



Downsize This!

Michael Moore

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Who says the left wing doesn't have a sense of humor? Maybe it doesn't, but documentarian Michael Moore sure does--Exhibit A was *Roger & Me*; B was the ill-fated *TV Nation*; & C is 1997's print skirmish *Downsize This!* Moore's politics are rabidly liberal, populist & anti-big business--about what you'd expect from the former editor of *Mother Jones*. While this restricts his audience to Americans on the left side of the aisle, for them *Downsize This!* will be a chance to point & laugh hysterically (if ruefully) at the clique of rich white guys who run everything. Moore is at his best as a prankster, whether it's trying to see if Pat Buchanan will take a campaign donation from the John Wayne Gacy Fan Club (yes) or whether he can have Bob Dornan committed to an insane asylum based on his bizarre behavior (no, but it was close). Moore is one of our sharpest satirists, & *Downsize This!* makes one wish he would write a "Sorry State of the Union" every year. But only if it doesn't cut into his moviemaking--that's too big a price to pay.--Michael Gerber

Downsize This! Details

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Author : Michael Moore

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From Reader Review Downsize This! for online ebook

Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance says

Makes you think....

Jessica says

While Michael Moore is biased, I always enjoy his work.

David Sarkies says

Michael Moore takes a swing at corporate America

12 May 2012

I picked up this book probably within the first few months of getting my first fulltime, degree related job. Going from unemployment benefits to a steady wage at the time felt like rivers of gold had opened up and started pouring wealth onto me, and unfortunately I ended up spending it as if it was limitless. One of the things that I began doing was buying lots of books that I had never had the opportunity of being able to afford previously, and I can remember coming home regularly with more books to cram onto my bookshelf. At the time I also loaded up on anti-corporate, left-wing leaning books, and in a way I still like the style, but it has also reached the point where there is really nothing new to be said. That does not mean that I have walked away from it, but rather have shifted my attention elsewhere.

I found this book to be a quick and quite easy read, and it is one of Michael Moore's earlier books, which means that he did seem to be a little more level headed at the time. It was also written during the reign of Bill Clinton, which also means that he was receiving less flack from the Republican Right than he received during the reign of George Bush Jnr. However, what is interesting is that there was little difference in the contents of the books over the period, with the exception that there was a greater concern over the intrusion of corporate interests into the government sphere. However, we need to be aware that in American politics at least, both parties tend to lean to the right, though the Republicans tend to lean further to the right than do the Democrats.

However, it was not always that way, and though one may suggest that it was when Regan was elected president that the Republicans took a sharp move to the right, we also must remember that the United States has always been a country with right wing tendencies. Remember that there was no labour movement in the United States and there was no formation of a Labour Party, as had happened in both England and Australia. In Australia, and England, the Labour Party evolved out of the Union movement, and in many cases, it was seen as a necessary move to attempt to halt the progress of communism. In England, the Conservative Party was the party that introduced health care and education, as well as pushed through the labour laws that are taken foregranted today. However, this never happened in the United States, and while there are labour laws, many of them have been watered down significantly. In fact, throughout the 1920s, while the Union movement was being supported in other countries, it was being attacked and undermined in the United States. Yet we must not forget that it was a Republican President that abolished slavery, and went to war to do so, and it was also a Republican President that also went to war against the monopolistic corporations of the early 20th Century and won. The Republican party of today is not the Republican party of yesterday, nor will it necessarily be the Republican party of tomorrow. While, to an extent, I respect the beliefs of Republicans, there are many aspects (such as their opposition to paying tax) that I find quite self-centred and

offensive.

However, I should consider some of the ideas that come out of this book, and as the title suggests, it is about how companies downsize their workforce, shift factories overseas, simply for the short term profit of the balance sheet and the shareholders. I have mentioned elsewhere though that corporate profits do not necessarily benefit only a handful of people, but also benefit the wider community who have their life savings stored up in superfunds. That does not necessarily mean that we all benefit from it, and that our life savings are safe, but we must remember that those of us who have savings, particularly in superfunds, do benefit from corporate profits.

