

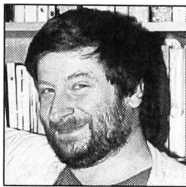
## BOOK REVIEW

Sharon Beder 1997, *Global Spin: the Corporate Assault on Environmentalism*, Scribe Publications, Melbourne. 244pp, \$24.95.

### subliminal messengers — two views

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*The fact that corporations and governments feel compelled to spend billions of dollars every year manipulating the public is a perverse tribute to human nature and our own moral values.*  
Strauber & Rampton (1995)

In her recent book Sharon Beder, senior lecturer in Science and Technology Studies at the University of Wollongong, outlines some of the ways in which large corporations have fought and countered the political and public influence of environment groups around the world. It is a work of interest to anyone who wonders why regulation of the chemical industry is so ineffective, how mining companies manage to over rule the wishes of traditional owners, or why mainstream news reports never provide the context or follow up to major environmental stories.

In short, this book is about the battle for the 'hearts and minds' of the general public, and the tools and techniques large companies have developed to counter the extraordinary successes of environment movements in the seventies. In the USA, these successes were represented by the introduction of the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act

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<<http://www.coopamerica.org/isf/tobi/tobi-agenda/ngo-statement.htm>>

Friends of the Earth International (FoE) is the largest confederation of environment NGOs with member groups in 60 countries, a network that covers North and South, in 60 countries, a network that covers North and South, East and West. One of their concern is with the social and environmental effects of TNCs. Major debates continue within Friends of the Earth internationally as to how to

### The role of transnational corporations (TNCs)

It is no accident that environment non-government organisations (NGOs) have focussed internationally on the increasing role and influence of TNCs. The United Nations, at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, was so heavily influenced by business that the one body considering regulation of the sector—the UN Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC)—had its report suppressed and was subsequently disbanded as a separate agency.

*[UNCTC] had also been long at work on a non-binding code of conduct for transnationals.[...] For the Earth Summit negotiations, the UNCTC was asked by the UN Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC] to prepare a set of recommendations on transnationals and other large industrial enterprises that governments might use when drafting Earth Summit's central document, called Agenda 21. But when it came time to present these recommendations in March 1992 at the UNCED Preparatory meeting in New York, the UNCTC found itself marginalized.*

*First, in February, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali announced as part of his program to restructure and streamline the UN that the UNCTC would be eliminated as an independent entity. This move in effect gutted the agency of what little power it might have had. But it still had the report commissioned by ECOSOC to deliver to Maurice Strong and his UNCED Secretariat. Try as it might, however, the UNCTC couldn't get the Secretariat to accept its report.*  
(Karliner 1998)

### 'The lack of any controls on transnationals was seen as a particular flaw of Agenda 21'

The lack of any controls on transnationals was seen as a particular flaw of Agenda 21, the major 'blueprint for the 21st century' document coming out of the Earth Summit. NGOs subsequently formed a working group on transnationals—the Taskforce on Business and Industry (ToBI)—which prepared reports to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). *Minding Our Business: The Role of Corporate Accountability in Sustainable Development*, an NGO report to the CSD, was presented at the Rio+5 follow-up UN General Assembly Special Session. A copy may be viewed at the following website: <<http://www.coopamerica.org/isf/tobi/tobi-agenda/ngo-statement.htm>>

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work with global industry. Complaints come from activists in developing countries that Friends in 'developed' countries of the North are sitting down to talk with companies which are killing campaigners in the South. FoE is busy developing protocols to ensure that companies will need to behave responsibly both at home and abroad. The on going debate is covered in issues of *Link*, the FoE International newsletter.

Amnesty International has started to question whether just focussing on governments is enough: in Nigeria, Shell's influence on activities in Ogoni-land cannot be ignored. The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa seems to have been a direct consequence of the Ogoni opposition to Shell's activities in Nigeria. Although they normally pressure governments, Amnesty explicitly called on Shell to intervene in Nigeria (Amnesty International 1996).

