but that it was also one of love and inherited gifts, including drive which Bono has used to help others through his music and influential position as a celebrity. This drive allows him to pursue goals that no one else would take on: “I guess, like most people, the world just beats them down into not expecting that things can change or be any better. When you’ve sold a lot of records, it’s very easy to be megalomaniac enough to believe that you can change things. If you put your shoulder to the door, it might open.”

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32 Bono’s father was a singer as well, but preferred opera to rock. (Wenner 50)
34 Assayas 123
III. Early Life in Ireland

A major factor in the development of Bono’s crusading spirit was his childhood environment of Dublin during the 1970’s: “We’re talking about a new generation which grew up in the Ireland of the sixties and seventies… This was the ‘blank generation’ of revolt and experimentation: a new breed of urbanized and internationalized youth determined to wipe the slate clean, to start again from scratch.” 35 The social climate in Ireland during Bono’s youth differed greatly from that of today. Today, Ireland is Europe’s second most prosperous country, whereas during the 1970s and ‘80s, Ireland’s economy was struggling to the point that the “IMF and the World Bank were on their way to take charge of it.” 36 Although he lived in what could be considered a lower-middle-class neighborhood in Dublin, his section of the city (Ballymun, specifically Cedarwood Rd.) was flanked by two poor working class areas, what American urbanites would call “projects.” The teens from these two areas, the Ballymun Flats and Finglas, formed warring street gangs, which often attacked Bono and his friends from the “nicer” area: “A nice street, good people – and yet, if I’m honest – overpowering sense that violence was around the corner… that’s one very strong memory of growing up, if you’re just talking about the local… the neighborhood where I grew up.” 37 Violence formed a backdrop and became part of everyday life for him. Though for some time, he considered this to have been normal, he has now realized that today’s teens do not live with it constantly as was his experience and that of his friends: “You would be harassed for your difference….I thought that was kind of normal, but

37 Wenner Podcast Pt. 1
now with twenty years behind me, I realized that isn’t how my kids are growing up… Honestly, I can remember incredible street battles.”\(^{38}\) Bono therefore gained a “rags-to-riches awareness”\(^{39}\) after growing up in Ballymun and becoming a multi-millionaire rock star. His modest beginnings instilled in him a desire to give back some of his blessings to the greater world, to those starting off worse than he. Through his experience of working-class violence, he also saw the negative effects of poverty. As a result, in his current work for Africa, he tries to clarify the ramifications of extreme violence and hardship for world leaders: that helping the third world is also an investment in their own safety. If third-world poverty continues, he reasons, the rich countries will become the enemies under attack once again, as in the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001: “…it might be cheaper to make friends out of potential enemies than to defend yourself against them later. That’s why the campaign for aid has not just a moral, but a strategic imperative.”\(^{40}\)

Bono’s awareness of violence in his own city and neighborhood, combined with the revolutionary climate of Northern Ireland, which, though far away, eventually led to his greater understanding of those who live amidst terrorism and violence: “I mean, I’m from the South and relatively uneducated about the situation, but if war in Northern Ireland is what it means to be Irish then we must redefine Irishness.”\(^{41}\) During the 1970s, the politics of Ireland began to shift. The Fianna Fáil party, or the Irish Republican Party, had dominated the Irish political system since the 1930s.\(^{42}\) It was led by Eamonn De Valera who served as the Taoiseach (Prime

\(^{38}\) Wenner Podcast Pt. 1
^{39}\) Richard Kearney, Personal Interview, 15 November 2005.
^{40}\) Wenner 66
Minister) for many years until becoming the President of the Republic of Ireland in 1959. At this time Sean Lemass became Prime Minister, succeeded in 1966 by Jack Lynch, both of the Fianna Fáil party as well.\(^{43}\) However, 1973 stands as a turning point in Irish politics and economic, for in that year De Valera and the Republicans were ousted in the election by Liam Cosgrave of the combined Fine Gael and Labour parties. Fine Gael was a conservative party, with more moderate views on nationalism than Fianna Fáil, and the Labour party was the liberal party of Ireland.\(^{44}\) Under his four-year rule, Irish politics became less tightly-wound, and the negative perception of Britain began to wane for the new generation. A “romantic view of France, Spain and the US – the land of refuge, heroism (JFK)”\(^ {45}\) – took its place. Also, Ireland joined the European Economic Community (later to become the European Union) in 1973. This step brought about major changes in the economy and social ideas of Ireland as the country was suddenly more internationally dependent, and the Irish “recognize[d] they had to share the island.”\(^ {46}\) They suddenly had a new identity as a country and in relation to the British. As the economy improved, emigration decreased, so the “creative energies stayed in Ireland,”\(^ {47}\) helping to foster openness in literature and music, especially in European influences, which brought about the “questioning in the younger generation”\(^ {48}\) of which Bono was such an important part. Irish music became internationalized as well, enabling for U2’s fame as an Irish band in the 1980s to grow exponentially.

\(^{43}\) “Timeline...”
\(^{45}\) Kearney Interview
\(^{46}\) Kearney Interview
\(^{47}\) Kearney Interview
\(^{48}\) Kearney Interview
Unfortunately, in the 1970s, the IRA became active once again in Northern Ireland, as did Unionist paramilitary groups, resuming terrorist attacks and violence in the north. The political leaders tried to mediate peace through the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973, but it fell apart the next year.\footnote{“Ireland,” Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2006, Encyclopædia Britannica, 18 Apr. 2006 <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-23003>.
} Part of Bono’s pacifist stance on the issue of unification or partitioning of Northern Ireland came from his unusual family situation. His father was Catholic, but his mother, whose religion he mainly adopted, was Protestant: “When I was growing up I didn’t’ know where I came from . . . I didn’t know if I was middle class, working class, Catholic, Protestant . . . I knew I was from Ballymun, Dublin but I didn’t know what that meant.”\footnote{Hewson 188}

Blending seemingly opposing religious entities into a unified front at home allowed Bono to develop his moderate views on the political struggle in Northern Ireland (which was based on religious preference). He did not identify with the extremists who believed there was only one right religion for each country. The other influence that led to Bono’s impatience with the Troubles in Ireland was the shift in attitudes of the youth in Ireland, all part of the new generation growing up in the 1970s who were “disillusioned with the ‘hard ideologies’ which have defined us according to a single, unadulterated ‘identity’ (Nationalist, Unionist, Catholic or Protestant), this new generation of Irish artists affirms the positive value of confusion, uncertainty, homelessness, migrancy, questioning, questing for ‘another place.’”\footnote{Kearney 186}

Growing up in this powerful revolutionary and violent environment had a mixed effect on Bono’s social conscience. The power of revolution seemed to inspire him to create his own revolutions, yet on peaceful terms. He rebelled against the violence that ran through his youth early on – even forming his own “surrealist” street gang that used performance art and humor as...
their weapons, dwelling in their imaginary locale of Lypton Village, only resorting to violence as self-defense against the bootboys and other street gangs who attacked them: “It was a way of fighting back against the prevailing ‘bootboy’ mentality.” Being a part of this “collection of outsiders” allowed Bono to have an independent mind, unafraid to tackle unpopular issues and beliefs. Since his youth, he had been used to people disagreeing with his ideas: “Even at home he was the odd man out, the kid who wouldn’t conform.” Conformity and coolness had little significance for Bono. He and the other members of U2 (except for Adam, the hippest member) did not buy into the fashion of the UK punk scene and music press. Bono explains in *Bono: In Conversation*, “…we didn’t want to be cool, we wanted to be hot, you see.” They thought of more fashionable British bands like The Clash as the cool ones: “We saw The Clash in the lobby [of the Gramercy Park Hotel in New York]. They were just so cool, and we knew we weren’t.” But did the “cool” Clash ever put their revolutionary punk power to good use as Bono and U2 chose to do? U2’s lack of desire to be fashionable allowed them to support social and political causes loudly and openly, not worrying about whether it was socially acceptable or politically correct. This unusual type of rebellion set a precedent for their later use of music as revenge on society’s injustices.

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52 Wenner Podcast Pt. 1
53 Wenner Podcast Pt. 1
54 Dunphy 26
55 Assayas 163
56 Assayas 165
IV. Bono’s First Political Crusade:

The Northern Ireland Conflict

Bono’s revolutionary sensibilities eventually pushed him to speak out against injustice for others – both in his music and on his own. In fact, speaking out against the Troubles in the North that stained so much of his country’s past became his first political crusade.57 As he said, “…I despise violence, but violence is something I know a little bit about.”58 In the early 1980s, as U2 was developing its close ties with the United States, they chose to wield their political aggression on the senseless violence and terrorism in Northern Ireland by speaking out at their concerts and in their third major album War against the fighting. In the book Across the Frontiers: Ireland in the 1990s, Bono revealed:

Our journey to America eventually turned us back to where we came from. It brought up musical questions and also political questions. During Bobby Sands’ hunger strike – we had money thrown onto the stage because we were Irish . . . you couldn’t but be moved by the courage and conviction of this man . . . yet we struggled with the question, is this the right way? Is violence inevitable? Is it the only answer to partition in Northern Ireland?59

Bono found many IRA sympathizers among Irish-Americans, which drove him to speak out against the IRA and terrorism because “these revolutionaries were not representing the will of any significant majority. Yet these people felt they had the right to form an army and destroy

57 Assayas 176
58 Assayas 132
59 Hewson 190
lives. So they were the enemy, as far as we were concerned….Well, maybe understandably, this began our interest in nonviolence.”\textsuperscript{60} At subsequent U2 concerts, especially the famed 1983 “Under a Blood Red Sky” concert at Red Rocks in Colorado, Bono would unfurl a giant white flag as symbol of anti-nationalism and peace while singing songs such as “Sunday Bloody Sunday” and “Surrender.” Bono explained his reasoning behind this dramatic display in \textit{Hot Press} magazine: “…I’m frightened of borders, frightened of restrictions on those levels and I get scared when people start saying they’re prepared to kill to back their belief in where a border should be. I mean I’d love to see a United Ireland but just don’t believe you can put a gun to somebody’s head at anytime to make him see your way.”\textsuperscript{61}

Bono also made a point of labeling “Sunday Bloody Sunday,” as “\textit{not} a rebel song”\textsuperscript{62} before actually singing the song that soon became mistakenly seen as a support of Irish nationalism. Bono’s clarification or insistence on this point was met with the deafening support of the crowds.\textsuperscript{63} Bono admits that U2 was intentionally working to bring the American funding of the Provisional IRA to an end,\textsuperscript{64} which resulted in Bono’s receiving death threats from the group in America and in Ireland: “‘It’s not helpful when the leader [Gerry Adams] of an armed struggle who has support in every working-class neighborhood, and a lot of maniacs on his side, calls you a ‘little shit.’”\textsuperscript{65}

Luckily, none of the threats was carried out, so that a decade later, U2 was able to perform at a Belfast concert celebrating the 1998 Good Friday Peace Agreement.\textsuperscript{66} Bono

\begin{footnotes}
\item Assayas 170
\item Dunphy 207
\item Carter Alan, \textit{Outside is America: U2 in the U.S.} (Boston: Faber, 1992) 63-64.
\item Alan 64
\item Assayas 171
\item Assayas 172
\item Kearney Interview
\end{footnotes}
referred to this occasion as “the greatest honor of my life.”\textsuperscript{67} In a symbolic gesture, Bono
publicly brought together John Hume and David Trimble, the two representatives of the warring
sides of the Troubles, and encouraged them to shake hands and then join hands with him in front
of the concert audience: “People tell me that rock concert and that staged photograph pushed the
people into ratifying the peace agreement.”\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{67} Assayas 172
\textsuperscript{68} Assayas 173
V. Amnesty International & Social Justice

One of Bono’s first social activist endeavors was his involvement with Amnesty International. His first major effort for Amnesty came in 1986, when U2 was chosen as the headlining band for Amnesty International’s Conspiracy of Hope Tour, which stopped in six cities across America to promote Amnesty as an organization: “It also solidified U2’s spot as international stars on the verge of greatness.”69 Bono enlisted Peter Gabriel to join the tour, while Amnesty International signed on other artists such as Bryan Adams and Sting. Bono performed his typical frontman stunts, including climbing the stage equipment – this time “as a blind man to show the vulnerability of a prisoner of conscience[, an Amnesty International term for an unjustly kept political prisoner].”70 Despite, or perhaps because of, Bono’s antics, Amnesty International welcomed 45,000 new members, who paid $25 each to join the organization, as well as donations totally $3 million, but more importantly: “Amnesty International was defined in the USA by this tour….We became a household name and the charity of choice. The tour changed American youth, because now there are chapters in colleges and high schools all over the USA.”71

In U2’s magazine Propaganda, Bono spoke about U2’s benevolent work, referring to his admiration for Amnesty International:

The biggest compliment anyone can pay U2 as performers is that they get out and do something themselves. They get out and they chip away themselves at those

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71 Healey 285
boulders that are in the path of progress, if you like, and they just smash them up
with their own hands and they can do that whatever way they want and if that’s
writing postcards for Amnesty International… I really love that phrase ‘a
conspiracy of hope’ and I really hope it could be applied to U2 and its
organization.72

Following the Conspiracy of Hope Tour, Bono learned about the civil wars raging in
Nicaragua and El Salvador, and “heard about the Sandinistas from the Clash. But the more I
read about the Sandinistas, the more I became fascinated by their modus operandi, because here
was liberation theology in action.”73 Perhaps Bono maintains confidence in the power of rock
and roll to change the world because he allowed it to do so for him in this case: he decided to
once again discover for himself, as he had done in Ethiopia, what the situation was in these
Central American countries by traveling there in 198674 “under the auspices of Amnesty
International.”75 He discovered that in these countries, only one percent of the population owned
land, but that this minority ruled oppressively over the rest of the people: “One percent of
landowners owned more than forty percent of the land before the revolution.”76 This minority
was also supported by the United States government under Ronald Reagan, while the Sandinista
government and its supporters, who represented the majority, experienced torture and
“disappearance.”

In El Salvador, Bono experienced firsthand the danger of being a campesino, or poor El
Salvadoran farmer, when he visited the rebel-controlled co-operative farm. Bono’s friend and

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73 Assayas 176
75 Stokes 67
76 Assayas 179
guide on the life-threatening visit normally ran several activist groups in El Salvador, including “Sanctuary,” which secretly transported El Salvadorans from dangerous areas to the United States where they would be safe, and another group which Bono monetarily supported to help the campesinos.77

In Nicaragua, Bono witnessed the poverty that was caused by the economic blockades imposed by the United States:78 “This was the other side of America as far as I was concerned at that time: America, the neighborhood bully.”79 Bono seemed torn between his love for America and his loathing of its current foreign policy, as well as between his firm stance on nonviolence and the real violence that surrounded him. Here, the Sandinistas were fighting because of their belief in God, just as the IRA promoted terrorist attacks in the name of Jesus. For these groups, religion meant violence, but for Bono, his spirituality instilled peace and nonviolence within him. However, the Sandinistas, although terrorists like the IRA, were the majority in their region, which seemed to give their cause more credibility. Also, their reasons for fighting seemed more noble than the IRA’s: “to defend the poor.”80 Still, Bono did not support the violence, but in this situation his tolerance for the fighting was growing. Instead, he sang out against the United States government, finding it hard to condemn the Sandinistas:

Well I have a kind of love-hate relationship with America….One of the things I hate is that such a trusting people could put their trust in a guy like Ronald Reagan….There is no question in my mind that the people of America through their taxes are paying for the equipment that is used to torture people in El

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77 Assayas 180-181
78 Assayas 179
79 Assayas 179
80 Assayas 178
Salvador….There’s no question in my mind of the Reagan administration’s involvement in backing the regime that is committing these atrocities.81

The mission of the Sandinistas seemed to be best expressed by Bertolt Brecht, although unintentionally. In his 1930s play *St. Joan of the Stockyards*, German playwright Brecht wrote:

JOAN: Now why is this wickedness in the world? Well, how could it be otherwise? Of course, if a man has to bash his neighbor’s head in for a bit of ham on his bread, so as maybe to grab from him what are, after all the necessities of life, brother clashing with brother over elementary needs, how can any feeling for higher things stay alive in the human heart?82

This text evokes the hungry and poor image Bono witnessed on his visit to Central America – an image that changed his view of United States forever.

Amnesty International is one of the organizations consistently advertised in back of the liner notes in U2’s albums. The band never forgets to promote this charity, and offers its contact information as well, in an effort to encourage U2 fans to get involved:83

Join Amnesty International: USA Section

322 8th Avenue

New York, NY 10001

U.S.A.84

81 “The Enduring Chill” 63-64
83 For more on Bono’s specific social and political work, please see Appendix A.
VI. Bono’s Lyrics:

A. The ‘80s

Bono’s activism extends into his roles as frontman and lyricist for U2. His habit of preaching activism is one of his most recently famous attributes, but his use of U2 lyrics as a vehicle for promoting social justice has been a constant feature since the band’s conception. Some of U2’s most famous songs involve topics that would not normally be considered proper subject matter for successful popular music. Yet U2 has sold well over 130 million albums to date.85 Ironically, the only time they hit a significant low in album sales was for their 1997 album Pop,86 which was “supposed to be the return to pop from the experimental period that included…Zooropa…i.e. earnest band with political overtones kicks off their boots for dancing shoes,” according to Bono in his November 2005 Rolling Stone interview.87 U2’s socio-political commentary lyrics have been a trademark of the band since the early 1980s. By consistently expressing these political and social messages, U2 has formed an identity for themselves and given their audience an awareness of critical issues.

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85 This is an approximate figure. There is a popular statistic of 120 million albums sold worldwide, but it does not seem to include global sales from How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb and other album sales in the past year or so. Wikipedia.org even listed 177 million global sales reported (“U2,” Wikipedia, 2006, Wikimedia Foundation, 10 May 2006 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U2>). However, according to an email from Keith Caulfield of Billboard.com, “There is no one firm that tabulates accurate global record sales figures, unfortunately.” Mr. Caulfield is the manager of four Billboard music charts as well as the Editor of Billboard Chart Alert. (Keith Caulfield, “Re: Ask Billboard: U2 Album Sales?” Email to Katharine Koster, 24 Feb. 2006)

86 According to the RIAA, U2 was awarded multi-platinum awards for the six albums preceding Pop, but Pop only received a single platinum award (for 1 million albums sold) in the U.S. – a significant drop considering Achtung Baby sold 8 million copies six years earlier. (RIAA.com, 2003, Recording Industry Association of America <http://www.riaa.com/gp/database/> (search: U2))

The *War* Album:

U2’s third album, released in 1983, was called *War* - a bold title for a band still on the rise. But this intensity reflected U2’s conviction of the need to express their beliefs confidently. The album itself is a political statement because almost every song on this fiery disc deals with the topic of war ranging from, the Northern Ireland conflict through even the Cold War, underscored in the lyrics of “Sunday Bloody Sunday,” “Seconds,” and “Like a Song…” While not the most musically sophisticated of U2’s collection, these songs contain a great deal of passion within them, and capture the feeling of militarism and the desolation of war.

“Sunday Bloody Sunday,” one of their earliest hits, arguably the most famous of U2’s politically charged songs, is consistently played on the radio to this day. Even the title speaks volumes about the political subject matter of the song, the political and religious conflict in Northern Ireland, specifically on Bloody Sunday. “Bloody Sunday” refers to several events in Northern Ireland, the most famous of which was the Black and Tan’s massacre and subsequent stampede of people watching a football match, a counterattack to the IRA’s massacre of 14 British undercover agents in their homes, in 1921. The event closer to Bono’s time was an occurrence in Derry, Northern Ireland where British military shot 27 Irish people (14 of whom later died) marching for the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. This event took place on January 30, 1972, when Bono was close to 12 years of age, and certainly had a lasting impact upon him. Bono was hit hard, obviously shaken since six of the dead were only 17 years old. This Bloody Sunday was a particularly controversial incident in the history of the Northern Ireland conflict because it was a massacre by British government officials, not by terrorists.

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88 Stokes 37
According to Niall Stokes, both events “formed the immediate political backdrop to the opening song on War...[‘Sunday Bloody Sunday’]”.90

The song features a militaristic drumming style, thanks to U2 drummer Larry Mullen, Jr., which replicates the feel of war, and yet what empowers the song the most are the passionate lyrics by Bono. He does not sing as one who has been through the battles themselves, but as an observer living in the country under siege: “I can’t believe the news today/ Oh, I can’t close my eyes and make it go away.”91 He brings the lyrics home by juxtaposing the images of war with loving relationships destroyed by that war:

And the battle’s just begun

There’s many lost but tell me who has won?

The trenches dug within our hearts

And mothers, children – brothers, sisters torn apart.92

Despite his use of angry phrases, Bono exudes hope – even in a song of frustration – urging the listeners that “we can be as one tonight,”93 a recurring theme in U2 songs. He uses “Sunday Bloody Sunday” as a “protest song...against a cycle of violence into which all of the protagonists in the Northern conflict seem to be locked.”94

The conflict in Northern Ireland was a cause close to Bono’s heart early in U2’s career, since he grew up in the violent period of the 1960s and 1970s in Ireland. Bono has stated that he feels farther removed from the actual conflict and violence because he lived in Dublin, not near the war zones. Nonetheless anyone growing up anywhere in Ireland during that time would have

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90 Stokes 37
92 U2 “Sunday Bloody Sunday”
93 U2 “Sunday Bloody Sunday”
94 Stokes 38
felt the effects of the terrorism and battle. Bono later recognized this and stated, “‘It was only when I realized that the troubles hadn’t affected me that they began to affect me….The bombs may not go off in Dublin but they are made here.’”95 Bono’s stance in the song is not to side with the Protestants and English nor with the Catholics and Irish. He calls for peace in the lyrics, promising “I’ll wipe your tears away,”96 and asks, “How long must we sing this song?”97 His pacifist stance most likely developed from the difference in his parents’ religious backgrounds. His impatience for the fighting between the Protestants and Catholics in his country can be heard in the lyrics: “Well I won’t heed the battle call/ It puts my back up, puts my back up against the wall.”98 “Sunday Bloody Sunday” symbolizes the cry against the senselessness of hatred and violence caused by differences in religious affiliations.

Although the song was released in 1983, Bono still preaches a similar message of religious tolerance, especially at U2 concerts and performances. Most recently, on the 2006 Grammy Awards, during U2’s performance, there was a large digital display featuring the word COEXIST. What was unusual in the presentation of the word was that several letters were changed to be symbols of the three major world religions: the C was in the shape of the Islamic crescent moon and star, while the X was the Star of David, to symbolize Judaism, and the T was a cross, to represent Christianity. U2 has also used this COEXIST theme in their Vertigo tour concerts, in an even more intense manner – with Bono’s wearing a white handkerchief as a blindfold, falling to his knees as if he is a political prisoner in a foreign country, with the band playing a politically-charged song such as “Bullet the Blue Sky.”

95 Stokes 37
96 U2 “Sunday Bloody Sunday”
97 U2 “Sunday Bloody Sunday”
98 U2 “Sunday Bloody Sunday”
“Sunday Bloody Sunday” has recently been used as a U2 concert anthem against the current struggle between the US and Iraq, showing it is a timeless classic, since it is applicable to any decade. While Bono shows his support for the US troops overseas, he also vocalizes his disapproval of going to war in the first place, and uses “Bloody Sunday” in contemporary performances as an expression of his frustration with the political system and the innocent victims of war: “I don’t believe you can put a gun to someone’s head to make him see your way.”

While “Sunday Bloody Sunday” is the most famous song from the War album, it is not the only notable song about social justice on the album. The second-most famous song is “New Year’s Day,” written about the Solidarity movement in Poland. One of the catchier songs on the album is “Seconds,” about “the imminence of nuclear catastrophe” during the Cold War. In this track Bono reminds the listener of how close death can be: “It takes a second to say goodbye/Push the button and pull the plug” and also features a sample of a 1982 documentary called Soldier Girls in which female soldier trainees are chanting ominously about wanting to “be an airborne ranger/…to live the life of danger.” During the time the song was written, Great Britain had just accepted nuclear arms from the United States, and Ronald Reagan was pushing the US into the nuclear arms race. Bono used “Seconds” to express his fear of the looming potential for nuclear devastation: “For the first time, it became possible – it is possible – to destroy everything.”

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99 Stokes 38
101 Stokes 40
102 Stokes 40
103 Stokes 40
104 Stokes 40
Likewise, the song “Like a Song…” is a ferocious cry from Bono against the senselessness of war. He berates those who “love to wear a badge, a uniform/And…fly a flag” but he refuses to “let others live in hell/ As we divide against each other/ And we fight amongst ourselves.” This song, perhaps more so than “Sunday Bloody Sunday” exemplifies Bono’s passionate condemnation of discord among human beings. He literally screams the words out:

A generation without name, ripped and torn
Nothing to lose, nothing to gain
Nothing at all
And if you can't help yourself
Well take a look around you
When others need your time
You say it's time to go... it's your time.
Angry words won't stop the fight
Two wrongs won't make it right.
A new heart is what I need.
Oh, God make it bleed.
Is there nothing left? 

_The Joshua Tree:_

After War, U2 reinvented their sound, opting for a more ethereal quality on later albums such as with The Joshua Tree rather than the military persistence of War. 

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106 U2 “Like a Song…”
107 U2 “Like a Song…”
proved to be their most successful album, receiving the RIAA’s Diamond award for U.S. album sales of over 10 million.108 But while the sound became more polished, their message did not falter. The Joshua Tree produced much politically-inspired fruit, such as “Where the Streets Have No Name,” “Bullet the Blue Sky,” and “Mothers of the Disappeared.” The Joshua Tree also featured more songs tackling social issues, such as addiction to heroin in “Running to Stand Still.”109

“Bullet the Blue Sky,” “howl[ing] with anger and with fear,”110 is the one of the strongest songs Bono has written about his social and political ideas. This song was inspired by his Amnesty International trip to Central America with his wife Ali in 1985. They traveled to El Salvador and Nicaragua, both very dangerous places to visit in 1985 due to terrorism and war, and learned firsthand about the problems in these countries that were caused by United States interference: “Bono saw terrible poverty, a direct result of the American economic blockade and US support for the civil war being waged by the Contras….It was an insight into the dark side of US foreign policy that would be hard to forget.”111 Bono has always been a lover of America, but seeing this seamy side made him question his admiration for the land of the free. He focused on those being oppressed by this great country, or those who were victims and received little help from their supposed protectors: “The Joshua Tree became a prayer for the dispossessed and for victims of military oppression….When it came to it, U2 would be prepared to bite the hand that had fed them.”112 In “Bullet” Bono describes a man in a suit and tie “slapping down” American bills while fighter planes fly over the heads of children living in shacks who know

109 Stokes 69
110 Stokes 67
111 Stokes 67
112 Stokes 67
“outside is America.” Bono was quoted as saying, “It’s just very sad to see the stranglehold America has on Central America in practice.” The symbol he paints of the United States in the song is of the greedy, corrupt politician or televangelist, whom Bono especially despised for misleading the people with ideas of faith and justice while robbing them of their money:

And I can’t tell the difference between
ABC News, Hill Street Blues, and a preacher in the Old Time Gospel Hour
Stealing money from the sick and the old.
Well the God I believe in isn’t short of cash, mister.
I feel a long way from the hills of San Salvador
Where the sky’s ripped open
And the rain pours through a gaping wound
Pelting the women and children…
Into the arms of America.

In “Bullet the Blue Sky,” Bono uses his gift of manipulating language to give his audience bold images of the stark contrast between the fear and violence of life in Central America and what the United States government wants the public to actually know about the situation: “It was carnage, it was awful. It was the other side of America. It’s a long time ago now, but in order to remember it, I tried to turn it into music, in the song ‘Bullet the Blue Sky.’”