The question is whether it is right for a company to sack all of its workers and to shift its manufacturing base to a country where the cost of labour is cheaper. In a way it makes economic sense to do so, and if you are a company that insists on employing a native workforce and are competing against a company that is using cheaper, foreign labour, then you are going to be on the backfoot and are unlikely to be as competitive. The question is then raised, is it right for us to keep an unprofitable operation going simply to keep people employed? My answer would have to be no, since if we are running an unprofitable enterprise, then the enterprise is going to be doomed to failure, and it will affect a lot more people. Michael Moore laments the destruction of his home town as General Motors pulls out, but the question really is raised as to whether this enterprise was profitable. It turns out that it isn't, and it wasn't. General Motors went bankrupt, while Toyota was opening new plants and making more profits. However, the catch is that General Motors was saddled with liabilities towards its workers, especially since in the United States the company runs the pension plans. Guess what, they got out of that liability, and it ends up leaving those workers who were relying on the company for their retirement income pretty much up the creek without a paddle.

Then there is the idea that Moore talks about with regards to the Welfare Mothers. These are people that are accused of having children, and not marrying, so that they may live off government pensions. To be honest, that type of attitude is simply unacceptable. There are many reasons why a mother lands up as a single mother (maybe the father was killed in one of the US's illegal wars). However, while these Welfare Mother's are being attached and accused of bludging off of the sweat of hard working people, the corporate masters are being given multiple handouts to survive. Okay, there are issues of keeping a company afloat so as to keep people employed, but a company that exists relying on government handouts is a company that probably doesn't deserve to exist. Anyway, half of these companies, even with a government handout, still ended up sacking workers, however I still don't believe that a company should keep workers simply to keep people employed, especially when the job no longer exists, or is unproductive. As for a company scamming government handouts, well, that to me is not the purpose behind free enterprise. The idea of free enterprise is that a good company survives and a bad company gets wiped out. If the company is not performing, it needs to adjust itself internally instead of running to the government cap in hand. While the idea of the bailouts during the GFC are contentious, I am leaning more on the side that these companies should have been allowed to fail, even if they were too big to fail.

David Malantic says

Can't decide between 3 & 4 stars. This is my favorite written work from the iconoclastic MM. Its content is quite provocative and insightful yet it is far too desultory to be considered a masterpiece; this is the same criticism I would level at "Slaughterhouse Five" for example, which is a far better book. However, politically, it's a must read. Released after his excellent, focused "Roger & Me," it was written during a more innocent time, linking his thoughts on Reaganomics, corporate downsizing and even OJ Simpson, before the contemporary nightmares of American electoral fraud, the War on Terror, the Great Recession etc... Personally, I think he is a courageous artist, and hope that he will continue to write and direct

Dr.J.G. says

Love is not chocolate and roses, champagne and diamonds, not all the time. When you love something or someone, if you love truly then it is about being vigilant about the loved one's life and health and well being of mind and heart.

When it is children you love - yours or your nations - it is not about ice cream and cookies and pizza to keep them from clamouring, it is about seeing them grow well and healthy, and providing all that is needed.

When it is your nation, if you love your country, you have to be just as open eyed, so you ensure your future generations inherit the nation you loved, not a caricature ridden with disease that you were too indulgent to strike at and wipe out. Love of your nation is more demanding - it is not about flag raising alone, not about a smug never criticising, pretending everything is fine and critics are enemy.

Loving your nation is about more vigilance to keep it the same wonderful nation your nation's creating spirits handed over to you. And it is not contrary to loving the world, the Earth, either. Not when you are from a country based on good principles.

Michael Moore is a good citizen of US.

Sydney Odell says

If there's ever a time to try and understand American politics--it's now. Michael Moore's style of reporting may be questionable to conservatives, but his books are no doubt thoroughly researched. Navigating the world of corporate politics and the phenomena of "downsizing," Moore attacks many different parts of the system from corporate lobbying, privatized prisons, institutionalized racism and the OJ trial, unfair sexism towards Hilary Clinton, and so much more. It's a widespread range of issues, all interconnected by the same threads of "for profit" companies and their desire to expand the bottom line. But at what cost? At what point is it "enough" profit, and where does that abuse of power and the race for capitalistic gains start to affect these disenfranchised groups?

What I love perhaps most about his investigations is that each chapter almost always end with an action plan. He lists names, phone numbers, and addresses of politicians to contact for information. He lets you know how you can get involved, and where misinformation is being fed to the American public (all too real these days). Moore also gives satirical ways of creating false movements or companies to try and highlight their cognitive dissonance and how ridiculously corrupt this philosophy of profit is. It's incredibly incredibly frustrating these issues but at the same time funny, making it easier to swallow.

After reading *Downsize This!*, I'm grateful to understand more of just how deep we've gotten ourselves into with corporate controlled politicians. And this book is almost 20 years old! Can't imagine how exponential these issues of greed have gotten. While I spent the first half of the book feeling dejected and helpless to change anything, I do think becoming educated about your enemy is the first step. To name them, know them, and then to fight them.

