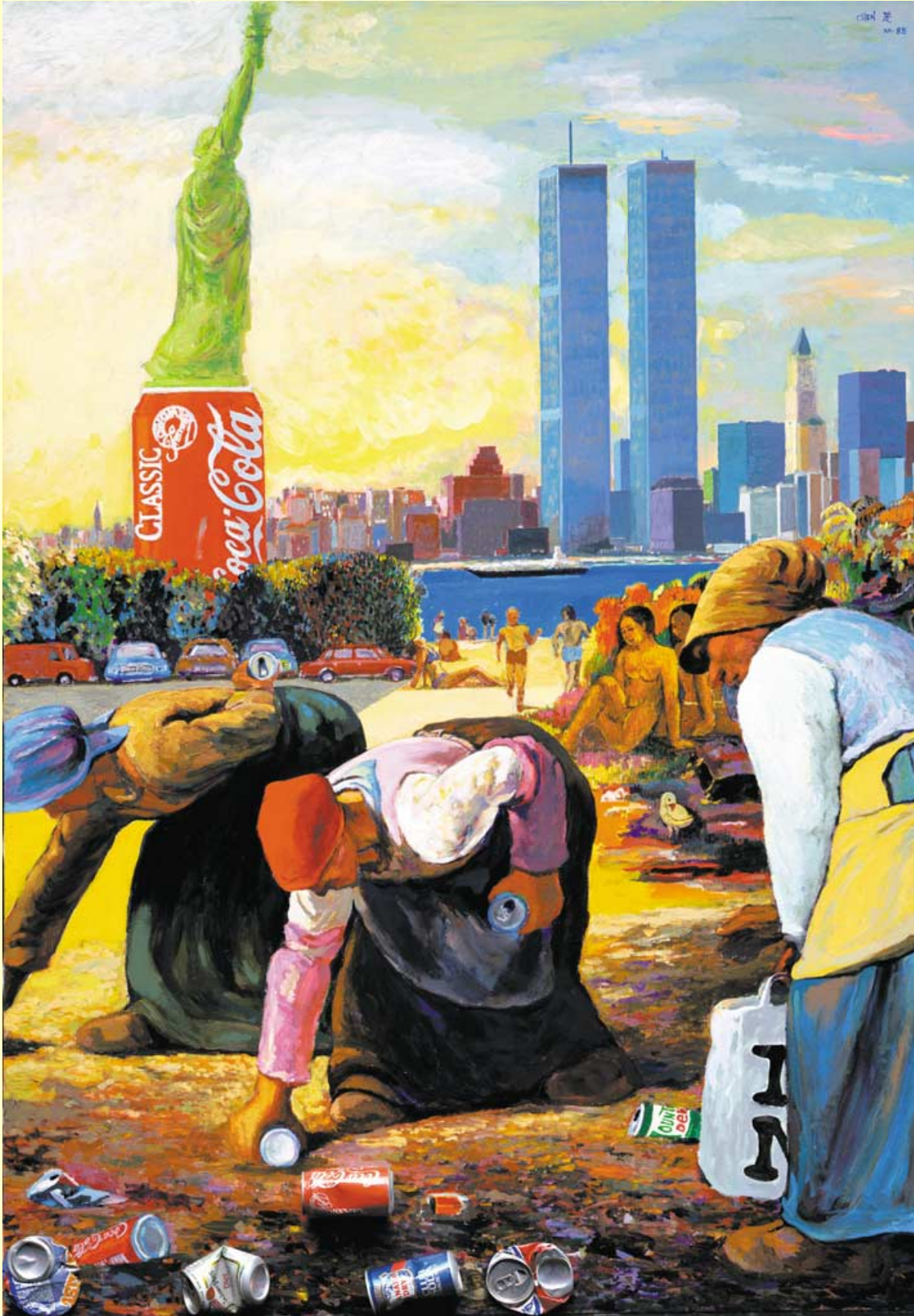


3 The chronicle of Coca-Cola®

INTERDÉPENDANCES

CONFLITS

CONTACTS DES CULTURES



T. F. CHEN, *City Gleaners* (1985)

CLOSE-UP 3

1. Birth and growth of a giant

1. Read the two articles twice, then hide them and try to memorize as much as you can: date of birth, location, name of the founder, the first slogan, why WW2 marked a turning point in the expansion of the Company...
2. What is Coca-Cola® associated with in the two ads? What impressions do they convey?

Small beginnings

The product was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on May 8, 1886. Dr. John Styth Pemberton, a local pharmacist, produced a syrup, then mixed it with carbonated water and came up with the Coke everyone began drinking.

- 5 Dr. Pemberton's partner and bookkeeper*, Frank M. Robinson, invented Coca-Cola's name and logotype. It was at once said to be "Delicious and Refreshing", a theme that today's ads continue to echo.

The first newspaper ad for Coca-Cola soon appeared in *The Atlanta Journal*, inviting thirsty citizens to try "the new and popular soda fountain drink".

- 10

* *comptable*



Pause and refresh

Drink
Coca-Cola
Delicious and Refreshing

A good place to park...and to pause...is where you see the familiar red sign that says "Drink Coca-Cola." On streets and highways everywhere it flashes a welcome invitation to a sociable pause for pure refreshment. Thirst asks nothing more.

