



# Brandalism, Environmentalism & Culture Jamming: Textual Analysis

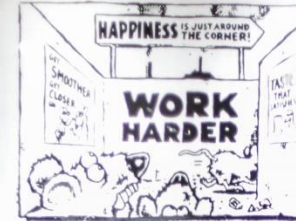
Ricerca Sociale e Consumi,  
March 7<sup>th</sup> 2017

Università di Bergamo

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@eleftheriafm

# Outline

- Theory:
  - new politics of consumption
  - discursive political consumerism
  - culture jamming
- Case in point:
  - Brandalism project during COP21
- Method:
  - Textual Analysis
- Case in point:
  - environmental discourses of Brandalism
- Exercises:
  - reading advertisements
  - creating subvertisements



PSK Crew, 2010



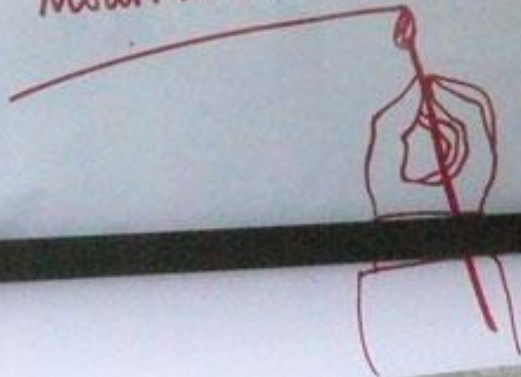


London, February 2017



JCDecaux

je consomme  
tu consommes  
il. elle consomme  
nous consommons  
vous consommez  
ils consomment  
et la terre  
mourra en hurlant



# CULTURE JAMMING AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

# A NEW POLITICS OF CONSUMPTION (SCHOR, 1999)

1. A right to a decent standard of living
2. Quality of life rather than quantity of stuff
3. Ecologically sustainable consumption
4. Democratize consumption practices
5. A politics of retailing and the “cultural environment”
6. Expose commodity “fetishism”
7. A consumer movement and governmental policy



# PLENTITUDE (SCHOR 2010)

1. new allocation of time
2. DIY and self-provision
3. “true materialism” as an environmentally aware approach to consumption
4. the restoration of value in interpersonal and community exchanges.

“Consumption becomes political when consumers assess products through the eyes of citizens.”

(Peretti with Micheletti, 2004: 127)





# Jonah Peretti and the Nike iD Sweatshop E-mail Controversy



From: "Jonah H. Peretti" <peretti@media.mit.edu>  
To: "Personalize, NIKE iD" <nikeid\_personalize@nike.com>  
Subject: RE: Your NIKE iD order o16468000

Greetings,

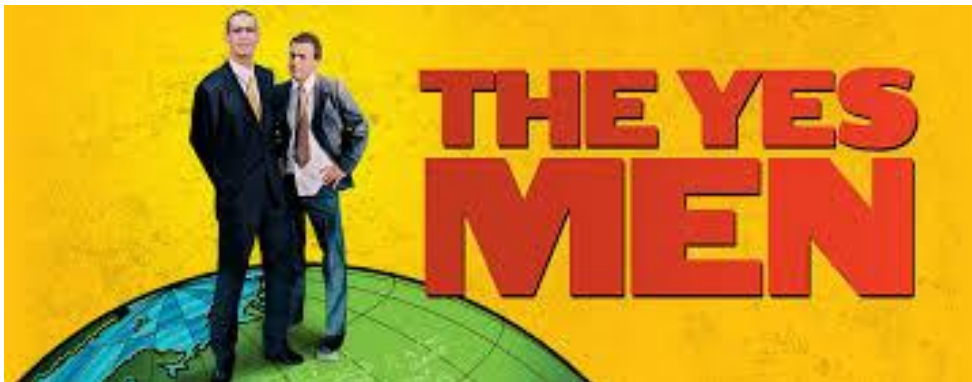
My order was canceled but my personal NIKE iD does not violate any of the criteria outlined in your message. The Personal iD on my custom ZOOM XC USA running shoes was the word "sweatshop." Sweatshop is not: 1) another's party's trademark, 2) the name of an athlete, 3) blank, or 4) profanity. I choose the iD because I wanted to remember the toil and labor of the children that made my shoes. Could you please ship them to me immediately.