"So here's what I don't understand: if profit is supreme, why doesn't a company like General Motors sell crack? Crack is a very profitable commodity....GM doesn't sell crack because its illegal. Why is it illegal?"

Because we as a society have determined that crack ruins people's lives. It ruins entire communities. It tears apart the backbone of our country...If we wouldn't let GM sell crack because it destroys our communities, then why do we let them close factories? That too destroys our communities."pg 254-255

Mr. Twinkie says

Criticizing America is not a new thing. The strength and weaknesses of america has been quite clear for a very long time. I am not sure if I am the correct person to really review a book that doesn't live in america and can directly relate to all he is refering too but I still feel that I can at least understand his criticism through the books I have read about american history and society.

However, as much as I want to love his book I can't. The main issue is that I am never sure when Moore is really joking, being sarcastic or being serious. Sometimes I am not sure if he is manipulating historical facts or if he is just doesn't know what really happened during history. For instance he has this chapter about Germany where he writes that Germany was almost rewarded or at least not punished enough for World War 2. Even further he mentions germans as they were all nazis and that a majority of the german people had actually vote pro-hitler which is false. Those are strong accusations and I was immediately turned off but problem was I wasn't sure if he was being serious about these things.

And this is basically the problem about this book. According to my edition Moore is like a modern Mark Twain. I do not agreed on that and I almost find that an insult to Twain. Moore wants to tell us something and I respect that but he is not a genius. He is more the average man wanting some attention from the not so average people. "Downsize This" just fails to deliver a tale we will remember.

Sharienne says

It is incredibly difficult to write a review about political, important issues. Any opinion of the book will include at least some opinion of the reviewer's. Here's my attempt at helping you choose how to spend your big check signed by a faceless corporation.

Michael Moore came to my attention when he was using the corporate chicken to poke the underbelly of the corporate/government leadership. Unsurprisingly, the show was hilarious to some and to others the equivalent of ripping off a band-aid (which should be capitalized but considering the subject I chose to have my own rebellion against corporate tyranny... go me!) Those he skewered onto his kabob just hated it... and him... and all of the O2 that enters his body. I would definitely not wasn't to be one of them.

This book is just as funny; just as serious; just as foundation shaking for the reader. Moore uses as his literary tool some uncomfortable points of a very sharp pen. Readers be prepared.

I read this when it was published (bought the hardback and everything. go me!) and have not revisited it since then. His strident tone will be the same but I suspect that a reread would show that at least some of his opinions have become more common than when this book was written. He has influenced so many on the "right" and "left".

Moore's great talent is best enjoyed through his films, but the book allows both reader and author time to digest and meditate about the issues Moore wears on each arm. Subtlety is not the author's forte in this book any more than in his other work.

My suggestion is this: read the books. Watch the movies. Give Moore's opinions a chance. If you agree with him that's OK. If you don't agree then write your own book... and read this one for background.

Jeff says

As a two-time victim of corporate (once non-profit greed), I found it easy to read and found myself getting even more angry! But unfortunately it's the same old story, greed is the basis of pretty much all economic problems, and the march of progress is kicking us all lifeless.

But hey, we know the world is greedy, yet nothing seems to change. So despite resonating with the content, there's not much more here than a rant by Moore, who admittedly can be arrogant when he wants to be. But he at least asks some good questions. Definately a good read for anyone who has suffered a lay-off, etc. Or good for Atlas Shrugged fans.

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

3.5 STARS

"Americans today are working harder, working longer and yet for most of us, in this time of ruthless downsizing and political cronyism, job security, a decent standard of living and a comfortable retirement are becoming harder and harder to find. In this brilliantly funny and right-on-target diatribe, irreverent everyman Michael Moore gives his own bold views on who's behind the fading of the American dream.

Whether issuing Corporate Crook trading cards, organizing a Rodney King Commemorative Riot, sending a donation to Pat Buchanan from the John Wayne Gacy fan club (which was accepted) or trying to commit former right-wing congressman Bob Dornan to a mental hospital, the in-your-face host of TV Nation and director/star of Roger & Me combines an expansive wit with biting social commentary to make you think and laugh at the same time." (From Amazon)

I really enjoyed this book by Michael Moore - expands on his documentary Roger and Me.

Hai Quan says

While I agree with most of his main points, being a Viet-nameese (Hey the world ! this is the correct form, not Vietnamese ! Why we gave the American a superior power to do everything for us, including Americanize our country name and hence our people name , for the life of me, I do not understand !) I am most interested in Chapter 23 : THOSE KEYSTONE CUBANS.