One of the most famous of U2’s songs comes from The Joshua Tree: “Where the Streets Have No Name.” Containing the passion and power of “Bullet the Blue Sky,” the song lacks the

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114 Stokes 67
115 Wenner 56
116 U2 “Bullet the Blue Sky”
117 Assayas 182
anger and terror of the darker song, remaining a soaring anthem that has the ability to ignite the air in a 60,000-seat stadium. Although it is a favorite of many U2 fans and music lovers, most of its admirers have no idea that the song was written about Bono’s time in Ethiopia. The lyrics are beautiful and poetic, yet not specific to Africa; they are ambiguous enough to allow for multiple interpretations of the song:

I want to run
I want to hide
I want to tear down the walls
That hold me inside…
I want to feel, sunlight on my face
See that dust cloud disappear without a trace
I want to take shelter from the poison rain
Where the streets have no name.\textsuperscript{118}

The song was actually written on an Air India sick bag when Bono and his wife were returning from their September 1985 stay in Africa. In the move that sparked his love affair with helping Africa, Bono and Ali decided to visit Ethiopia after Live Aid, the concert dedicated to raising aid for that country in 1985.\textsuperscript{119} Most artists on the Live Aid bill were content to play the massive show and reap the publicity benefits from it without looking into the cause they had attached their names to. Bono, however, was not content with being a passive supporter, and chose to volunteer in an African orphanage, which “for a couple of kids from the suburbs, …was

\textsuperscript{119} Wenner 58
a very overwhelming experience.”120 He taught the children survival skills through music and theater, so that they could teach the older members of their community.121

Bono and U2’s heavy involvement in Amnesty International in the 1980s prompted them to sign on for the Conspiracy of Hope concert tour in 1986. The goal of the US tour was to raise money and awareness for the people of Central America living amidst revolution, especially in Argentina: “In particular, Bono had been struck by the accounts he’d heard of murder squads operating under the Argentinian military junta through the ‘70s and ‘80s…. [The missing and dead student resisters of the junta] became known as ‘the disappeared,’ and an organization called Mothers of the Disappeared had been formed…”122 Bono wrote the song “Mothers of the Disappeared” for The Joshua Tree as a tribute to this group, who were searching for the truth about what happened to the missing and to those fighting for justice for their murderers:

Midnight, our sons and daughters
Were cut down and taken from us…
We hear their heartbeat
In the wind
We hear their laughter
In the rain
We see their tears…
Night hangs like a prisoner
Stretched over black and blue123

120 Wenner 58
121 Wenner 58
122 Stokes 77
In addition to the continuing political theme on *The Joshua Tree*, Bono created several songs that dealt with social concerns in 1987. “Running to Stand Still” is a hidden gem on the album, gracefully describing the tragedy of heroin addiction that was prevalent in Dublin, Bono’s hometown, during the ‘80s. This was one of several songs dealing with this issue—others include “Bad” and “Wire” from *The Unforgettable Fire* in 1984. “Bad”’s take on the theme expresses a personal connection, a moving anthem “addressed to a junkie acquaintance from the band’s old Lypton Village days”\(^{124}\) in Dublin. “Running to Stand Still” was a more objective view of the heroin epidemic, but still reflected their closeness to the problem in Dublin. “I see seven towers/But I only see one way out”\(^{125}\) is a reference to the seven tall buildings that served as low-income housing in Bono’s neighborhood of Ballymun, where drug use was prevalent. After several friends and acquaintances won or lost their battles with the drug, Bono expressed his sympathy with those fighting the addiction: “‘I really understand the attraction…even more now because of, for instance, being on stage for two hours and then not being able to sleep for six or seven or eight hours.’”\(^{126}\) He lost his judgmental vision of the addiction, a sign of the more tolerant but justice-seeking Bono of years to come. He recognized the plight of those who felt they needed the drug: “‘Because for a lot of people there are no physical doors open any more. And so if you can’t change the world you’re living in, seeing it through different eyes is the only alternative. And heroin gives you heroin eyes to see the world with.’”\(^{127}\)

\(^{124}\) Stokes 69
\(^{126}\) Stokes 69
\(^{127}\) Stokes 69
The Unforgettable Fire:

Before the powerful punch of The Joshua Tree into the music scene, The Unforgettable Fire was the follow-up to War that began to shift the vibe of U2’s sound. ...Fire turned away from preaching about the evils of war, and turned to one of Bono’s most admired leaders for inspiration: “Martin Luther King had emerged as the hero of The Unforgettable Fire.”128 Two main songs were dedicated to his memory on the album, one of which became a hit for U2, “Pride (In the Name of Love),” and the appropriately named “MLK.” Bono was first introduced to King’s ideas in 1980 when “…a Rolling Stone journalist, Jim Henke, who has believed in [him] more than anyone up to this point, hands [him] a book called Let the Trumpet Sound – which is the biography of Dr. King. And it just changes your life.”129 In this energetic rock song, Bono displays his long-standing admiration for the civil rights revolutionary. Bono passionately sings:

One man comes in the name of love…

Early morning, April 4
A shot rings out in the Memphis sky
Free at last
They took your life
They could not take your pride
In the name of love
What more in the name of love?130

128 Stokes 69
129 Wenner 56
“MLK” is a rock song that sounds like a lullaby being sung to MLK by Bono. The lyrics are based on the “I Have a Dream” speech, but they are Bono’s wish for King’s legacy to live on and for his goal of true equality to some day be achieved:

    Sleep, sleep tonight
    And may your dreams be realized
    If the thunder cloud passes rain
    So let it rain
    Rain down on he
    So let it be131

King’s ideas about civil rights and nonviolence continue to influence Bono in his social and political justice pursuits. Bono is currently taking King’s determination to make the idea of human equality a reality in action by campaigning intensely for the victims of AIDS in Africa:

“‘We see that this journey of equality, which had come through the civil-rights movement in the United States, had now switched to what’s going on in Africa: If we really believed that these people were equal to us, we couldn’t let this happen.’”132 Bono is not afraid to speak out against injustice, which he sees in America as well as Africa because America is letting it happen to Africa, taking Dr. King’s important message to heart: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”133

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132 Wenner 58
B. The ‘90s and Beyond

In the 1990s, U2 produced as many albums as they had in the previous decade, but their songs and lyrics lost some of the hopefulness they had expressed in the ‘80s. Their idealistic passion was fading to sarcasm and cynicism, and they became tired of their righteous image. In an attempt to reinvent themselves, they invested hundreds of millions of dollars into elaborate stage spectacles, even creating false personas such as Bono’s flashy version of the devil, Macphisto. Still committed to raising public awareness of global injustice, such as the conflict in Bosnia which they addressed in the song “Miss Sarajevo,” Bono deliberately changed the tone of his lyrics, to reflect a darker, more despairing outlook. Songs such as “If God Will Send His Angels” (“God’s got his phone off the hook, babe/Would he even pick up if he could?”134), “Please,” and “Wake Up Dead Man” from the Pop album seemed to be looking for the idealism and pursuit of justice of U2’s past, but had almost given up on finding it, and U2 now avoided being specific about humanitarian issues of the day. U2 was descending into a dark ironic period, shaking off their famous earnestness, and “chopping down the Joshua Tree.”135

Only after the disappointment of Pop’s reception by the public, and the subsequent release of The Best of 1980-1990, did U2 begin to rediscover their roots. They didn’t release a new album for almost four years after Pop, and returned to the music scene with the “comeback album” All That You Can’t Leave Behind, which begged Bono to ask where everyone thought they went. ATYCLB was littered with hopeful, idealistic but meaningful songs, such as “Walk On” and “Peace on Earth.” It was the return to the spirit of U2 that had been missing for almost

135 Alan 210
a decade. Most recently, Bono has been pushing the envelope of hopeful social justice writing with U2’s 2004 release *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb*.

*Achtung Baby*:

*Achtung Baby* was the album that completely broke away from U2’s earnest past, broaching a new lyrical style while distorting Bono’s voice and the band’s instruments so that the sound was harsh and industrial. In spite of their attempts to stray from their former greatness, it is arguably U2’s best album. Leaving behind their idealistic past, U2 and Bono move away from purely social justice themes. *Achtung Baby* is not sprinkled with songs specifically addressing advocacy, and most of them sound as though Bono was on the verge of despair. Still there is one gem on the album that makes up for the lack of social justice subject matter: “One,” which now stands as U2’s famous anthem for peace, hope, and advocacy. At one time it had a different interpretation. In *Into the Heart*, Niall Stokes refers to “One” as “one of their finest creations, a ballad of great depth and beauty that’s open to a multiplicity of interpretations.”

It was originally written as a song about love and relationships, specifically Bono’s lifelong friend Guggi’s breakup from his girlfriend of fourteen years, but during the tumultuous time of Adam Clayton’s battle with his addictions it became a song about U2 as a band, being “One/ But…not the same/ We get to carry each other.”

“One” was always open to interpretation, but it seemed to reach its pinnacle of meaning on September 11, 2001, with the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. U2 was one of the first bands to perform in New York after the attacks, so in honor of the deceased

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136 Stokes 98
137 Stokes 98
firefighters, policemen and civilians, they played “One” while scrolling the names of all the deceased on a giant screen behind the stage in Madison Square Garden. It was a moving spectacle, and brought many in the crowd to tears because the song offered pain, grief, hope and love all at once\textsuperscript{139}:

\begin{quote}
Is it getting better?
Or do you feel the same?
Will it make it easier on you now
You’ve got someone to blame?...
One love - we get to share it
It leaves you baby if you don’t care for it.\textsuperscript{140}
\end{quote}

Even by the end of October 2001, when the concerts took place, there was still a feeling of hurt and blame, and “One” touched on that perfectly, but asked the crowd to reconsider why they were holding on to the pain:

\begin{quote}
You gave me nothing
Now it’s all I got
We’re one but we’re not the same
We hurt each other then we do it again
You say Love is a temple
Love the higher law…
You ask me to enter
But then you make me crawl
But I can’t be holding on
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{140} U2 “One”
To what you’ve got
When all you got is hurt\textsuperscript{141}

“One” shows off the true personality of Bono, because even when he feels he is starting to, or trying to, despair, he clings to a beacon of hope, and decides to give that hope back to his audience. Now, “One” is played at concerts solely to portray a hopeful message, because U2 plays it when Bono pitches the ONE campaign to the crowd. He reminds them of what everyone shares around the world, even with the poor and sick in Africa:

One love - One blood

One life, you got to do what you should

One life with each other

Sisters and brothers

One life, but we’re not the same

We get to carry each other…One.\textsuperscript{142}

Suddenly, thousands of cell phones light up the concert arena, and Bono has furthered his campaign in another city.

“Miss Sarajevo”:

The biggest political U2 song to come out of the ‘90s was “Miss Sarajevo,” which was not even from a mainstream U2 record, but from a hidden U2 album released under the false band name “Passengers,” demonstrating just how far U2 was trying to run from its former identity. “Miss Sarajevo” referred to an actual beauty pageant that was held during the bombardments in Sarajevo, as a Bosnian act of defiance against their plight. According to U2

\textsuperscript{141} U2 “One”\textsuperscript{142} U2 “One”
manager Paul McGuinness, it was as if they were saying, with their “‘fingers up to the world: ‘You may have forgotten us but we’re alive and we’re having a beauty pageant.’” The song “Miss Sarajevo” was not political because of its lyrics but because of the context in which it was used on the Zoo TV Tour in 1993: “For many, the plight of the Bosnian people was brought home…vividly by U2’s Zoo TV Tour satellite link-ups with the city of Sarajevo.” American aid worker Bill Carter arranged the telecast because U2 wanted to play a show in Sarajevo to protest the Serbian bombings of Bosnia, but it was too dangerous. Instead, “each day, Carter scoured the city looking for locals to broadcast their reality into whatever stadium U2 found themselves in that night.”

Finally, U2 got their chance to play in Sarajevo, and brought the entire Zoo TV spectacle with them, including their 40-foot lemon, even though it meant they were losing money to play the gig: “‘We offered to do a benefit gig here,’ Bono says, ‘…but they wanted the whole fucking thing. They wanted the lemon.’” During the gig, Bono brought his signature gift of hope to the audience, telling them as he was losing his voice, “‘I ask you to carry me like you carried each other in those weeks, months and years.’ The resulting roar is enough to lift the place off its base.” Then, during the performance of “Miss Sarajevo,” the documentary Miss Sarajevo about the famed beauty pageant is played, as a banner saying “Please don’t let them kill us” is released, and “it’s impossible to remain composed.” U2 turned the song for Sarajevo into an

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143 Smith 136
144 Smith 134
145 Smith 134
146 Smith 135
147 Smith 136
148 Smith 136
enormous gift because, by bringing their entire tour to their war-ravaged city, Bono and U2, “put their city back on the map.”

*All That You Can’t Leave Behind:*

In 2000, U2 went back to its conscience-raising roots with *All That You Can’t Leave Behind*, featuring several songs addressing social and political issues, such as “Walk On” and “Peace on Earth.” “Walk On” was dedicated to Aung San Suu Kyi, who was a political prisoner in Burma, one of Amnesty International’s “prisoners of conscience,” under house arrest from 1989 until 1995, stripped of communication with her family back in England and the outside world, even when she was given the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. As the leader of the National League for Democracy, she had courageously returned to Burma even though she knew her freedom would be at risk in order to take charge of the movement against the military junta in Burma. Bono wrote “Walk On” as an inspirational piece for her, but the song was quickly banned by the Burmese government:

> And love is not the easy thing
> The only baggage you can bring is
> All that you can’t leave behind
> And if the darkness is to keep us apart
> And if the daylight feels like it’s a long way off
> And if your glass heart should crack
> And for a second you turn back

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149 Smith 136  
150 Stokes 151  
151 Stokes 181
Oh, no – be strong!

Walk on – what you got, they can’t steal it

No they can’t even feel it – walk on.¹⁵²

“Peace on Earth” is the second politically inspired song from ATYCLB, and yet another song in the U2 repertoire of protests against the Troubles in Northern Ireland. This version of the protest song is a heartbreakingly plea for the peace they wished for for so long, which they thought they had finally achieved with the Good Friday Agreement. Unfortunately, shortly after this agreement was passed, a bomb exploded in Omagh, killing twenty-nine and wounding many others.¹⁵³ It seemed the peace would never come:

Heaven on earth, we need it now

I’m sick of all of this hanging around

I’m sick of sorrow - I’m sick of the pain

I’m sick of hearing again and again

That’s there’s gonna be Peace on Earth…

They’re reading names out over the radio

All the folks the rest of us won’t get to know

Sean and Julia, Gareth, Ann, and Breda

Their lives are bigger than any “big idea”¹⁵⁴

Surprisingly, the bomb was not planted by the IRA, but by a new terrorist group disguising itself as the original IRA, which unfortunately did not lessen the pain of betrayal felt that day.