Thanks and Happy New Year,  
Jonah Peretti

# DISCURSIVE POLITICAL CONSUMERISM (STOLLE & MICHELETTI, 2013)



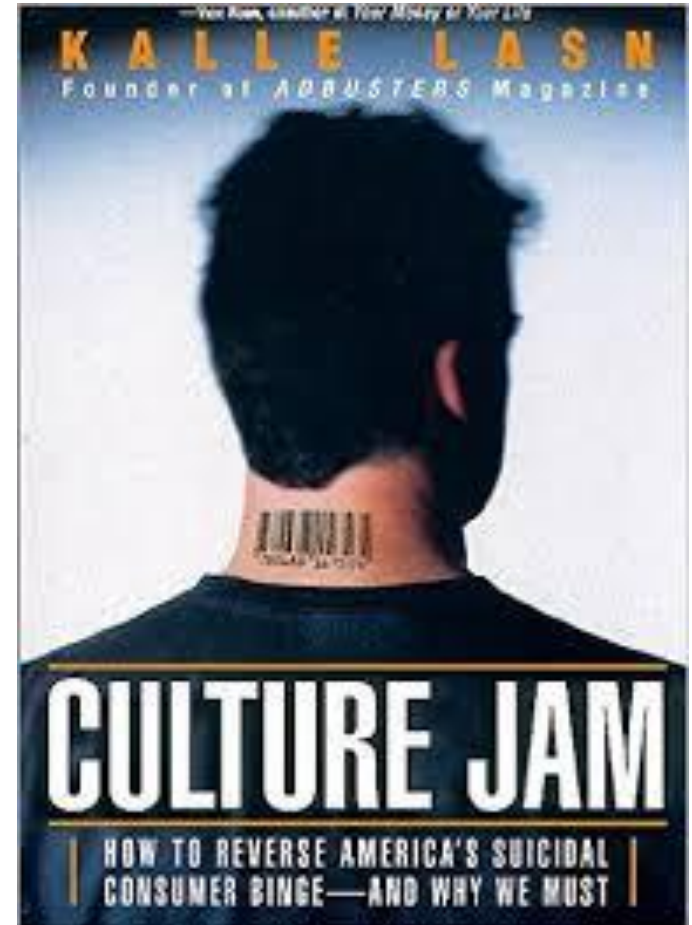
# AKA Culture Jamming...

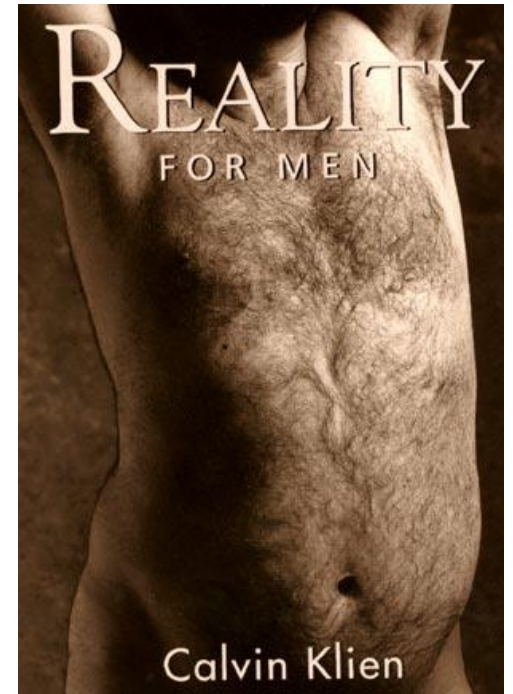
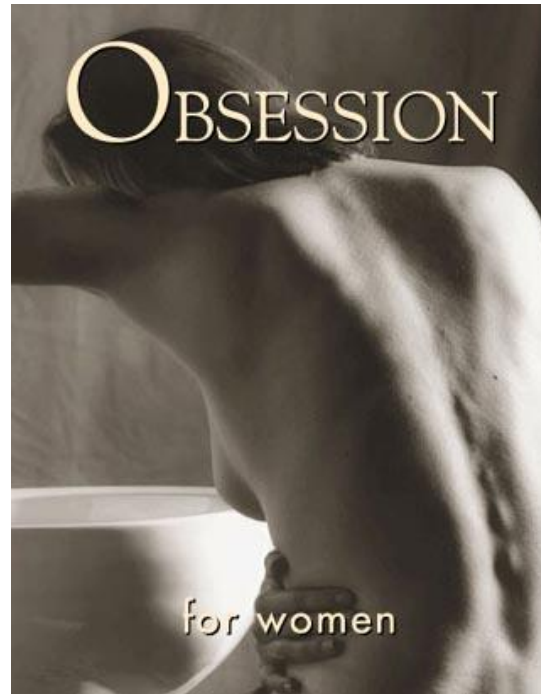
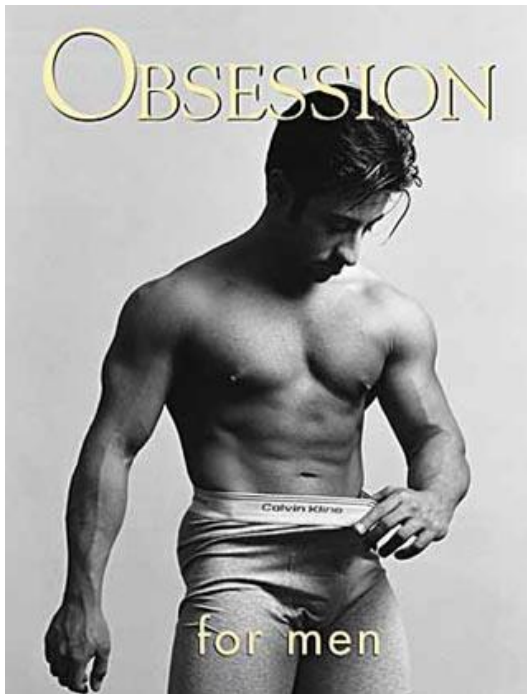


