

Product Endorsement And The Hegemons of Capitalism

I love my India but I love my bank balance more

By [Colin Todhunter](#)

Global Research, November 23, 2012

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#)

The endorsement of products by famous figures is a great way to sell a brand. From David Beckham to Penelope Cruz, the faces of the famous have sold a little of their time and a maybe a bit of their souls to push products for their corporate sponsors. The list of so-called 'role model' footballers and beauty queen movie stars that have provided credibility to products intended for mass consumption is a long one.

Good old 'Becks' with his killer smile and genteel southern English accent. If he is promoting a product then it can't be bad, can it? But surely the public aren't fools. They can see through PR and are aware that certain celebs are prone to endorse any old tat as long as the wad of cash dangled in front of them is large enough. They are aware that the famous faces endorsing some cheap, tacky products would never actually use these items themselves. Maybe.

But the reassuring faces of the famous tend to get associated with particular products and this sticks in the minds of the public. Brand recall is what it's all about. Tying the consumer to the product is what is required and identifying the reliability and apparent trustworthiness of certain famous faces with a particular brand is the order of the day.

Let's face it, for better or worse, large sections of the population look up to celebrities and what they say, do or endorse matters. Hey, these folk have 'made it' in life, so what they say goes. 'Making it' implies that they have usually been paid a shed load of dosh for some activity of dubious worth like acting, kicking a ball or having a damned good PR company behind them in order to convince us all that wearing a dress made of meat is outrageous enough to be admired.

But where to draw the line? Where does morality come into endorsing products of questionable worth that the celebrity would in reality not be seen dead wearing, using or eating? Where to draw the line if a product has been tested on animals, involves sweated labour in the production process or its manufacture damages the environment? Where to draw the line if consumerism is based on planned product obsolescence, conflict and war to grab the finite resources required to make commodities? I guess for some of the famous, the line gets buried so far beneath the flow of cash to obscure its very existence.

Corporations know they are on to a good thing whenever they buy a face to front their brand, as long as the celebrity remains a good boy or girl. It's best for the product manufacturer not to take on a big star who suddenly finds himself in the media for all the wrong reasons as did Bollywood star Salman Kahn a few years ago for being in a vehicle

that mowed over people sleeping at the side of the road in Mumbai. But now all is forgiven. Salman's face is once again to be seen on billboards endorsing to his bank balance and heart's delight.

But that's India for you. Movie stars, no matter what they do, no matter what terrible crimes or misdeeds they might indulge in, are gods. They are worshipped. The likes of Pitt, Jolie or Lopez have nothing on their Indian counterparts, whether in Bollywood, Kollywood or the other various 'woods' in India. And from the late 1980s onwards, corporations have been increasingly turning to the likes of Amitab Bachan or Kareena Kapoor to help sell their stuff. Mister reliability himself Sachin Tendulkar has over the years been a more or less permanent fixture on urban billboards pushing various products, not least a fizzy cola. But even in this cricket-mad nation, Bollywood still manages to trump cricket in terms of popularity and selling power.

The public are no fools and the Indian one is more astute than most. But the manufacturers know that branding matters and the bigger the star, the better the potential market percentage of sales.

Western corporations are seeking to grab an ever-increasing share of the Indian market. And, given the downturn in demand and the over accumulation of capital in their own markets, overseas markets are regarded as must-grabs in order to maintain and boost profits. If imperialism is capitalism's highest form (these days, the Western version's saviour), India represents rich pickings.

The likes of Monsanto and Syngenta are aware of this and Walmart is too. From finance to retail, the Western hawks are descending on India. From bottling plants for soft drinks that contaminate or use up local water supplies to the chemically-poisoned, water-intensive, big-dam food sector and a profit-driven nuclear industry, India is open for business.

But, hey, what's the big deal if a celeb promotes a cola, a facial cream, a food product? It's not like they are selling weapons, poverty or an oil-thirsty war-driven system of consumer capitalism, is it? Well, actually, it is. But as long as a celeb wraps him or herself in the flag of nationalism and chants 'I love my India' every Independence Day, who is to know they are complicit in buying into the bogus merits of international capitalism and at the same time tying the public to it. Because, like it or not, what happens in the backyards of the US corporate sponsored empire in conflict-ridden Libya, Congo or elsewhere, is connected to what appears on the billboards. I love my India... but I love my bank balance even more?

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Colin Todhunter](#), Global Research, 2012

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Colin Todhunter](#)

About the author:

Colin Todhunter is an extensively published independent writer and former social policy researcher. Originally from the UK, he has spent many years in India. His website is www.colintodhunter.com
https://twitter.com/colin_todhunter

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca