Anti-Branding in the American Society and Fiction

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Abstract

Corporatization and branding of the world seem to be a relatively new phenomenon for many people. However, they have been present for quite some time. The only difference could be found in their immensity and manifestations during the modern and postmodern times. Branding could take on a lot of different forms, like place branding, identity branding, cultural branding, nation branding, and so on. Whatever form it may assume, it has always tended to attain strongholds around us. Modern branding started in the United States somewhere around the 1920s, rose to its peak in the 1950s and then slowly met its decline till the end of the 1990s after which its focus was shifted on to the Third World. This article aims at tracing out the various socio-cultural or political factors or elements that contributed towards the Anti-branding Activism aroused among the target victims of the brands themselves particularly in the United States of America. The anti-branding and anti-corporate rage has been displayed, as unfolded by Naomi Klein, by a backlash of target consumer masses via riots, denial of the branded products, reclamation of unbranded space and vice versa. The same anti-branding rage reflected in the American fiction is analysed here in selected fiction of Don Delillo.

Keywords: Anti-branding, corporate rage, Don Delillo.

I do get weary and worn down from it all. I'm always forced to face the fact that I make my money from poor people. A lot of them are on welfare. Sometimes a mother will come in here with a kid, and the kid is dirty and poorly dressed. But the kid wants a hundred-twenty-buck pair of shoes and that stupid mother buys them for him. I can feel that kid's inner need—this desire to own these things and

have the feelings that go with them—but it hurts me that this is the way things are. (A shoe-store owner qtd. in Klein 2000, 247)

Introduction

With the rise of the modern age in America, somewhere around the 1920s[1], a consumer culture slowly and gradually began to emerge among the common masses. The establishment of a consumer culture was not a very difficult task as production was not a problem for the cosmopolitan centres anymore while developing strategies for the consumption of the products was what had to be looked into. During the first few decades of the modern age, consumerism flourished for the advantage of the ones who had the means of production in their hand like the big multinationals, transnational companies and other shopping chains.

As the decades of the 1940s and 1950s dawned upon the consumers of the United States of America, rather than retaining their original boost, some of the much-desired-for products started losing their original selling-buying ratio. The power those products seemed to have attained over the minds of the consumers seemed to be declining. This was the time when the multinationals, who had been reaping the benefits of their products for such a long time, stood up to devise some new schemes which may help retain their strongholds over the minds and pockets of their consumers. Hence, on top of the list of those schemes was branding itself. Some scholars like Matt Haig believe that it was an addition of a 'human' element into the products at the backbone of the branding strategy which saved the products from being wiped out (Haig 2003, 3). Modern branding was adopted with a greater fervour once its ability of control over the consumer's mind was found out. That is why branding reached its peak during the 1950s (Klein, 2000).

The rise of modern branding and its manifestations proved to the producers even at that time that it was the Object itself which was now in control[2], not the subject. The *things* or the *products* were what would now define our lives for us. Brand is the immortal[3] and infinite image of the product which can live on even if the physical product is terminated at one time or the other. According to a scholar quoted by Peterson, branding acquires its power because "the right brand can surpass the actual product as the company's central asset" (2006, 743). The abundance of media-driven mechanics in the industrialized countries also played an indispensable role in hoisting up a branded world.

The brand has always remained an object of interest to the scholars and researchers of this field because of its highly influential character and long-lasting effects. Many have tried to define it and solve its mysteries by giving it a distinct shape. For

instance, Chernatony and McDonald describe a successful brand as "an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values which match their needs most closely" (McDonald 2003, 25). This clarifies that the brand, whatever product, service or place it might be used to define, tells the consumers about 'added values' that are contained by that specific product, service or place as compared to all others. Those added values may not be visible to the consumers physically, but actually they are very much real to the consumers as they are their real needs. On the other hand, if the means of production of the brands are searched out then one would find out that they are quite at odds with the brand image projected by the corporation in possession of the brand (Sekeres 2009, 405). Such things are, obviously, carefully hidden away[4] from the consuming public.