I am even so enthralled after I had severely criticized Mirta Ojito 's memoir FINDING MA~NANA , to know that I was right all along ! According to Micheal Moore, those Miami Cubans were exactly what Moore had reported in his book : Wimps, half-ass "liberators" with many hare-brain schemes , all ended with disastrous results, most notably THE BAY OF PIGS fiasco, thugs who ran narcotic rings, criminals who participated in the infamous break-in that brought down Nixon, murderers responsible for bombings (in Miami of all places !), hired guns willing to commit any crime for money (Iran-Contra) and even people with some involvement with the Kennedy assassination !

Moore strongest opinion about the Miami Cubans , being "WIMPS" is most interesting ! I can not do justice to you , readers, unless I quote the following passage found in page 179:

".....For starters,when you don't like the oppressors in your country, YOU STAY THERE AND TRY TO OVERTHROW HIM. This can be done by force (American Revolution,French Revolution) or through peaceful mean (Gandhi in India or Mandela in South Africa). BUT YOU DON'T JUST TURN TAILS AND RUN LIKE THESE CUBANS ,

Imagine if the American colonists had all run to Canada- and then insisted the Canadian had a RESPONSIBILITY to overthrow the British down in the States.....Mandela went to prison,not to Libya or London....."

(all capital letters are mine,except" RESPONSIBILITY ")

These were exactly the people Mirta Ojito kept crowing about in her memoir.It is easy to understand : she and her family were and is a part of this despicable crowd !

In my review of Ojito book, I have only briefly mentioned that she was lying in almost every pages .Reading this chapter, readers can see how a liar she was.Well, she was not exactly lying , she has just conveniently NOT MENTIONED how bad were those Miami Cubans mentioned above, including the notorious Cuban dictator, much corrupted Batista (1) to whom she had highly praised and liked !

Another big lie from Ojito memoir is she has deviously ignored the well known fact about the shameful , numerous , and extreme dirty plots to assassinate Castro . Planned and executed by , you have guest it correctly , various evil US administrations (I don't know if I need to use the word "evil" preceding U S administrations, even without this adjective, people in the whole world knew, from their observation, that all of them, the right hand of the elusive and secretive MAFIA BOSSES, are evil).Amazingly Castro survived all these attempts on his life. Actually, it was not amazing at all, because Castro knew too well his fate once he submitted his country sovereignty to the U S, his life will be cut short if he did not like what they do to his country and his people, like the fate of the Diem brothers of South Viet-nam. Castro has chosen to stand tall and survived !

Well Ojito has chosen to be spineless , and surviving too , right ? (Actually she is not just surviving, perhaps she is very prosperous) Sure, but giving all the knowledge cited above, do you really want to follow Ojito steps if you know the different between being respected and despised by your fellow countrymen (and countrywomen (?!)

For more detail on the dirty plots on Castro life, please read the above mentioned chapter of DOWNSIZE THIS !

ojito, freedom seeker, successful journalist, "political" exile, college professor, and a BIG LIAR , hiding a huge mountain in broad daylight and almost successful until Micheal Moore !

For those who do not know about the Viet-Nam war and its aftermath , let me tell you : I can see exactly myself in those despicable Miami Cubans.Yep, I was the collaborator (or at least,one of millions of apathetic ,otherwise happy slaves)of the American masters who invaded my beloved motherland under the phony purpose of fighting communism and after all the Viet-namese lap dogs "TONG TONG" ----were murdered (the Diem brothers) , fired ,went into exile by the order of their masters,or ran with tails between their legs(Thieu, Ky) together with their American masters who did likewise ---like a moron, I ran with them to the US !

Luckily , I recognized it now , a little too late thought , the crime I had committed against my motherland , not unlike the Miami Cubans. Reading the above mentioned chapter have put more salt into my newly opened old wound.

However, I am happy, because the pain and sorrow for my past actions is the first step toward healing , recovering and changing my life direction toward the right path, the path that my ancestors, who were much admired, much heroic, much resilient, never kow tow to foreign barbarians had lived and fought

I strongly recommend this book to anyone , but specially to many third world country people who were or are the victims of colonialism , Viet-nameese included.

FOOTNOTE : (1) " Fulgencio Batista ran the country ruthlessly in the process accumulating a personal fortune of three hundred million dollars "

THE NIGHT WATCH, by David Atlee Phillips. Atheneum Publisher, NY, condensed by READER DIGEST , page 51

Bryan says

Back When Moore Had a Real Issue.....: This is from an era where Micheal Moore actually made valid points. I'm a Republican, but I'm also a Christian. That means I believe that people are supposed to give a darn about something besides just money. Greed and heartlessness in the corporate world are very real... though I'm a capitalist, this greed thing is something that I struggle with. There are folks who lose their jobs for no reason at all, hard working people with nowhere to go.

