

MEDIA HEGEMONY

Corporate Culture Keeps Nature Regular: The “Super Citizen,” the Media and the “Metamucil and Old Faithful” Ad

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The commercial appropriation of environmental imagery is so ubiquitous that it has become a kind of cultural wall paper—largely unnoticed and plastered over formaldehyde-laden plywood lives that are increasingly shaped, or mediated, by flows of technologically and genetically reconfigured nature. All televisual images are now embedded within a system of consolidated, commercial media overdetermined by military-industrial corporations and the advertisers that feed this system. Yet occasionally this system oversteps the voluntary boundaries that maintain the veil of environmental illusion—what some have termed ecopornography—and reveals itself for the juggernaut that it is. In the case examined in this paper, Proctor and Gamble, one of the leading advertisers of consumer products in the United States, overstepped the line that keeps citizens on the boardwalk at Yellowstone National Park by impersonating a Park ranger and “healing” the Old Faithful geyser with a dose of its laxative, Metamucil.

The Metamucil/Old Faithful advertisement provides an opportunity to clearly observe the modus operandi of the *super citizen*, a powerful status enjoyed by corporations, which have been granted many of the rights and privileges of a “person” without being held accountable for their actions. Neoliberalism promotes unchallenged corporate authority. Through the mini-narrative contained in the Metamucil/Old Faithful commercial and the media discourse that followed, the neoliberal imaginary is revealed. In a post-structural world where representation strongly influences perceptions of reality, tracing the contours of the virtual is essential for understanding the flows of power that are shaping the material world.

Popular Culture and the Environment

Popular culture has become recognized turf for struggles over ecological discourses. From the narratives of popular television drama to the eco-collage of SUV advertising, implicit and explicit debates about nature and culture are woven into the televisual backdrop of life in the 21st century western world. Analysis of popular culture texts and their connections to the natural world has emerged as both a potent stream of media research and a serious adjunct to the more traditional analysis of news media effects, framing, discourse, and representation of environmental issues.

Thus, the languages and images of popular culture situate humans in relation to natural environments, create and maintain hierarchies of importance, reinforce extant values and beliefs, justify actions or inaction, suggest heroes and villains, [and] create past contexts [and] future expectations.

With the blurring of news and entertainment, infotainment has emerged as a highly visible and influential space for shaping and directing environmental impulses. In their study of environmental discourses in narrative television dramas in the U.S. and audience response to those narratives, Shanahan and McComas found “that [environmental] conceptions and portrayals are strongly supportive of the DSP [dominant social paradigm].” They argue that television not only acts as a break to retard social change across a host of social issues, but it

also “cultivates ‘alienation’ and stifles activism.” Thus the fictions created for dominant commercial media perpetuate many of the patterns of environmental representation in news media coverage, a phenomenon documented by 30 years of scholarly work across a host of traditions.

The system in which the Metamucil ad is embedded is defined by the tropes of “marketplace” and “efficiency,” where public spaces, institutions and actors are colonized by these tropes and reconfigured to serve the demands of a global neoliberal regime. Detailing the strategies of the corporate super citizen is an essential step toward developing effective tactics in response. This one instance represents one of many examples that has led to the newly emerging networked activism that is responding to the corporate enclosure of communication technology.

Advertising and Greenwashing

The proliferation of green marketing and greenwashing is a reminder of the enduring appeal of environmental imagery. As the natural world becomes increasingly mapped, mined, logged and paved, pristine images of mountains, prairies and wildlife grace everything from calendars to cereal boxes. The vast majority of these images are harnessed by capital to enlist the natural in its own commodification. Through the appropriation of wild nature, advertisers are able to redirect the potentially radical environmental impulse back into an act of consumption. As a result, consumerism based on the marketing of nature has been expanded, while at the same time the environmental impulse has been tamed.

A host of scholars have detailed the contours of the cycle described above. Smith confronts the paradox of ecologically concerned citizens who are lured “goat-like” into environmentally destructive consumption practices. Although there are possibilities for positive change embodied in green marketing, the pluses are outweighed by its negative aspects, which Smith argues, maintain and reproduce consumer culture. Green marketing contains an underlying discourse of “productivism” that along with the ensuing culture of consumption is the product of a largely consolidated commercial media system. “The market, advertising and public relations industries are far ahead of the green movement and environmental political theory in the understanding of signifying systems,” Smith notes. Green marketing is particularly insidious, because it appropriates “nature as a neutral bystander” that then functions as an “unbiased arbiter.” “Nature’s laws can then be invoked as a source of legitimation” where the purity of nature’s cycles is conferred on the product or business being advertised.

