No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies Study Guide

No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies by Naomi Klein

Contents

Plot Summary

Consumers have become nothing more than pawns of huge multinational corporations that determine, in large part, what is seen, heard, read and worn. Author Naomi Klein sketches the historical development of this phenomenon, beginning with the shift from selling products manufactured in local factories to the marketing of brands that become identified with culture itself. Indeed, products are made while brands are sold. The shift to brand marketing began with an invasion of cultural space so that billboards, magazines, television and radio commercials, clothing logos, music and cultural events, celebrities, schools and other institutions promoted and idolized the brand in such a way that consumers began to view brands as synonymous with their cultural identities. Corporations became so fixated on their brands that production became secondary. In an effort to maximize funds for brand promotion, therefore, they turned to methods by which they could minimize production costs. This goal was accomplished by moving factories to third-world nations, where labor laws and minimum wages, not to mention benefits packages, were non-existent. The sweatshops of the early twentieth century in America were reborn in urban slums of Asia and Latin America where young women continue to be abused and exploited. The impact on the middle classes in developed nations has been devastating. Workers who could previously plan to be employed for life and enjoy the benefits of a good wage and excellent benefits have found themselves abandoned by the corporations for which their parents worked. Lower paying positions, often on a part-time or temporary basis, are what is left. Retail establishments, employing these part-time and temporary workers, hawk the brands that their employees can hardly afford to purchase. Additional "brandizing" has been accomplished by the advent of "brand-name" stores, such as Nike Town of Disney, all meant to give a brand experience to the children and adults who patronize them. Add to this the theme parks, cruise ships, "branded towns," resorts, and the intrusion of brands into schools and colleges through huge donations in exchange for a privileged position, and one is easily able to see the complete usurpation of cultural space.

Moving forward in a time when de-regulation became public policy, corporations accomplished mergers and buyouts, driving smaller, independent businesses out. These practices have lead to multinational conglomerates which, because of their huge profits, are able to wield inordinate political power through lobbying and campaign contributions, not to mention the threat of "pulling out" if their demands are not met. Specifically within the media, mergers of television networks, news magazines, newspapers and radio stations have resulted in an insidious type of corporate censorship. This has meant that what and how incidents and situations are reported is controlled by executives who protect their lengthy list of subsidiaries and partners. With de-regulation and the ability to control governments of third-world countries, corporations have moved in to privileged positions, not just exploiting the poor, but destroying environments and ecosystems as well.

A backlash has begun that includes "culture jamming," protests, demonstrations, the ejection of corporations from college campuses, and the exposure of corporate "dirty big secrets." As the Internet has developed, so, too have these movements grown, now

able to communicate with one another, to coordinate activities, and to undermine corporations through concerted technological efforts to subvert advertising and hack into corporate websites. Executives are subject to protests, pie-throwing, and other abuses as they make public appearances. Celebrities are refusing to hawk product and appear at events sponsored by certain brandized companies. It is in these movements, small but determined, that Klein sees the potential for consumers to reclaim their independence and freedom of choice, to press for human rights globally, and to take back their cultural space and identities.

Chapters 1-5

Chapters 1-5 Summary and Analysis

It is a myth that corporations are actually growing. For most of the twentieth century, they did, because they enlarged their product lines and actually produced everything they sold. By the 1980s, however, this began to change, as corporations became multi-national and contracted out production to third world countries. The new focus of the corporation itself became one of marketing its brand name. Most American corporations now buy products produced elsewhere and "brand" them for sale. To promote their brands, corporations are "...waging a war on public and individual space - on public institutions such as schools, on youthful identities, on the concept of nationality and on the possibilities for unmarketed space" (p. 5). How this phenomenon came to be and what it means to American cultural groups is the subject of the first five chapters of this work.

As inventions promised to improve consumers' lives, companies began mass advertising campaigns. Brand names were incidental, because the goal was to convince consumers they needed the product. As multiple companies began to produce the same products, however, brand names came to be. Brand names became synonymous with a corporate "consciousness," and ad agencies began to focus on name as much as on product. The hypothesis that the consumer would identify as much with a brand as with a product was correct. By the 1980s, brand names were often worth more than the actual physical assets of a corporation. Accordingly, when a company was sold, a huge mark-up could be expected if the brand name was known and popular. Once this phenomenon was understood, the race was on. Traditional advertising was no longer enough. The "brand" had to infiltrate every corner of life, despite predictions that it would quickly suffer a demise. Indeed, during the recession of the early-1990s consumers became price, rather than brand, conscious, and the result was the ascendancy of discount stores, with generic brand foods, cigarettes, cleaning products and even low-cost computers to compete with IBM. While it appeared that "brand name identity" might be dead, it was soon confirmed that those companies which maintained their brand name advertising campaigns (Nike, Starbucks, McDonald's, etc.) fared well and continued to thrive. Once the recession corrected, therefore, brand name races rebounded. Saturn, The Gap, Reebok, Microsoft, Apple and many others came on the scene, as corporations began to think globally.

Promotion of brand moved well beyond advertising. Sponsorships and strategically placed "shops" served to give the consumer a "brand experience." Brand extensions occurred with increasing frequency, as the name was plastered in hotels, on airlines, on the sides of public transit vehicles, and on the Internet, not to mention the continuation of brand bombardment through all traditional media outlets. The goal was to establish an emotional connection between the consumer and the brand. Thus came the clear differentiation - "Advertising is about hawking product. Branding in its truest and most advanced incarnations, is about corporate transcendence" (p. 21). No longer is the

focus on production, for this is farmed out to contractors all over the world, who meet order deadlines as cheaply as possible. The boardroom is for brand enhancement and mythology creation. With the help of the "new age" advertising gurus, a product is no longer a product. It is a brand with a "way of life, an attitude, a set of values, a look, an idea." Thus Nike is not a shoe or a piece of clothing, but a lifestyle of sports and fitness.

Once brands became the focal point, logos appeared, small at first, like the polo pony or the alligator, and children and teens flocked to these as symbols of "coolness." Gradually, logos became larger and were sported on the outside for all to see. Next came corporate sponsorship of events, always with the logo in prominent positions. Thus, the brand became identified with the experience of an event, whether cultural, educational, musical or athletic. Contests in which public school students helped design an ad campaign for a particular company became commonplace. Also consider Disney's ESPN television network that has expanded to ESPN sports bars and credit cards. The brand expansion has so consumed events that the brand itself has become the event or activity. Brand expansion was further fostered by governments at all levels, who, faced with less money to support public institutions, allowed the formation of partnerships with private corporations. Thus, a school gets a new gymnasium, so long as Coca-Cola is prominently advertised and only Coca-Cola products are sold at events and in machines on the campus. Carried further, corporations now buy their own facilities and host events themselves. The public, meanwhile, is sold the concept that these corporations are merely being generous in serving communities.

