

From Spectacle to Festival

David M. Boje
November 22, 2002

Introduction

I seek to transform spectacle into festival. Festival is currently co-opted by spectacle, like the sideshows and attractions that attract people to Las Vegas gambling. Spectacle legitimates, rationalizes, and camouflages violent aspects of production and consumption. In Las Vegas, violence is off the strip. Festival cultivates non-violent production and consumption. Spectacle enables questionable social engineering, workaholism, shopaholism, and inhumanity to labor and the ecology. Spectacle feeds the War Machine; it cost the US \$4 Trillion dollars since 1945 to pay corporations to build weapons of mass destruction. It takes spectacle to convince that masses that a small country in the Middle East has more weapons of mass destruction than we do. One example of the Spectacle War Machine is the series of undeclared and declared wars by America in the Middle East. Today oil corporations rule America's search for oil instead of gold. Look closely at every Iraq/Iran war and oil is behind it. Iraq oil contracts to France, China & Russia worth \$300 Billion. After Oil War with Iraq contracts worth \$1.1 trillion dollars will be given to US/UK oil corporations.

Festival and Carnival is at the heart of the Peace Movement, worldwide resistance to Globalization, and a reformation of what it means to live sustainably with Mother Nature. Festival is community, play, simplicity, and humanity on a scale Nature can tolerate. Carnival is acts of contentious street theatre to bring attention to power. Festival is more a sexual seduction - bringing awareness through acts of nakedness. Capitalism is saturated with violence legitimated and masked by spectacle. Festival and Carnival unmask in different ways. Festival is replete with fun and sexuality. Festivalism is the metamorphosis of capitalism into festivalism, brought about by acts of carnivalesque resistance. I will give some in-depth introduction to each of the three players, and then outline the book contents.

Spectacle - Spectacle can be total manipulation of meaning-making processes through theatrical events to serve the production of power and managerial needs to

control and spin a good story in the face of bad news. The Spectacle is an entertainment force that has a major impact on the economy, our business models, and societal culture.

The world is in the death grip of spectacle. By spectacle I mean Debord's (1967) the *Society of the Spectacle*, now the *World of the Spectacle*, the often violent and oppressive social control that masquerades as a celebration of betterment by recycling pseudo-reforms, false-desires, and selective sightings of progress, never admitting to devolution. Spectacles are our own day-to-day religious-like worship that Karl Marx called fetish, that we know now as over-consumption by the first world, feeding off the dwindling resources of the third world. Marx had hoped that fetishism could be overturned through the trade union movement and greater workplace democracy. Marx underestimated the domesticating influence of spectacle.

Big Oil gave \$26 million to Bush, Cheney & fellow Republicans in the election. At least part of the 2nd Bush Oil War is greed for black gold. Iraq has 2nd largest oil reserve in world (next is Saudi Arabia); Oilmen want the oil. In 2012 US oil reserves will run out (says BP); America wants the oil. Point of fact, a ban on SUVs in America would save more oil than we get from the Middle East. At the current SUV rate of consumption, in 2020 US will import 17 million barrels of oil per day (US Department of Energy). Bush, Cheney, & Oil cartel planned Oil War with Iraq before election-2000. \$33 million in severance pay to Cheney from Halliburton, world's largest oil services company. Halliburton sold oil equipment to Iraq after the UN relaxed sanctions two years ago. Big oil split up \$1.1 trillion in oil reserves: Exxon-Mobil, Royal Dutch-Shell, British Petroleum-Amoco, Chevron-Texaco and TotalElfina. President Bush Jr. proposed 2003 budget awards another \$34 billion in subsidies to oil, gas, coal & nuclear companies while cutting \$1 billion from natural resources/environmental departments of the U.S. government. At current SUV rates of consumption, and without building alternative energy supply, in 2045 the World oil supply runs dry. The spectacle camouflages this reality with its War on Terror. Spectacle is a way to divert public attention from the main issues.

Why is the US the only nation in the world that seems to feel threatened by Saddam Hussein? The intelligence community is being pressured to provide false data to support the administration's war machine. I witnessed this before in the manufacture of

body counts and the faking of incidents (e.g. Tonkin Bay), in order to sustain public support for the war machine during Vietnam. The current need is to turn the propaganda machine into a way to sell the current postmodern war. Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq are postmodern wars, media-driven, theatrical, spectacles of corporate and state propaganda to enlist spectator support for war. Postmodern war is defined, by philosophers Best and Kellner (2001), as the implosion of human and machine in cyber and bio technology (Boje, 2002a).