¹⁵³ Stokes 156
How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb:

U2’s latest release reflects a return to the earnestness of U2’s past. Bono’s latest crusades are evident in the lyrics, and not disguised or generalized. Two of the most prominent advocacy songs on the album are also the ones with the clearest titles: “Miracle Drug” and “Love and Peace or Else.” “Miracle Drug” most likely refers to Bono’s sincere wish for a miracle drug that could cure AIDS, the issue he has been struggling with for the past decade. Most of Bono’s lyrics dealing with a social cause appeal directly to the heart, but “Miracle Drug” is different because it specifically addresses logic and reason:

Of science and the human heart
There is no limit
There is no failure here sweetheart
Just when you quit…
Love and logic keep us clear
Reason is on our side
I’ve had enough of romantic love
I’d give it up…for a miracle drug

And yet, Bono’s emotional pleas in the song link the heart with the mind, just as he does in his political and social campaigning. He knows the importance of using the emotions and reason to create a strong case for a cause.

HTDAAB’s other example of social and political bluntness is the rock anthem “Love and Peace or Else,” in which Bono sings:

We need some release

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We need love and peace

…Lay down your guns

All you daughters of Zion

All you Abraham’s sons…

Where is the love…love and peace?"^156

This song fittingly summarizes U2’s repeated message in all their political and socially pertinent songs: we must create a world filled with love and peace, or else we will continue to hurt one another and live in a way that is far less than we are capable of. “Love and Peace or Else” demonstrates that Bono, in his songwriting and his advocacy for important causes, calls on everyone to rise to their full potential for goodness and have hope that we can learn from the mistakes of the past to achieve a better future.

VII. Bono and Africa: Then and Now

In 1985, Bono and U2 were propelled into superstardom, with an invitation to perform at Live Aid, an event that launched both their music careers and Bono’s social justice love affair with Africa, which has captivated him more than any other cause for the past decade. Live Aid was a large-scale charity concert organized by Bob Geldof of the Irish band The Boomtown Rats in 1985. Its purpose was to raise money and increase awareness for the famine ravaging Ethiopia at the time.\textsuperscript{157} Geldof, now famous for Live Aid’s successor, the Live 8 concert series, for which he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, enlisted the famous bands and artists of the 1980s, including U2, Queen, and David Bowie, to perform at the show. Thanks to Bono’s crazy stunt of disappearing into the crowd for several minutes to find and embrace a beautiful young fan, U2 was catapulted to fame, and Live Aid received enormous press around the world, raising its desired awareness for the African famine, as well as $200 million in aid for Africa.\textsuperscript{158}

Live Aid was only the start of Bono’s twenty-plus-year commitment to the continent of Africa. Once the concert was over, Bono was not content to pat himself on the back for being a generous human being, but rather, as Boston College Professor Richard Kearney explained, Bono was “very hands on with Amnesty International, minority issues, justice issues,”\textsuperscript{159} and

\textsuperscript{157} Laura Roberts, “Bono and Geldof’s Efforts Rewarded with Second Nobel Nomination?” \textit{Scotsman} 25 Feb. 2006, 1 ed.: 17
\textsuperscript{159} Kearney Interview
therefore wanted to “see it, touch it, do something about it.” Kearney says Bono was “doubly committed” unlike most of the Live Aid performers, even the other members of U2.

After Live Aid, Bono and his wife Ali went to Ethiopia to witness the famine’s devastation for themselves and to see how they could help. They stayed for a month, working at an orphanage, where they would “teach children through songs or one-act plays….We would teach them the things they needed to know in order to not be sick.” Bono offered up his musical talent to compose songs for them which were translated into their native tongue. During their stay, they saw thousands of families who had been uprooted because of Ethiopia’s extreme poverty being kept out of the camp where the Hewsons stayed because, as Bono realized, “There was not enough to go around.” Bono left Ethiopia determined to help the African people, inspired by them, yet torn by helplessness because he was without a strategy at the time.

For the next twelve years, Bono pushed Africa to the back of his mind, slowly forgetting his pledge to find a way to help the troubled area. It was not until 1997, when lobbyist Jamie Drummond invited Bono to join Jubilee 2000 that he recognized a strategy that could work: “Jubilee 2000 had a great strategy for canceling the debts of the poorest countries to the richest as a part of the millennium celebrations.” Bono agreed to spearhead the American movement for debt elimination under Jubilee 2000, later called the Drop the Debt Campaign. He contacted Eunice Shriver, founder of the Special Olympics and member of the Kennedy family, who connected him with her famous son Bobby Shriver, a music producer with invaluable political contacts. Shriver introduced Bono to Jeffrey Sachs, the Harvard professor who would become

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160 Kearney Interview
161 Kearney Interview
162 Assayas 222
163 Assayas 223
164 Assayas 258
165 Assayas 259
his private tutor in the economics of extremely impoverished countries. Bono took his education seriously, learning the ins and outs of the political system in the United States and becoming an expert on African poverty solutions. He even had a meeting with Pope John Paul II about the Jubilee 2000, which was originated as a church movement, in which the Pope famously donned Bono’s trademark sunglasses. Bono said, “Without his support…we would not have gotten such a result….Actions followed…[that] were tactical and strategic, and put the shoulder of the Church to a few doors that had been slammed shut on us.”

By 1999, Bono was making regular visits to Washington to meet with politicians from both parties to promote debt cancellation. He won over President Clinton, but struggled with the Republican Congress, until he found a way to sway their opinions. The Conservative Christian contingency was a strong presence in Congress, so Bono appealed to the Christians with Biblical quotations and metaphors to convey the importance of the struggle against AIDS, which was tearing through the continent, and the elimination of debt for countries that could not afford clean drinking water, let alone constant payments to the richest countries of the world. His strategy worked. By October 2000, Congress committed $435 million for 100% debt relief for the poorest countries in the world, especially those in Africa.

As AIDS continued to consume Africa, killing 6500 people every day, Bono turned his attention to fighting for U.S. government assistance with the disease. In 2001, Bono pitched an idea to Bill Gates for an organization that would lobby for Debt relief, AIDS assistance, and free

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166 Assayas 89-90
167 Assayas 203
169 Traub
170 Assayas 149
Trade for Africa, so, with a grant from the Gates Foundation, Bono founded DATA in 2002.\textsuperscript{171} DATA’s goal was to reward successful, corruption-free countries with large amounts of aid to be put to good use, while still helping other countries fight AIDS, TB, and malaria. Bono won many conservatives, such as Senator Jesse Helms, to his side of the AIDS struggle, and in 2003 convinced George W. Bush to allocate more aid to Africa through PEPFAR, the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.\textsuperscript{172}

By 2004, Bono had created the ONE Campaign to spark a grassroots effort to push DATA’s issues through Congress. He appealed to the American public through ONE advertisements, magazine articles, concerts, and any form of media possible, to talk to their politicians about providing aid to Africa. He staged the Live 8 concerts with Bob Geldof in 2005 to pressure world leaders to give more to foreign aid. In 2005, Bono was tackling the world leaders themselves, both at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland and at the G 8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland. By having private, persuasive audiences with leaders such as George W. Bush, Tony Blair, Jacques Chirac, and Gerhard Schröder, Bono was able to convince the leaders to promise commitments of up to $50 billion a year by 2010,\textsuperscript{173} and to cancel multilateral debt for the 18 poorest nations in Africa.\textsuperscript{174}

Now that Bono has won these commitments from the world leaders, DATA has served its main purpose, so Bono can focus on his “next target[,]…the American people: he expects to have an army of 10 million activists signed up for the One Campaign by 2008.”\textsuperscript{175} Bono is currently employing all his resources to spread the One Campaign, which already has 2 million

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\textsuperscript{172} Traub
\textsuperscript{173} Traub
\textsuperscript{174} G8 Gleneagles 2005, \textit{The Gleneagles Communiqué}, Section: “Africa,” Point 29
\textsuperscript{175} Traub
\end{flushleft}
members thanks to his promotional efforts, across the country.\footnote{“About the Campaign,” ONE Campaign, 2006, 10 May 2006 <http://one.org/About.html> \footnote{Bono “The Future in Front of Us”} \footnote{Rod Patterson, Comp., “Bono Sees Red, in a Good Way, Joining With Firms to Fight HIV, AIDS in Africa,” The Oregonian 30 Jan. 2006, 10 May 2006 <http://www.atu2.com/news/article.src?ID=4217&Key=&Year=&Cat=14> \footnote{Emma Cowing, “Politician or Pop Idol?” Scotsman 10 Feb. 2006, 1 ed.: 10}} He has been making speeches across the United States to various groups in different parts of American society and preaching at U2 concerts, asking his audiences to join ONE, but no matter how varied his audiences are, his message has remained constant: that the situation in Africa is “not a cause, it’s an emergency,”\footnote{Bono “The Future in Front of Us”} and one that the American people can and should fight to end.

Finally, Bono’s newest attempt to eliminate extreme poverty is a commercial one, the creation of a brand called Red which would sell products by big-name companies but whose proceeds would go, in part, to the UN’s Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria.\footnote{Rod Patterson, Comp., “Bono Sees Red, in a Good Way, Joining With Firms to Fight HIV, AIDS in Africa,” The Oregonian 30 Jan. 2006, 10 May 2006 <http://www.atu2.com/news/article.src?ID=4217&Key=&Year=&Cat=14> \footnote{Emma Cowing, “Politician or Pop Idol?” Scotsman 10 Feb. 2006, 1 ed.: 10}} The clothing and accessories will be made with African materials and labor, thus promoting free trade for the continent, which is a major step in its self-sufficiency.\footnote{Emma Cowing, “Politician or Pop Idol?” Scotsman 10 Feb. 2006, 1 ed.: 10} American Express is also launching a new credit card, the Red Card, which will donate at least 1% of money spent using the card to Project Red.

Bono’s legacy in Africa has been growing over the past 21 years, but is finally coming to fruition in this new millennium. He has taken on more responsibility than any other rock star after performing in a simple benefit concert over two decades ago. Recently it seems he has been putting more time and effort into his volunteer work for the impoverished nations of Africa than he does into his paying job U2, although U2 is not suffering too greatly from his truancy since they have just accumulated their 21st Grammy award and are reaping massive sales from their latest release \textit{How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb}. In fact, \textit{HTDAAB} exhibits definite
influence by Bono’s work for social justice, in the subject matter of its songs and even in its title, making it another politically charged album in a long line of U2’s thought-provoking records.}\(^{180}\)

\(^{180}\) This will be explored in the next section.
VIII. Bono’s Unique Importance

Bono has a unique and important role in the twenty-first century as a new breed of humanitarian. Because of his celebrity status, Bono has an edge over most lay activists. People are more willing to hear his ideas because they want to meet the famous performer. But what makes him different from other celebrities who promote charities? There are countless celebrities who have pet causes that they indulge in when their PR needs a boost. Britney Spears, for example, has established a camp for the performing arts, but how often does she work with the children there? Former “starving actors” pose for pictures with currently starving children in order to help their tarnished Hollywood images. In response to that type of charity work, Bono says, “My definition of charity is the old idea that the right hand should not know what the left hand is doing. If it’s public, it’s not charity. It’s PR. Unless it’s taking a stand.” Other celebrities come to the rescue when tragedy strikes close to home, such as Sean Penn helping rescuers after Hurricane Katrina or celebrities volunteering at New York City’s Ground Zero to help after September 11, 2001.

While these celebrities may care about their causes for a while and put their fame to good use by drawing attention to and creating awareness for their causes, they lack thorough knowledge of their charity. While they are willing to associate their name and image with a

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181 i.e. “Jessica Simpson jetting to Africa to help kids with facial deformities...She conveniently happened to turn from Daisy Duke into Florence Nightingale just as her impending split from husband Nick Lachey was dribbling into the tabloids.” (James Poniewozik, “Viewpoint: The Year of Charitainment,” Time December 26, 2005/January 2, 2006: 94.)

182 Assayas 258

specific cause, and even willing to make a visit to a troubled area, most don’t get down-and-dirty with the statistics, facts and strategies to become experts for their causes, as Bono does. Also, many lack his passion and drive to work tirelessly in order to effect substantial.

There are the rare celebrities who are famous for their consistent charity work, such as Angelina Jolie, a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador who notably adopted two children from third-world countries and works to raise awareness about the hardship of refugees.184 Celebrity activists like Jolie demonstrate strong passion for their causes and are well-educated about their causes. However, even these celebrity activists are not as successful as Bono in achieving significant results with their activism because they lack other key elements that he employs in his unique approach to social justice.

No other celebrity humanitarian works as hard as he does, knows as much or really cares enough to invest the extraordinary but necessary amount of time, energy and heart to make a difference. Bono is matchless in his approach to humanitarianism because he utilizes the power of his fame, his passion for and knowledge of his cause, his insight into his audience, and his inspirational nature to sway public policy and to involve others in his cause. Other celebrities and activists may have a few or some of these qualities, but none has all of them to the degree that he has, which is what sets him apart as the new model for twenty-first century social and political activism. In this fast-paced world of short attention spans and cynicism for grandiose dreams, Bono has found a way to captivate people and sell them on his colossal ideas.

A. Celebrity Currency

Bono’s first key asset is what he calls “celebrity currency,” meaning that his fame and celebrity status allow him to gain access to people, places and things just as large amounts of money can. Bono is fully aware of the power of his fame and has consciously “chosen to spend my currency on Africa.” Bono utilizes his fame to get around the systems of bureaucracy with more ease than most activists who must struggle to meet with politicians, let alone hold their full attention to convince them to change their views. Other high-profile celebrities are blessed with this power, but most do not spend it as wisely as Bono does: “He’s a kind of one-man state who fills his treasury with the global currency of fame….But it is Bono’s willingness to invest his fame, and to do so with a steady sense of purpose and a tolerance for detail, that has made him the most politically effective figure in the recent history of popular culture.”