Branding the cityscape was originally restricted to the use of billboards. Now, however, entire buildings are purchased or their facades leased, so that corporations can paint scenes with brand names on entire sides of multi-storied edifices. Add to this the advertising on all transportation venues, and you have cities consumed by brand consciousnesses. Financially strapped cities have partnered with corporations in the sponsorship of neighborhood renovations, including the prominent displays of brands throughout. The next level may very well be to turn entire towns into brand entities. The media has not been left out. Because no media venue can exist without advertising dollars, it is easy for corporations to use their power to influence or control what and how news is reported. Also, corporate sponsors of television entertainment shows often insist that their products be used exclusively by cast members. The advent of the Internet has brought an explosion of "ad-free ads." Thus, a teen going to a popular site may read an article in which is embedded key words, linking to an advertiser's site, on which they can then purchase products. Sites target specific groups, and corporations with their own sites attract visitors by offering information and other goodies, such as free music and video game downloads. In television, corporations have moved into sponsoring entire cable channels, such as MTV, where brands are marketed twenty-four hours a day. As the film industry looks for funds to produce, large corporations are willing to "pony up" cash for the agreement to feature their products within the film itself.

Music and sports have been equally branded. Popular recording artists and athletic superheroes now promote brand names of clothing, cosmetics, cars and food. Because this is a win-win situation for the corporation and the star, such activity has come to be known as co-branding. Nike and Hilfiger were the first to conceive of this model of

branding, and it has been so successful that a new race is on to find newer and better partnerships. So pervasive has this become that celebrities themselves are developing their own lines of products; fast food chains now partner with popular cartoon or movie characters, featuring children's meals with branded toys—and corporations sponsor any event possible. Brands, celebrities, and corporations are now so intertwined that there has been ushered in "an era in which people are brands and brands are culture..." (p. 61). Identifying the segments of society which were most profitable became the next level of branding.

During the recession of the early-1990s, those brands that thrived were connected to soft drinks, beer, fast food restaurants and tennis shoes, along with some famous toys. Business leaders began to see a new consumer group on the horizon - the teenager. To market their brands, manufacturers knew they would have to adapt to the teen culture - its music, priorities and tastes. Marketing professionals began concerted research into teen culture, so that designs and commercials would be considered "cool" by this large, spending sub-population. The winners during the '90s were Microsoft, Apple, The Gap, Hilfiger and Nike. Losers included Levi Strauss and IBM. Parents of these teens, moreover, adopted the same preferences, also wanting to remain "cool;" younger children adopted the preferences because they wanted to mimic their older siblings. To maintain the ability to appeal to youth culture, middle-aged corporate executives did not hire younger clones; they hired "change agents," twenty-something professionals who had shed suits and ties and who brought the youth culture into the company. America is experiencing unprecedented growth of young top executives and CEOs, who bring an entirely different leadership style into play. One emerging strategy is to employ "cool hunters," stalkers of youth culture who trail teens, hang out with them, learn their language, and then recommend products, designs and marketing strategies that will work. Much of their work begins in poor black neighborhoods.

Hip-hop culture, which began in the urban ghettos, incorporated Nike and Hilfiger into its social climate, purchasing shoes, hats, pants, shirts, hoodies, etc., or creating knock-offs when the real thing was not affordable. As hip-hop culture moved from the cities to the suburbs, both corporations seized the opportunity to expand their brands throughout American teen culture, becoming "superbrands." This is not new in American history. Cultural trends tend to begin in poor, minority neighborhoods, specifically African-American, as the development of music clearly shows. To determine what will be "trendy," cool hunters look first to black neighborhoods, realizing that within a year or two, what is cool there will be cool everywhere. "Street snitches" abound, spawned by cool hunters. As these employees descend upon urban neighborhoods, they bring with them new designs (shoes, clothing, jewelry, etc.) and pay local teens to wear or use them, thus becoming "walking infomercials" for a brand. Seeing the success of such endeavors, other corporations have enlisted college students to "talk up" their brands on campus, paying them to do so. "...The effectiveness of the cool hunt also set the stage for anti -corporate activity in another way" (p. 81). For there came, slowly at first, an understanding that cultural space had been usurped by large corporations, that "coolness" was dictated by capitalists driven only by greed. Counter cultures developed, abandoning the superbrands and frequenting resale shops for clothing and jewelry from

other eras. Undaunted, companies jumped in and began producing "retro" items, touting the "uncool" of yesteryear as "cool." Young consumers fell for it, and profits continued.

It became apparent, and almost inevitable, that, in order to "brandize" youth, corporations had to get into the schools. After all, elementary and secondary students spend most of their days there. On college campuses, moreover, a potentially more affluent group of consumers needed to be indoctrinated. Companies began once again as generous benefactors. With money tight and the technological revolution in full swing, schools could not resist offers to outfit schools with computer labs, Internet access, cable television hook ups, and other audio-visual equipment. The price could be borne - the right of companies to place their brand names and logos in the school. If local school boards were able to fund technology, they often did so at the expense of other programs, such as music and sports. School-business partnerships could solve this problem, too, so long as the logo was affixed to the new band uniforms or the football jerseys. Scoreboards could sport names and logos as well. Cafeterias were the next to fall. Food courts, much like those found in malls, began to spring up in school cafeterias. Curriculum might as well fall victim too. Companies were quick to invade the classroom by providing units of study and activities in all subject areas, free to teachers, who are always looking for new motivational lessons. Students could thus read about the history of a corporation, write about the brand, participate in contests for a new ad campaign, or design a new tennis shoe. The brand and logo could thus be equated with learning. Providing free book covers and access to cable channels on which their brands would be advertised rounded out the classroom invasion.

College campuses are not immune to branding either. Advertising is prominent on benches, in hallways, libraries and bathrooms. The revenue is good. Food courts, featuring every fast-food restaurant, take up a huge part of student unions, often built with funding from the participating chains. Credit card and cell phone companies compete for exclusive rights to sell on campuses; athletic programs count on revenues from partnerships with the likes of Nike, Adidas, and Pepsico. Market research also occurs in schools, without student awareness. In-school computer networking, provided by such companies as "Zapme!" track all sites visited by students and compile new potential consumer trends among teens and young adults. As well, companies sponsor taste tests, opinion questionnaires, and discussions in order to determine market trends. Contests relative to developing new products or advertising strategies have been inexpensive ways to give marketing departments valuable information about their consumers. One of the most disturbing inroads of corporations into universities has been at the level of research. Partnerships have resulted in enormous funding from companies but always with "strings" attached. If research is conducted on products of funding corporations, the corporation has the right to veto publication of the results. In some instances, research has involved drugs which are shown to be ineffective or dangerous. Corporations also fund "endowed chairs," that is, fund a professorship, in return for specific perks. The corporation name and logo, of course, is predominantly displayed. The entire concept of academic freedom is compromised when these partnerships are allowed. Fortunately, students and professors both have finally come to the realization that their campuses are "for sale," and the backlash has begun .

Students during the 1980s and '90s had causes other than brandizing. Specifically, the focus of campus activism was the oppressed of American society, and the fact that the media and university curricula did not support equality for ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, and AIDS victims. The work of these campus activists came to be known as the ID politics - an American cultural revolution demanding representation and quality for all sub-populations of America, indeed, a demand for the value of diversity. Generation X diversity was grabbed by marketers and the media and exploited, not for philosophy, but for profit. Accordingly, companies, such as Abercrombie and Fitch, Diesel, and the GAP, as well as soft drink corporations, began to run commercials featuring these social and cultural groups and bearing slogans of this new diversity. In truth, identity politics served to feed corporate branding. "Some ex-ID warriors are even getting nostalgic about the good old days, when they were oppressed, yes, but the symbols of their radicalism weren't for sale at Wal-Mart" (p. 114). Unfortunately, the traditional young reformers in college campuses were blind to the larger issues at hand. While their focus was on greater representation of women, minorities, and gays in society, the multi-national corporations were engaged in occupying the cultural space of all groups the world over. The true issue for these young people should not have been representation, but, rather, ownership.