In the case of the Metamucil ad, we see an appropriation of the “neutral bystander” in the form of Old Faithful, a geyser that functions 24/7 according to geological processes, not commercial interests. Additionally, the “unbiased arbiter” in the guise of the National Park Ranger is invoked, appropriating the public values of land stewardship and conservation made possible through a system of taxation and a broader conception of the public good. The “private” corporation is then cloaked in the guise of “public” service, working with nature to maintain the smooth functioning of these iconic natural phenomena.

In a similar vein, Corbett demonstrates the pervasive green backdrop in advertising and argues these images “serve as cultural icons of environmental values embedded within

the social system.” Because of their ubiquity and repetition, ads are said to have a “special cultural power” that serves as a guide “for what is important, valued and acceptable.” The Metamucil example reinforces an anthropocentric position that empowers humans with the ability to mediate the earth with a “natural” laxative, folding nature back on itself through the transfigurative process of human agency and intervention.

The Super Citizen

Scholars looking at public participation in local environmental decision-making processes have documented a troubling trend: the presence of corporations acting in the guise of citizens. In the U.S., the presence of corporations in public participation processes is a direct outgrowth of courts conferring many of the rights of citizens onto corporations. In hearings designed to elicit public testimony about potential impacts of development, waste emissions or a range of other community issues, citizens and community organizations are increasingly competing for time at the lectern with representatives of corporate stakeholders. Corporations have been dubbed “super citizens” in recognition of the increased intellectual and material resources they bring to these deliberative processes. Guldbrandsen and Holland sum it up this way:

Business leaders are treated as though they were “apolitical,” while environmentalists and social justice activists are perceived as having “special interests” or “political” agendas. We use the concept of “super citizen” to capture this privileging of business leaders. If these forms spread with their granting of super citizen status to business, they will likely pose challenges for grassroots politics and, as has been the case along the New River, blunt the critical edge of the environmental critique.

Besides bringing the resources of the business community to the table, the super citizen brings the image of the business community—the *representation* of imagined efficiency and legitimacy. Although much has been written about the intellectual and material resources born by the super citizen, the issue of representation and the mediating powers of the super citizen demand further inquiry. As public space is increasingly privatized and marketplace values are propagated across a host of media outlets, it is vitally important to trace the routines of mediation that reinforce the erosion of public values and answer the saturation of commercial media, which trumpets the call of the super citizen.

The origin of the super citizen can be traced to the legal history of business incorporation. The concept of individuals joining together to pool resources in pursuit of profit dates back to joint stock companies that emerged in the 16th century. But collective financial arrangements changed significantly in the late 1800s when the legal responsibilities of corporations moved from the individual shareholders to the corporation itself.

By the end of the nineteenth century, through a bizarre legal alchemy, courts had fully transformed the corporation into a “person,” with its own identity, separate from the flesh-and-blood people who were its owners...The corporate person had taken the places, at least in law, of the real people who owned corporations.

This new status gave corporations the same legal protections as individuals, including the Fourteenth Amendment’s rights to due process and equal protection. And with this legal turn, the super citizen was born. The corporate super citizen has continued to acquire new powers, most recently aided by a discourse of privatization, free trade and the proliferation

of global trade agreements during the 1990s that privilege it over the flesh-and-blood citizens of nation states. Through their super citizen status, corporations have now amassed so much power that the democratic principles that created the conditions for the birth of the super citizen are now being eroded and marginalized by the “bizarre legal alchemy” that emerged out of that very legal and civic tradition.

In detailing the behavior of the super citizen, Guldbrandsen and Holland established the larger context of neoliberalism and globalization as significant forces elevating the status of corporate knowledge. Though they focus on public participation in local environmental decision-making processes, they acknowledge the power of “symbolic capital” as a significant tool at the disposal of the super citizen.