As soon as one looks at the question of moving to a sustainable society the activities of TNCs, particularly in the global mining, forestry and chemical industries, become vital. Yet Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development governments were recently busy negotiating a Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), which would promote the 'investment rights' of TNCs and other global investors above local considerations of a healthy environment, worker's rights or regulations to improve environmental standards. The global backlash against MAI has created further calls for regulation of TNCs. For more on the MAI and its consequences, there is a good summary analysis available set out on the following website: <<http://www.oneworld.org/twf/mai/ana.htm>>. The global outcry seems to have halted negotiations—for the present. The negotiations finally collapsed when France withdrew from the talks in October 1998, but a similar kind of treaty will probably surface at the World Trade Organisation.

As *Global Spin* details, it is very difficult to form a clear picture of TNC activities—even harder to generate any public debate about such activities. The core of the book looks at the global public relations (PR) industry and how it has formed special groups dedicated to countering and diluting the attacks made on industry by environmentalists.

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***'industry can.....influence media reporting.....and influence public opinion'***

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As Beder documents, the creation of right wing, well funded think tanks, and increasing media monopolies, provide an environment where industry can not only influence media reporting, but also dominate and influence public opinion. Their reach also extends deeply into the school systems, offering under funded schools corporate teaching materials. Chapters 5, 12 & 13 of *Global Spin* detail some of the connections.

Curiously, the success of grassroots environmental groups,

with their perceived honesty, has lead to the creation of 'astroturf'—pseudo-grassroots campaigns, funded by industry to protect and promote their profits.

*Artificially created grassroots coalitions are referred to in the industry as 'astroturf' (after a synthetic grass product). Astroturf is a "grassroots program that involves the instant manufacture of public support for a point of view in which either uninformed activists are recruited or means of deception are used to recruit them." According to Consumer Reports magazine, those engaging in this sort of work can earn up to \$500 "for every citizen they mobilize for a corporate clients cause". (Beder, p32)*

Much of the material in *Global Spin* has already been covered in earlier books. *Green Backlash*, by Andrew Rowell (1996), includes an extensive study of the anti-environment PR campaigns around the world, and a detailed chapter on activities in Australia, based on Bob Burton's research. Burton has spent a considerable amount of time tracking down the evidence of 'dirty tricks' campaigns, including corporate front groups, bomb threats and media mis-direction. Several of his articles in *Mining Monitor*, the quarterly newsletter of the Mineral Policy Institute (<<http://www.hydra.org.au/mpii/>>) follow up on reports in *PR Watch*, a magazine dedicated to keeping tabs on the industry edited by John Strauber for the publisher, the USA Centre for Media and Democracy.

*Toxic Sludge is Good for You! Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry*, written by John Strauber and Sheldon Rampton, blows the whistle on the covert activities of PR firms. It includes considerable detail, and significant case-studies.

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***'its Australian content is limited to a few paragraphs'***

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Unfortunately, *Global Spin* doesn't provide significant new material, and its Australian content is limited to a few paragraphs. Most of its focus is on activities in the USA, where the use of PR firms and domination of the media by politically conservative individuals and groups is most advanced. We shall probably have to wait until Burton's new book appears, sometime in the next 18 months, for a comprehensive coverage of the Australian situation. For *Mining Monitor* he attended a conference in the USA on the Wise Use lobby group which Beder (p47) describes thus: "The Wise Use movement is a broad ranging, loose-knit coalition of hundreds of groups in the US which promote a conservative agenda". Its agenda is about guaranteeing access to public lands for the resource extractive industries of forestry and mining. It is basically a coalition of groups who oppose wilderness or conservation protection of public lands, and whose combined membership gives them considerable political leverage. By trying to shift the terms

of debate, they hope to stymie environmental protection of public areas. Beder (p47) gives a good example of their 'doublespeak':

*They call for a Global Warming Prevention Act that would replace old growth forests with plantations or, in their words, "convert all decaying and oxygen-using forest growth in the National Forests into young strands of oxygen producing carbon dioxide-absorbing trees to help ameliorate the rate of global warming and prevent the greenhouse effect..."*

Where Beder does excel is in providing a good summary of material from a wide range of sources, organised into chapters about the Wise Use Movement, industry fronts, think tanks, the PR industry, the advertising industry and the media. Copious references and a clear summary of the issues provide a useful, readable work. Beder highlights the threat these groups pose to public debate and democracy, pointing out their subversive and dangerous corporate agenda.