The new emphasis on a "brand of diversity" propelled corporations into global markets. Earlier homogeneous brand identities met with resistance in foreign lands, particularly Asia. Showing White Anglo-Saxon children eating cheerios was not well-received. Once corporations embraced diversity, however, advertising contained people of all colors and cultures and, immediately, acceptance in foreign lands blossomed. The biggest market, indeed, has been the "global teen," through ads and billboards promoting the concept that teens share a unique oneness, even in their diversity. MTV was the clear leader in globalization, but Nike, Diesel, and Coca-Cola, along with a host of food, personal care and candy products, defined the global teen identity as well.

Chapters 6-8

Chapters 6-8 Summary and Analysis

These three chapters focus on the reduction of choice for consumers, who fail to realize the consolidation of the "...entertainment, media, food and retail industries.."(p. 129), because there are so many choices available. Buyouts and mergers, however, coupled with one entity operating under several brand names, actually constrict choice. Further, large corporations have so consumed public space that their power has virtually controlled what we see, read, and purchase. They became powerful through the use of three strategies: "Price wars" have forced the small independent owner out of business. When Wal-Mart buys in bulk, it can beat any competitor's price. "Clustering" is the activity of branded chains to saturate a metropolitan area with strategic placement of stores (e.g., Gap, Starbucks). "Selection versus Choice" is a strategy by which consumers believe they have choices simply because of the wide selection available. Consider the Gap, which owns its name store as well as Old Navy and Banana republic. Selection exists but no choice of retailer. Likewise, Wal-Mart offers selection - one can buy Tide or the Wal-Mart brand, but choice of retailer is gone.

The ultimate goal of brand-run corporations is synergy, that is, the expansion of brand consciousness beyond that of merely a specific retailer and into a lifestyle. The concept was originally conceived by Walt Disney, who moved from cartoons to Mickey Mouse mania, to full length movies, toys, and, ultimately, theme parks. The methods of synergy, however, have become more insidious, pervasive, and sophisticated. Sponsorships, already discussed, is certainly one strategy. Add to this the attempts to build superstores, driving out the competition, and then the branding of hotels, restaurants, villages and entire towns, and the creation of a "branded loop" is achieved. Synergy of this magnitude usually begins with mergers, so that there is enough money (and power) to accomplish the mission. This has been particularly true of the media industry, expanding not simply into cable networks, but into radio, music, book and magazine publishing, and, yes, theme parks. The goals have been, as always, to permeate as much cultural space as possible. Two examples serve to demonstrate the concept. Viacom purchased Blockbuster Video and Paramount Pictures in 1997. In doing so, Viacom began to profit any time a Paramount movie was shown in a theater or, later, on television, and, of course, on video in Blockbuster stores.

Branded superstores began with the first Disney Store in 1984, and others quickly followed. Barnes and Noble has been perhaps the best example of a branded sore, offering its customers a "library-like" ambiance, co-branding with Starbucks to offer a refreshment retreat, thereby expanding the brand experience. These superstores exist because branded companies do not want to share venues with any competition. Their goal is to create a shopping "experience" which continually adds new and innovative "draws," such as coffee bars, rock-climbing walls, and interactive exhibits. The next logical extension will be entire branded towns, such as Celebration, Florida, built by Disney, or entire resort centers - "privatized public utopias" (p. 158). Small retailers

simply cannot compete, and Americans lose choices. The synergy revolution's impact on consumer choice can be understood by the example of Microsoft. Its "bundling" of software and services into its operating system, most notably Internet Explorer, has certainly reduced consumer choice, and as other corporations follow suit, "global powerhouses" control what we see, eat, hear, read and wear. In earlier times, such activities would have been illegal under anti-trust laws, which were largely dismantled under Reagan's administration.

Synergy has moved beyond reduction of consumer choice to outright censorship, not by governments, but, rather, by corporations. When mergers result in mega-corporations, and these mega-corporations control both media and retail industries, there is no longer a truly free, competitive marketplace in which all social, political and cultural voices are heard. Retailers who wish to maintain a family venue often reject music and publications which might be offensive. While this is not a new practice among retailers, the activity has more dire consequences within the venue of media. Here, huge conglomerates may "kill" newsworthy and important stories and investigative reports, if they cast an unfavorable light upon members of that mega-group. In 1998, for example, ABC refused to air a report on bad security at resorts and theme parks. A major culprit was Disney World, ABC's parent company, and, of course, the report was killed. Freedom of the press is clearly at risk as continued consolidation of media giants occurs. As they move into global markets, moreover, there is a tendency not to "offend" governments of these markets with critical news coverage. Profit trumps truth. An additional disturbing feature of growing censorship relates to the co-sponsoring activities of branded corporations with celebrities, athletic teams, and events. Corporations with a specific political leaning, or that wish to remain apolitical, define, for their co-sponsors, what may and may not be said publicly.

As mega-corporations gobble up public space, reduce consumer choice, and, often, practice an insidious form of censorship, there has been a growing public backlash, albeit small. One phenomenon, however, is serving to promote backlash on a much larger scale, and that phenomenon is the loss of American jobs, as corporations take their production activities elsewhere.

Chapters 9-11

Chapters 9-11 Summary and Analysis

New corporate philosophy is this: products are made in factories; brands are what consumers buy. Promoting a brand is, moreover, an expensive business. There is both physical and air space to be purchased if the brand is to thrive. Because a corporation has to allocate its financial resources in a way that returns the greatest profit, it became obvious that production costs had to be reduced. The means to do this were found in third world countries, where cheap labor could be acquired, allowing, in some instances, as much as a four hundred per cent markup on the product once it returned to the developed, consumer-driven country. This markup allowed top executive salaries and amounts needed to expand "brand space" throughout a country. Nike was the first corporation to adopt this strategy, and its model has been emulated by most other major brands. Production is contracted out to factories in third world countries, owned by third parties. As Sara Lee, Vans, Wal-Mart, Champion, Adidas and Levi discovered, it was most profitable to focus only on brand expansion and new product development in the United States, while leaving the actual production to foreign factories and home-based workers. The shut-downs of U.S. factories has continued over the years, often leaving entire towns without their major source of employment and tax bases. To attract these companies, moreover, governments in third world nations have given all sorts of tax breaks, have allowed twelve-sixteen hour work days, thus exploiting women and young girls almost exclusively.

Poor countries, in a further effort to attract foreign investors, have set up factory zones. These zones entice companies like Nike, with no labor regulations and complete support of local military and police to quell any labor unrest or penetration into the physical facilities by anyone other than the workers themselves, who must pass through checkpoints as they arrive and depart. If American management must be sent, entire compounds are built with golf courses, clubs and private schools. The factories themselves are walled off from the general population, to prevent theft and, in the case of Communist countries, to prevent a clear view of capitalism at work. Workers live in slums close by. "The upshot is that entire countries are being turned into industrial slums and low-wage labor ghettos, with no end in sight" (p. 209). The brand corporation back in America neither owns nor manages these sweatshops. Their involvement is contractual and, somehow, this condition is purported to absolve them from responsibility for conditions.