Based in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Adbusters is a not-for-profit magazine fighting back against the hostile takeover of our psychological, physical and cultural environments by commercial forces.



“Culture jamming  
reflects a theory of  
culture as a site for  
political action, seeing  
consumer culture as a  
viable path to social  
change”  
(Carducci, 2006: 130)





# CONCEPTUALISING CULTURE JAMMING

- *Why?* Concerned with media concentration, identity politics, consumerism and environmental degradation (Lasn, 2000; Klein, 2005; Kaylor, 2013)
- *Now?* Legacy of Situationist International (Klein, 2005; Kuehn, 2015) and critique of society of spectacle (Debord, 1967)
- *Who?* Anyone from citizens to governments, from NGOs to social movements (Cammaerts, 2007; Davis et al, 2016)
- *How?* Tactics include sabotage, appropriation, intensification (Harold, 2009) and tactical use of (digital) media (Harrebye, 2015)



# CREATIVE TACTICS (HAROLD 2009)

- Sabotage
- Intensification or augmentation
- Appropriation



# SABOTAGE: BARBIE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION



# INTENSIFICATION OR AUGMENTATION





# APPROPRIATION



**Join The Earth's Resistance**

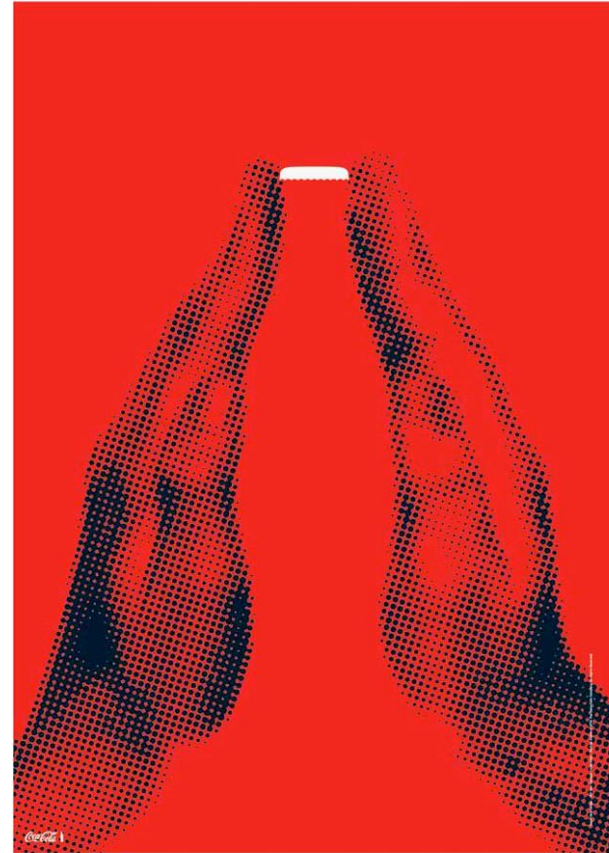
[revbilly.com](http://revbilly.com)

# CO-OPTATION OF CULTURE JAMMING?

“at first, the system tries merely to *assimilate* resistance by appropriating its symbols, evacuating their ‘revolutionary’ content and then selling them back to the masses as commodities. It thereby seeks to neutralise the counterculture by piling on substitute gratifications so high that people ignore the revolutionary kernel of these new ideas.”