It's not right.

But when the government gets involved, I can't say things are made any better.

Nonetheless, Moore makes some valid points in this book, which is from an era when he was more than an anti-gun, anti-war loony.

Bettie? says

as usual, Moore's renditions are over the top and offensive but at the core there is a point made, one just has to be in the right frame of mind to 'get it'.

Tinka says

“Our Citizens Are Armed and They Like To Shoot”

Michael Moore is probably the one man half of America loves and the other half wants to chase out of the country with pitchforks. But hey that's kind of the thing when polarize, especially with political statements.

I think Michael Moore is an intelligent and funny man and I enjoy reading his stuff and watching his movies. Well this book is not what you would call 'up to date'. It was first published in 1996 and a second time

around 2002. I found it by accident and decided to read it anyways and tell you what, yes a lot of things are outdated but surprisingly a lot of things are still in a way like they used to be almost 20 years ago. Sad? Shocking? I have no idea.

I'm from Germany so you might ask, "Why is she even reading this?" Well, I study English which not only included language and literature, but also history, politics, people and country in general (meaning equally Great Britain and America), so I'm always interested in critical views on history/politics/etc.

This book was an enjoyable, easy and most of all very interesting read. Still, I had a problem rating it. While I appreciate Moore's honesty, views and especially his humor, I found myself often questioning his sarcasm. I'm usually someone who picks up on irony and sarcasm very quickly, mostly because I use it a lot myself, but in this book I had problems with it. There were chapters where I wasn't sure if Moore was just being sarcastic or if he really has those sometimes extreme views.

Like his chapter on Germany. As a German I know our history is messed up (let's be honest US history is totally messed up as well) and I can equally acknowledge that our people did a lot of bad things and I can take jokes about us (making them myself) but his very harsh views made me raise my eyebrows. Germans should still pay for what happened in World War 2? They haven't suffered enough? Okay, well if you think so...

Well, like I said I'm sometimes not sure what he actually means and what is just him being sarcastic, I was questioning his opinions a few times but still it was a fun read and I liked it.

Conclusion: Interesting, funny and even a bit shocking.

Recommendation: If you're interested in America and a critical look at it, go and read. Don't be afraid because it is not that up to date anymore.

Nancy Wilson says

2.5 stars

Olethros says

-Dieciocho años después poco ha cambiado, y si lo ha hecho ha sido muchas veces a peor.-

Género. Ensayo.

Lo que nos cuenta. Revisión inmisericorde de la política gubernamental y empresarial (y más concretamente de sus protagonistas) estadounidense durante la última mitad de los años ochenta y la primera de los noventa que cambió los paradigmas y las vidas de muchas personas en los USA. Poseo la traducción de la edición revisada y con nuevos contenidos de 1997.

¿Quiere saber más de este libro, sin spoilers? Visite:

<http://librosdeolethros.blogspot.com/...>

Little Miss Swiss says

Interesting to read although this must be read carefully. Don't believe everything straight away some things he says in a cynical way and he even states himself that he hasn't even finished college but just writes what he learned.

Jack Herbert Christal Gattanella says

My introduction to Moore - I dunno, this I got before Roger and me, the cover just seemed interesting - and its a great place to start. I love the chapter about the right to life ideal but about sperm instead of the egg being most precious.

Travelin says

Michael Moore does pay teams of fact checkers to ensure he doesn't end up financially beholden to any number of subjects who want his blood. He exaggerates and takes cuts at self-important frauds, but he hasn't been found guilty of falsifying facts against anyone litigious yet, to my knowledge.

As he tells people time and again, he grew up working class Irish-Catholic. This comes out as someone who wants central authorities, especially companies, to do more, while insisting that everyone should be free in practice.

He and someone as insignificant as Coulter, for example, seem somewhat similar, in that they seem to want a religious liberalism, in her case, financial, in his, social, in a world of so-called beneficent companies. This makes for terrible social science all around.

He deserves all the stars and more for being the only widely heard voice against some blatantly idiotic policies and politicians, all while making his books and movies very entertaining.

It's notable how uniformly ridiculous politics have been for some time in the U.S. The jesters have been holding court indefinitely.

L says

His talent and good sense of balancing irony and sarcasm with social issues makes him one of the few good writers nowadays in this subject area.