America itself is moving into an impermanence relative to employment within its own borders. We can no longer expect to be employed for the long term, as jobs are outsourced, altered to temporary positions filled by employment agencies, or simply eliminated by down-sizing. Contracted home work is becoming the norm for many companies. Again, the driving force if profit. When factory jobs are outsourced or existing positions are reduced to part-time and temporary, no benefits need be offered, saving the corporation millions and keeping stockholders happy.

While jobs in the service sector continue to be available, they have been reduced to part-time as much as possible. Retail chains, restaurants, and discount superstores rely increasingly on people willing to work less than full-time, in order to avoid benefit requirements. The health care industry increasingly relies on "at-home" contractors for its billing, accounting, and record-keeping. Retailers win on two fronts. Their products are made in third world countries, where workers use paid non-livable wages, and then sold in retail shops in America where workers are paid minimum wage. In both instances, the work force is viewed as transient. At Borders Books or Starbucks, for example, young people work until they can "find something better." In third world "labor warehouses," women work until they become pregnant or are too old to withstand the conditions. There will always be a new "crop" of young people to replace those who leave, and there is no pressure on corporations to change. They do not see the jobs they create as permanent, adult, long-term positions. Branded corporations are thus free to rake in huge profits and expand their market presence with new stores and more advertising. Attempts of employees to unionize are hampered by high turnover and the threat to close the facility.

One of the largest employers in America is Manpower Temporary Services, providing companies a huge pool of temporary workers who, by the nature of their status, receive no benefits or employment security. Canada and Western Europe are following suit, and Manpower is moving into their markets as well. The benefits to corporations are so great, that they now use temp agencies as their human resources department for entire divisions, including clerical, accounting, manufacturing, and computer services.

many believed that the solution to the declining job market would be the tech explosions. Surely Microsoft, Silicon Valley and others would provide good-paying permanent positions for a new, skilled workforce. At first, this was true; however, as these executives began to discover, much of the work could be contracted out to "techies" who could work at home, and telecommuting was born. As well, the use of temporary employees in this industry has ballooned. Microsoft provides a prime example of employment practices in the tech industry. In the 1990s, it trimmed its permanent workforce by using temp agencies to fill a large percentage of its employment needs. Many of these temps remained on the job for a year or more. When a group of them took Microsoft to court, they won. Microsoft's answer was to contract a payroll agency to pay its temps, so they legally became employees of someone else. As well, all temps who remain on the job for a year must take a mandatory thirty-one day leave without pay in order to cement their temporary status. Further divestment has included contracting many other departments, to include clerical, facilities management, sales and printing functions. An additional contractor manages all of the other contractors.

Freelancers make up an additional source of workers for Microsoft and others. Free agents work from home in almost every area of the service industry, jumping from one contract to the next. Rob Lieber, freelance writer, summed it all up: "The time of considering yourself as an 'employee' has passed. Now it's time to start thinking of yourself as a service provider, hiring out your skills and services to the highest, or most interesting bidder" (p. 253). Freelancing can be a gold mine and certainly offers freedom

for many, but it requires dedication, motivation and a strong internal work ethic, not to mention superior skill levels. Most people who need income do not possess all of these characteristics and thus must settle for less exciting positions with smaller income.

Even corporate executives are for sale, and they move among top positions among corporations frequently. Sign-on bonuses are paid, and the "house cleaning" begins. Once accomplished, and having down-sized the company (thus increasing profits), they move on to the next bidder, often with a "golden handshake" as they leave. The net result is huge CEO compensation, happy stockholders, and workers who are wither terminated, laid off, or forced to return as temps.

The new economy has come to mean a small core group of permanent managers and executives, earning large salaries and participating in stock options programs and an enormous group of part-time, temporary, or free agent individuals who provide the actual work that sustains the executive salaries and benefits. The net effect has been the increasing disparity between the few at the top and the masses at the bottom, accompanied by a disappearing middle class. It is not surprising, therefore, that a backlash would begin, an "anti-corporate militancy," in which people feel betrayed by corporations that used to provide job security. They are joined by environmentalists who see corporate wealth and power as the single danger to the planet, lobbying for de-regulation of environmental controls.

Workers, skilled and unskilled, no longer embrace loyalty to their employers. Most understand that there is no loyalty to them either, and this divestment has led to a new workplace "culture" and anti-corporate politics and activities. Websites now focus on the horrible practices of corporations in third-world countries; hackers consistently disrupt and poison corporate technology; billboards are slashed or covered with anti-corporate defacement; temporary, part-time and terminated employees steal whatever they can. Even more important, however, is the backlash that is just beginning among the youth of America. This group has been "sold" on brand consumerism, and yet, as it reaches employment age, the same corporations they have supported these many years will not be willing to employ them nor to be responsible citizens of the planet.

Chapters 12-18

Chapters 12-18 Summary and Analysis

The final book, comprised of six chapters, summarizes the rise of activist strategies to battle the growing power, abuse and environmental destruction of multinational corporations. While these began as individual incidents, aimed at specific corporations, the growing use of media and the Internet has allowed these activist groups to coalesce, coordinate, and publicize abuses and protest activities throughout the world. Multinationals have been forced to pursue some reforms but have not abandoned their clear goals of huge profit and cultural monopolization.

"Culture jamming" is a recently devised activity of guerrilla artists, in which billboard ads are altered or destroyed and replaced with political messages against the branded corporations, or society in general. The broader goal is to take back public space, refusing to allow corporations to access the public's senses without the public's right to speak back. Culture jammers attempt to re-focus the ad message to the "truth" behind the company or its products. Thus "Joe Camel" is changed to a dying figure, hooked up to IV machines. Jammers are composed of a variety of sub-groups, but they share one common thread. Corporate America has run amuck and has no true concern for human rights, or dignity, no social conscience, and no commitment to preservation of the planet. Billboard jamming has now expanded to including hacking corporate websites, pirating radio stations and using Internet sites. Community activists and unions rent billboards and taxi roof signs for their own anti-corporate ads; techies use current software programs to replicate corporate logos with degrading print copy. Billboards can now be altered using the same colors and materials, sporting a corporate logo and an anti-corporate message. Foundations sponsor televisions ads exposing tactics and practices of major corporations. Even celebrities are involved with public service announcements of their own. The concept is simple: use the same tactics of the marketers to criticize corporate image and brand. Culture jamming has evolved from assault on the messages of branded companies to a fierce campaign against their perceived rights to capture and monopolize every "nook and cranny of our mental and physical environments" (p. 291). Consider the newest advertising venues - small billboards, in plastic frames, positioned in elevators and, of course, bathrooms, where the most personal of space is now usurped. The cause is now more about disappearing personal space and the lack of consumer choice than it is about finding humorous and satirical ways to subvert a brand's message. Adbuster activities now focus on the practice of advertising itself, rather than just upon the content or techniques of advertisers.

The "Reclaim the Streets" (RTF) movement began in England, in the 1990s, as an effort to return urban life to those who actually lived there. Faced with new police power to break up and arrest groups of rockers, new age activists, eco-warriors, and the homeless, a new coalition was formed among these groups to fight back. It began to hijack streets, intersections and portions of highways, taking the space, setting up

jungle gyms, sandboxes, small wading pools, furniture and passing out free food and drink, with loud-speaker music for dancing. This reclaiming of cultural space, was an attempt to "fill it with an alternative vision of what society might look like in the absence of commercial control" (p. 313). Variations on this theme spilled out to other countries, including the Critical Mass bike riders in America. RTF groups state that they are focused upon the reclamation of communal human space in all cities of the world. Reclamation of their own space, however, was not enough when worse corporate abuses began to be exposed.