The Gulf spectacle was “postmodern” in that, first, it was a media event that was experienced as a live occurrence for the whole global village. Second, it managed to blur the distinction between truth and reality in a triumph of the orchestrated image and spectacle. Third, the conflict exhibited a heightened merging of individuals and technology, previewing a new type of cyberwar that featured information technology and “smart” weapons (Best & Kellner, 2001: 73).

The Spectacle of Postmodern War Machine - A postmodern war uses hyperreality and interactive simulation cyber technologies to sanitize war into bloodless images I analyzed 9-11 (Afghanistan) as a postmodern war (Boje, 2002, *Theatre os Capitalism*, in press Hampton Press, San Francisco). Technological innovations in warfare from biotechnology, cyber war, and infotainment have fused with state, military, and corporate capitalism to transform the theatrics of capitalism into a social corporeality more postmodern than Vietnam or WW1 and WWII. In postmodern war, the line between military combat and entertainment gets blurred in endless graphic-enhanced replay and simulation: The differences between the modern and postmodern theatrics of warfare include current uses of robot drones, satellites, digital battlefields, and other high tech technologies that change both the theatre of operations, the game of war, and its theatric strategy.

Propaganda exploits our fears and constructs a leader that gives us hope for safe passage. Corporate media is a major factor in the distribution of *Heroic War and Demonizing the Enemy* propaganda because it resorts to hype and fear, under reports the Peace Movement. Compliant corporate media owns the Western press and does not allow reports about the swelling peace movement in the U.S. Rather, the role of the Western corporate-owned media is to make the American-Iraq war appear 'just' and 'essential' to America's homeland 'security.'

The logic of this latest postmodern war, is that Iraq civilian lives must be sacrificed in preemptive invasion in order to protect future American lives. In pre-game (pre-war) analysis, President Bush tells the media corps that the Iraqi regime is in league with al-Qaida. The international media and more critical scholars argue that Bush's claims are misleading the American public, and that war is not justified. The postmodern war theatrics call for building up Saddam as the Super Bowl-type enemy that will be defeated by the red, white and blue team. In an election year, critical analysis and opposition to the war among politicians (even democrats) is few and far between. In postmodern war it becomes difficult to separate fact from propaganda. Nevertheless, the facts are quite sobering.

Forms of U.S. resistance (i.e. carnival of street theatre, the waving of peace signs at motorists in downtown Las Cruces from 4 to 6 PM each Wednesday) to the war do not get media coverage. This is done by blocking out coverage of the peace movement and the true human costs of this latest war. The U.S. media is part of the war machine and is unwilling engage in facts-based analysis of presidential rhetoric or to depict the human carnage of war. The carnage is not nearly as pretty as heroic war rhetoric. A *Crispy Critter*, a name given to a citizen struck by depleted uranium munitions of US military arsenal is not heroic.

Like Enrongate – while the War on Afghanistan, then Iraq, and next we invade N. Korea – rages – While the spectacle directs our attention, Bush does not have to answer for Enrongate, the way Nixon had to answer for Watergate, and Clinton for Whitewater-gate. Enron contributed \$736,800 directly to George W. Bush and \$888,265 to Republican National Committee. Five Enron executives are hired into Bush administration. The spin machine says “terrorist behind every Bush.” Iraq war is partly a grab for slimy ooze reserves. Iraq has 112.5 billion barrels of oil reserves and 22 more billion in undiscovered reserves. War machine budget is \$200 billion. Big oil runs slick PR campaign to keep nations dependent upon the slimy ooze. Crude awakening to spectacle: At current rates of production and consumption (1) In 2045 world oil supply runs dry, (2) In 2012 US oil reserves run out.

Beneath Enrongate, there is the cost of the Iraq War: \$200 billion cost of Iraq war, plus a \$400 billion defense budget. The spectacle has no memory, cannot remember

what happened to the Soviet Union, how it over invested in military arms race, and went bankrupt.