Neoliberalism celebrates the wisdom of the marketplace and the need for localities to shape themselves to fit niches in the capitalist economy. It privileges business know-how above other kinds of practical knowledge from other walks of life making business, as we have already noted, a “super citizen.” With the economic resources and symbolic capital of the super citizen, corporate interests tend to constitute a center of gravity for these partnerships. These hybridizing accommodations—both the discourses and the partnership form of decision making—it is argued, have blunted the radical edges of the environmental movement.

It is common knowledge among scholars and, to a lesser extent, citizens that the super citizen appropriates environmental images in the service of capital. Less clearly understood is the disparity between the representational repertoires of the super citizen and the grassroots citizen. These disparities include material differentials that allow corporations to spend millions of dollars on televised ad campaigns, ideological viewpoint discrimination on the part of broadcasters and cable TV outlets that refuse to air fully paid ads that challenge the status quo, and finally, a larger, synergistic media infrastructure that supports and reinforces neoliberal assumptions, giving the super citizen a chorus to echo its position. These structural disparities regarding access to the means of televisual representation are exemplified in the Metamucil/Old Faithful ad and the ensuing media response to the ad.

The Metamucil Ad

In the winter of 2002/2003, Proctor and Gamble released a television ad for Metamucil, a “100% natural psyllium fiber” laxative. The ad features a man who appears to be a U.S. National Park Ranger speaking to a group of tourists at the Old Faithful geyser in Yellowstone National Park. He says, “Everyday for thousands of years, Old Faithful has been, well, faithful. You can almost set your watch by it.” A woman in the audience raises her hand and asks, “What causes it to stay so regular?” The scene cuts and the word “earlier” appears. We see the ranger open a box, mix up a glass of Metamucil and pour the mixture into the open geyser hole as a narrator intones, “Stay regular, with Metamucil daily fiber therapy.” The scene cuts back to the ranger and tourists, and as the geyser erupts, the ranger smiles and answers the woman’s question by saying, “we just can’t say” as the audience applauds. The scene cuts to an image of the Metamucil label and the narrator closes with “Get regular, stay regular, the natural way. Now available in powder, wafers and capsules.” As of the fall 2005, this 30-second spot was still airing on national and cable television stations in the U.S.

As we see in the ad itself, the role of the park ranger has been taken over by the commercial entity, Metamucil/Proctor and Gamble. The public servant embodied as park

ranger becomes a private entity, representing a commercial company that has the ability to transgress the boundaries set up by the park. This corporate representative masked as a public servant is then able to approach the opening of the Old Faithful geyser and pour Metamucil into the hole—something neither park rangers nor (especially) average citizens are allowed to do. This cloaking of corporate interests in the guise of a park ranger reflects the neoliberal model where public spaces, institutions and practices are increasingly privatized and subjected to market forces. The park ranger is a somewhat neutral image, associated with protecting wildlife and preventing forest fires. The Metamucil ad appropriates this publicly financed and constructed image and enlists it in the service of Proctor and Gamble. As we will see, the public response to this advertisement contained a number of critical discourses that created a potential rupture—a space for critical reflection and analysis of the contemporary status quo—that required a suture by the chorus of neoliberal defenders occupying the privileged spaces of media real estate.

Media and Cultural Skirmish Over the Metamucil Ad

The Metamucil/Old Faithful ad elicited reactions from national parks personnel almost immediately after the ad first aired, which were reported by a range of print and online news organizations. The mediated response to this ad reveals both the struggle to open up a space for environmental and media critique and the ability of the super citizen to foreclose that space before it can be discursively explored. Thus we see yet another mediated aspect of the super citizen: the ability to manipulate discourses as they emerge.

Shortly after the Metamucil/Old Faithful ad aired, the *New York Times* ran an article about the ad and the ensuing environmental response. The article quoted Suzanne Lewis, the superintendent of Yellowstone National Park saying, “My eyes got bigger, and my jaw dropped...To suggest that it's not natural, that it is enhanced by a product, is a little disconcerting.” Lewis went on to describe the history of people putting foreign objects, such as rocks, into the geysers to see how high the water would throw them. This turn-of-the-century entertainment caused a number of geysers to stop working and resulted in policies to keep the public away from the geyser openings.

A Proctor and Gamble toxicologist, Dr. Greg Allgood, dismissed the brief cultural and ecological history offered by Lewis and reframed the ad by defending it as “humor.” “The vast majority of people we've heard from like this ad,” Allgood was quoted as saying. “Clearly when you try humor, not everybody gets it.” The corporate response of “harmless fun” that is taken too seriously by dour government bureaucrats was repeated across the mediascape.