Bono’s celebrity opens doors for him in the political world. Politicians, who are the policy makers deciding the fate of the millions of Africans Bono is trying to defend, are more willing to meet with him because of his fame. In the past decade while campaigning for Drop the Debt and DATA, Bono has met with President George W. Bush, former President Bill Clinton, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Russian President Vladimir Putin, former German Chancellor Gerard Schröder, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Paul O’Neill, French President Jacques Chirac, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, South African President Nelson Mandela, former U.S. Senator Jesse Helms, and United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Society’s elite could not dream of having relationships with even a few of these figures, but

\[\text{Quigley}\]


\[\text{Traub}\]
Bono has developed close alliances with several of these politicians. He is more than well-acquainted with Mikhail Gorbachev, having had many face-to-face conversations with him many times. One of Bono’s favorite anecdotes involves Gorbachev’s visit to Bono’s home in Ireland, when Bono had forgotten he was coming over, and Ali, Bono’s wife, opened the front door to find the former head of the USSR holding a giant teddy bear for their infant son.\textsuperscript{188} Bono has also formed a close friendship and admiration for Bill Clinton because of their work together on the Drop the Debt campaign during Clinton’s terms in office. Most recently, Bono has met with President Bush on multiple occasions, working on the Millennium Challenge Account and leading up to the G8 Summit at Gleneagles in 2005.

When Bono is unable to secure audiences with the politicians immediately, he uses his celebrity status to form associations with a politician’s staff and administration, who then help him gain contact with the politicians: “At first, even the Democrats wouldn’t clear their schedules….Republicans tended to be more skeptical, so Bono courted their staff members, most of whom were his age or younger and had grown up loving U2.”\textsuperscript{189} This method of forming and “cashing in” his connections in the political world was especially important for him in his first meeting with George Bush. Bono found a connection to Bush through Condoleezza Rice, the U.S. Secretary of State, who, according to Rice herself, is “‘a U2 fan.’”\textsuperscript{190} By 2002, Rice was very willing to help Bono get in touch with the President, even trying to get President Bush to meet Bono. In addition, “Condi gave the keys to her office to a bunch of English activists, Jamie Drummond and Lucy Mathew from DATA – not just the rock star and the Kennedy [Bobby

\textsuperscript{188} Assayas 239
\textsuperscript{189} Tyrangiel 57
\textsuperscript{190} Traub
His connections paid off in 2002, when President Bush was presenting the Millennium Challenge Account idea for aid and desired Bono’s public approval of it, since “Bono had enormous credibility in an area where the administration had virtually none; or, as Secretary Rice put it to me [James Traub], ‘It’s great to have a person who would not normally be identified with the president’s development agenda as part of it.’”

After forming a connection with Bush, Bono has continued to use his connections with Bush’s under-staff to push the President on his issues. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in 2005, Bono met with Randall Tobias, who is in charge of Bush’s AIDS program to encourage him about the work the Bush administration had been doing for AIDS. In addition, “Bono met with John Taylor, an under secretary of the treasury, to try to move the Bush administration's position on the issue [of multilateral debt cancellation]” and with Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the United Kingdom, “and heir apparent to the British prime ministership.” Through his working of connections, by Gleneagles, Bono began having private audiences with big-wigs such as Bush, Blair, Chirac and Schröder.

Besides his general position as a celebrity, Bono has spoken about the added advantage of representing the most politically sought-after section of society:

The reason why politicians let me in the door, and the reason why people will take my call is because I represent quite a large constituency of people. Now, I do not control that constituency, but I represent them in a certain sense, even without them asking me to, in the minds of the people whose doors I knock upon. That

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191 Assayas 233
192 Traub
193 Traub
194 Traub
195 Traub
constituency is a very powerful one, because it is a constituency of people from eighteen to thirty, who are the floating vote…. They’re the most open-minded, and that’s why politicians pay attention to what’s going on in contemporary culture and what a rock star might have to do with all of this: because of the people I represent.  

This concept of representing the floating vote ties in closely with Bono’s particular position as lead singer of U2. Having sold over 130 million albums worldwide, U2’s fan base is extensive, and U2 is regularly referred to as the Biggest Band in the World.  Bono has U2 fans who are in their mid-forties, about as old as the members of U2, but thanks to U2’s newer albums and the constant radio play of their old songs, there are many fans in their twenties, a desirable recruiting age for political party affiliation. This fan base provides a strong foundation of connections that Bono can call on for assistance with the ONE campaign and DATA.

Throughout U2’s history, Bono has used lyrics and concert spectacle to promote various social justice messages.  As recently as U2’s Vertigo tour, which I was fortunate enough to witness, Bono has beckoned the stadiums filled with loyal fans, sometimes numbering up to 80,000 at a time, to turn on their cell phones – something that is usually faux pas at social events – and to text a message to the ONE campaign to add their membership to the already two million U.S. members. This point in the concert can only be described as magical, for the light of thousands of cell phones heeding Bono’s command light up the stadium with sheer brilliance,

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196 Assayas 149
197 This phrase has appeared in various sources, such as Time’s “Persons of the Year” article (Tyrangiel 55), and Baylor University’s newspaper The Lariat (Van Darden, “‘Biggest Band in the World’ Maintains Heart, Strong Mind,” The Lariat 2 Dec. 2004, The Lariat Online, Baylor University, 10 May 2006 <http://www.baylor.edu/Lariat/news.php?action=story&story=21487>)
198 See section: Bono’s Lyrics
and demonstrate the power of Bono’s position as U2 frontman. Through U2’s fan base and Bono’s popularity, he is able to urge a large amount of America’s voters to contact their politicians and encourage them to make more progress on aid for Africa, the AIDS crisis, debt elimination and fair trade. He attracts attention to the cause and makes it seem sexy, since it is presented by a rock star, compared to being introduced to popular society by more traditional activists such as Paul Farmer and Jeff Sachs. Bono is needed to make DATA appeal to the masses: “They needed the drug companies to come on board…and a whole generation of politicians who were raised to believe that foreign aid was about as politically sexy as postal reform. And that is where Bono’s campaign comes in.”

Bono also makes use of his celebrity currency by involving other celebrities in the crusade to help Africa. At the start of the Jubilee 2000/Drop the Debt campaign, Bono had a famous meeting with Pope John Paul II, just before the Pope announced the plan to eliminate debt for the poorest countries. Through the ONE campaign, Bono engaged the assistance of many other celebrities, such as actors Penelope Cruz and Brad Pitt, to speak for the campaign and to pose for its striking black-and-white-portrait advertisements. He has also involved other celebrities in DATA’s endeavors, linking various stars with prominent political figures, often from opposite ends of the political spectrum, especially at the G8 summit at Gleneagles: “Bono, meanwhile, launched a final burst of back-room politicking, greasing countless surreal encounters with people who had no business being in the same room together.” For example, George Clooney has become an ally for DATA, learning about AIDS, trade and debt elimination for Africa to become a lobbyist for the cause on American talk shows, at the Live 8 concerts.

199 Gibbs 45
200 Tyrangiel 60
201 Traub
and in these one-on-one discussions with politicians: “Clooney had been tasked to buttonhole Paul Wolfowitz [the president of World Bank] and get him to press the administration to finance the World Bank’s program to provide free public education.”

Bono is also responsible for prompting Bob Geldof to create the global series of eight concerts that would coincide with the G8 Summit, called Live 8: “Bono wanted a concert to prove how far the movement had come.” The G-8 summit was going to fall very close to the 20th anniversary of Live Aid, which Geldof had founded in 1985.

One of the most valuable celebrity connections Bono has drawn on is Microsoft multibillionaire Bill Gates and his philanthropic wife Melinda who are helping to fund Bono’s new organization called DATA, founded in 2002. The Gateses, later named Time magazine’s Persons of the Year 2005 alongside Bono, gave $1 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to found DATA. Later, the Gateses also granted $3 million for the ONE campaign.

In addition to their financial contribution, the Gateses helped DATA by attaching more immediate credibility to the cause and to the organization than a pop culture icon could: “‘When an Irish rock star starts talking about it, people go, yeah, you're paid to be indulged and have these ideas,’ Bono says. ‘But when Bill Gates says you can fix malaria in 10 years, they know he's done a few spreadsheets.’”

While the Gateses provided important backing for DATA, Bono also received substantial support from Eunice Kennedy Shriver: “The best phone call I ever made in my opinion was to

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202 Traub
203 Tyrangiel 60
204 Tyrangiel 57
206 Gibbs 45
the most extraordinary woman in the world: Eunice Shriver…”207 She linked Bono with her music producer son Bobby Shriver, who helped Bono found DATA in 2002208 and became an invaluable resource for Bono in the political world, introducing him to such influential figures as John Kasich, the chairman of the House Budget Committee.209 However, “more than just giving [Bono phone] numbers, he [Shriver] called them and often accompanied [him] to those appointments.”210 Although a Democrat, Bobby had many Republican connections, which Bono needed, coming from the Left himself, through Bobby’s brother-in-law Arnold Schwarzenegger.211 Kasich, a Republican and friend of Arnold, became Bono’s “guide through the Republican side of the Congress.”212 In fact, Bono’s connections to these politicians through his celebrity friends were so important that Bono claims, “we were dead in the water without John Kasich.”213

Through the Shriver/Kennedy connection, Bono went “straight to the decision-makers, or at the very least the people who knew those decision-makers,”214 and therefore believes he had a substantial impact on the United States’ part in canceling one third of the poorer countries’ debts, “which adds up to a hundred billion dollars worth.”215

Despite Bono’s honorable success in helping the poor in Africa, he is often mocked, or at least parodied, in the media, as in famed satirical newspaper The Onion’s article mocking Time magazine’s 2002 cover story on Bono:

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207 Assayas 89  
208 Assayas 80  
209 Tyrangiel 57  
210 Assayas 89  
211 Assayas 89  
212 Assayas 89  
213 Assayas 90  
214 Assayas 89  
215 Assayas 89
Called ‘rock’s conscience,’ U2 frontman and political crusader Bono has met with everyone from Kofi Annan to Colin Powell. What has he been doing recently?

- Tirelessly dedicating self to ending Third World Debt, no matter how many magazine covers he must appear on in process…
- Vowing to lobby Congress for African aid on progressively larger Jumbotrons until demands are met.\(^{216}\)

However, Bono knows that any publicity is good publicity, and involves himself with the media as much as possible, seizing every opportunity to promote his work with Africa, even if it is mocked. He uses the media the way the media uses him – to reach his goals, but with respect for the other side. In every magazine article – including several in Time, Rolling Stone, and The New York Times Magazine – book, speech, and interview, Bono never wastes a chance to connect the chosen topic to the plight of Africa and how the reader or viewer can get involved in the ONE campaign. He uses his celebrity status to get the media interested in him and to use the media to increase public awareness.

Through his infiltration of popular society by way of the media, through his connections to politicians and to other important celebrities, and through his peaceful manipulation of his fan base, Bono uses his celebrity currency to bridge the gap between pop culture and philanthropy, crossing over differences in age, sex, and class. Bono is in the top tier of celebrity notoriety, which is evident in his mononym. Having had twenty-six years to get used to his fame, Bono is comfortable using his celebrity to help others: “You know, celebrity is ridiculous. It’s silly, but it is a kind of currency, and you have to spend it wisely. And I’ve learnt that much.”\(^{217}\) His acceptance of his celebrity status also gives him the confidence to be himself with VIPs, not

\(^{216}\) Assayas 144  
\(^{217}\) Assayas 93
feeling pressured to change his image to fit in with politicians and businessmen. This confidence allows him to follow his instincts and let his charming personality shine through when meeting influential leaders. In this respect, he was influenced by Bob Geldof, who, Bono says, “gave me confidence to be…who I am. You don’t have to be a politician to hang out with them. You don’t have to wear a suit to be a businessman. You can be yourself at all times. And you can be as bohemian as you want to be. It’s about the quality of ideas.”218 The quality of Bono’s ideas is another crucial factor in his effectiveness as a humanitarian. His fame may be the factor that gets him in the door, but he must rely on other qualities and tactics to succeed once he is inside.

218 Assayas 287
B. The Strength of His Argument

Once Bono has used his fame to get in the doors of some of the most heavily guarded offices in the world, he implements his other methods of success, such as his ability to deliver strong arguments. Bono’s case for Africa depends on his strong foundation of knowledge about his cause and his sincere passion for and belief in its importance, which gives weight to his argument.

When Bono first became involved in the fight for debt cancellation, he believed in the cause but lacked the knowledge and detailed facts about the countries’ struggles and the economics and politics behind debt elimination. Rather quickly Bono was able to convince President Clinton to cancel the debt of many impoverished countries, yet Bono soon recognized that Congress played a more important role in policy making than the President. He realized how much more he would need to learn if he were to further his cause:

And that’s how I found myself inside the body politic, trying to figure out how it lived and breathed, how it behaved – a rock star wandering around the corridors of power rather than placarding at the gates outside…Every few weeks I had to travel to Washington, D.C., to go and meet all kinds of unexpected people, in an attempt to get debt cancellation accepted in the United States….Myself and Bobby Shriver were entering a world not just of ideologue politicians, but one of bankers and economists, and a certain elite who guard America’s piggy bank….I was way out of my depth.”

