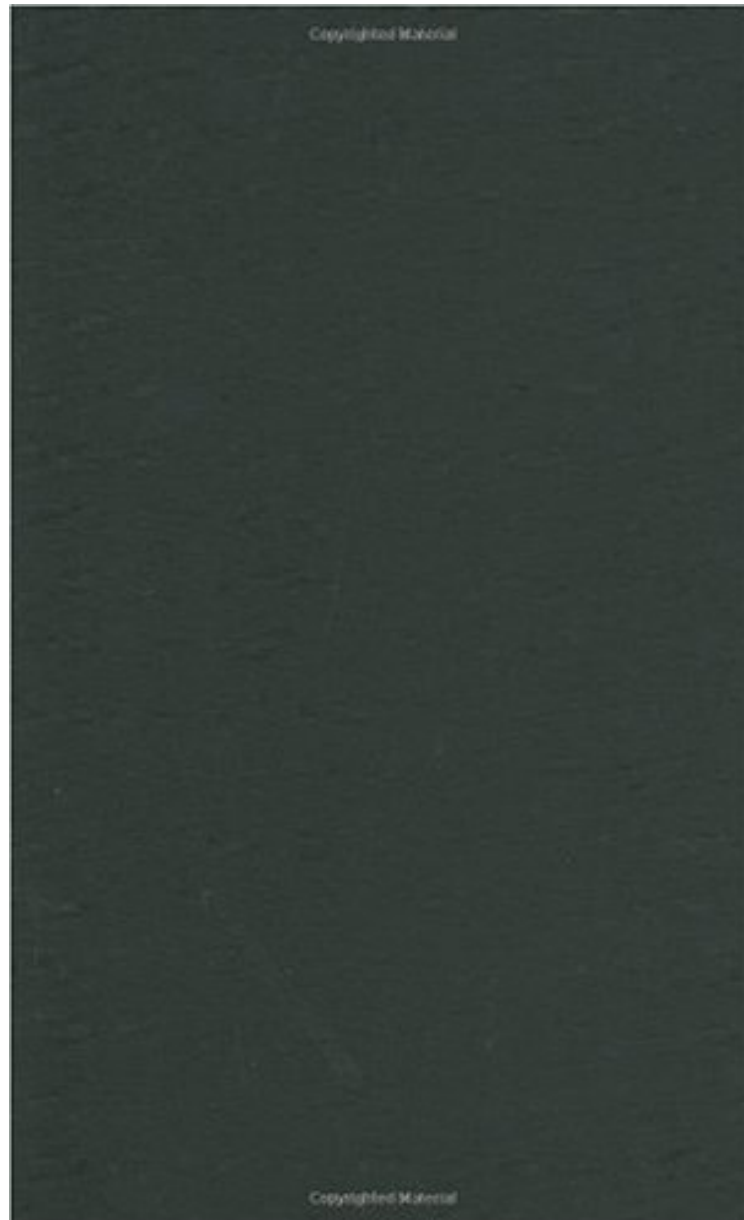


[Read download] The Business of America: How Consumers Have Replaced Citizens and How We Can Reverse the Trend (Pathways Through the Twenty-First Century)

# The Business of America: How Consumers Have Replaced Citizens and How We Can Reverse the Trend (Pathways Through the Twenty-First Century)

*Saul Landau*

*audiobook / \*ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#3363745 in eBooks 2004-06-29 2004-06-15 File Name: B001AQ2C9K | File size: 57.Mb

**Saul Landau : The Business of America: How Consumers Have Replaced Citizens and How We Can Reverse the Trend (Pathways Through the Twenty-First Century)**

before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Business of America: How Consumers Have Replaced Citizens and How We Can Reverse the Trend (Pathways Through the Twenty-First Century)*:

14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. A Timely Manifesto for Change--and an Entertaining Read By Farrah Hassen Landau's *THE BUSINESS OF AMERICA*, a complementary follow-up to his 2003 work, *THE PRE-EMPTIVE EMPIRE* (a bold and witty collection of diary-like entries chronicling the lingering parallels, contradictions and dramatic shifts in U.S. foreign policy under President George W. Bush before and after the 9/11 attacks), succeeds in once again providing the public with a much needed context for decoding the current political, socioeconomic and environmental dimensions behind one of America's favorite exports, the culture of consumption, or shopping. More precisely, Landau observes, the habitual and seemingly unconscious usage of the accountants' term 'bottom line' by President George W. Bush, college professors, students and others alike "symbolizes contemporary values. Advertisers attempt to convince each 'consumer' that he or she is and should be the focus of attention and as such can overcome the severe inadequacies from which he or she suffers by buying something, at the mall or online" (p. 2). Spend a few minutes channel surfing through the barrage of "plastic surgery changed my life--and left me looking totally unrecognizable" reality TV shows (like ABC's "Extreme Makeover" and Fox's "The Swan"), interspersed with commercials selling "new and improved" SUVs and shampoos and the frenzied news flashes about the latest sex scandal, to recognize, as Landau pointedly does in Chapter 3 ("Sheep Don't Need Whipping: Media in the Twenty-First Century"), how the mainstream media's reinforcement of individualism and consumerism plays a role in distracting citizens from thinking about the more crucial issues of their time--including the ongoing resistance in Iraq, worldwide proliferation of terrorism, growing unequal distribution of wealth in America and abroad and environmental degradation. What distinguishes *THE BUSINESS OF AMERICA* from the flock of pretentious, dust-collecting "cultural studies" books on the same subject is its broad scope, sense of humor and conversational-like quality. Indeed, Landau analyzes President Bush's promotion of shopping as a spiritual value (following the 9/11 attacks, W urged Americans to shop and travel to Disney World) and consumerism's correlation to his political values (Chapter 1, "The Bush Vision: A Bipolar Political Disorder") and justification for waging war against Iraq (Chapter 5, "The Iraq Conundrum"); the prevailing national security culture in Washington (Chapter 2); and Nature's response to congested freeways, gus-guzzling vehicles and developers' encroachment on public land (Chapter 4, "At Two with Nature"). In particular, Landau's unlikely pairing of essays on Las Vegas as epitomizing Bush's America and a wedding celebration in Havana stand out as effectively dramatizing one culture's celebration of easy money with that of an anti-global economic model neighbor's embrace of an educated, healthy and socially-conscious public. Ultimately, Landau challenges readers with a lingering question: What is the meaning of citizenry in America, besides the upcoming ritual of voting for a President every four years and shopping? Rather than answering that question, Landau's work, in the words of the late C. Wright Mills's 1959 critique (*THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION*) of the anti-humanist sociology schools of the time, aims at encouraging 21st century individuals to "grasp what is going on in the world, and to understand what is happening in themselves as minute points of intersections of biography and history within society"--without being lured to do so by endless commercial messages and empty sales pitches.

First published in 2004. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor Francis, an informa company.