

# 國立中央大學 111 學年度碩士班考試入學試題

所別： 英美語文學系 碩士班 不分組(一般生)

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科目： 文化與文學分析

Instruction: Read the excerpt carefully and answer the following two questions in essay form (100%).

First question (60%): Explain the main argument of this excerpt.

Second question (40%): Present your own perspective on this excerpt.

By the mid-nineties, companies like Nike, Polo and Tommy Hilfiger were ready to take branding to the next level: no longer simply branding their own products, but branding the outside culture as well—by sponsoring cultural events, they could go out into the world and claim bits of it as brand-name outposts. For these companies, branding was not just a matter of adding value to a product. It was about thirstily soaking up cultural ideas and iconography that their brands could reflect by projecting these ideas and images back on the culture as “extensions” of their brands. Culture, in other words, would add value to their brands. For example, Onute Miller, senior brand manager for Tequila Sauza, explains that her company sponsored a *risqué* photography exhibit by George Holz because “art was a natural synergy with our product.”

Branding’s current state of cultural expansionism is about much more than traditional corporate sponsorships: the classic arrangement in which a company donates money to an event in exchange for seeing its logo on a banner or in a program. Rather, this is the Tommy Hilfiger approach of full-frontal branding, applied now to cityscapes, music, art, films, community events, magazines, sports and schools. This ambitious project makes the logo the central focus of everything it touches—not an add-on or a happy association, but the main attraction.

The effect, if not always the original intent, of advanced branding is to nudge the hosting culture into the background and make the brand the star. It is not to sponsor culture but to *be* the culture. And why shouldn’t it be? If brands are not products but ideas, attitudes, values and experiences, why can’t they be culture too?