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219 Wenner 102
220 Assayas 90
221 Assayas 90
Because of the link between politics and economics, Bono decided to get an education in the economics of poor countries. Bobby Shriver connected him with Jeffrey Sachs, then a Harvard professor – an experience “which,” Bono says, “completely changed my life.”²²² Sachs helped Bono understand the mathematical side of the struggle against poverty in Africa: “[Sachs] turned the math into music.”²²³ Bono studied with him at Harvard and outside of the school grounds to learn as much as he could about the facts of extreme poverty and the detriments of AIDS, debt and lack of trade. Bono wanted to be fully prepared with all the facts so that he could defend the Africans he chose to represent against any opponent. He, Sachs, and Shriver then traveled the world together to promote Jubilee 2000 and Drop the Debt.²²⁴

During their globetrotting, Bono made connections in Africa, becoming familiar with specific individuals and cultures ravaged by disease, famine and poverty, which he effectively uses as evidence of the existing emergency situations when talking to politicians and the general public. Bono has put his collection of African connections to use when influencing politicians. For instance, for Bush’s visit to Africa, Bono and the staff of DATA arranged for the President to meet key Africans, including the Ugandan nurse Agnes Nymura, who, according to Bono, told Bush the tearful story of her family’s strife with AIDS and poverty, moving Bush to hug her, at which point she “whispered in his ear: ‘…what about putting some more money in Kofi Annan’s Global Health Fund for TB, AIDS, and malaria?’…maybe someone whispered in her ear.”²²⁵

After becoming knowledgeable about the situations, Bono surrounded himself with people who could keep him best informed about politics and economics. Bono’s organization,

²²² Assayas 90
²²³ Assayas 91
²²⁵ Assayas 233
DATA, “hired lobbyists—Tom Sheridan, a Democrat who had been a star of the domestic AIDS lobby, and Scott Hatch, a former Tom DeLay aide who ran the National Republican Campaign Committee.” By keeping lobbyists on his staff, Bono continued to educate himself on the workings of the political system he was suddenly involved in.

After learning facts and examples to thoroughly support his side of the argument on African poverty, Bono further educated himself on the other side of the debate. By personally getting to know his competition, he was able to strengthen his own argument even more when encountering opposition: “I also asked and got to meet very conservative economists like Robert J. Barrow, for example. I wanted to get to know the people who might oppose the idea….I wanted to meet the people who could roadblock us . . . to roadblock them.”

By learning about all the aspects of his cause, and being able to debate with striking facts and statistics to support his case, Bono continues to impress politicians who, at first, doubt the purpose of a rock star in politics. Former Secretary of the Treasury Paul O’Neill said, “‘I refused to meet him at first…I thought he was just some pop star who wanted to use me.’ After their scheduled half-hour session went 90 min., O’Neill changed his mind. ‘He’s a serious person. He cares deeply about these issues, and you know what? He knows a lot about them.’” Even Republican Senator Rick Santorum admitted, “‘The important thing is, Bono understands his issues better than 99% of members of Congress.’”

The strength of Bono’s argument also comes from the obvious passion he possesses for his causes. He speaks with such conviction that one feels a strong sense of his belief in his work,

226 Tyrangiel 57
227 Assayas 91
229 Tyrangiel 50
which instills credibility in his argument beyond the cold facts. His enthusiasm is contagious and his passion leads to an unbelievable persistence and relentless determination in his work for social justice: “I just went all the places they didn’t expect me to turn up. I didn’t go because I wanted to, I went because we had to, to get it through the Congress.” Bono has traveled to Washington, D.C. dozens of times over the past several years – a long journey from Dublin – to meet with political and economic figures, such as Robert Rubin, the Secretary of the Treasury, Paul Volcker, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, and Jim Wolfensohn, the former head of World Bank. He pressed on until he could meet with the highest official in every area.

His persistence is also visible in pop culture, for no matter what interview, magazine article, or U2 appearance he is in, Bono finds a way to talk about Africa and encourage his audience to become involved. He is relentless, persistent, and annoying at times, even to himself: “I am sick of Bono. And I am Bono.” He constantly repeats his ideas – and his jokes – drilling them into the public’s heads, refusing to let them forget. He returns to the same familiar stories and lessons, and brings them into tangential topics, never missing an opportunity to talk about his cause again. He incessantly repeats that relieving the extreme poverty in Africa is “not a cause – it’s an emergency.” Michka Assayas, author of *Bono: In Conversation*, spoke of his interaction with Bono while writing his book: “There was something uncanny about Bono’s route to Africa. Each time he had the opportunity, Bono would lay Africa on the table, whether I’d asked him about clinical depression or his impression of President Bush.” One particularly random example involved Bono originally discussing video games. Bono said, “I

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230 Assayas 91  
231 Assayas 91  
232 Wenner 59  
233 Bono. “The Future…”  
234 258
remember asking [John Riccitello, who works in the video game industry]: ‘How can we make video games emotional?’ And he said: ‘Wow! Now that’s a project that everyone wants to be a partner of.’ Am I as excited about this as I am for an AIDS vaccine? No.”

Bono never passes up an opportunity to remind the public about Africa because of what motivates him: “Fear of a missed opportunity....if I don’t do it, I’ve walked away from an opportunity to really effect some change in a world that badly needs it.”

In Washington, D.C. on February 3, 2006, the day after Bono’s appearance at the National Prayer Breakfast, Bono made another stop on his speaking tour, delivering his speech “The Future in Front of Us: Living a More Involved Life” at the Hilton Washington. As a fortunate witness of this speech before 3000 executives, I saw Bono’s strength of argument in action. He skillfully applied impressive statistics about the devastation of Africa by the AIDS virus and produced a very convincing argument for every person in the large ballroom to join him in his crusade. Even more impressive than his numbers and figures was his emotion when he spoke of the emergency that no one was rushing to eradicate. He even seemed choked up when he confessed, “I didn’t expect change to come so agonizingly slow.”

Bono truly believes in the urgency and importance of saving the continent of Africa. By not being afraid to express his passion and by becoming an expert on extreme poverty and its solutions, Bono has been able to assist in the U.S.’s part in major debt cancellation for the poorest countries in the world, which was no small feat because, as Bono reported to Assayas, “If the U.S. hadn’t moved, everyone else would have gotten out. As I say, there was a hundred

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235 Assayas 299
236 Wenner 102
237 Bono “The Future…”
billion dollars in play, and I’m very proud of our part, however small it was.238 As a result of the debt cancellation, Uganda has been greatly changed: “…there is three times the amount of children going to school in Uganda…as the result of debt cancellation.”239 The money saved by the third-world countries through debt cancellation affords schools, hospitals, and medicine for the people who cannot afford it otherwise. Bono is still striving for similar results throughout the continent because he knows it is possible if we will ourselves to help.

238 Assayas 92
239 Assayas 92
C. Wooing and Winning His Audience

To be a useful humanitarian, it is not enough to know your cause inside and out, nor to be passionate about the cause you believe in. You must also have insight into the best methods of convincing the people and politicians, wooing them and winning them to your side. Our global society is bombarded with information at every waking hour, so people have learned to filter out the information they do not want and hold onto what matters most to them. Bono succeeds in selling people on the importance of his mission because he knows how to reach beyond the wall of apathy, the mental block against yet another series of facts and statistics and heart-felt pleas – to give the politicians and regular people something they can personally relate to – in order to catch their attention and then engage them.

Bono instinctively knows how to touch something in each person on an emotional or moral level in order to attract others to his ideas and inspire them with his drive to do something to change the world. For some people, hearing his idealism and passion is sufficient, while others are more stubborn, and require the tricks of the con man or experienced salesman, which is what Bono proclaims himself to be.\(^{240}\) Bono learns about the background of politicians before he meets with them, getting relevant details from his DATA employees that he can utilize in his argument for African aid: “Knowing the facts is crucial…but so is knowing your audience.”\(^{241}\)

As he does onstage at U2 concerts, Bono traverses the space between himself as the speaker and the audience.\(^{242}\) At concerts, he can sing his heart out or even jump into the crowd, as he has done at unsettling moments for the rest of the band, but in the political arena, he must

\(^{240}\) Traub, and Assayas 210
\(^{241}\) Tyangiel 50
\(^{242}\) Assayas 210
rely chiefly on his personality and his spontaneity to bridge the gap between his pop culture identity and the formalities of politics: “As I told you, performers are sort of part con men and, if they’re any good, part shaman. So, in order to do your job, you have to be completely spontaneous and completely conscious,”243 whether singing with the band or speaking about Africa.

As a performer, Bono has been gifted with a “reptilian sense” of awareness. He claims that he constantly senses people coming and going in a space, what interactions are taking place and what mood people are in: “I pick all that stuff up. It’s really a noise. It gets to be a terrible noise after a while, and you just wish you could turn it off. …it turns out to be the mark of a performer. When I go onstage and a song is not connecting, I can feel it. You can feel people going to the bathroom or to buy a T-shirt, and you’re annoyed.”244 The same applies to his interactions with politicians; when, at a meeting with a politician, he can sense if they are not gelling, and therefore alters his course of action. When Bono met with ultraconservative Congressman Jesse Helms, “Bono quickly realized that his usual spiel about debt service and so on wasn’t making a dent.”245 Crediting his hyper-awareness, Bono switched gears and compared the AIDS epidemic with the leprosy of Biblical times. Through this comparison and Bono’s stories of the HIV-infected mothers and orphaned children in Africa, Bono brought the typically hardened Senator to tears, after which, “the flinty old Southerner rose to his feet, grabbed for his cane and said, ‘I want to give you a blessing.’ He embraced the singer, saying, ‘I want to do

243 Assayas 210  
244 Wenner 59  
245 Traub
Jesse Helms became a strong ally on the Republican side of Congress for Bono and the fight for Africa.

As a rock star, Bono is skilled in the art of seduction and entertainment. He woos his audiences, both on and offstage, using his natural charm and charisma to make people feel at ease with him. As Boston College professor Richard Kearney, an acquaintance of the Irishman, said in our November discussion, “Bono knows how to work a room.” Bono considers himself a salesman in that respect, but one who sells ideas. He has cultivated the best tactics to produce the highest sales, and like a salesman, persuades his “customers” with flattery, hope, and charm: “Bono arrives with no security, takes gifts (a leather-bound volume of Seamus Heaney for Patrick Leahy, a framed copy of the Marshall Plan speech for Colin Powell) to suit his host’s taste. He poses for every staff picture, and his thank-you notes are hand-written and prompt.”

Bono wisely tailors his presentations to his audience’s moods, values and interests, using what he knows about their personalities and backgrounds to distinguish what approach is best to take. With Bill and Melinda Gates, Bono forewent his regular humorous and charming route, as well as his conservative Scripture-quoting method. He knew what would appeal to the head of the Microsoft corporation and his computer-science-trained wife would be hard facts, statistics and solid numerical data that showed what he could do for the Gateses’ charitable foundation and what they could do for his goal of establishing his organization DATA: “It took about three minutes with Bono for Gates to change his mind. Bill and his wife Melinda, another computer nerd turned poverty warrior, love facts and data with a tenderness most people reserve for their

246 Traub  
247 Kearney Interview  
248 Assayas 17  
249 Tyrangiel 55
children, and Bono was hurling metrics across the table as fast as they could keep up."\textsuperscript{250} From this meeting, Bono was given a Gates grant of $1 million to found DATA and formed a strong relationship with the Gateses and their foundation, who later gave Bono $3 million to help the ONE campaign.\textsuperscript{251}

Bono was able to approach Bill Gates as a fellow celebrity, but Bono struggled to find level footing with Congress, which was an important body of people to convince. In his efforts to reach both sides of the bipartisan Congress, Bono knew he would have to work more diligently to reach the Republicans. However, Bono was aware that the most stubborn and unyielding Republicans were often Conservative Christians, which gave Bono some leverage to reach them. To steer them from their capitalist impulses, Bono drew on his own Christian background and love of the Scripture by relating his cause to specific Bible passages which he could then present to Senators such as Jesse Helms and even President Bush himself. In fact, just before Bono was to meet the President for the first time, he searched for the perfect Bible verse to quote for Bush: “…from the Gospel of Matthew: ‘For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in…’ ” Bono then presented Bush with an edition of the Psalms for which he had written the foreword.\textsuperscript{252} By appealing to Christian politicians’ moral values and emotional ties to their belief in Jesus Christ, Bono also appealed to their desire to follow the Lord’s word and help others: “I’ve started to see this [Conservative Christian] community as a real resource in America. I have described them as

\textsuperscript{250} Gibbs 44
\textsuperscript{252} Traub
‘narrow-minded idealists.’ If you can widen the aperture of that idealism, these people want to change the world. They want their lives to have meaning.”

By studying the Conservative Christian politicians as a target audience, Bono also discovered that the everyday Conservative Christian community could be excited in the same way as their political leaders, once an appeal was made to their souls and hearts. In his beseeching of the general public of America, Bono has used the Christian community to excite citizens about the injustice of extreme poverty. He even organized a bus tour across the heartland of America to promote the One campaign and DATA: “He goes to churches and talks of Christ and the lepers, citing exactly how many passages of Scripture (‘2,103’) deal with taking care of the poor…” This community is “now a key constituency in the debates over aid to Africa; Bono was among the first outsiders to help them across the ideological divide.” Bono is now revered in the Christian community because of his grassroots involvement with their churches and politics. Multiple sermons have been written about him and U2, and he is highly esteemed in a book on the new generation of Evangelism, *Speaking My Mind* by Tony Campolo, for inspiring the Christian community to act against AIDS:

Bono may be right on the mark when he says that this is the moment when America must prove its greatness. Future generations will judge us, he claims, by whether or not we worked to eliminate from the earth the real weapon of mass destruction - AIDS…. This is America's hour. Let the Christians of this country rise up and ensure that this time does not pass without those who live in it doing

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253 Wenner 56
254 Gibbs 45
255 Traub
what Christ has called us to do.  

Bono’s careful research of his audience, especially of the Conservative Christians, separates him from many other activists who do not believe in suppressing one’s own political beliefs in order to further their good causes. Bono has been hassled by his compatriots for being someone from the liberal Left who easily fraternizes with officials from the Right, and yet Bono believes in bipartisanship, or at least in not letting party differences become obstacles to important breakthroughs: “It doesn’t belong to the Left or the Right….The Left may offer more money to fight AIDS or deal with the debt burden, but they scuttle off when we talk to them about trade reform.” Even Bono’s groundbreaking meeting in 2000 with Jesse Helms was thought of as an encounter with “the archfiend himself.” No matter how much criticism he must endure, Bono refuses to disrespect those with whom he works, especially Bush. When Assayas pressured him to reveal a dislike of the President, Bono simply replied: “We get on very well. As I told you, I couldn’t come from a more different place. We disagree on so many things…. [but] I think for all the swagger, this Texan thing, he has a religious instinct that keeps him humble.”