Miletsky and Smith define the brand in two ways. On the one hand, they define the brand as "the sum total of all user experiences with a particular product or service, building both reputation and future expectations of benefit" (Smith 2009, 2). The consumers thus develop expectations far ahead of the actual purchase and use of the product. Peterson (2006) says that '*image*' and '*reputation*' are key factors that help shape the brand into a certain specific mould. The second definition that Miletsky and Smith give for a brand is that the brand is "an icon or mark (logo) that helps distinguish one product from another" (10). However, most of the researchers believe that the logo can only be called a tip of the iceberg[5] because it is only sort of a label for the brand, while the brand is the actual story encircling the product, relaying the totality of internal experience promised by that specific brand as well as the external communications that it may extend between the producers and consumers beforehand.

 Douglas B. Holt (2002) divides the historical evolution of branding into three basic eras or periods. These periods are modern branding, postmodern branding and post postmodern branding. The modern branding has already been referred to earlier. It is said to have started in the 1920s (Holt 2002, 80). Modern branding developed as the people were reduced to choosing from the choices already laid down by the famous brands (or by the corporations behind those brands). They did not have any right to make their own choices, or even if they did have some right, then the choices were so limited that they did not get any opportunity to choose anything different for themselves. However, as people gradually got able enough to start seeing through this hidden coercion enforced by the corporations, an anti-brand activism was seen to emerge among them in the following decades. Brands were being boycotted, trend setters overthrown and choices extended to newer options. Upon seeing this threat to the survival of their brands, the corporations attached more hopes and expectations with the branding of the products.

Up till the 1960s, which was the time of the postmodern branding, the corporations had strengthened their brand images by affixing greater 'human' desirable intangibles with the brands. They projected the idea that greater personal sovereignty could be achieved through the consumption of better branded products, and they also emphasized that 'to be socially valued, cultural content must pass through branded goods '(Holt 2002, 82). This was the peak time of the brands especially in the United States. The decades of the 1950s and 1960s witnessed a great rise in the profits generated by the numerous famous brands for the corporations that possessed them. The given chart (taken from Holt's article) describes how Holt has divided the three ages of branding.
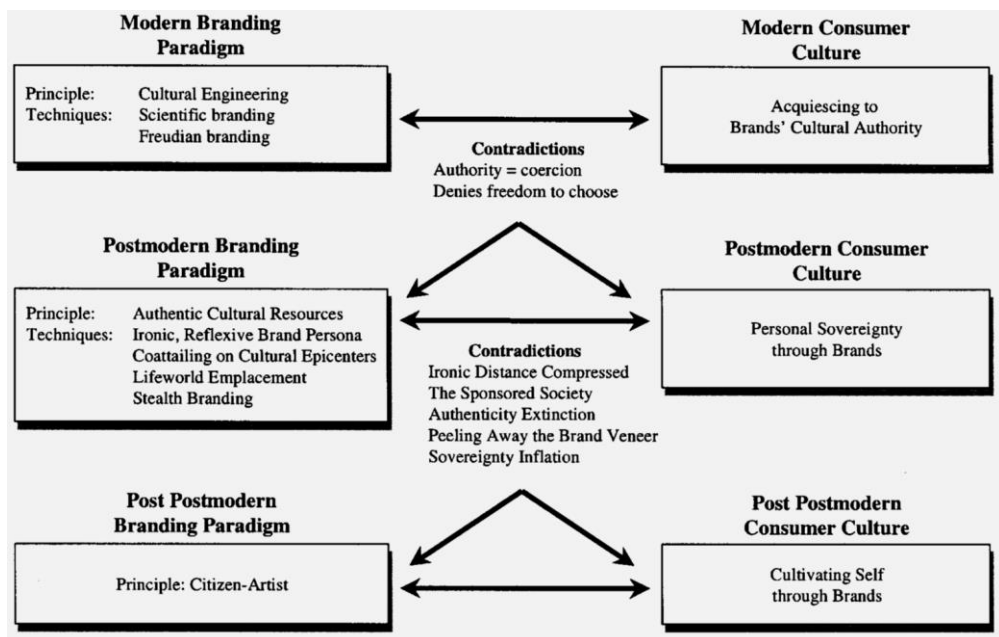
1: Stages of Branding as given by Douglas B. Holt p.81