The Microsoft online news magazine *Slate* ran a story in Feb. 2003 also emphasizing the harmless fun theme. After noting that Metamucil responded to park officials' concerns by adding the text, “viewers should not throw things into geysers,” the article declared: “P&G has a point: No rational person could take the spot seriously.” *Slate* thus pronounced any “serious” response to the ad to be irrational, denying the power of advertising to influence both the sale of this P&G product and the perceptions of nature and the public servants who work to protect national parks.

Other examples of the “humorless bureaucrats” appeared as the story spread. In an article titled, “The National Parks Service Needs to Loosen Up,” students at Carnegie Mellon wrote, “Metamucil should not be chastised too much for its innocent joking.” Similarly, a *Las Vegas Review Journal* column stated, “They didn't count on the humorless bureaucrats of the National Park Service (motto: Only you can prevent people from having too much fun in the forest).” Written just after the beginning of the Iraq war, the column contrasted the serious issue of war with the perceived triviality of misappropriating natural/national landmarks. The author went on to say that this story was an indication that the country had come under a “reign of regulatory terror” driven by “what the stupidest person in the country might do.” The *Rocky Mountain News* similarly editorialized: “The National Park Service needs to develop a sense of humor. If advertising agencies couldn't poke gentle fun at national and cultural icons, what on earth would they do?” In the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* editorial, “Old Humorless,” park service employees were again chastised for their concerns about the imagery. “The Park Service's reaction to a laxative commercial featuring the geyser makes the agency seem like its sense of humor is constipated.”

These responses to concerns about the ad are united in their opposition to opposition. All the media voices who opined on this issue chose to belittle the concerns of the Park Service and celebrate the “humor” and “creativity” of Proctor and Gamble. The villain in this discourse was the Park Service for being “constipated” and creating unnecessary regulations.

This discursive maneuver is an essential element for the maintenance and expansion of neoliberalism. By making the public governmental representatives the villain, corporate agency vis-à-vis the super citizen is championed and positioned as the victim of excessive regulation and control. The act of corporate appropriation of the culturally valued park ranger—whose value was established and maintained through public resources—is not considered a legitimate issue. Even though the Park Service did not call for the ad's removal and accepted the inclusion of a text warning, the *very impulse* to defend a public good was seized upon as bureaucracy out of control. The reversal of the power balance, where the corporate giant (in this case, Proctor and Gamble) is recast as the victim and underpaid public servants are endowed with extraordinary powers of marketplace interference, is integral to the neoliberal agenda: Public spaces are increasingly marginalized before they can be privatized, which is a central tenant of the expansion of corporate capitalism.

Proctor and Gamble (P&G)—which consistently ranks as the number one or two leading buyer of consumer advertising—has a long and well-documented history of using their advertising dollars to influence media content. As far back as 1932, P&G “canceled its advertising in newspapers that carried a syndicated column telling readers how to make soap at home.” This anti-competitive, reactionary strategy progressed through the 1950s when P&G developed a policy of “not sponsoring shows that depicted industrialists or members of the military in a bad light” and has continued through the present. After *Ms. Magazine* mentioned a congressional inquiry into the possible carcinogenic effects of hair dye (before *Ms.* went ad-free in 1990), P&G pulled all its advertising for Clairol products. The company subsequently expanded its contractual restrictions, banning advertising “in any [magazine] issue that included material on gun control, abortion, the occult, cults, or the disparagement of religion.” During this same time, P&G canceled \$1 million worth of advertising after

WHDH-TV in Boston aired an advocacy ad calling for a boycott of the company's Folgers brand coffee. "P&G canceled its advertising for all brands—Pampers, Tide, Crest, Oil of Olay, and Charmin—not just Folgers." Clearly this ability to determine media content through retaliation for the *mere mention* of content deemed inappropriate has had, and continues to have, a powerful effect on the tone and character of our public debates and the broader civil society.