Environmentalists and human rights activists coalesced to publicize the reprehensible activities of multinational corporations and corrupt governments. They were assisted as investigative reporters began to expose atrocities in third-world countries, including such bad actors as Nike, Reebok, Disney, Mattel, and the discount superstores that sell their products. Horrible scenes of young children working in sweatshops conditions, women workers forced to feed their infants sugar water because milk was not affordable, and raids on secret sweatshops in the United States were all featured. Americans paused to absorb this reality, and the anti-corporate attacks escalated, morphing into anti-brand attacks. These attacks moved beyond clothing to coffee, chemically-altered agricultural products, and oil companies, all of which violated human rights and the environment. Not only this, but they also associated themselves with and financially supported oppressive, violent dictatorships, such as those of Myanmar, Colombia, Nigeria, occupied Tibet and China. While this abuse had been occurring for years, the spotlight finally shone brightly with international media coverage throughout the world. Added to this has been the disconnect between corporations and former American employees, and the resultant willingness on the part of these employees to publicly shame the perpetrators of human and environmental abuse. These groups have stepped in to do what governments will not do. Multinational corporations have tremendous political power, and most of them have more money that the majority of governments in the world. Money buys politicians either directly or indirectly, and thus dictates governmental economic policies. Whether this means lobbyists in Washington, D.C. or bribes to third-world dictators, corporations have found the way to operate with impunity, while continuing to push their "brand images" to those able to buy.

For years, corporations have been able to separate their consumers in developed worlds from their producers in the third world, somehow believing that the two would never really know of each other. Enter the high tech world of real-time news. The leaks began by investigative reporters and their cameramen, although it has been difficult to actually penetrate the physical barriers surrounding the factory zones, secured by police and the military. Anti-corporate activists developed a unique and creative technique. They brought workers from Nike, Disney, and Gap factories to the United States and took them to the respective retailers to see for themselves the prices of the items they made. With cameras rolling, they all registered shock at the prices, considering how little they were paid to produce the items. In reverse, activists purchased items at retailers and took them to the factory workers to show them the amount of markup. The group perhaps most responsible for exposure of corporate practices overseas is the National Labor Committee. It has attacked logos specifically by spotlighting the sweatshops and providing facts and figures. During television news specials, these

16

facts and figures shock Americans. For example, Disney's CEO earned $9,783 an hour in 1998; a worker in Haiti making Disney clothing items made twenty-eight cents an hour. NLC sponsored protest events as well, some during the holiday season, in hopes of awakening America's conscience.

Three protest victories, against Nike, Shell Oil, and McDonald's, were highly publicized during the 1990s. Nike was hit hard when schools and colleges refused to allow sponsorships. Shell Oil faced embarrassment over its activities in Nigeria and its support of the corrupt dictatorship there. McDonald's attempted to sue members of Greenpeace for libel and, in the course of the almost year-long trial, faced international publicity regarding its practices of human, animal and environmental abuses. Corporations have learned some lessons from the cases of Nike, Shell and McDonald's. First, they are not now prone to attempt to quiet criticism through the courts, because their practices are then exposed, even if they win. They also face suits by a variety of groups, on behalf of people who suffer from their practices. Corporations have also learned that the Internet is a powerful tool to be used against them in disseminating abuses, even in tiny remote parts of the world. This tool gives formerly disjointed protesters and activists the ability to coordinate, publicize, and cooperate in astounding ways.

All organized groups within a community are consumers: schools, churches, unions, police forces, and local and state governments. Many purchase in bulk, invest in the stock market through pension funds and a place to park institutional assets. In fact, bulk purchases, such as school uniforms, athletic equipment, internet providers and food suppliers, are big profit items for corporations, who compete for this business. These institutions should do their homework before getting cozy with corporations that violate human rights in the name of profit. People within these groups can become powerful forces in the war against brandizing and unethical practices. There have been a number of student campaigns resulting in major shifts in corporate policies and activities. When Pepsico was given a privileged position on university campuses worldwide, a few students in Canada discovered that Pepsi had bottling plants in Myanmar and, as well, sold its product throughout the former Burma, controlled by an illegal military dictatorship. Through the Internet, word was passed to campuses throughout the world, and massive protests were begun. Not wishing to jeopardize its position on campuses, Pepsico divested itself completely from any activity in Myanmar. Similar protests against Coca-Cola and its presence in Nigeria have managed to change some policies; objections to campus partnerships with McDonald's have reduced its presence on campuses. As students become consistently more aware of the partnerships between their schools and a host of corporations, bankers, benefactors, they are engaging in considerable research and publicizing the moral temperament of these people and their organizations.

Local and state governments have become involved in putting pressure on the sweatshop issue too. These groups purchase in bulk and allow corporations into their public schools; they contract with oil companies for gasoline for all of their automobiles; they contract for telecommunications and internet services. Many have passed resolutions banning any purchases or contracts with companies involved in sweatshop

production, much of it focused on Myanmar. Feeling the pressure, Ericsson, Kodak, HP, Philips, Apple and Texaco have pulled out of Myanmar. Some describe this phenomenon as "local foreign policy," and corporations have determined to fight back by insisting that, indeed, these actions constitute foreign policy, an activity reserved only for the federal government. The matter may well end up at the Supreme Court. If corporations win, moreover, many believe that the plaintiffs (branded corporations) could be determined to be more powerful than the federal government, able to protect their own rights more than those of individuals

The focus on individual corporate abuses and power quests expose a growing global trend toward the removal of barriers and conditions to "trade, investment and outsourcing" (p. 421). While targeted corporations have developed voluntary codes of conduct, in an effort to appease the growing anger and publicity, there are, still, no provisions for independent monitoring of their activities and factory conditions. Despite these codes of conduct, little has changed for the typical third world factory worker. Young girls are still harassed by supervisors, wages remain low, working conditions remain harsh, and change is slow to come. What exists is a new form of colonialism, including the contractors and the multinational corporations, which, together, seal the fate of girls and young women, who will continue to work in the factories, producing goods that consumers in developed nations buy at ridiculous prices. At the same time, anti-corporate activists throughout the world are coming together. They have the tools to unite themselves in the twenty-first century and, in that unification may, in fact, manage to achieve the retreat of brand power and the reclamation of both cultural space and human rights.

Characters

Naomi Klein

Author Naomi Klein is a native-born Canadian, who, upon graduation from college, took up residence in the old garment district of Toronto, living in a renovated factory, now converted into retail establishments and apartments. As she looked about her, she saw a history of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, who buzzed through the streets years ago, going to factory jobs and creating clothing for the people of Canada. Where had it all gone? Through research and investigation, Klein began a sojourn into the world of corporate growth and development in the late twentieth century. Eventually, the investigation took her to Indonesia, the Philippines, and South America where she heard from young women, in slave-like conditions, who produced the products that once kept factories alive in the United States and Canada. The only "work" being done in developed countries, Klein determined, as the design of new products and the marketing of brands, which involved gobbling up as much "cultural space" as possible. Klein's work culminated in the book, No Logo, a condemnation of multinational corporate philosophy and policy, and a call upon citizens of developed countries to join in the growing anti-corporate awareness and activism. Naomi Klein continues to be a journalist, contributing to The Toronto Globe and Mail, The Village Voice, and The Baffler.