(Heath and Potter, 2005: 35, *The Rebel Sell: Why the Culture Can't be Jammed*)

# CO-OPTATION OF CULTURE JAMMING?



<http://www.minuteworks.co.uk/2015/03/30/is-subvertising-sustainable/>

# CO-OPTATION OF CULTURE JAMMING?

Discursive political consumerism “is dependent on the logic of capitalism to publicize its cause” (Stolle and Micheletti, 2015: 203)





# 17 TRENDS

THAT REVEAL THE FUTURE



## VIGILANTE CONSUMER



The consumer manipulates marketers and the marketplace through pressure protest and politics.

# LOGIC OF APPROPRIATION

- Between incorporation and expropriation
- Ephemeral intervention in public spaces
- Material and symbolic disruption of the [corporate] spectacle
- Tactical use of [mainstream + digital] media
- Systemic critique as link between creative and environmental activism

# BETWEEN INCORPORATION & EXPROPRIATION



A poster for the Unhate Foundation's 'Unemployable of the Year' contest. It features five diverse young adults in business attire standing against a grey background. The text 'UNEMPLOYABLE OF THE YEAR' is prominently displayed in large white letters. Below it, 'CALL FOR ENTRIES AT UNHATEFOUNDATION.ORG' is written. A green banner on the right says 'UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON.' and below it, smaller text reads: '5 OF THE NEARLY 100 MILLION PEOPLE UNDER 30 YEARS OF AGE IN SEARCH OF A JOB. Tell us about your non-work experience. Enter the Unemployable of the Year contest with your project or vision for the one that inspires you. 100 of them will be supported.' The hashtag #UNHATE is at the bottom right. Small text at the bottom left identifies the models: JACQUELINE J. ROSE, CHRISTOPHER PETER BELL, JAMES J. ROSE, JESSICA ROSE, and JAMES J. ROSE.