### Warnings to educators

Of particular interest to environmental educators are the sections dealing with corporation funded educational packages, the corporate co-option of environmentalists, and the influence corporate funding has on research projects. The first of these activities seeks not just to influence public opinion, but to directly control students' education and attitudes.

The position of trust and credibility held by educators makes them a prime target for corporate programs designed to 'sell' the corporate agenda. Beder writes (p. 172):

*Conservatives recognize the power of genuine environmental education to foster environmental concern and values in the next generation, and are threatened by it. Some conservative Christians have even labelled non-corporate environmental education materials as paganistic, satanistic, anti-Christian and anti-business: "The growing 'environmental education' movement is a recruitment drive intended to conscript young students into a pagan children's campaign." They argue that "the constant depiction of a planet on the brink of environmental catastrophe is frightening children and turning them into eco-warriors at home."*

and continues:

*For example, a high school text entitled Environmental Science: Ecology and Human Impact was withdrawn from one school after a manager of a Monsanto chemical plant, an employer in the area, called for it to be banned as the book was said to be anti-industry. Dr Suess's The Lorax was*

*subjected to a parents' campaign in the timber town of Laytonville, California, because it depicts a character that defends the trees. Another book, Earth Child, which uses activities to help students appreciate the beauty of nature and learn about the stars, has also come under attack as satanic and containing "subliminal messages to brainwash our children"*

Beder notes that schools are being overwhelmed with free and unsolicited curriculum material from PR firms, corporations and industry associations. This activity is echoed in the Australian Forest Industry's commercials promoting 'growth and re-growth' during the woodchip debates. Set in a classroom they used the 'authority of the teacher' to influence students to accept an industry viewpoint as gospel. In a section on environmental education Beder details how materials produced by the nuclear industry, the forest industry's 'Project Learning Tree' and the beef industry's 'Caretakers all' are being used to promote industry viewpoints in the school environment.

This is not limited to the USA, as the Australian Institute of Petroleum and the Australian Petroleum Exploration Industry have provided classroom materials free to schools (Coulter 1995). In Western Australia, the ministry of education has prepared materials sponsored by Woodside Petroleum, BHP, Shell, Mitsui and Mitsubishi. The Employer's Education Consortium of Victoria—a coalition of nine of Victoria's largest companies—has had a major input to the state's high school curriculum with a compulsory Australian Studies unit on 'The World of Work'. (Isles 1989). In Chapter 10 Beder describes places in the USA in which schools are being paid to screen special TV programs, twelve minutes each day, without interruptions. But could it happen in Australia?

*[Australian schools] are being actively canvassed by corporate and multinational organisations to enter into sponsorship arrangements where the distinction between pedagogy, promotion, and marketing is not clear.*

(Coulter, quoted by Beder, p173)

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### *'the role of environmental educators [is] critical'*

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The current assault on education funding makes these free materials, with their embedded corporate messages, increasingly attractive to schools. Few NGOs have the resources to match such glossy materials. That, in turn, makes the role of environmental educators critical in analysing the messages and correcting inaccuracies.

At the tertiary level, the increasing reliance on corporate sponsorship—with all strings attached—make it more and more difficult for universities to pursue research 'free of fear or favour', or to comment on public issues. I have also



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[www.xs4all.nl/~foeint/magazine.html](http://www.xs4all.nl/~foeint/magazine.html)>

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## Delyse Springett

Massey University



As the environmental movement gathered force during the 60's and 70's, influencing public opinion and government policy-making, the business sector and the 'contrarians', from John Maddox (1972) onwards, began their own campaign to undermine, even ridicule, environmentalists and their concerns. However, since the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987) and the UNCED Rio conference in 1992, there has been concerted attempts by business and industry to take centre stage and to claim sustainable development as their very own, and, in doing so, to capture the concepts and even the language of sustainability (Welford et al 1997). The last few years have seen a number of exposés of what still goes on in many companies behind the green corporate front (Korten 1995, Welford 1997), warning us not to be taken in by the wolf's clothing.