In addition to influencing media representations of overtly political issues, P&G has an active hand in shaping cultural products as well. Most recently, P&G was cited as a significant force in limiting the country radio airplay of the Grammy award-winning, *Billboard* chart-topping, 4.4 million copy-selling soundtrack to the film *O Brother Where Art Thou?* P&G is the largest purchaser of radio advertising, and young adult women are its largest audience and target demographic. Focus group research designed to deliver the proper audience to P&G found this demographic to prefer "family-friendly, optimistic" music. The two hits from the *O Brother* film, *Oh Death*, and *Man of Constant Sorrow* did not follow this formula, so broadcasters largely avoided this number one album. As a *New York Times* story noted: "The major advertisers are the people who really control what you hear on the radio, especially country radio." These brief examples of the influence P&G wields in the media and the media treatment of the controversy surrounding the Metamucil ad reveal a broader, structural issue about media consolidation and the ability of private sector corporations to restrict free speech and cultural expression in the U.S.

Neoliberalism and the National Parks

The discourse over the Metamucil ad emerged during the first term of the presidency of George W. Bush whose administration is openly hostile to environmental concerns. Early in his term, Bush reneged on a campaign commitment to classify carbon dioxide (CO₂) as a greenhouse gas and regulate emissions. Bush then withdrew U.S. support for the Kyoto Protocol, a global agreement involving 160 countries that took ten years to come into force, to confront the issue of global warming. These policy announcements reflected an anti-science position, exemplified by the administration's questioning of the science behind global warming, energy conservation, and species protection, among other ecological and public health concerns.

The generally high public support for the national parks in the U.S. did not deter the Bush administration from pursuing a number of anti-environmental policies that directly threaten these public lands. In 2003, the U.S. Interior Department reversed a ban on snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park that was introduced in the closing days of the Clinton administration despite overwhelming public support for the ban and requests from the National Park Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The extensive media coverage largely pitted "anti-snowmobile" environmentalists against the economic interests of the "pro snowmobile" winter tour businesses in the small towns surrounding Yellowstone. These stories were framed as outsiders meddling with the jobs of locals. They obscured the collective public investment in the National Parks and instead prioritized the economic livelihood of a small subset of citizens who happened to live close to the collectively owned park land.

The Bush administration also played anti-environmental politics with the funding for maintenance work in the national parks. In August of 2003, Bush promoted the \$2.9 billion he had spent on the National Parks system as an indication of his commitment to this public resource. Critics quickly noted that that this money was part of the annual operating expense budget and actually represented a cut of \$6 million a year in support. Bush did call for another \$5 billion in park funding, though according to a 1998 estimate, that sum would only cover what was needed to clear an already existing maintenance backlog totalling \$4.9 billion. In that case, the politics of environmental support was mediated through a discourse of funding and national park infrastructure as opposed to science and environmental protection. Money was used as a stand-in for support, masking policies that actively endangered the parks and their ecosystems.

The Bush administration also attempted to privatize a large number of park service jobs. By 2003, the Park Service was a neoliberal bonanza, with private contractors running a host of park facilities. The *Tampa Tribune* noted that: “20,000 of the 48,000 workers in the nation’s 388 parks are already private sector employees working for concessionaires, in co-ops, and as construction and maintenance workers.” The plan in 2003 was to move another 1,700 jobs from the public to the private sector. In response, National Park Service director Fran Mainella was quoted as saying, “National parks have been a model for working with the private sector.” The fact that the director of a public agency actively defended the privatization of almost half of her workforce indicates the extent to which the neoliberal agenda has been adopted and accepted as the dominant operating principle, even within the public sector.

The Metamucil incident played out against the backdrop of these larger political issues involving the national parks. In each we see a discourse of market forces and finances driving the policies that shape our public institutions, where the super citizen, endowed with deep corporate pockets and a public primed for marketplace values, was able to harness the twins of tele-mediated persuasion and a ready audience to reconfigure public assets into private engines of capital. Thus, within the new contours of neoliberalism, park rangers can become salesmen, geysers are props for marketing and public land is a stage upon which to project consumer desire.

Analysis and Implications

The Metamucil/Old Faithful ad is a useful “object to think with.” Through this cultural object, we can observe the contours of the super citizen at work—an image machine reproducing the neoliberal model. A substantial and growing body of research articulates the influence of the super citizen on public decision-making processes. However, it is important to understand the full range of influence that these corporate, extra-ordinary “citizens,” which are endowed with material and intellectual resources far and beyond the reach of ordinary citizens, have. In a world increasingly shaped by televisual images crafted by capitalist messengers, the ability to mediate a message has profound implications for public perception on a broad range of social and political issues.