"COLD...ICE-COLD"



"Coca-Cola goes along"

Drink
Coca-Cola
Delicious and Refreshing

Ice-cold Coca-Cola gets a hearty welcome. It's the answer to thirst that adds refreshment. Coca-Cola has that extra something to do the job of complete refreshment. It has a taste that's uniquely satisfying—a quality that's unmistakable. That's why the only thing like Coca-Cola is Coca-Cola itself. Thirst asks nothing more.

5¢

It's natural for people to want to enjoy friendly conversations. That's why the best Coca-Cola called Coca-Cola and Coca-Cola serve the same thing...the real thing...the single thing coming from a single source, and well known to the world.

It's the real thing

Moving with the times

The Coca-Cola Company started building its global network in the 1920s.

When World War II broke out, Coca-Cola was bottled in 44 countries. The war marked a turning point for the corporation. In 1941 Robert Woodruff's* goal was "to see that every man in uniform gets a bottle of Coca-Cola for 5 cents, wherever he is and whatever it costs the Company."

- 5
- 10

The plants were set up as close as possible to combat areas in Europe and the Pacific. More than 5 billion bottles of Coke were consumed by military service personnel during the war.

- 15

But the presence of Coca-Cola did more than just lift the morale of the troops. In many areas, it gave local people their first taste of Coca-Cola.

After the war, the firm started its worldwide expansion and became a powerful brand. From the mid-1940s until 1960, the number of countries with bottling operations nearly doubled.

* the Company's president

2. A Coke is a Coke

“What’s great about this country is that America started the tradition where the richest consumers buy essentially the same things as the poorest. You can be watching TV and see Coca-Cola, and you know that the President drinks Coke, Liz Taylor drinks Coke, and just think, you can drink Coke, too. A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum* on the corner is drinking. All the Cokes are the same and all the Cokes are good. Liz Taylor knows it, the President knows it, the bum knows it, and you know it.”

Andy WARHOL (1975)

* *clochard*



Andy WARHOL, *210 Coke Bottles* (1964)

What aspects of American society does Andy Warhol stress, both in the text and the painting?

3. Think global, act local

Coca-Cola CEO¹ talks ethics

Introducing the speaker, Yale Center for international and Area Studies director Gustav Ranis said Daft² has worked to decentralize the operation of Coke. “His motto³ is to think globally and act locally,” Ranis said. “This policy has allowed Coke to get closer to the consumer.”

Daft said he thinks that every business must be run like a local business. Coke has employed this principle by bottling all of its products at the local level. As a result, Daft said he believes that people have a close relationship with Coke. “We want people to say Coke is ‘My Coke,’” Daft said. “Doing the right thing in that community is a real brand-builder for us. It is as good as a thirty-second commercial.”

Justin ASH, in *Yaledailynews.com*, April 1, 2004

1. [ˌsiːiːˈəʊ] chief executive officer: *directeur général* – 2. chairman and chief executive officer of the Coca-Cola Company – 3. [ˈmɒtəʊ] *devise*



In your own words, explain what strategy is now used by the Coca-Cola Company.

4. Branding

NAOMI KLEIN: Advertising is a form of branding, but branding is a much more ambitious project than simply buying a billboard or... a commercial on TV. The idea of branding came about during the industrial revolution. Branding was a process of... trying to create distinction and individuality within the context of manufactured sameness. So you have these identical products coming out through the line, well then you have to say, this product is gonna stand out because it got Aunt Jamima's name on it, or the Quaker Oats guy's... name is on it.

JOURNALIST: But the idea behind branding has now changed.

NAOMI KLEIN: It is... about... you. Not about the brand being of good quality, but you being of good quality because you buy that brand.

JOURNALIST: Brands are now sold as lifestyle, a look, a culture.

NAOMI KLEIN: You do not just buy Nike sneakers; you buy in to the entire Nike philosophy.



From a documentary film by Jason DICEMAN (2001)

1. What elements immediately strike you in the *Time* cover? What are the cartoonist's goals?
2. According to Naomi Klein, what impact does branding have on our lives? Why?

5. Brands of the future

Consumers can increasingly influence the behaviour of companies. Arrogance, greed and hypocrisy are swiftly punished.

"It is absurd to say that brands can be too powerful," concludes Interbrand's Ms Clifton. "Brands are the ultimate accountable institution. If people fall out of love with your brand, you go out of business."

This ultimately makes brands highly effective tools through which to bring about change. Brands of the future will have to stand not only for product quality and a desirable image. They will also have to signal something wholesome about the company behind the brand. "The next big thing in brands is social responsibility," says Mr Olins, "It will be clever to say there is nothing different about our

product or price, but we behave well." Far from being evil, brands are becoming an effective weapon for holding even the largest global corporations to account. If we do not use them for that purpose, as Mr Olins puts it, "we are lazy and indifferent and we deserve what we get."

Fittingly, brands will then have come full circle. The founders of some of the world's oldest – Hershey, Disney, Cadbury and Boots, for example – devoted their lives and company profits to social improvements, to building spacious towns, better schools and bigger hospitals. The difference in the future will be that it will be consumers, not philanthropists, who will dictate the social agenda.

The Economist, September 6, 2001

1. Read the article first, then analyze what impact consumers may have on world companies in the future.
2. Do you agree with the journalist's view? Why or why not?
3. The expression "Coca-colonialism" is often used. Explain what this means in your own words.