## 'the overt and hidden ways in which corporations take power'

Sharon Beder's *Global Spin: The corporate assault on environmentalism* points up the need for eternal vigilance against corporate domination of even our ways of knowing. It is fitting that the book bears an endorsement from Edward Goldsmith, since his flagship, *The Ecologist*, has often warned us of the invasive power of transnational cor-



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lication, *The Nature of Sustainable Development*, which set out her concern about corporate strategies designed to dis-empower environmentalism and establish corporate dominance. In *Global Spin* she meticulously researches and documents this 'corporate assault'.

Beder demonstrates that the corporate backlash against environmentalism and the deep distrust of business which the movement had engendered drove corporations to new political activity in the area of environment, and to their re-learning how to lobby government, co-operating with each

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The details of the corporate assault on environmentalism—and environmental education—outlined in *Global Spin* are of immense importance. Debate about the protection and use or abuse of *everyone's* environments must not be allowed to be shaped or curtailed solely by the vested interests of industry and like minded groups. 🌱

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As the environmental movement gathered force during the 60's and 70's, influencing public opinion and government policy-making, the business sector and the 'contrarians', from John Maddox (1972) onwards, began their own campaign to undermine, even ridicule, environmentalists and their concerns. However, since the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987) and the UNCED Rio conference in 1992, there has been concerted attempts by business and industry to take centre stage and to claim sustainable development as their very own, and, in doing so, to capture the concepts and even the language of sustainability (Welford et al 1997). The last few years have seen a number of exposés of what still goes on in many companies behind the green corporate front (Korten 1995, Welford 1997), warning us not to be taken in by the wolf's clothing.

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### *'the overt and hidden ways in which corporations take power'*

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Sharon Beder's *Global Spin: The corporate assault on environmentalism* points up the need for eternal vigilance against corporate domination of even our ways of knowing. It is fitting that the book bears an endorsement from Edward Goldsmith, since his flagship, *The Ecologist*, has often warned us of the invasive power of transnational corporations—for example, in *Whose Common Future?* (The Ecologist 1993). In *Global Spin* Beder not only presents a detailed exposure of the overt and hidden ways in which corporations take power but also offers a challenge for a new agenda for environmentalism to 'engage in the task of exposing corporate myths and methods of manipulation' (p. 243). The book is the natural successor to her 1993 publication, *The Nature of Sustainable Development*, which set out her concern about corporate strategies designed to disempower environmentalism and establish corporate dominance. In *Global Spin* she meticulously researches and documents this 'corporate assault'.

Beder demonstrates that the corporate backlash against environmentalism and the deep distrust of business which the movement had engendered drove corporations to new political activity in the area of environment, and to their re-learning how to lobby government, co-operating with each other against the perceived common foe and engaging business associations, councils and roundtables to 'front'

the campaigns for them. Beder's example are largely drawn from the United States of America, but she gives Australian and UK examples of corporate activism, and there is certainly much to which New Zealanders can relate.

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***'one of the last internal obstacles to the complete hegemony of transnational corporate capitalism'***

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She sets out to demonstrate that corporate activism has been successful in achieving a virtual moratorium on new environmental legislation. The regained force of the environmental movement in the 80's, engendered by public concern about ozone depletion and weather patterns, met with a renewed corporate backlash and a determination to 'put the environmental lobby out of business' (p. 22). In the 90's, the environment has been labelled by corporate public relations personnel as 'the life and death PR battle'; and Beder underlines this fight-to-the-death mentality with the words of activist Brian Tokar: "the growth of ecological awareness in the industrialised countries may be one of the last internal obstacles to the complete hegemony of transnational corporate capitalism" (p. 23).