Hip Hop Generation

Born in the 1990s, this cultural group ushered in an era of focus on the music, dress, and style of teens in disadvantaged neighborhoods in American metropolitan areas. The group is primarily composed of African-American youth, but its cultural impact on suburban youth grew exponentially as the 1990s progressed, so that emulation of "hip hop" mores became pervasive throughout teen groups throughout America. As the hip hop generation adopted new styles of dress, so did suburban styles of dress follow. American clothing corporations realized that, in order to market to a huge consuming market of teens, they needed only to appeal to the hip-hoppers. Cultural "stalkers" were thus employed to infiltrate disadvantaged neighborhoods, providing new clothing and shoes and gaining an understanding of what this group found to be "cool." It was then merely a matter of producing the items (in third-world nations, at ridiculously low cost) and assigning high price tags when the produced goods arrived back in the states. In the poor urban centers, welfare parents do without necessities in order to purchase the coveted clothing and shoes, and teens themselves engage in violent acts to obtain them. In the suburbs, teens are much more able to afford the items, and they purchase in huge quantities. Nike is perhaps the most famous perpetrator of such marketing techniques, although Adidas and Hilfiger are close behind. Recently, there have been strong efforts to educate hip-hoppers relative to the production and marketing of these corporation, with small successes.

Phil Knight

Phil Knight is the CEO of Nike, a multinational corporation which markets athletic clothing and shoes to teens and adults throughout the world. With headquarters in Portland, Oregon, Knight oversees the design of new products and the marketing of the Nike brand, so that it carries cultural significance. The actual production of Nike gear is contracted out to factories in third-world nations, where children and young women work long hours in sweatshop conditions. This results in the greatest profits for Nike executives and dividends for shareholders. Marketing Nike has involved using celebrities, sponsoring concerts and other events, providing "donations" of new gymnasiums and athletic gear to educational institutions, in return for logo prominence, and, of course, all facets of media and traditional advertising. In developed nations, Knight is focused solely on marketing the brand. Formerly the hero of graduate schools of business, the backlash against him, and corporations which have followed his lead, has begun. In the late 1990s, her returned to his alma mater to give a speech and was welcomed by demonstrators protesting his "sweatshop" policies and his abandonment of the American worker.Theodore Levitt

Theodore Levitt

Levitt is a Harvard Business School professor who first coined the term "globalization" in reference to huge, multinational American corporations. He is considered to be the "father" of global marketing, and insisted that strong multinational corporations would move throughout the world with the same policies, production strategies, and marketing tactics. Following his advice and direction, corporations at first committed some cultural "faux pas," and were eventually forced to alter their marketing so as not to be viewed as cultural "imperialists," promoting Western culture.

Rodriguez de Gerada

Considered the "father of culture jamming, de Gerada began by defacing billboards in poor neighborhoods, specifically those advertising cigarettes and alcohol. In "hijacking" the billboards, he changes the original message, to show the true impact of the product advertised. Culture jamming has risen significantly in popularity, particularly with the advent of the ability to use new technologies to copy the color, design and visuals of the original advertisers.

Mike Gitelson

Mike Gitelson is a social worker in the Bronx, who, by educating young black teens about the abuses and markups of Nike, was able to spark a protest at the Nike Town in New York City, in which black teens participated in large numbers.

Charles Kernaghan

The Director of the National Labor Committee, Charles Kernaghan has been significantly responsible for the exposure of third-world sweatshops. His efforts have resulted in several television feature stores on the stories on the companies that utilize sweatshops in apparel production.

Helen Steel and Dave Morris

Steel and Morris were two Greenpeace members who were sued by McDonald's because of a pamphlet publicizing its abuses and exploitations. While McDonald's won the lawsuit, based upon one charge that could not be proved, the exposure resulted in widespread criticism and boycott of McDonald's in Europe.

Bob Ortega

Author of In Sam We Trust, Ortega chronicled Wal-Mart's growth, its takeover of towns, and its dismal employment practices.

Lora Jo Foo

President of the organization, Sweatshop Watch, Lora Foo presents seminars in which participants' clothing labels are cut off and placed on a world map based upon where they are actually produced. Foo then describes the specific conditions of production of each piece of clothing, based upon the brand name.

Objects/Places

Greenpeace

A late twentieth century international organization, originally formed to expose environmental issues and the corporations which harm the environment through their practices, also involved in protests, demonstrations, and some acts of violence.

Rosario

A town in the Philippines and home to the Cavite Export Processing Zone, where workers in sweatshops produce product for Nike, the Gap, IBM, and Old Navy.

Wieden and Kennedy Advertising Agency

Advertising agency for many of the top U.S. corporations which base their marketing on brand recognition and "experience."

Voluntary Codes of Conduct

Documents developed by major multinational corporations intended to demonstrate that they are becoming more humane and improving work conditions for those employed in production factories in third-world nations. The codes do not provide for independent monitoring.

Culture Jamming

The ace of changing or defacing advertising of branded corporations, by altering billboards or by designing anti-corporate advertising on the Internet.

Liberty Orchard

Name of a candy company in Cashmere, Washington, and the only major employer of the town. Held the town for ransom when it announced that it would leave if the town were not turned into a tourist destination publicizing the Liberty Orchard brand candy.

Ogani

region in Nigeria destroyed by Shell Oil Company, as it drilled for oil.

Sweatshop

Term to describe the factories in third-world nations which contract production for multinational corporations such as Nike and the Gap.

The Sponsored Life

Book by Leslie Savan about corporate intrusion into culture through sponsorships.

Non-Disparagement Clause

A clause written into contracts between corporations and universities that there will be no criticism of the corporation by any university staff or faculty, in exchange for large donations.

Corporate Clustering

The act of placing a retail outlet in numerous strategic locations throughout a metropolitan area, in an attempt to become the sole "brand" (e.g. Starbucks).

Manpower Temp Agency

An international temporary employment agency, fast becoming the largest private employer in America.

Themes

Loss of Cultural Space

The marketing and advertisement environment in which huge conglomerates spend huge sums to spread brand awareness, identity, and loyalty, has resulted in the usurpation of society's "cultural space." Since the early days of advertising products, first in newspapers, then on radio and television, the evolution into marketing brands, rather than products, has resulted in an assault on our personal and public space, to include billboards on roads and highways and in elevators and restrooms. In addition to this, it has come to include the branding of entire buildings, towns, and resorts; logos and brand names plastered about in schools and on university campuses; the sponsorship of activities and events; logos on clothing, hats and shoes; and brand "hawking" on the part of celebrities and teen heroes. Additional levels of space "branding" include curricula in public schools, internet sites, and partnerships with fast-food chains, as well as theme parks and brand retail establishments. Megabrands, such as Nike, Gap, Disney, and Microsoft are now so much a part of our daily experience that they have become embedded in our very consciousness as an integral part of our societal nature. Until major backlash, which has only begun on a small scale, forces branded corporations to retreat, the trend of capturing cultural space will continue, using any technology and strategy available to invade our environments and thus our identities. Corporations "transcend their connection to earthbound products, then, with marketing elevated as the pinnacle of their businesses, they..alter marketing's social status as a commercial interruption and replace it with seamless integration..." into culture (p. 35).

