“The Corporation” Video Worksheet

1. What metaphors are used to describe the modern Business Corporation? (It starts with a description of how the Corporation is like an Eagle)

2. What is a Corporation according to the video? (It starts when there is big text saying “What is a Corporation?”)

3. How did the Corporation go from being a gift from the people to Capital to becoming legally equivalent to a person? (It starts when it says that corporate lawyers realized that they needed more power, and the 14th amendment was passed)

4. What kind of “person” is a Corporation? (It starts when Noam Chomsky, a famous academic, starts to speak)

5. Is the Corporation legally required to place maximising shareholder value before all other considerations including the public good?

6. Why are externalities so important to corporate profitability? (It starts when Milton Friedman, a famous Economist, starts to speak)

7. Why is the Corporation best defined as an “externalizing machine”?
8. How can a jacket cost US$178 in the shops yet the El Salvadoran workers who made it get paid US$0.74? What happens in the factories in which they work?

9. What was the typical age of the factory workers in Ecuador making Cathy Lee Gifford clothing?

10. Why do you think that Nike specify the time for each step in making their products down to one thousandth of a second per step? How would you feel having your life dictated to you to such a degree?

11. Why did manufacturing synthetic chemicals and materials become so cheap and easy after the 1940s?

12. What effects do synthetic chemicals have on life forms? What effects do they have on us?

13. What is “Posilac” made by Monsanto? Why is it injected into dairy cows?

14. What effects does it have on dairy cows and the humans who drink the milk?

15. What else have Monsanto done?
16. What are the top corporate criminals and what fines have they paid over the past one hundred years? (It starts with Exxon). Write as many as you can

17. Why is our civilisation completely doomed if we keep using the same Business Model as we have for the past three hundred years? (He uses a metaphor of a falling aircraft that doesn't know it can't fly because it is still too high up)

18. In the section entitled “The Pathology of Commerce", why is the Corporation legally designed to be a psychopath according to the standard psychiatric diagnosis?

19. How is it that a person can be kindly and decent as individuals yet be psychopathic monsters when part of a corporation? Why do you think the protestors which invaded the house of the CEO of Royal Dutch Shell were so surprised that he and his wife gave them tea and sat down and talked to them?

20. Why did Royal Dutch Shell have Nigerian protestors put to death through hanging?

21. Why do corporations routinely employ professional spies to infiltrate their competitors?

22. Why did Interface Carpets start to look into their environmental impact?
23. Why did its CEO Jack Welsh decide he better ought to stop “plundering”?

24. Why did the September 11th attacks on the Twin Towers in New York instantly double the price of gold?

25. Why did the bombing of Iraq immediately double the price of oil? Why did financial brokers want the war to go as badly as possible?

26. In the section “Boundary Issues”, why were the common fields and land “enclosed” i.e. put into private ownership? Why was this privatisation and ownership extended over the oceans and then into airspace?

27. Why does the academic think that the only solution to the problem of pollution is the privatisation of everything?

28. In the section “Basic Training”, why does it costs US$10,000 for a movie to depict the song “Happy Birthday” being sung?

29. How did corporations get children to nag their parents to buy products which make up 20% to 40% of their parents’ discretionary spending?

30. For what purpose do corporations try to instil a “philosophy of futility” into society? Why is this important to maximising profits and market share?