How has corporatism gained such power against environmental legislation and the environmental movement? Well, as Beder demonstrates, by not showing its hand. The employment of corporate 'front groups', with names that make them sound as though they might be groups of concerned environmentalists—Alliance for Responsible CFC Policy, Information Council on the Environment—means that a clever and insidious attack can be mounted, with environmental problems even being acknowledged in some cases, only to be overwhelmed with arguments that their solutions will be too expensive, will damage the economy and diminish employment prospects. Readers might recall the recent decision by BP and Shell to pull out of one of these front groups—the Global Climate Change Coalition, a front group for the oil industry, notable most recently for its loud resistance to the policies proposed at the recent Kyoto conference on global warming. Front groups like to promote superficial 'solutions' to environmental problems. In New Zealand the tactic of focusing on anti-litter campaigns, rather than on legislation or changes impacting on packaging practice, typifies the work of the Keep New Zealand Beautiful group, mirroring what Beder tells us of its American counterpart in this, and in its occupying offices of the Packaging Industry Advisory Council of New Zealand.

Beder shows how, to be effective in government campaigning, public relations firms need to demonstrate the appearance of public support. Through lobbying and the use of familiar marketing techniques, they manufacture instant quasi-grassroots support—known as 'astroturf' in the industry. This manufactured 'support' is used to influence politicians, who respond to personal

communication; telephone campaigns use 'patch through' techniques which mean that once you have been persuaded to a point of view through a phone-call you can be connected straight through to your political representative while you are still 'warm'. Beder suggests it is a handy technique for politicians, who want to be seen as voter responsive even while they are submitting to corporate inducements. The other side of the quasi-grassroots activity is 'treetops' lobbying—contacting smaller numbers of more influential people who have contacts they, too, can mobilise to target politicians and influence policy.

She exposes the activities of the 'Wise Use' movement in the United States—a coalition of groups set up to promote a conservative and anti-environmental agenda, and well funded by industry. Cohesion of the disparate groups involved comes from having a shared enemy—environmentalists. Distrust of environmentalists is fed through allegations that they put nature before people, by exaggerating the radical and extreme elements of the movement, and labelling environmentalists as 'eco-freaks', 'pointy-headed' or 'communists'. People with real feelings of alienation and powerlessness are recruited to the Wise Use movement, as are people who are pro-development, anti big government and opposed to environmentalism. 'Wise Use' poses as the 'true' environmental movement, while stressing the costs of environmental policy and portraying environmentalists as seeking authoritarian power.

Beder describes the way in which public freedom to speak out against corporations can be effectively curtailed through the punitive issuing of Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation—with the appropriate acronym of SLAPPs—which subvert and circumvent the political process. Such lawsuits, when brought against individuals by companies prepared to spend enormous amounts of money, even on cases they rarely win, have a 'chill effect'—a SLAPP very likely ruins the individual financially, tends to prevent them from speaking out in future, and distracts key protagonists from the main controversy by using up their time and energy and masking what the original issue was about. While a certain amount of satisfaction is to be derived from Beder's recounting of the partly successful 'McLibel' case in London, and the absurdity of McDonalds' two and a half year, ten million pound lawsuit against two unemployed anarchists who had cast aspersions on their products and practices, the misplaced use of power and the money available for such a case leaves little to smile at.

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***'[the] aim is to achieve enormous influence upon government policy making'***

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Beder traces in some detail the central role that conservative think tanks play in the corporate battle against environmental policies and tax reforms. Immensely well funded by corporations, committed to free market ideals,



industry deregulation, supply side economics and the reduction of taxes, their aim is to achieve enormous influence upon government policy making. Beder claims that they are capable not only of influencing individual policies but of moving the whole policy agenda to the right. She sees them as having been centrally influential in the moves in Western countries towards the adoption of free market environmentalism and market based approaches to environmental problems. Her concern about polluters purchasing the right to continue in polluting practices through the use of price based economic instruments picks up one of her central issues in *The Nature of Sustainable Development*. Whereas government has traditionally favoured legislation over economic instruments, they have increasingly changed their policies; business, too, she claims, has been brought round from preferring legislation—which they could influence through negotiation and delay—to a liking for economic instruments.