The present state of the brands is even a step ahead of what it was during the postmodern times. In this post postmodern age, branding has been put forth as a medium of *cultivating one's self* [6]. However, such claims of the brands also met with a slowly evolving anti-branding rage among the common masses especially in the United States—a rage which is still being manifested in various forms. For this reason, the brands have shifted their focus more towards the developing states now as these states are now, in a way, passing through the modern times of the 1950s and 1960s that have already been experienced by the West.

The present study is focused mainly on the anti-branding rage that somehow erupted in the United States during the preceding decades, the factors which may have led to it, and the effects it has left behind. Naomi Klein's theoretical framework sets up a coherent guideline for the anti-branding movement that America has been passing through. It is going to be discussed in the proceeding sections.

The Emergence of the Anti-Branding Activism in the United States:

> It hasn't taken long for the excitement inspired by these manic renditions of globalization to wear thin, revealing the cracks and fissures beneath its high-gloss façade. More and more over the past four years, we in the West have been catching glimpses of another kind of global village, where the economic divide is widening and cultural choices narrowing. (Klein 2000, 14)

Those in the West (especially the United States) have, no doubt, been caught up in a *logo-maze* (to quote Klein's words precisely) of the brands for quite a long time. Naomi Klein has devoted her whole work to the anti-branding activism that has been stimulated in the US due to the illegal and unethical occupation[7] of the peoples' minds, hearts, bodies, choices, lands, spaces, jobs and vice versa by the cunningly attractive logos and the brands they signify. Globalization, which was initially an international-relationships-enhancing and poor vs. rich equalizing phenomenon, has turned out to be something vicious and much more threatening than one could ever have imagined.

Theorists have been propounding upon the mysteries of globalization in the recent times. This is a relatively new phenomenon but it has had far-reaching and widely distributed effects around the globe, which makes it even more essential to be probed into. Some of the critics deem it to be a lucky thing that happened to the world, while there are others who study it from the perspectives of the dangers it has gifted to the present global village. For instance, Nicholas Ind. perpetuate the idea that "globalization, the process of increasing economic, social, technological, regulatory and political interaction between societies across large parts of the globe, has over the years been praised and blamed for much that is good and much that is bad in the world" (Nicholas Ind 2003, 57). However, when the talk is about anti-branding activism, then globalization would definitely be thought of in terms of the many wrongs done to this world.

'Branding, in its truest and most advanced incarnations, is about corporate transcendence' (Klein 2000, 30). When Naomi Klein said this, corporations had power, control and governance[8] not only over the humans but also the states.

Joseph Nye, as quoted by Peter Van Ham in his article, describes two types of powers that reside with the states at all times. One type of power is the hard power, while the other type is the soft power. The hard power often employs coercive or forceful measures to legitimize its orders. On the other hand, the soft power is 'the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments' (Ham 2008, 126-127). So the soft power employs only diplomatic strategies like appeal and attraction for the onlookers so that they may be convinced to adopt or hold on to certain entity. The strategy of branding devised by the transnational corporations is also a part of the soft power to magnetically pull the consumers towards buying their brands.

