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Your Call Is Very Important to Us

Advertising and the Corporate Theft of Personhood

By Richard Hardack

In a unique exploration of how corporations take on rights and identities of people, Hardack reveals corporate America's quest to dominate every aspect of our culture. Making a seemingly complex topic accessible, the book recontextualizes the inordinate influence of corporations as a legal, political, psychological, and sociological phenomenon.

Not only do corporations govern our economy, but corporate personas define our identities and shape our relationships with people and the world around us. In a timely and wide-ranging study, Hardack recontextualizes the inordinate influence of corporations and corporate advertising as a legal, political, psychological, and sociological phenomenon. He connects a surprising array of topics, including advertising, pop culture, representations of nature, science fiction, legal history, the history of colonization and slavery, and the longing to transcend individuality, to show how the principles of corporate personhood—the idea that corporation are people—allow corporations to impersonate and displace actual people. Throughout, Hardack also provides a novel reassessment of the pernicious role and effect of advertising in our daily lives.

The book makes accessible a complex topic and integrates many pressing issues in the U.S., including the privatization of the public sphere; the escalating polarization of wealth and rights; unchecked corporate power, influence and monopoly; and the descent of political debate and policy into the language of advertising, branding, and entertainment. Hardack treats the assumptions that foster corporate personhood as both cause and effect, driver and symptom, of a series of transformations in U.S. society. Awakened to this foundational way corporations infiltrate most human activities and interactions, readers can better understand and safeguard themselves against systemic changes to the American economy, culture, and politics.

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About the Author

Richard Hardack, who holds a Ph.D. and JD from UC Berkeley, has applied his love of history, law, and literature to projects such as his book, *Not Altogether Human: Pantheism and the Dark Nature of the American Renaissance*; NASA's History of the Juno Mission to Jupiter; and the courses he's taught at Berkeley and Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges.

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