Business is becoming synonymous with entertainment; we are becoming actors in corporate and state spectacle-riddled theatre. Disney, for example, does not have workers, it has "cast members" and we are not customers, we are "spectators" in the show. Customers expect that they will be entertained; they buy spectacle-experiences, not commodities. McDonalds is a little spectacle, a place of corporate entertainment. Las Vegas is the Spectacle of Entertainment which veils the commodification of social addictions. Enron treated the stock market like entertainment, and forgot the difference between ethics and greed-economics (GREEDonomics) and putting on a show. Analysts believed the dog and pony presentations by Kenneth Lay and Jeffrey Skilling and were distracted from reading the bottom line. Company brands from Nike to GAP are promoted by movie and sports stars, so that consumers confuse corporate values with entertainer-PR-images.

You do not purchase a river-rafting ride, you become an actor in a Whitewater river rafting adventure, where the guide knows how to thrill you. You enter a McDonalds restaurant, knowing exactly what to say in that robotic theatre, where our lines are scripted. The danger is we have become actors in spectacle controlled by a hostile and manipulative media seeking to change our self-concept into a marketing concept.

The media and the administration's analysts are setting up the next postmodern war, a war staged in the media through sanitized images and football-game-style graphic replays. We are about to see more replays of laser guided missiles with video cameras relaying the action to American TV sets 10,000 miles from the action. The Iraq postmodern war will be one more sanitized, quickie technowar, fought (Nintendo-style) by remote-control, before a national election. As in the Bush Sr. war, the Bush Jr. war will be accompanied by the same uncritical, self-censored media coverage of the conflict which will once again facilitate the slaughter of Iraqis by a superior military superpower. There will be self-censoring of the more gory aspects of the victor's slaughter, and we will hear claims of acceptable collateral damage. As in the last postmodern war, CNN, Fox, CBS, NBC, and ABC will compete for audience-share by offering better simulations and digital interactive experiences to spectators. Postmodern war is an infotainment

commodity in the ratings game. Corporate-media can offer digital experience that is less terrifying, so spectators need not look at 'real' bodies, or the blood and gore of war.

There are two forms of resistance, carnival and festival.

Carnavalesque - This is a trilogy; spectacle and festival interact with a third. The third player is Carnival, acts of resistance to spectacle. Carnavalesque is the use of theatrics to face off with power via satire and parody, and invite spectators to a new reading of the spectacle of global capitalism.

We see carnival all around us in the street theater, teach ins, and naked protests. Carnival pokes fun and uses critical satire and crude parody to say something important about global capitalism, and its impact upon both workers, consumers, and planet. When students, for example, stop being mere spectators in the historical process, and engage in the street theatre of carnivals of resistance, the elite is frightened. Spectacle worries that its game will be exposed. Spectacle erodes biodiversity and caring capacity, while increasing human violence, war machine and wage slavery. Under the battle cry of "globalization," the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank (WB), and International Monetary Fund (IMF) enslave us.

In premodern times, the peasantry dressed up like the kings, queens, and pope and staged the theater of the carnivalesque; so that their voice would be heard by the powerful. It is no different now, when from the protest over WTO in Seattle, then Quebec City, Sydney, Switzerland, Genoa, and recently in the peace movement protesting War in Iraq --- we witness a hundred different social advocacy and activist groups use carnivalesque street theater, wear masks and costume, and perform with irony, satire, and parody of the corporate spectacle.

The carnivalesque can be grotesque, violent or quite peaceful. An example of carnival is a Sweatshop Fashion Show that brings awareness of who makes our clothes and the Friday evening NikeTown Blockade in Melbourne. An example of carnival is the street protests that began in Seattle to contest the WTO and has spread throughout the world to protest current models of globalization. An example of Festivalism is the pursuit of fun and aesthetics.

Carnival also resists WTO, WB, and IMF as well as the War Machine in acts of street theatre. Carnival is a return to what Bakhtin and Kristeva saw as theatre of

resistance. Carnivals of Resistance continue to proliferate to protest spectacles: from anti-WTO in Seattle in 1999, J18 International Day of Protest in 1999, S26 2000 in Prague, Quebec 2000, G8 in Italy 2001, and the continuing blockade of NikeTown in Melbourne. Spectacle resists attempts by the people to engage in carnival protests of resistance, often by violent means, more often with pseudo promises of reform and inclusion. The spectacle doubles its tactics of domination, to reduce students to a mass of unthinking bodies. Students in Spectacles of domination are forbidden to speak; they grow accustomed to domestication.