Decline of Consumer Choice

With such a vast array of products available to today's consumer, it is difficult ot comprehend the notion that consumer choices have actually declined. Consider, however, the facts. As corporations grow, they buy others, merge, and/or continue to gobble up other companies, much like Pac-Man races around a game board. One may shop at Old Navy, Banana Republic, or the Gap, but one is really lining the pockets of Gap, Inc., which owns all three. One may go to a movie, watch a cable show, tune into the evening news, read a magazine, or purchase toys from a Disney Store, but, in fact, each activity supports one huge corporation. It is not a major leap, them, to see that what the consumer sees, hears, reads, and wears is consistently being reduced to what a huge conglomerate decides is "correct" or appropriate." The ultimate byproduct of the "merger/buyout/force out" trend is, ultimately, corporate censorship, leaving the consumer less able to exercise critical free choice and less able to access objective information. If this trend continues unchecked, Americans may find themselves completely under the control of a few multinational corporations which control most aspects of our existence.

Corporate Power and Abuse

Money results in power, and power often results in abuse. In America, this concept is not new. At the turn of the century, monopolies and trusts controlled government at all levels and abused that power by dictating all laws and policies relative to conducting business. Sweatshops abounded, in which poor children and adults labored in horrible conditions for non-livable wages. Anti-trust and labor laws steadily corrected these abuses and served to reduce corporate power. Labor unions worked to steadily gain better wages and benefits for their members, and a middle class grew. The 1990s, however, brought major changes to the status quo. As de-regulation occurred, companies began to merge, as well as to drive smaller competitors out of the marketplace. The independent shopkeeper could not longer compete with the Wal-Mart at the edge of town, and clustered chains, set up in huge shopping malls, attracted consumers to a new type of shopping environment. The trend continued until huge multinational corporations were able to peddle their products worldwide, resulting in astounding profits, exorbitant executive salaries and bonuses, and happy stockholders.

As these multinationals grew, production became secondary to brand marketing, and shifting production to cheaper parts of the world became the fiscally prudent thing to do. Contracting with production factories in third world nations meant the ability to ignore U.S. labor law and the expensive demands of unions. It meant dictating to corrupt governments the conditions under which they would remain in these countries. The early twentieth century sweatshops are thus alive again, this time in places hungry for jobs, no matter what conditions and wages might be. The environmental toll in these countries is great as well. Consider Shell Oil, which pollutes and destroys entire ecosystems, as it drills for oil, giving nothing in return to the people whose livelihoods have been lost. Back in the U.S., these mega-corporations contribute to political campaigns and fund expensive lobbying efforts to reduce regulations on their practices and to allow mergers and buyouts which diminish freedom of choice of American citizens. All of this is accomplished, moreover, as former American jobs are transported out of the country, leaving American workers with temporary or part-time employment, no benefits, and, most important, no employment security. It is time for the federal government to reclaim the power to regulate and, indeed, punish corporate abuse within America and to take steps toward human rights throughout the world.

Style

Perspective

Naomi Klein is not a newcomer to the civil disobedience which she lauds and promotes throughout No Logo. Born to parents who fled to Canada in order to avoid the Vietnam draft, she was raised in a familial environment of individual freedom and the necessity of exposing that which is believed to be morally wrong. Her target is not the U.S. government or that of any other developed nation, however; it is the rise of multinational corporations which control or wrongly influence governments, abuse people, society, and environments, and promote insidious forms of censorship, all in the name of profit. In a work filled with extensive research and detail, Klein takes shots at numerous multinational corporations including Nike, Gap, Disney, Wal-Mart, Shell Oil, and McDonald's. Klein exposes their "dirty laundry" of human abuse, environmental destruction, exploitation of the young and poor in America and in third world nations alike, promoting brand identification and loyalty, and regularly suppressing any opposition. Her solution is a "call to arms" against these multinationals by way of boycott, protest, and demonstration on a global scale, until they are forced to "clean up their acts," become socially and environmentally responsible, and return human dignity and choice back to people in all countries. While Klein's perspective is often academic and factual, there can be no doubt where her sympathies and politics lie, as she exposes the dangers of the continuing trend toward "branding" the world.

Tone

Klein's tone is both combative and redemptive. From her loft apartment in Toronto, she looks out upon the old garment district of the city, once teeming with immigrants who worked daily, in the production of clothing that was then sold by small independent retailers. Like most former industrial cities, the factories are closed and have been converted to lofts, restaurants, and clubs, remaking the areas into chic neighborhoods where affluent citizens can live, shop and play. So goes progress, she understands, but the abandonment of production in developed nations, especially in the United States, has had dangerous and far-reaching consequences for all of modern society. Add to this the "brandizing" of our cultural space, insidious censorship, and the abuse of third-world citizens and the environment, and Klein becomes certainly combative in her denunciation of multinational corporate practices. In the entire work, indeed, Klein finds nothing responsible or ethical about these executives and their marketers, whose decisions have resulted in global injury, and falls just short of demanding that we take action. What Klein is beginning to see, however, is the beginning of a backlash which, although somewhat sporadic, has the potential to grow exponentially, as the anti-corporate activists are able to coordinate, communicate, and encourage each other through the use of new technology. In this, she hopes, the global community will come together and demand action from their governments, their institutions, and their fellow consumers.

Structure

No Logo is divided into four distinct books. "No Space" gives the historical perspective of the development of huge corporations and the great decline of production in developed nations, threatening the middle class worker. As well, it describes the continual invasion of our cultural space by companies which concentrate on marketing their brands and infusing those brands and logos into our very socio-cultural existence. "No Choice" discusses the continual decline of consumer choice, as mergers and buyouts, along with the growth of superstores like Wal-Mart and the clustering of chain stores, drive out independent retailers and profits from several different brands and companies under one umbrella. Thus, Viacom owns Paramount Pictures and Blockbuster Video, Virgin has airlines, record companies and banks, and Disney owns its movies, theme parks, a cruise line, an island, a town and has merged with ABC.

The mergers of television networks with newspapers and magazines, as well as banks, has decreased freedom of choice of which the consumer is often not even aware. "No Jobs" discusses the exportation of jobs oversees, to gain cheap labor and reduction in taxes, and the advent of the part-time and temporary non-employee status of a huge number of Americans. "No Logo" is a call to arms. It outlines the current activist movements of backlash against multinational corporations and promotes the idea that, given contemporary technological advances, activist groups are now able to coordinate and expand their activities. Throughout all of this structure, there is also a chronological undertone in an attempt to describe how we got to this point, outlining both deregulation of governments, ascending power of corporations because of their wealth and ability to blackmail, the systematic unraveling of production in developed nations, and the growth of "brandizing" entire cultural groups.