In the case of the Metamucil ad, the power and primacy of the super citizen is revealed in the ad itself as well as the media discourse that reframed debate about the ad. Like most corporate sponsored ads on television today, the Metamucil commercial was well

produced. The production values, and the enduring repetition of the ad through media buys night after night, represents millions of dollars in advertising expenses—money far beyond the reach of the most successful public advocacy group. In addition, the use of iconic public symbols for the advancement of private profit is a classic neoliberal maneuver.

Neoliberalism often denigrates governmental spending as inefficient and an unnecessary drag on an otherwise unfettered marketplace, but in this case, the private corporation Procter and Gamble found the image of the park ranger and Old Faithful valuable enough to appropriate and enlist in the service of the corporation. This appropriation is an acknowledgement of the value of the public service employee we know as the park ranger and his/her stewardship of natural resources. The values embodied in the symbolic park ranger were established and are maintained through a system of public investment through government taxation. Thus the very target of the neoliberal agenda—taxpayer funded public institutions—becomes the cloak of the private super citizen.

The *media-tions* of the super citizen extend beyond the images themselves. As we saw in the media discourse that followed the ad, this was portrayed as a funny commercial and any concerns about Old Faithful or the impersonation of a park ranger were seen as the humorless, constipated, hand-wringing of regulatory bureaucrats. The assumption that ads are funny and that there are no broader implications is one of the great social myths. Most people deny that they are influenced by ads, yet we are increasingly bombarded by a hyper-commercialism that shapes and determines not just the ads but the content of the programs as well. Ads are seen as innocuous or annoying (or in this case funny), whereas public concern about natural resources is subject to the critique of regulation. The ubiquity of advertising reinforces the illusion of innocuous “fun,” whereas any substantive critique of commercial representation calls into question a system thoroughly dominated by commercial messages. This case also reveals the boundaries of a neoliberal sense of humor. Where the manipulation of natural resources in this case is deemed “innocuous” by corporate media outlets, Adbuster’s animation of a pig coming out of a map of North America did not strike the funny bone of corporate broadcasters and has been effectively banned from the airwaves.

The *media-tions* of the super citizen take on increasing importance as we consider the public interest standards written into the broadcast regulations of the Federal Communications Commission in the United States. In the U.S., the airwaves are considered to be owned by the public and are leased to commercial entities who in turn agree to serve the “public interest” as a part of the lease. As watered down as these polices have become—resulting in a consolidated media landscape dominated by six major corporations—the notion of the “public” remains a visible trope within media regulation discourse. As with the public participation process detailed above, the public in this case has been replaced by the super citizen, which is able to create messages, distribute them globally, and even help shape their reception through the reinforcement of advertising as harmless fun.

Finally, the Metamucil ad is the result of a system that selects content and privileges voices based on their ability to reproduce the dominant paradigm. Here we see the super citizen with unfettered access to the televisual screen at the same time that messages that challenge the status quo have been actively blocked from what DeLuca and Peebles have somewhat ironically referred to as “the public screen.” From the persistent attempts of Adbusters to air their ads for “buy-nothing-day” to attempts by a host of anti-war groups to

have their ads placed on TV—including Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker, Barbara Koppel, whose work was denied a forum on MTV, and MoveOn.org which wanted to air a political ad during the Super Bowl—public interest organizations have been consistently denied access to the “public screen” despite offers to pay market rates for the ad slots. This viewpoint discrimination is the most influential tool of the super citizen, constraining the marketplace of ideas and limiting the possibility of an informed public capable of engaging in democratic processes.

The consolidation of global media coupled with the consistent denial of access to the “public screen” for noncommercial messages from advocacy groups reinforce the need for radical media reform at the local and global levels. A nascent global media reform movement is emerging to confront these issues. This movement includes the creation of new media spaces, such as the indymedia model that has spread to 35 countries worldwide and more than 130 websites, as well as the emergence of blogs. These new micro-media technologies are harnessing the power of networked activism to confront the enclosure of media space by the super citizen. Through policy reform, activism and the consistent confrontation of the global media cartel, environmentalists and public advocacy groups across the political spectrum may yet prove to be the Lilliputians who sedate the super citizen Gulliver and restrain the reach of neoliberal global capital.