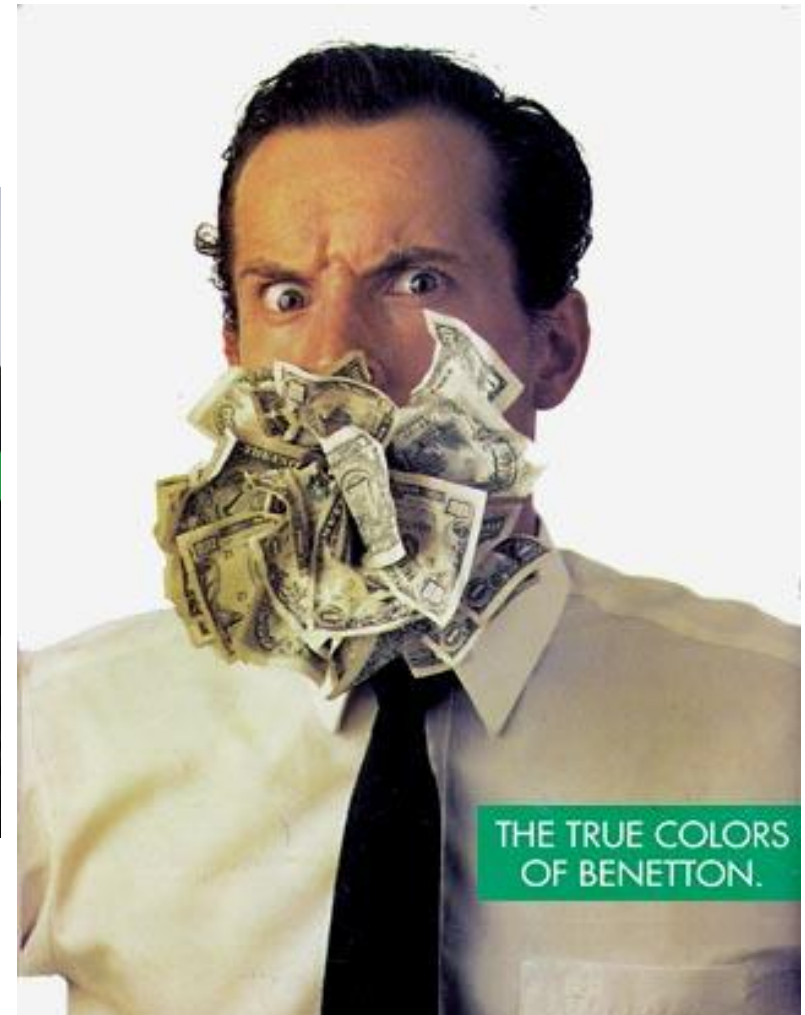
**UNEMPLOYABLE OF THE YEAR**

CALL FOR ENTRIES AT  
UNHATEFOUNDATION.ORG

UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON.

5 OF THE NEARLY 100 MILLION PEOPLE UNDER 30 YEARS OF AGE IN SEARCH OF A JOB. Tell us about your non-work experience. Enter the Unemployable of the Year contest with your project or vision for the one that inspires you. 100 of them will be supported.

#UNHATE



A Benetton advertisement featuring a man in a light-colored shirt and dark tie. His face is partially obscured by a large, crumpled mass of US dollar bills, which he is holding up to his mouth. The background is a plain, light color. A green banner at the bottom right contains the text 'THE TRUE COLORS OF BENETTON.'

THE TRUE COLORS OF BENETTON.



# CULTURE JAMMING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



Davis et al, 2016



Kaylor, 2013



Brendalism®







Brandalism 2015 - COP21 Paris Climate Talks



Brandalism®



# BRANDALISM COP21 PRESS RELEASE

"We are taking their spaces back because we want to challenge the role advertising plays in promoting unsustainable consumerism. Because the advertising industry force feeds our desires for products created from fossil fuels, they are intimately connected to causing climate change."

\*Joe Elan\* 29/11/2015



**Brandalism®**






# TACTICAL USE OF (DIGITAL) MEDIA

- Digital media can enhance culture jamming (Carducci, 2006; Stolle and Micheletti, 2015):
  - possibility of archiving work which would otherwise be removed and destroyed
  - disseminating these messages in a theoretically limitless audience
  - organizing transnationally
  - mobilizing public interest
- The Brandalism Project:
  - active Twitter account
  - website that includes information on past projects, gallery of artwork, information on artists, extensive news coverage, social change themes
  - Press coverage highlights tension in terms of 'authenticity'


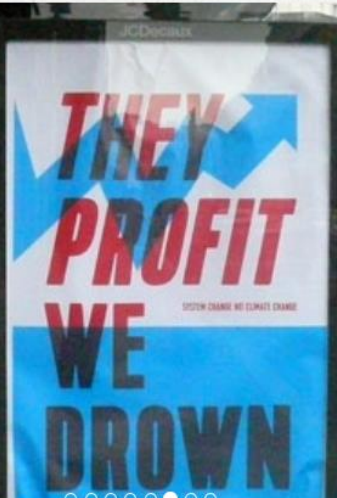
# TACTICAL USE OF (DIGITAL) MEDIA

← www.brandalism.org.uk Search ☆ 📁 📧 📄 🏠 🗨️ 🇬🇧 📱 📺



[Home](#) [Gallery](#) [Artists](#) [About](#) - [Themes](#) - [Projects](#) - [Press](#) [Resources](#) [🐦](#) [f](#)

## Brandalism returns with 600 ad takeovers for the UN climate talks in Paris.



Brandalism 2015 - COP21 Paris Climate Talks

Brandalism returns with 600 ad takeovers ahead of the UN climate talks in Paris. Check out our video.



# TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

"...is a way for researchers to gather information about *how other human beings make sense of the world*. It is a methodology - *a data-gathering process* – for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live." (McKee, 2003: 1)

# TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- 'educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text' (McKee, 2003)
- *Texts*: films, TV programmes, magazines, advertisements, clothes, graffiti etc.
- *Strengths*: we can encounter the limitations and advantages of our own sense-making practices
- *Weaknesses*: applicability to specific case analysed, difficult to generalise

# TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF CULTURE JAMS

- *Data source*: [brandalism.org.uk/gallery](http://brandalism.org.uk/gallery)
- *Population*: 122 original artworks produced by 82 artists in 19 countries
- *Sample*: purposive sample of 12 artworks
- *Themes* emerging reflectively between sampling, analysis and interpretation:
  - corporate greed
  - inadequate politicians
  - consumer saturation
  - Earth in mourning
  - commitment to the environment

JCDecaux

# TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE?

OF COURSE NOT.  
WE'RE AN AIRLINE.

We're sponsoring the  
UN climate conference so we  
look like we're part of the  
solution and to make sure  
our profits aren't affected.

Economic growth is far more important than  
saving the planet. So we'll keep on bribing  
politicians and emitting greenhouse gases.

Just keep it to yourself.

**AIRFRANCE**  
PART OF THE PROBLEM

#RedLines

# AGAINST CORPORATE GREED



# INADEQUATE POLITICIANS



by Eubé // KC

[http://www.brandalism.org.uk/artists/eube?photo\\_id=5659a0e1df6abc000e00004a](http://www.brandalism.org.uk/artists/eube?photo_id=5659a0e1df6abc000e00004a)



# CONSUMER SATURATION

# EARTH IN MOURNING



by Paul Insect [http://www.brandalism.org.uk/artists/paul-ins?photo\\_id=565b6085ed0e8c000600002b](http://www.brandalism.org.uk/artists/paul-ins?photo_id=565b6085ed0e8c000600002b)



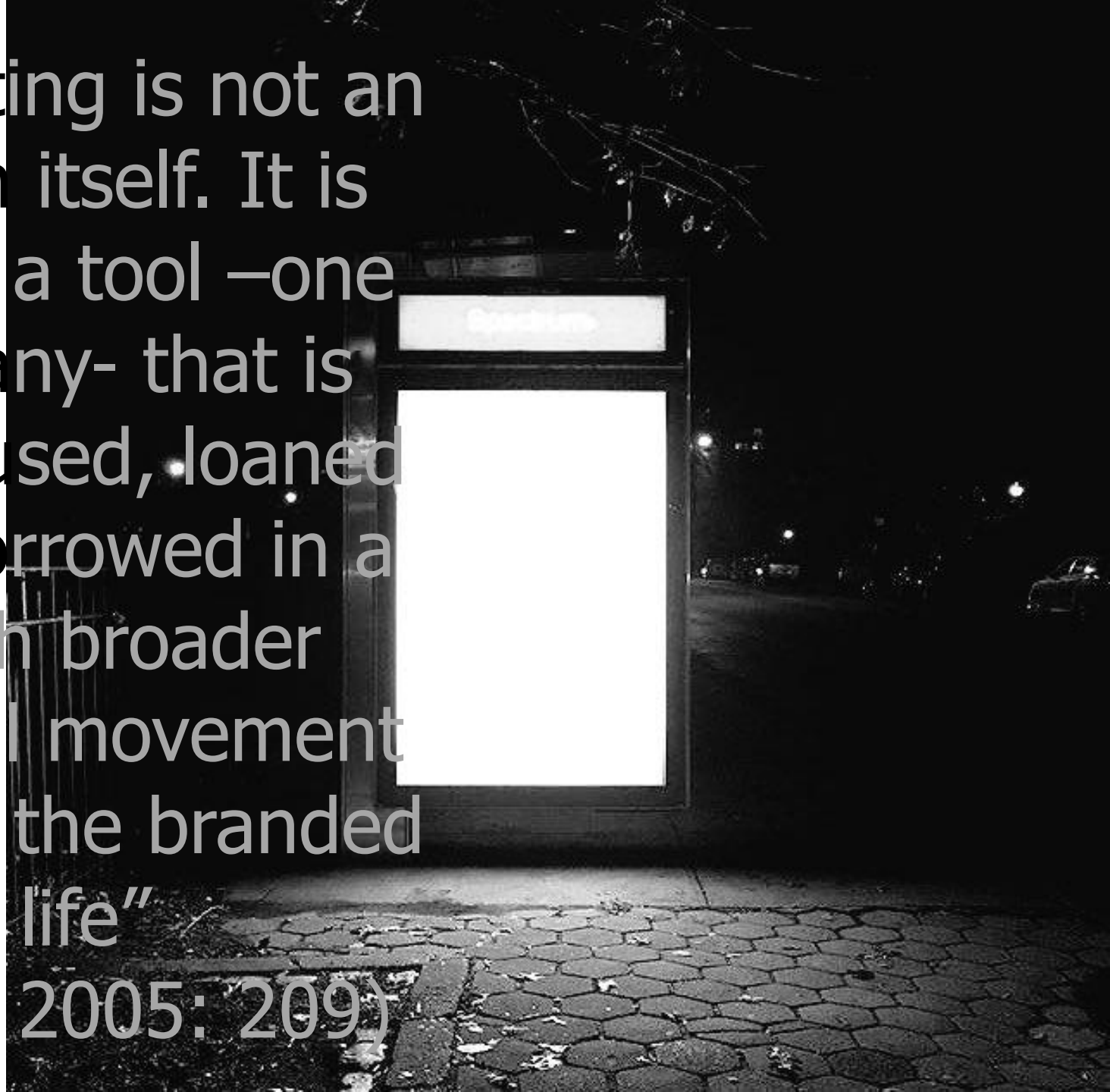
# COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT





“Adbusting is not an end in itself. It is simply a tool –one of many- that is being used, loaned and borrowed in a much broader political movement against the branded life”

(Klein, 2005: 209)



Advertising is treated as a target both  
as *practice*, as well as *space*.

- articulates critique of neoliberal capitalism in terms of its symbolic and environmental consequences
- challenges dominance of advertising in public spaces.

Questions?

# READING TEXTS: ADVERTISEMENTS

- Identify 4-5 key elements of their meaning:
  - What ideas about the brand are they attempting to communicate?
  - To whom? What kind of audience are they addressing?
  - How are they trying to connect audiences to the brand?



*Nespresso. What else?\**



**NESPRESSO**

Café com corpo e alma.



[www.nespresso.com](http://www.nespresso.com) \*Que mais poderia ser?







*"Fusilli with  
Valentina Sauce"*

Ingredients: fusilli,  
fresh sauce and Valentina.  
And of course, Birra Moretti.

---

**Birra Moretti.**  
*The taste of sincerity.*



☐ wrinkled?

☐ wonderful?

Will society ever accept 'old' can be beautiful? Join the beauty debate.

[campaignforrealbeauty.co.uk](http://campaignforrealbeauty.co.uk)  | *Dove*



# APPROPRIATING TEXTS: CREATING SUBVERTISEMENTS!



1999



<http://www.hatads.org.uk/catalogue/record/68201636-e08f-4d5e-a2e3-0d60d62958a9>

1960



Heinz make something new for you . . . they make it Italian . . . they put BEEF into it.

## **HEINZ<sup>57</sup> Spaghetti Bolognese**

And if you haven't already sampled this delicious new dish, here is your chance to do so! One meaty mouthful and you'll imagine you're in Italy, enjoying Italy's national dish. Succulent spaghetti in a tasty meat sauce. Prime beef, bacon, Italian cheese, sun-ripe tomatoes, and other good things give this sauce its meaty goodness and sunny flavour.





The best coffee  
For the best **YOU.**

*East of Inspiration.*





# READING NATIVE ADVERTISEMENTS: BEYOND PRINT/TEXT FORM



# BUZZFEED

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LOL

wtf

omg

cute



## Slipping Through The Nyet?

By Focusing On The Ambassador Controversy, Trump's Critics Are Letting The Bigger Russia Story Slide [ru](#)

 BuzzFeed News



**Find Awesome Gifts For Friends And Family With Our "Gift Guide" Newsletter!**

 BuzzFeed Promotions

**BuzzFeed**NEWS

11 hours ago

The FBI director reportedly asked the Department of Justice to make clear that Obama never directed a wiretap of Trump's phones. >

North Korea on Monday launched several missiles, which fell into the Sea of Japan but could be capable of reaching the United States. >

# SAN PELLEGRINO

 Pinterest • il catalogo mondiale delle idee

Registrati

Accedi

## San Pellegrino



### The Cult Bottle

152 Pin



### The Legend

82 Pin



### S.Pellegrino Young C...

12 Pin



### Itineraries of Taste

58 Pin



### Fine Dining Lovers

163 Pin



### The World's 50 Best R...



### Living Design



### Special Editions



### Salone del Mobile



### Our World

Questions?