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***‘difficult.....to discern ‘real’ news from what is essentially advertising’***

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Beder points out that the public relations industry which works for corporations has had an anti environmental role since Monsanto parodied Carson’s *Silent Spring* in *The Desolate Year*. PR experts use the media, educational institutions, community forums, conferences, talk back radio and emerging technologies. The ‘news’ we receive today is often made up of press releases from PR firms, ‘raw material’ which journalists increasingly rely upon and which makes it difficult for the public to discern ‘real’ news from what is essentially advertising. There has been a traditional notion of the objectivity of the media, what Michael Duffy has recently (1998) described as “the belief that journalism’s sacred historic missions was to underpin democracy by providing accurate and objective information about parliament and everything affecting it, including foreign affairs, the economy and important social changes.” Beder suggests that the lingering belief in media objectivity now gives legitimacy to PR stories; the media advances the corporate view while appearing independent, and investigative reporting is displaced. Where the environment does make the news, Beder suggests that it is the corporate view that is promulgated. Corporate representatives occupy places on boards of media companies. Some companies now own media corporations, and Beder recounts how General Electric, with a history of disaster and malpractice cover ups, now owns NBC, and can largely define the way the environment is reported. Damaged public images can be remedied through PR, as when the chemical industry was advised to build a ‘therapeutic alliance’ with the public to convince people of its caring ethos—Responsible Care! Beder points out that the corporate influence over the media has replaced what was seen as the ‘liberal bias’ of the media in the 60’s and 70’s. Corporate entities now determine what is ‘news’, and

capture journalists through, for example, mounting events, and providing awards which journalists covet for reasons of professional advancement. She maintains that the objectivity traditionally associated with journalism is employed only in so far as it provides an impression of objectivity for corporate ‘reporting’.

A veneer of concern for the environment can be purchased by corporations through donations to environmental groups. Endorsement from such alliances can be powerful, but they can also be dangerous liaisons. Here Beder raises an issue where it is clearly not only the ethics and values of the corporate sector that merit examination. The traditional confrontational role of environmental groups becomes eroded: a question that John Elkington has reported having to field (1997) is “Once all the environmentalists have got into bed with industry, who will throw rocks at industry’s tent from the outside?” An interesting twist on this is that the question came from someone in the business world! Beder warns that corporations can access information about the work and philosophy of these environmental groups, useful in the longer term gameplan against what the groups stand for. Increasingly, leading environmentalists are proposed as candidates to Boards of Directors or advisory boards; anyone who has scanned recently published Company Environmental Reports will have noticed the amount of endorsement and comment currently found from environmentalists. However, some of us would argue that it is only ‘talking with the enemy’ that is going to build a bridge of constructive dialogue which may lead to changed business perspectives.

The manipulation of scientific controversy over environmental concerns is one of the most powerful ways in which corporations can promote their own ideologies. An example Beder traces in depth is the history of the contested views over dioxin and the industry funded research which, in the face of significant evidence to the contrary, persists in reporting only marginal health effects for the substance. The chlorine industry has moved into producing schools materials and establishing front groups of ‘concerned’ parents Beder reminds us of the extent to which children and education have become prime targets of the PR industry, as environmental educators will be aware. No doubt many of us have been unsuccessful in gaining sponsorship funding for resources based on the principles of environmental education only to see that funding expended on schools materials which amount to an industry PR exercise where, as Beder points out, corporate views are promulgated in the classroom. Added to this is the whole thrust for ‘green’ marketing, aimed at ‘repositioning’ the market and maintaining consumer levels, not least among children and young people.