Quotes

The market has seized upon muticulturalism and gender-bending in the same ways that it has seized upon youth culture in general - not just as a market niche but as a source of new carnivalesque imagery. As Robert Goldman and Stephen Papson note, 'White bread culture will simply no longer do.' The $200 billion culture industry - now America's biggest export - needs an every-changing, uninterrupted supply of street styles, edgy music videos and rainbows of colors. And the radical critics of the media clamoring to be 'represented' in the early nineties virtually handed over their colorful identities to the brandmasters to be shrink-wrapped. (p. 115)

"...Today, a clear pattern is emerging: as more and more companies seek to be the one overarching brand under which we consume, make art, even build our homes, the entire concept of public space is being redefined. And within these real and virtual branded edifices, options for unbranded alternatives, for open debate, criticism and uncensored art - for real choice - are facing new an ominous restrictions. (pp. 130-31)

Quite simply, every company with a powerful brand is attempting to develop a relationship with consumers that resonates so completely with their sense of self that they will aspire, or at least consent, to be serfs under these feudal brandlords. This explains why marketing talk of pitch and product has been usurped so completely by the more intimate discourse of 'meaning' and 'relationship building' - brand-based companies are no longer interested in a consumer fling. They want to move in together. (. p.149)

...The next phase after retail-as-tourist-destination has been the creation of branded holidays: never mind Disney World, Disney has launched the Disney Magic cruise ship and amount its destinations is Disney's privately owned island in the Bahamas, Castaway Cay. Nike has its own sports-themes cruise ship in the works and Roots Canada, shortly after introducing a homewear line and opening a flagship store in Manhattan, launched the Roots Lodge, a branded hotel in British Columbia. (pp. 152-3)

So here we are, for better or for worse, having meaningful committed relationships with our toothpaste and co-dependencies on our conditioner. We have almost two centuries' worth of brand-name history under our collective belt, coalescing to create a sort of global pop-cultural Morse code. But there is just one catch: while we may all have the code implanted in our brains, we're not really allowed to use it. In the name of protecting the brand from dilution, artists and activists who try to engage with the brand as equal partner in their 'relationships' are routinely dragged into court for violating trademark, copyright, libel, or 'brand disparagement' laws - easily abused statutes that form an airtight protective seal around the brand, allowing it to brand us, but prohibiting us from so much as scuffing it. (p. 176)

Mounting disillusionment in the face of the forces described her in "no Space" and "no Choice" is not, however, sufficiently widespread or deep to spark a genuine backlash against the power of the brands. In all likelihood, resentment at invasive advertising, the

corporate takeover of public space, and monopolistic business practices would have festered as little more than run-of-the-mill cynicism and many of the same companies gobbling up both space and choice not decided simultaneously to bankroll their innovative branding forays by slashing jobs. It is this essential economic, human concern that has been a major force in contributing to the rise in anticorporate activism: No Good Jobs. (pp. 190-91)

Corporations are indeed 'growing' the economy, but they are doing it, as we have seen, through layoffs, mergers, consolidation and out-sourcing - in other words, through job debasement and job loss. And as the economy grows, the percentge of people directly employed by the world's largest corporations is actually decreasing. Transnational corporations, which control more than 33 per cent of the world's productive assets, account for only 5 per cent of the world's direct employment. (p. 261)

...An unmistakable message now emanates from our free markets: good jobs are bad for business, bad for 'the economy,' and should be avoided at all cost. Although this equation has undeniably reaped record profit in the short term, it may well prove to be a strategic miscalculation on the part of our captains of industry. By discarding their self-identification as job creators, companies leave themselves open to a kind of backlash that can come only from a population that knows that the smooth sailing of the economy is of little demonstrable benefit to them. (p. 262)

This slow divestment by corporate culture has implications that reach far beyond the psychology of the individual: a population of skilled workers who don't see themselves as corporate lifers could lead to a renaissance in creativity and a revitalization of civic life, two very hopeful prospects. On thing is certain: it is already leading to a new kind of anticorporate politics. (p. 271)

Perhaps the gravest miscalculation on the part of both markets and media is the insistence on seeing culture jamming solely as harmless satire, a game that exists in isolation from a genuine political movement of ideology. Certainly for some jammers, parody is perceived, in rather grandiose fashion, as a powerful end in itself. But for many more, as we will see in the next chapters, it is simply a new tool for packaging anticorporate salvos, one that is more effective than most at breaking through the media barrage. And as we will also see, adbusters are currently at work on many different fronts: the people scaling billboards are frequently the same ones who are organizing against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, staging protests on the streets of Geneva against the World Trade Organization and occupying banks to protest against the profits they are making from student debts. Adbusting is not an end in itself. It is simply a tool - one among many - that is being used, loaned and borrowed in a much broader political movement against the branded life. (p. 309)

Branding, as we have seen, has taken a fairly straightforward relationship between buyer and seller and - through the quest to turn brands into media providers, arts producers, town squares and social philosophers - transformed it into something much more invasive and profound. For the past decade, multinationals like Nike, Microsoft,

and Starbucks have sought to become the chief communicators of all that is good and cherished in our culture: art, sports, community, connection, equality. (p. 335)

With such corporate carelessness at play, no public-relations budget has proved rich enough to clearly dissociate the brand from the factory. And the wider the disparity between the image and the reality, the harder the company seems to get his. Family-oriented brands like Disney, Wal-Mart and Kathie Lee Gifford have been forced to confront the conditions under which real families produced their wares. And when the McLibel crew released many of their most gruesome tidbits about McDonald's-tortured chickens, and hamburgers infested with E. coli bacteria, they displayed these facts over an image of the manic plastic face of Ronald McDonald. The logo adopted by the McLibel defendants was a cigar-chomping fat cat hiding behind a clown mask because, as the McLibelers put it, 'Children love a secret, and Ronald's is especially disgusting.' (pp. 358-9)

...One can't help thinking that one of the main reasons black urban youth can get out of the ghetto only by rapping or shooting hoops is that Nike and the other multinationals are reinforcing stereotypical image of black youth and simultaneously taking all the jobs away. As U.S. Congressman Bernie Sanders and Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur stated in a letter to the company, Nike has play a pivotal part in the industrial exodus from urban centers. 'Nike has led the way in abandoning the manufacturing workers of the United States and their families...Apparently, Nike believes that workers in the United States are good enough to purchase your shoe products, but are no longer worthy enough to manufacture them.' (p. 371)

By attempting to enclose our shared culture in sanitized and controlled brand cocoons, these corporations have themselves created the surge of opposition described in this book. By thirstily absorbing social critiques and political movements as sources of brand 'meaning,' they have radicalized that opposition still further. By abandoning their traditional role as direct, secure employers to pursue their branding dreams, they have lost the loyalty that once protected them from citizen rage. And by pounding the message of self-sufficiency into a generation of workers, they have inadvertently empowered their critics to express that rage without fear. (p. 442)

As connections have formed across national lines, a different agenda has taken hold, one tht embraces globalization but seeks to wrest it from the grasp of the multinationals. Ethical shareholders, culture jammers, street reclaimers, McUnion organizers, human-rights hacktivists, school-logo fighters, and Internet corporate watchdogs are at the early stages of demanding a citizen-centered alternative to the international rule of the brands. That demand, still sometimes in some areas of the world whispered for fear of a jinx, is to build a resistance - both high-tech and grassroots, both focused and fragmented - that is as global and as capable of coordinated action, as the multinational corporations it seeks to subvert. (pp. 445-46)

Topics for Discussion

It has been nine years since No Logo was written. Discuss the status of branded companies during this time. Are brands any less in control of our space? Why or why not?

Do you believe teens and young adults remain brand conscious today? If so, what might change this? If not, why?

Given that we, in America, seem not to produce "things" anymore, how will the American middle class sustain itself?

What impact might nationalized health insurance have on employment practices on the part of large corporations, such as Microsoft and Wal-Mart?

What should the U.S. government do to regulate corporate practices of invading cultural space, and is this a proper function of government? Why or why not?

Define censorship. What practices in developed nations foster corporate censorship? Can this be stopped? How?

What impact might the election of Barack Obama have on the powers of multinational corporations based in the U.S.?