This power draws its nourishment from ideologies surrounding the notions of *open* and *closed* societies. According to Popper, closed societies "are represented by totalitarian systems and espouse the idea that institutions are everything and the individual nothing. In contrast, the open society puts the individual at its centre. It praises intellectual honesty and truth. It also lays down alongside the creed of freedom and the point of responsibility: that we must all work to improve the world in which we live" (qtd. in Nicholas Ind 2003, 18). The writer seems to propagate the idea that since the open societies give free choices to the individuals, so the brands manufactured by the corporations would be a part of their free choices and hence it would strengthen the peoples' individuality as well as mutual well-being[9]. On the other hand, the brands cannot go a long way if the closed society pattern is implemented as brands opt for sovereignty of the individuals and not of the institutions.

Now although much similar idealistic images have been portrayed by the promoters of the branding strategies on and off, still the underground and behind-the-scenes realities really shock the theorists as well as the consumers once they leak out[10]. Such realities, these days, are even more vulnerable to leakage due to the advancement of technology and wide access of media coverage across the globe. With the passage of each day, one hears more and more consumers coming out on the sidewalks in protest and boycotting the branded products that saturate the innumerable shopping malls of the metropolitan States. The *Politics of Representation* and the *Authority of the Visual* (Spyer 2008, 28) which was once used as an inherited tool by the brands to propagate their own authority over the consumers, has now reversed its role and, conversely, the consumers are using the tools against the manufacturers by visual anti-branding representations[11] across the globe. The people have actually perceived the reality that "many of the powerful ways of performing…branding have turned vicious: against customers, employees and pensioner investors" (Nicholas Ind, 2003, p. 87). People are getting more and

more cynical about the whole process of branding and they do not just blindly take in what is given to them.

An idea introduced by Klaus is very much pertinent over here. He says that the corporations have been making pretty much the same brands again and again by only changing the names or logos of the brands at the very least. However, they have actually "failed to understand that we do not want more products. The market is already so saturated, we have difficulty choosing and the rational arguments as to why we have to buy a specific company's product are not sufficient" (Klaus Fog 2010, 21). What we in reality need is the reclamation of our public spaces, our choices, our jobs and all other things that have been occupied by the brands. The products should be there for only as much as is our day-to-day survival requirement but they should not exceed that limit by exploiting or neglecting some other areas like human rights, labour rights, land laws, so on and so forth during the process.

It would be something of interest to the anti-branding activists that corporate companies and their CEOs usually keep on developing newer strategies to strengthen the image[12] of their brand even further. In a similar context, the yearly report of the Yum Brands contain the words of its CEO, saying that "the single most important thing we do every day is hire, retain and develop the right people, with diverse backgrounds and styles, who have the ability and attitude to be Customer Maniacs (capitalization mine)" (Yum Brands 2008, 22). These customer maniacs have been referred to as *Cool Hunters* by Klein in her book, who are hired by each corporation under high salary packages, and whose only task is to keep looking for the next cool image they can link to their brand so as to be more attractive to their target consumers and so as to increase its sale rate. Klein also ironically refers to the fact that the corporations actually send out one simple message to their consumers: "we want our brands to be the air you breathe in but don't dare exhale" (Klein 2000, 132). The idea is quite clear: the brands have taken away our sole freedom of existence, and we need to, have to and must take it back somehow.

In the present times, Klein declares, anti-branding activists have taken to various methods like cultural jamming[13], labour scandals[14], internet hacking[15], ad busting[16], ad parodies[17], etc. in order to sabotage the plague of branding. On the other hand, if we look at the level of the individual consumer, anti-branding activism can also be taken over by him/her with the help of Chase and Schlink's logic discussed by Klein, which says that "if consumers had access to careful scientific research that compared the relative merits of the products on the market, everyone would simply make measured, rational decisions about what to buy" (Klein 2000, 207). On a similar note, Holt (2002) introduces two types of

resistances that can be utilized at the individual level in order to make rational decisions about what to buy. The first one is the *Reflexive Resistance* which is the "posing of resistance by consumers against the consumption code steered by marketing through personal consumption practices". The second one is the *Creative Resistance* in which "the consumers emancipate themselves from marketer-imposed codes by altering their sign value[18] to signify opposition to establishment values[19]"(72). So the sole purpose of both these types of resistances is to enable the individual consumer to break free of the spell that has been cast upon us by the brands such that we may then be able to make proper rational decisions about what to buy and what not to buy.

Building upon the basic tenets given by Klein as well as others of the same line, the study may now be extended towards a critical analysis of Don Delillo's selected fiction. Since anti-branding activism is a much-talked-about as well as much-participated-in phenomenon in the United States, so it is quite possible that the famous fictional works of that region may also carry imprints of as well as show participation in the anti-branding movement that has been dominating American socio-politics[20] for the last few decades. The next section of the present study aims at digging out such aspects of Don Delillo's fiction which is going to be a representative of the famous and advanced fiction of the American writers of the modern and postmodern times.

Anti-branding and Don-Delillo's Fiction:

> Time is a corporate asset now. It belongs to the free market system. The present is harder to find. It is being sucked out of the world to make way for the future of uncontrolled markets and huge investment potential. The future becomes insistent…This is why something will happen soon, maybe today…to correct the acceleration of time. Bring nature back to normal, more or less. (Delillo 2003, 34)

Don Delillo is considered by most as a part of the Anti-branding movement that has been going on in the United Sates for the last few decades. Four novels of Don Delillo have been selected for this particular research so as to probe into the text and see whether Don Delillo really has moved with the anti-corporate rage or whether he also has let his fiction become a part of the Branded Fiction[21] that Sekeres (2009) has referred to - a genre that includes books that are one product among the many that are sold under specific brand names (400). Don Delillo is the author of eleven novels in all, namely: *Americana* (1971), *End Zone* (1972), *Great Jones Street* (1973), *Ratner's Star* (1976), *Players* (1977), *Running Dog* (1978), *The Names* (1982), *White Noise* (1985), *Libra* (1988), *Mao II* (1992), *Underworld* (1997), *Point*

Omega (2010) and *Cosmopolis* (2003). Out of these eleven novels, four have been selected for analysis in the present research, which are; *Americana*, *The Names*, *White Noise*, and *Cosmopolis*. The analysis will be carried out according to the chronological sequence of the publication of the novels, which will help in tracing out the relative additions that Delillo has done in his works concerning the corporatization and the gradually increasing intensity in the anti-branding or anti-corporate rage that had been sweeping through America over the decades.

Americana—the first ever novel of Delillo—was published in 1971. This is one of the best-selling novels of Delillo, for the witty, clever, original and incisive manner in which he has written it. Delillo, even while writing this novel in the early 1970s (well before the initiation of the actual anti-branding rage in the United States), was well aware of the brand or logo maze in which all the modern or postmodern people are caught up. He often refers to the commodities with the names of their brands, like the *Playmouth Fury car,* the *three screen color TV console,* the *Gut Bucket hotel*, the *Penn-Mar hotel*, the *Coca Cola Sandwich*, the *Amusement Park*, the *Bergman Films*, the *Spanish cuisine*, the *men in Gucci loafers*, the *Johnnie Walker Red cigarettes*, and vice versa. He also refers to the overall lifestyle of the Americans by symbolically saying that the charcaters *'must realize that we (they) are living in Megamerica. Neon, fiber glass, plexiglass, polyurethane, Mylar, Acrylite'* (Delillo 1971, 119). This means that they are surrounded by brands all around them in their footwear, body wear, constructions, buildings, transport vehicles, eating places, eating stuff, and vice versa.

Another key issue that has been highlighted by Delillo in this novel is that of the role of corporations in developing specific brands and (or) lifestyles for the people to whom they sell their brands. The corporations have a lot of people at their service including the CEOs and other workers, just like David, Quincy, Warburton, etc. in the novel, and they have to keep devising newer projects for their company's overall image, just as the writer says in the novel that "the chemical firm was merely trying to improve its image" (106). Similarly, David (the protagonist) is working on some new project about which someone else asks him that "how's that laser beam project shaping up? They're starting to put pressure" (28). America is shown to be a place where all nature has been hidden or destroyed by smoke or billboards rising high into the sky, where the characters seek escape from their corporate routines by moving away from the metropolis to the relatively pure and primitive countryside as well as a place where all empty space has been, ironically speaking, utilized in the name of aesthetics and preservation by the construction of artificial surfaces. It is a place where the TV set has become a *package* which is *full of products*, and a place which can "only be saved by what it's trying to destroy" (256).

The second novel of Delillo selected specifically for this research is *The Names*, which was published in 1982. This novel is important from the perspective of transnational corporations that do businesses widespread over a number of countries. America, as portrayed by Delillo throughout the novel, gives residence to many of the world's largest corporations or transnationals. The characters of the novel are executives either at banks or at insurance companies who keep travelling through space and time for the management of their businesses across borders. "Americans", as the writer says, "used to come to places like this to write and paint and study, to find deeper textures. Now we do business" (Delillo, The Names, 1982, p. 6). he places mentioned in the text could be Greece, Athens, Teheran, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Kuwait, Jordan—places that are yet relatively pure and safe from the impact of the corporations, businesses and brands as compared to the United States of America. The characters in this novel also do make comparisons between people on the basis of the brands or possessions they have, just as Ann, in the novel, reflects that "This is why your car is too small for six, it's Japanese" (p. 5). The lives of these people are also tangled with the brand intangibles[22] that are guaranteed by the brand, like "…the promise of something. That something is intangible; it could be a guarantee of quality, a sense of prestige, or of heritage" (Davis, 2005, p. 16).

White Noise is the third novel selected for analysis in this particular study. It was published in the year 1985. This is also one of the bestsellers of Don Delillo because of the originality of expression that Delillo has employed on top of all the major prevalent themes (in accordance with the socio-political setting of the novel) that he has referred to throughout the novel.

Jack is the main character who is a teacher at a nearby academic institution and he observes the daily practices of life with seriousness and skepticism. He teaches his students to be cynical about things that they watch on the TV screens, because the TV screen is just like a feeding machine that "offers incredible amounts of psychic data" but the individual should be sharp enough to take in only that much as he feels right (Delillo 1986, 51). There is a "wealth of data concealed in the grid, in the bright packaging, the jingles, the slice-of-life commercials, the products hurtling out of darkness, the coded messages and endless repetitions, like chants, like mantras. 'Coke is it, Coke is it'" which comes out of the TV screens (p. 51).

White Noise talks abundantly about the consumer experience in general, as well as about images of the products and brands under which we live. The characters have been reflected upon in terms of the individual identities they have worn by becoming a part of one marketing scheme or the other, while the group identities have been lost with the emergence of loneliness and dissatisfaction. The writer

says, "Even as we sit here, you are spinning out from the core, becoming less recognizable as a group,…feel estranged from the products you consume. Who are they designed for? What is your place in the marketing scheme?" (50). The writer remains skeptical of the basic menace that the practices of mass consumption have spread among the common masses, in the form of some unseen illness that might have been a cause of the "ventilating system, the paint or varnish, the foam insulation, the electrical insulation, the cafeteria food, the rays emitted by microcomputers, the asbestos fireproofing, the adhesive on shipping containers, the fumes from the chlorinated pool, or perhaps something deeper…" (35). Jack and his wife Babette go out for shopping one day to the superstores, and come back fully packaged with accessories. At that moment, Jack reflects:

> It seemed to me that Babette and I, in the mass and variety of our purchases, in the sheer plenitude those crowded bags suggested, the weight and size and number, the familiar package designs and vivid lettering, the giant sizes, the family bargain packs with Day-Glo sale stickers, in the sense of replenishment we felt, the sense of well-being, the security and contentment these products brought to some snug home in our souls—it seemed we had achieved a fullness of being that is not known to people who need less, expect less, who plan their lives around lonely walks in the evening. (20)

Jack's daughter Bee is unable to readjust into the lifestyle of the Washington suburb after having spent quite some time of her life in South Korea. In South Korea, life had been really too much different than what it was in the States, in terms of the comforts, luxuries, products, brands and vice versa (94). The situation of Bee describes how people get used to and dependent over the brands—in short, the brands take over our lives.

The fourth and last novel of Delillo to be analyzed here is *Cosmopolis*, which has been published in the year 2003. By looking at its year of publication, one can infer that it might be dealing with even more recent, pertinent and basic aspects of consumption, branding and anti-branding that are prevalent in the American society. This novel also received its own share of fame due to the up-to-date information it has provided in a strikingly amazing manner. The novel is set in the postmodern times when the anti-branding rage has reached a certain peak among the common masses. Naomi Klein talks about anti-branding protests, riots and road parties organized by the common masses or consumers of the American society, which is what exactly Don Delillo has also highlighted throughout the novel. Delillo refers to "THE LAST TECHNO-RAVE"—dance party protest in a theatre—"among American teenagers in a stylized riot" which is the last of the

protest dance parties that common people have arranged in order to reclaim public spaces for themselves and free them of the grasp of branded logos (Delillo 2003, p.51-52). Other than that, the writer mockingly mentions the man named Andre Petrescu in his novel, who (just like the computer hackers) uses to stalk corporate directors, military commanders, soccer stars and politicians and hits them in the face with pies. This is funny but, at the same time, very ironic and sarcastic.

Delillo mocks the whole idea of product manufacturing in the developing world regions and their branding in the transnationals located in the United States of America, by making the main character say to someone that: "You have to die for how you think and act...For the limousine that displaces the air that people need to breathe in Bangladesh" (81). Even the mere statement shows sheer distaste for the practice of procuring money at the expense of labor exploitation, insufficient wages and human rights on the whole. Everywhere there are limousines on the roads waiting to pick rich men, whole rows of restaurants on road sides to cook branded meals for rich people and many other branded luxuries that only the rich can afford. The protagonist himself is an important person, rather the CEO of some insurance company who travels around everywhere with bodyguards and security. They always keep looking out for computer hackers who might jam their systems under anti-branding or anti-corporate protests, and vice versa. The novel as a whole is full of anti-corporate imagery being implanted over there by the writer on purpose.

Don Delillo is a novelist who runs with the pace of the times. He picks up themes and imagery that suits the socio-political currents of the age in which he is living. He does pick up the various aspects of anti-branding rage that has been contained among the common masses and portrays it via a number of ways in his novels. One may say that Delillo himself is a part of the anti-branding movement of the United States.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Brands have gradually been led to become a major part of our existence. Those of us who are very much a part of the present postmodern age do have a direct experience of this phenomenon. Klein is right in her declaration that the brands are now the very air we breathe in as well as the fact that branding is all about corporate transcendence. However, before it spreads to any further limits among the countries of the global village, something has to be done to overthrow this maddening regime.

Certain theorists and literary scholars of the modern as well the postmodern times have taken to finding the possible causes, effects as well as the ways of refutation, denial, boycott, or rebuttal of the branded products being sold in the markets. Klein as well as Don Delillo are among those literary personnel who aim at achieving such an end, among the many others that we come across. Don Delillo's fiction and its detailed analysis is ample proof of this fact. Analysis of his selected works revealed the findings or results that: firstly, the American fiction is not separate from the socio-cultural movements that go on in the background, and secondly, it does take an active part in the struggle for confiscation of the rule of branded commodities that the present world is passing through.