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***‘the decline in democracy that it betokens’***

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What Beder draws from all of this is the decline in democracy that it betokens. Surveys may report increased

public concern about the environment and a desire for tougher regulation, but this is not translated into action; corporate investment is too important to economic growth for government to take note, giving corporations privileged access to government policy making, and greater power in the democratic system. Beder gives examples of collusion between government and corporate groups in the USA, Australia and the UK. It means that corporations are increasingly setting the political agenda, while passive entertainment foisted upon the public through the media discourages political participation, and sells the values of free enterprise and consumerism.

Yet, for all this, Beder argues that, perversely, the media still plays a role in creating a mass movement of concern for the environment, even through negative portrayals of protest movements or alternative life styles. She suggests a positive 'spin' for the environment, also, by observing that the amount of effort and funding that has to go into attempts to stifle the environmental agenda is an indirect tribute to its strength. In the *Foreword* to the book, David Edwards likens this to a comment in *History and Warfare*, where Howard Zinn points out that governments have to go to enormous lengths to mobilise populations to go to war, through claiming that wars come out of human nature. In the same way, Beder suggests that the corporate relations machine is itself an inverted tribute to human nature and moral values. Picking up on the earlier quotation from Tokar, Beder also concludes that environmentalism must be a powerful challenge to corporate hegemony if so much effort has to go into thwarting it.

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***'a new agenda.....which environmental educators.....might take on board'***

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Beder finishes by suggesting that all of this presents a new agenda for environmentalism, and it is one which environmental educators in particular might take on board. Not all of us would agree with her that environmentalists have ignored the ideological and political sphere where corporations set the agenda—but we would probably have to concede that, in general, her charge carries weight. She calls upon environmental groups to engage in the ideological arena and to expose corporate myths and manipulation for what they are, thus opening up new areas and ideas to public debate. This challenge to action brings a much needed signal of hope at the end of a book which is unrelenting in its exposure of corporate manipulation at many levels, an exposure which is the more powerful for the fact that Beder does not present her case in an emotive manner, but reinforces her argument at each turn with detailed research. Maybe Beder will follow up with a book in which she joins us in taking up the challenge of embracing a more potent agenda and action plan for the environmental movement, just as *Global Spin* appears to be picking up the baton from *The Nature of Sustainable Development*.

For environmental educators, the book will provide an invaluable resource, particularly at the tertiary level of education. It has already become part of the reading for the post-graduate course I teach in Business Studies, and joins a growing number of important publications aimed at stripping away the corporate front; see, for example, the ongoing work of The Ecologist, Lang and Hines (1993), Kortens (1995), Welford (1997) and others.

I have found that there are two particularly tricky things about introducing education for sustainability into the Business Studies curriculum: one is to get a foot in the door; the other is to ensure that a balance is maintained between opening students' eyes to realities of the business world, and assisting them, if they wish, to enter that world as potential change agents, without promulgating just another form of propaganda. The students I teach are typically stunned by their initial introduction to the environment and business debate, especially as this is the only environmental course most of them encounter. Such views as Beder's jangle with the profit based, growth-at-all-costs ideology they have become familiar with for the past three to four years. These students have grown up in the climate that the corporate PR machine has helped to create; exposures such as Beder's of the corporate impact on values and worldviews help them to question the world as they know it. As they learn about the social, political and economic forces which impact on the environment, and consider the questions of agency and causality for the way things are, they become better equipped to critique, not only business' traditional role, but its current occupancy of centre stage in the sustainable development debate. This is vitally important for our future generation of business leaders. Students also need to become acquainted with the literature of business and sustainability which has recently emerged, not only from academia, but from the business world itself—particularly that presenting the eco-efficiency thrust as sustainable development—and attempt to determine their own position on the business and sustainability continuum. Although not all teachers or students, particularly in Business Schools, will necessarily agree with Beder's position on the free market and its ideology, her book has enormous punch, and the advantage of being written in an unemotional manner, underpinned by rigorous research. A critical approach to education for sustainability means that we need more books like *Global Spin*, which help to challenge teachers and students, raise their awareness, make them think and debate, and reach their own conclusions from an informed point of view. 🐼

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