Bono wisely controls his anger and frustration in the process of lobbying politicians. In this way, he is most effective because:

Bono grasps that politicians don’t much like being yelled at by activists who tell them no matter what they do, it’s not enough. Bono knows it’s never enough, but he also knows how to say so in a way that doesn’t leave his audience feeling

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256 Campolo 183
257 Assayas 237
258 Traub
259 Assayas 235-236
helpless. He invites everyone into the game, in a way that makes them think they are missing something if they hold back.\textsuperscript{260}

Similarly, Virginia Woolf preaches against letting anger tamper with one’s creative process in \textit{A Room of One’s Own}, condemning Charlotte Bronte for infusing \textit{Jane Eyre} with feelings of her personal grievances, which taint the writing of her famous novel.\textsuperscript{261} Bono could easily let his personal feelings overcome his message about saving lives in Africa, but he knows the importance of his role in speaking for those whose lives are at stake.

Rather than giving in to negative impulses, Bono takes a positive perspective and consciously tries to inspire his audiences by opening their imaginations and subsequently winning their hearts and minds. He speaks optimistically about what can be accomplished, providing examples of recent successes, and encouraging people to have faith in the future. He praises accomplishments, making those who have already helped want to continue to serve his cause. In his meeting with Bush’s AIDS advisor Randall Tobias, Bono could have disparaged the Bush administration for only giving a pittance of aid instead of a grandiose amount, but instead Bono earnestly said, “You should know what an incredible difference your work is going to make in their lives.” Tobias looked embarrassed. Bono said various wonderful things about President Bush. Tobias beamed.\textsuperscript{262} This positive vision can be traced back to U2’s positive relationship with their own audience in their early days. During the 1980s most self-proclaimed punk bands like U2 enjoyed antagonizing crowds, whereas “U2 had a bond, a benevolent relationship, with the audience.”\textsuperscript{263}

\textsuperscript{260} Gibbs 45
\textsuperscript{261} Virginia Woolf, \textit{A Room of One’s Own} (New York: Harcourt, 1989) 73.
\textsuperscript{262} Traub
\textsuperscript{263} Traub
Through Bono’s willingness to break the barrier between audience and performer, and his application of what he knows about his audiences, he has been able to reach his listeners on an inspirational and effective level that most activists only dream of. He wins over opponents to his side, and inspires to action those already in his encampment: “…Africa, or so Bono feels, needs what only a certain kind of world figure can give – a call to conscience, an appeal to the imagination, a melody or lyric you won’t forget.”

His final tactic is using his unforgettable melody to motivate the general population to action.

At Bono’s “The Future in Front of Us” speech in Washington, D.C., I was able to experience Bono’s strategic handling of the 3,000-person crowd firsthand. Although he joked about being nervous because he is “not used to crowds of less than sixty or seventy thousand,” he looked perfectly comfortable speaking to the audience. He had wonderful stage presence, because of his life-long career of performing, which he was able to carry over to his speech and probably to his meetings with world leaders – so that “it changes the atmosphere, when you [Bono] walk into the room.”

He did not adhere to strict formal speaker etiquette, making jokes that were sometimes inappropriate, and using informal physicality to “cross that distance” between himself and the crowd: “…as a performer, I’m not content with the distance between the crowd and the performer. I’m always trying to cross that distance. I’m trying to do it emotionally, mentally,

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264 Traub
265 Bono “The Future...”
and, where I can, physically.” By joking with the crowd, he kept up a serio-comedic balance, which was very effective for entertaining and enrapturing the crowd in his speech. He would have the crowd laughing, and then would return to the serious reality of the situation in Africa. He spoke to the crowd about Irish-Americans leaving Ireland because of the potato famine, during which Irish cheers erupted in the crowd. In response to the heavy Irish presence in this American capital city, Bono joked, “You can come back now, the potato-famine is over!” This simple jest won over the crowd, even provoking a woman close to me to proclaim, “He’s funny!”

But soon after the humor died down, Bono was back to beseeching the crowd to comprehend the staggering death toll in Africa due to AIDS, and urging us to contact our political representatives.

Bono also demonstrated the importance of appealing to the crowd’s emotions, when he invited a 14-year-old audience member to come up to meet him when her question was selected. To the joyful surprise of the audience, he kissed her hand and hugged her, and then slyly asked her, “You’re ready to sign up to be an absolute pest?” meaning, would she sign her school up for involvement in the ONE campaign? While pretending he was talking to her, he projected his sermon on the importance of Trade for Africa to the rest of the audience, explaining that “Africans are entrepreneurial;” they do not want the fish, but the fishing rod, and the ability to sell their catch themselves.

Bono also cleverly appealed to the crowd’s sense of idealism and national pride, referring to the American dream, the belief that anything is possible here. He called upon the idealistic America, asking, “Do we have the will?” He fed the American ego, proclaiming, “I

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267 Assayas 210
268 Bono “The Future...”
269 Bono “The Future...”
am in love with this country – called America.” Bono allows himself to believe in big ideas, because he has achieved his big ideas in the past, and so infuses big dreams and hopes in people who hear him: “We do not have to stand for this. We can do this. We can save a continent. We can change the world.” Bono drove his point home, by repeating his request for everyone in the ballroom to join the ONE campaign. If I hadn’t already been a member, I would have signed up at that moment, because of Bono’s inspirational power.

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270 Bono “The Future...”
D. The Grassroots Movement

Bono’s final tactic in his arsenal of lobbyist weaponry has been his uncanny ability to foster a following for his cause and create a grassroots movement of nongovernmental lobbyists who have as much passion and determination as he does. In 2003, after the Bush administration’s formation of PEPFAR and the MCC, Bono declared, “These are more than baby steps…but to get them to be strides we need more than applause or hisses from me. We need a movement.”271 By May 2004,272 Bono and some other celebrity activists created the ONE Campaign, which is “the U.S. partner in the Global Call to Action Against Poverty,”273 the umbrella organization responsible for the Make Poverty History Campaign in England and Canada. ONE is a conglomeration of eleven non-profit social action groups, including Bono’s DATA.274

These campaigns were “aimed at educating people about global poverty and registering millions of supporters online.”275 Bono has achieved his movement, which, with two million members in the United States, remains a crowning achievement for him as the model of 21st century humanitarianism. He has diligently promoted the grassroots effort of the campaign, which forms smaller chapters of the ONE organization around the country to instigate public interest in the cause. In December 2002, December, Bono organized the Heart of America bus

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271 Tyrangiel 59
273 “Global Campaign,” ONE Campaign, 2006, 10 May 2006
<http://one.org/GlobalCampaign.html>
274 The other ten groups include “Bread for the World, CARE, International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, Oxfam America, Plan USA, Save the Children US, World Concern, and World Vision” (“About the Campaign”)
275 Tyrangiel 60
tour “to demonstrate that ordinary Americans wanted action on AIDS.” He has also been appealing to America’s youth to start ONE branches in their schools, hoping to sign up the youngest generation of activists in the United States.

The chief goal of ONE is to increase the U.S. budget’s allotment for foreign aid over a 5 year period by an additional 1% to fight extreme poverty. Since the government already gives 1% of its budget, this would be a $25 billion increase, at approximately $5 billion a year. The purpose of the campaign itself is to “rally Americans – ONE by ONE – to fight the emergency of global AIDS and extreme poverty.”

According to www.one.org:

ONE is students and ministers, punk rockers and NASCAR moms, Americans of all beliefs and every walk of life, united as ONE to help make poverty history. ONE believes that allocating an additional ONE percent of the U.S. budget toward providing basic needs like health, education, clean water and food would transform the futures and hopes of an entire generation in the world's poorest countries. ONE also calls for debt cancellation, trade reform and anti–corruption measures in a comprehensive package to help Africa and the poorest nations beat AIDS and extreme poverty.

Bono has been effective in establishing a movement as large as ONE because of his unique charisma and inspirational power. At U2 concerts alone, Bono easily convinces his audiences to join ONE via cell phone in a manner that invokes a spirit of patriotism and practical idealism. In interviews and articles, Bono talks excitedly about the ONE campaign, trying to lure the public into his optimistic vision of the future. Bono uses his inspiring nature to sell the

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276 Traub
277 “About the Campaign”
278 “About the Campaign”
masses on his campaign, instilling hope in his audiences, and through his conviction, making others believe in the possibility of a better world. The general population can see that Bono goes above and beyond the call of duty, since he does not have to do any charity work. His relentless dedication to his causes through his education, training, and commitment reflect his passion for helping others. Offering assistance to Africa is almost his full-time job now, instead of the singing with the band. His commitment to Africa rivals his commitment to music.

Other celebrities are not immune to Bono’s inspiration persona. Actor George Clooney was recruited by Bono to help with the Live 8 concerts and the G8 lobbying. When asked his opinions on Bono, Clooney “spoke of Bono with a respect that bordered on reverence. ‘He calls on everyone to be their best….If you fall short, you feel embarrassed. That’s a unique thing. And we all want to be that person.'”279 Bono impels others to rise to his level of dedication, which is what allows him to create a multi-million person organization. He has enlisted celebrities, such as Clooney, Brad Pitt and Cameron Diaz to be featured in the ONE Campaign advertisements.280

This May marks the second anniversary of the founding of ONE, which now boasts over two million members thanks to Bono’s relentless promoting of the group. Upon signing up, ONE members can send notice to their politicians that they support the movement and are giving permission to the policy makers to give aid to Africa. The movement could go further though, since presently “it’s what economists call a risk-free choice; there’s no fee to join and interest tends to rise and fall based on world events.”281 Bono hopes that the ONE campaign’s membership will continue to multiply, and that the enthusiasm for political change will increase

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279 Traub
280 Traub
281 Tyrangiel 60
with it, but he must continue to drum up the grassroots enthusiasm himself until that happens: “I really believe the movement is our future,” says Bono, “but it’s not here yet.”"
IX. Conclusion

Bono understands the necessity of using both one’s head and one’s heart to succeed in social activism: “…my deepest conviction is that making our intellectual case rigorous and keeping our support broad by a large peaceful grassroots movement [the ONE campaign] is the only way we’ll get this job done.” Additionaly, relying on instinct and passion will help a humanitarian to a certain extent, but strategizing and using all of one’s knowledge will take one’s activism to another level: “It’s not just about heart; it’s about being smart.” In our jaded new-millennium society, Bono has found a way to infiltrate the media, the political spectrum, and the minds of everyday people with his rallying cry for Africa because he instills in people something rare that they crave: hope. Through his positive messages and unfailing faith in his work for the elimination of extreme poverty, Bono offers hope for a better world, and a hope that seems tangible, not preposterous. He has achieved much for the poorest people on the long-tortured continent of Africa; however, without strong support he can only accomplish so much. As he has said before, his legacy will only matter if others join him in his crusade, which is a rousing idea, but begs the question, “Is it possible to reproduce what he does as a humanitarian?”

Indeed it is, if we have the resolve to attempt it, because Bono is the new model for 21st century activism. While not all of us are gifted with celebrity status, complete with red carpets laid out for our arrival and doors opened to VIP offices, we can employ Bono’s other techniques for successfully producing change in the world. Bono’s message is to use everything available to get beyond the traditional forms of humanitarianism that are no longer effective. Do something,

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284 Bono “The Future…”
anything, new, to creatively work for the improvement of human existence, and make others feel
included in your cause in order to encourage its growth.

Following Bono’s example, we can all make use of the connections we have. We must
seek out and utilize them in order to climb the political and social ladders for the causes we
believe in. We may not have celebrity mystique, but we can find new and creative ways to
seduce our audiences. Our approaches do not have to be straight-laced and formal – in fact they
no longer should be – because society has shown, through its welcome reception of Bono and
other creative activists, such as Angelina Jolie, that it wants and needs more stimulating social
activism. Bono calls on us to embrace his enthusiasm, his drive and his passion, and not fear
going involved in our own lives. We can replicate those qualities and inspire others in turn.

Using Bono’s techniques of winning over an audience with a strong argument, everyday people
could have as great an influence as he. Bono asks, “Would we have gotten there without people
taking to the streets, banging the dustbin lids and raising the temperature of the debate? No….
What the protesters are asking is to get in the room.”

Bono may seem to be one-of-a-kind at the moment, but he is urging others to follow in
his footsteps, to not be afraid to be as large as a rock star – because we all have the capacity – we
are just afraid to fail. Perhaps Bono’s greatest strength is that he has let go of fear of failure.
Once he had lost someone precious in his life at such a young age, no other failure could
compare to that loss. We could all take a lesson from him, and, as Alan Rickman advised a
group of acting hopefuls in 2003, “Dare to be terrible!” We must think outside the box, risk
“ending up with a little bit of egg on [your] face” as Bono has said of his charity endeavors.

285 Assayas 92
2006 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4650024.stm>
Writer James Traub spoke of his feeling that Bono at U2 concerts, “was beckoning his fans to join him in the ecstatic place where the music came from. Even his political appeals, which he generally kept in check, felt like an invitation to the transcendent.”287 By releasing our inhibitions which prevent us from wholeheartedly investing in working for social justice, we too can reach this higher plane of existence. As writer Marianne Williamson famously states in her book *Return to Love*, “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.”288 We can continue what Bono has established as a model: we can become experts for a cause, both in mind and in heart, giving all our passion, faith, commitment, and hope for a better world. We can learn the tricks of the system, and how to best reach different types of people, finding some common ground with everyone. We can offer inspiration and passion, so that others want to get involved, and continue the cycle that Bono has originated.

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287 Traub
<http://www.marianne.com>, (her official website)
Appendix A: Miscellaneous Activism

Self Aid:

The Self Aid Concert, another Bob Geldof charity event, came a year after Geldof’s most famous concert, Live Aid. Self Aid, which took place on May 17, 1986, was organized to raise money and find work for Ireland’s vast number of unemployed. Geldof signed up acts, such as his own Boomtown Rats, U2, Van Morrison and Elvis Costello, who were all famous Irish artists. The concert found employment for 1,200 people and inspired donations of over 500,000 British pounds from viewers of the concert telecast.289

Anti-Apartheid:

Bono and U2 were also involved in the anti-apartheid movement. The band performed at an anti-apartheid rally in New York City in 1986, and with other musicians, played the song “Sun City,” from Sun City, a CD supporting the movement. Adam Clayton, bassist for U2, spoke of their performance: “It was more for moral support than anything – turn up and be counted.”290 U2 had also written their own track for the Artists United Against Apartheid album called “Silver and Gold,” which was a haunting outcry against the economic struggle of blacks under apartheid. The profits from Sun City went to the African Fund, which helps refugees and political prisoners.291

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Greenpeace:

Russia:

In 1988, U2 was approached by Greenpeace who wanted to start a branch of their organization in Russia, since Russia had just recently experienced the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Greenpeace had arranged a deal with the Russian state record label to produce 5 million copies of a benefit album, the proceeds of which would all go to Greenpeace. U2 was the first band to donate a track, and Bono gave them a previously unreleased song, which later became one of their most famous for social justice: “Pride (In the Name of Love).” After U2 generously signed on, other bands volunteered, and Greenpeace profited $20 million to found their Russian chapter. The record was also important for the state of Russia because not only did it sell out in less than twenty-four hours, but “it was the first Western rock album ever to be released in the Soviet Union.”

Sellafield:

One of Bono’s and U2’s “most effective pieces of political campaigning,” according to Ian Flooks, a Greenpeace board member for twelve years, was their involvement in the demonstration on the radioactive beach at Sellafield, the site of a nuclear plant. U2 took a stand against Sellafield because “the radioactive discharges from Sellafield wash up on beaches in Ireland.” (U2 Show, p. 284, Ian Flooks) U2 first participated in a protest concert against Sellafield in Manchester, England. Then, the next day traveled on a Greenpeace ship to the

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Sellafield beach, where they donned radiation-resistant suits and posed on the beach for pictures that would make a global statement.293

Featured in U2’s liner notes:

Join Greenpeace:

Greenpeace International

1436 V Street

N.W., Washington, DC 20009

U.S.A.294

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293 Flooks 284
294 U2, liner notes
Appendix B: A Selection of Bono’s Awards and Nominations

- Nobel Peace Prize nomination 2006
- Nobel Peace Prize nomination 2005
- Nobel Peace Prize nomination 2003
- 21 Grammy Awards, including Album of the Year 2006 for *How to Dismantle*, Song of the Year for “Sometimes…”, Best Rock Album and Song, and Best Rock Duo or Group with Vocal.
- 2005 Time Person of the Year (with Bill and Melinda Gates)
- Amnesty International's 2005 'Ambassador of Conscience Award': “The Award citation refers to the fact that for over two decades U2 have 'used their music and their celebrity to highlight and champion countless human rights causes.”
- Q magazine: “…voted Bono the most powerful figure in the global music industry for his ability to win the attention of world leaders.”
- 2003 Meteor Ireland Music Awards’ Humanitarian Award
- 2003 French Chevalier of Legion of Honour (knighthood)
- 1999 MTV Europe Music Awards’ Free Your Mind Award for Jubilee 2000

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295 Roberts 17
296 Roberts 17
298 Bream, Jon, “Grammy Awards; Bono, U2 Make Awards Their Own...” *Star Tribune [Minneapolis]* 9 Feb. 2006, Metro ed.: 4A.
299 Gibbs 44-45
301 Bishop
303 Associated Press
304 “Bono the Activist...”
Appendix C: A Timeline of Bono’s Work for Africa

“Way before Nirvana there was U2…

Her two kids in high school

They tell her that she’s uncool

Cuz she’s still preoccupied

With 1985”

– Bowling For Soup “1985”

1985:

Live Aid:

• The brainchild of Bob Geldof

• A concert to raise money and awareness for Ethiopia (during its famine)

• Raised $200 million for aid for Africa,

• However, it was only a drop in the bucket because single countries owed more in annual debt repayments than that.

• For example, Ethiopia paid $500 million per year in debt
“And what am I to do? Just tell me what I am supposed to say? I can’t change the world. But I can change the world in me. I rejoice!” – U2 “Rejoice”iv

- Launched Bono’s career as U2 frontman
- Launched Bono’s career as an activist

“I want to run/ I want to hide/ I want to tear down the walls that hold me inside”
- U2 “Where the Streets Have No Name”v

1986:

Bono’s trip to Ethiopia with Ali:

- Planted the seed of desire in Bono to help Africa
- Inspired by Live Aid experience
- Volunteered at an orphanage

“Take this heart and make it break” – U2 “Yahweh”vi

- A poor man begged Bono to take his son out of Africa, a memory that has stayed with Bono to this dayvii
“No particular placement/ No particular song/ I’ve been hiding/ What am I hiding from?”

- U2 “Zooropa”

1986-1997: (Non-African projects and causes)

“What do you want?” – U2 “Zooropa”

1997-1998:

Jubilee 2000/Drop the Debt:

- Jamie Drummond called Bono to ask him to assist Jubilee 2000
- Bono agreed to head the American Movement
- Bono then called Eunice Shriver
- Eunice connected him with her son, Bobby Shriver
- Bono studied with Jeffrey Sachs at Harvard, through Bobby
- Bono learned the facts of the cause
- Bono met with opponents

“What do you want?” – U2 “Zooropa”

Summer 1999:

Washington, D.C.:

- Bono met Clinton’s administration, including:
  - Gene Sperling (chief econ. adviser)
- Sheryl Sandberg (chief of staff to Lawrence Summers)
- Lawrence Summers (sec. of treasury under Clinton)
- John Kasich (chairman of House Budget Committee, conservative)

“I see an expression so clear and so true
That it changes the atmosphere when you walk into the room
So I tried to be like you/ Tried to feel it like you do…/ When I look at the world”

– U2 “When I Look at the World”

2000:

Bono won Congress over:

- Jesse Helms (super-conservative)
- Sonny Callahan (Alabama congressman – used his parishes to get to him)
- Late October: Congress promised $435 million for 100% debt relief

“I’m ready for what’s next…I’m ready to say I’m glad to be alive/I’m ready” – U2 “Zoo Station”

2001:

- Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (through the U.N.)
- Bush only gave $200 million from the US, but Congress offered to fund 1/3 of the budget
- Bono formed an alliance with Bill and Melinda Gates
September 11 made Washington reconsider importance of foreign aid

“Coffee is cold but it’ll get you through/ Compromise, that’s nothing new to you”
- U2 “Electrical Storm”

Bono tried to lobby Bush’s administration
  - Found help through Condoleezza Rice, a U2 fan

“I wanna be the song – be the song that you hear in your head”  - U2 “Discotheque”

2002:

- Bono demanded AIDS program from Bush in exchange for Bono’s public support of the MCA
  - Condoleezza Rice promised Bush would pull through
- DATA officially founded
- Paul O’Neill (Treasury Secretary) learned of the importance of trade for Africa, through Bono
- He was fired when tried to push drinking water plan on Bush
- December: Bono organized Heart of America bus tour “to demonstrate that ordinary Americans wanted action on AIDS.”
“When there’s all kinds of chaos/ And everyone is walking lame/

You don’t even blink now do you/? Or even look away?”

- U2 “When I Look at the World”xvii

2003: Pepfar:

- 2003 State of the Union
- President Bush proposed a five-year, $15 billion effort to combat AIDS in 15 hard-hit countries, 12 of them in Africa.
- The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
- “In two years [2003-2005], PEPFAR has paid for antiretroviral drugs for 400,000 Africans with HIV”xviii

“I can’t wait any longer/ I can’t wait till I’m stronger…

I think of you and your holy book/ When the rest of us choke”

- U2 “When I Look at the World”xix

2004:

- Millennium Challenge Account finally signed into law by Bush

“Some days take less…

- Original goal = reach goal of giving away $5 billion in third year alone
“…But most days take more…

- But the MCA gave far less money than promised: less than $5 billion total instead of promised 5 billion in 3rd year!

“…Some days are better than others”
- U2 “Some Days Are Better Than Others”

- Tony Blair formed Commission for Africa
- His adviser on development, “credits Bono with making Africa an urgent issue in Britain, and with helping Blair ‘keep the bar very high’ by insisting on big, breakthrough goals.”
- The Commission presented its findings of strong need for African aid at the G8 Summit.

“Some days it all adds up
And what you’ve got is enough”
- U2 “Some Days…”

- May: ONE campaign launched

“Bill Gates: Some of us were more optimistic about the future than others.
Bono: That’d be me then.”
2005:

Live 8/G8 Summit:

- DATA lobbied the US government to join Tony Blair in demanding $50 billion in aid and 100% debt cancellation from G-8. xxvi
- The date of the G-8 summit fell very close to the 20th anniversary of Live Aid.

“Life should be fragrant/ Rooftop to the basement/ The last of the rock stars” – U2 “Kite” xxvii

- Live 8 became a set of free concerts around the world to raise awareness about the issues of poverty for the G-8 summit, to put pressure on the politicians by demonstrating the public support for aid.
- “An estimated three billion people watched the ten concerts staged in America, Japan, South Africa, Italy, France, UK, Canada, Germany and Russia.” xxviii

“Don’t worry baby/ It’ll be all right/ Uncertainty could be our guiding light”

- U2 “Zooropa” xxix

- “Bono, meanwhile, launched a final burst of back-room politicking, greasing countless surreal encounters with people who had no business being in the same room together [liberals and conservatives, celebrities and politicians].” xxx

- He lobbied G-8 “sherpas” in London:
  - Sherpas were “the G-8’s civil-servant negotiators…who put deals into precise language” xxxi
“Bono hatched a plan to visit… the eight ‘sherpas,’ who map out the summit for their heads of state… Lobbying sherpas is simply not done, but Bono dropped in on their meeting as if he just happened to have been in the neighborhood. Once he was in the door, he started talking for all he was worth. ‘First I tried to get them to laugh,’ he told me. ‘And I did get them to laugh. Then I tried to inspire them. I think I inspired them.’”

- Bono enlisted George Clooney’s help: to promote the debt relief agenda on American TV, to lobby with the president of World Bank at the G8 Summit
- He met with Jacques Chirac and Kofi Annan

“You can dream, so dream out loud/ You know that your time is coming ‘round
So don’t let the bastards grind you down” – U2 “Acrobat”

- Results of the communiqué:
  - “The heads of state had promised that by 2010 they would increase aid to Africa by $25 billion a year, and aid worldwide by $50 billion a year. Schroder… promised… that he would find a way to raise the money. They had extended debt relief to Nigeria, a goal activists had long sought. They had added to President Bush’s commitment on malaria, so that the number of victims should be reduced by 85 percent by 2010. They had vowed to ensure that all children had free access to school by 2015. ‘I know how big this is,’ Bono said.”
• They also cancelled 100% of multilateral debt for the 18 poorest countries
  (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries, or HIPCs) in Africa owed to the IMF, the
  IDA and the African Development Fundxxxv

  “Can’t sing but I’ve got soul” – U2 “Elevation”xxxvi

• “2005 is the year…when Bono charmed and bullied and morally blackmailed the
  leaders of the world’s richest countries into forgiving $40 billion in debt owed by
  the poorest; now those countries can spend the money on health and schools
  rather than interest payments – and have no more excuses for not doing so.”xxxvii

  “How far are you gonna go before you lose your way back home?
  You’ve been tryin’ to throw your arms around the world”
  – U2 “Tryin’ to Throw Your Arms Around the World”xxxviii

• The future: “The next five years will offer Bono and Geldof…and all the other
  activists the laboratory experiment they’ve been seeking. It’s an experiment that
  needs to be tried, even if it seems likely to disappoint the advocates’ hopes. In
  years past, aid has proved extraordinarily effective on issues like disease
  eradication (which makes the malaria initiative, for example, so important)…”xxxix

• But there is hope because the aid will be given to countries that have proven
  themselves to be well-governed, so that the money will go where it is intended.
“Love, lift me up out of these blues/ Won’t you tell me something true?

I believe in you” – U2 “Elevation”xl

2006:

• “Bono’s next target is the American people: he expects to have an army of 10 million activists signed up for the One Campaign by 2008. He believes – he knows – that the American people would demand action on Africa if only someone would tell them the facts.”xli

• Bono is actively campaigning for the One campaign now, as is evident at the speech he made in Washington, D.C., where he encouraged all 3000 people to join ONE and set up grassroots chapters, to spread the movement.

“You’re dangerous/ ’Cos you’re honest…/

Well you tell me things/ I know you’re not supposed to”

– U2 “Who’s Gonna Ride Your Wild Horses”xlii

• National Prayer Breakfast – Feb. 2, Bono asks Bush why the government can’t “tithe” 1% more for foreign aid, as Christians tithe 10% of their budgets to charity; Bono therefore shows he has no fear of Bushxliii

• Bono goes on a speaking tour, making stops such as the one for the ASAE

• $866 million pledged by US government for 2007xliv

• Now Bono and ONE are just pushing for the politicians to make good on their promises
• Bono chairs Product Red, creating products which can be sold by the Red brand - with a portion of the profits going to charity.

“You’ve got the right shoes to get you through the night” – U2 “Zooropa”

• There will be an American Express Red Card, Converse shoes made from African mudcloth, Armani shades, and T-shirts made in the African country of Lesotho.

• Bono is promoting trade for Africa and the free market there by purchasing materials from Africa, plus the profits will go to back there.

• “Product Red will be launched in the UK next month with an Amex credit card that contributes 1 per cent of what is spent up to Pounds 5,000 (Dollars 8,800) and 1.25 per cent on anything more.”

• “The U2 frontman said the money will go to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria….The Global Fund was created to finance a dramatic turnaround in the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. To date, the fund has committed $4.4 billion in 128 countries to fight the diseases.”

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Endnotes for Appendix C

i All information and quotations from “The Statesman” by James Straub, unless otherwise marked.


iii Tyrangiel 55


v U2 “Where the Streets...”


vii Bono “The Future...”


ix U2 “Zooropa”

x U2 “Zooropa”


xiii Gibbs 44-45


xvi Traub

xvii U2 “When I Look...”

xviii Tyrangiel 59

xix U2 “When I Look...”

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U2 “Some Days...”


U2 “Kite”


U2 “Zooropa”

G8 Gleneagles 2005


U2 “Elevation”

U2 “Elevation”


U2 “Zooropa”

Cowing


U2 “Elevation”

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