For future researchers, it is recommended that the notion of branding could be traced out from the perspective of the desire for the newer or the unknown as foretold by Lacan. Furthermore, the research could also be carried out by selecting the fictional works of different American writers rather than just one. It is highly significant to trace out the branding rage in the Pakistani literary and cultural milieu with keen eye on the rippling side effects to create awareness for anti-branding.

Notes

[1] According to Klein and Holt, modern branding started approximately in the 1920s (i.e. with the rise of the industrially driven systems as well as an aftermath of the World War) (Holt, 2002; Klein, 2000).

[2] For elaboration of the concept of the 'Object in Control', *see* (Harold, 2009).

[3] It is believed that "immortality is within the reach of any brand " (Field, 2008, p. 1).The brands surely have taken over, extending their influence over decades and across borders.

[4] The harsh facts behind the apparently idealized and glorified image of the brand and its products are sweatshop labor, illegal occupation of lands, exploitation of resources of the occupied lands, construction of unhygienic slums etc. The corporations mask such illegalities as people would not buy the brands.

[5] See Nicholas Ind (2007),pp 78-79 for further details.

[6] A lot of debate is going on these days not about branding itself, but about the branding of the individual. It is asserted that an individual can be successful in all fields of life if s/he is equipped with branded products.

[7] This occupation has ultimately turned into the occupation plus exploitation of the poor, under-developed, struggling or Third World states. Much of the theoretical literature highlights this specific point, and even one of the most important reasons behind the anti-branding rage is also the same.

[8] Manfred B. Steger describes in detail how some major transnational corporations (TNCs) have strongholds in many major countries of the world and thereby are in position to influence the state affairs. See (Steger, 2003) for more details.

[9] Mutual well-being is presumed to arrive once individuals have access to good lifestyles, comfort and raised status in society which is assured by the brands. Once a mutual comfort zone is provided, people will live their lives in harmony side by side. This is the idealized picture portrayed by the brands, but in reality things usually do not happen in exactly similar fashion.

[10] For further details on hiding the real and harsh facts concerning the development of the brands, read Klein (2000)

[11] Visual anti-branding representations across the globe have been witnessed in the form of protests on the roads with slogan holding banners and brochures, wall-chalking, anti-branding networking websites, media video coverage of the exploitation of the unbranded regions where the branded products are manufactured via cheap labor, and vice versa.

[12] Image and reputation of the brand is all that makes the brand popular, just as Fog says that 'images speak a language we can all understand: the language of emotions' (Klaus Fog, 2010, p. 208).

[13] Cultural jamming Cultural jamming is process of altering ads and billboards in such a way that cultures are mixed up in ways different to what the ads were originally showing.

[14] Labor scandals are exposed from Media coverage of the actual workers' wage and labour exploitation during manufacturing products that are later on branded and sold on high prices.

[15] Internet hackers are experts in computer technology. They hack or corrupt the network websites of the big corporations to cause them damage in any way.

[16] Ad busting is a form of cultural jamming, in which the original message of the ad is subverted by the ad buster, whose own message then takes over.

[17] Ad parodying is again something very much similar to ad busting.

[18] The sign value of any product is the value it assigns to its possessor as compared to the other people, e.g. when brands come up as status symbols.

[19] Establishment values are the normal stereotypical values held among people living in a particular society.

[20] Anti-corporatism or anti-branding in itself has been termed as a sort of politics by Klein—a politics established to dismantle the politics of representation and control that has been played by the brands for a long time.

[21] Although Diane Carver Sekeres has talked specifically in terms of children's literature that has has gradually fallen into the category of branded fiction, but the same applies for all types of fiction as well. Since the big corporations are all in control, so all types of fictional works at times assist in promoting the various brands. That is why it is termed as Branded Fiction.

[22] Brand Intangibles have been described by Keller and Lehmann as 'aspects of the brand image that do not involve physical, tangible, or concrete attributes or benefits' (Lehmann, 2006, p. 741).

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