Welcome to 21st Century planet Earth and to the dark age of the spectacle. We are so out of power, we can only put on puppet masks or run naked in the street to protest corporate and state violence. But most do not engage in carnivalesque resistance. Most of Earth's people are gripped by ignorance spread by spectacle media, corporate propaganda, and an education system that inculcates worship of consumption. The carnivalesque performers of street theatre read an alternative press, plug into those rebel sites on the Internet. People, relying upon mainstream media, are gripped by ignorance, each one bombarded by 6,000 messages a day to make them believe that happiness can be purchased. Sorting out the message, in the midst of media dominated by spectacle advertising, infotainment, and purchased by transnational power, is the most important thing we can be teaching in school.

The Carnivalesque protestors, divert their eyes from the spectacle glamour machine, and seek alternative sources of input. The global corporate empire has absolutely corrupted state and media. Yet, those in spectacle-grip, prefer to not know, to maintain deniability, to worship spectacle leaders like gods. The global CEOs rule with cruel self-interest, disregard for ecological limits, concentrating their own wealth by wage-enslaving entire nations below the poverty level. Yet, the spectacle spectators celebrate them with their pocketbooks, with trips to Las Vegas, Disneyland, Wal-Mart and McDonalds. It is an extraordinary hegemony, a massive mind control. It is unbelievable that spectacle succeeds in creating CEO and globalization worship, even among the poorest of the poor. It is undeniable that few join into carnivalesque protest, as compared to the millions who worship at the Cathedral of Consumption.

Carnival of Resistance raises consciousness about why the wealth of 447 billionaires exceeds that of 2.75 billion people, an economy that puts money, growth and the 'free market' above everything else, leading to poverty, the Third World Debt and environmental destruction.

This is not dialectic, it is a new word, a “*trilectic*.” It is not dialectic of spectacle resisted by carnival, out of which comes the synthesis of festival. Rather, all three appropriate the others, mimic the others, morph into the others, and interact with the others. Go to Circus Circus in Las Vegas – is this a spectacle, a carnival, or a festival? Current theory has no way to answer.

A dialectic model of Spectacle, Carnival, and Festival would look like Figure 1.

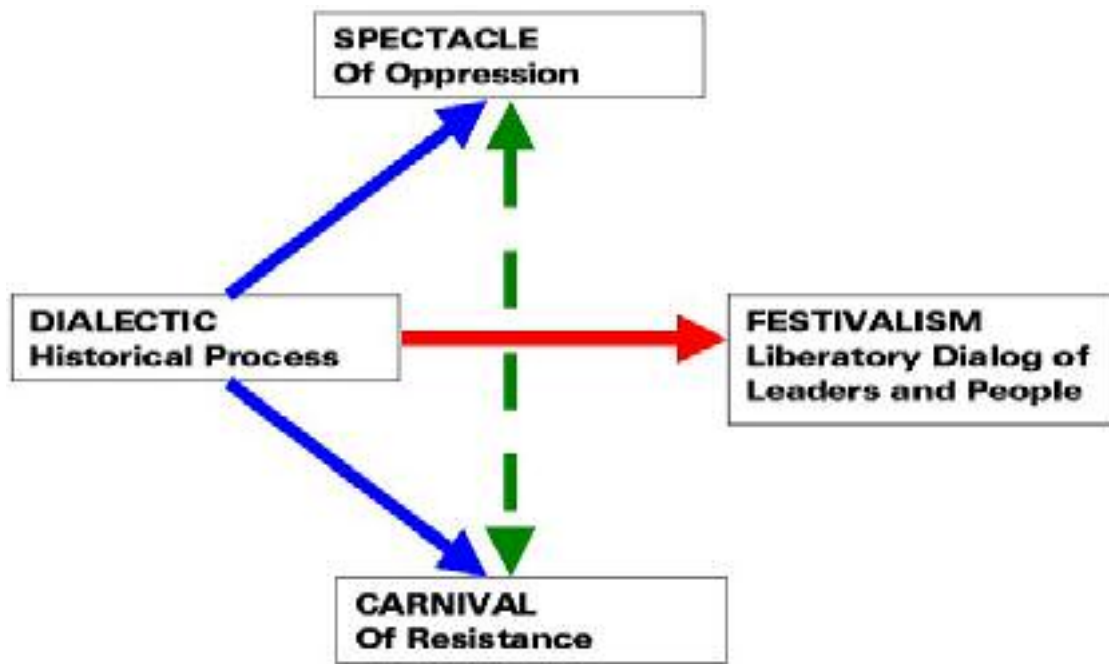


Figure 1: Dialectic of Spectacle of Oppression and Carnival of Resistance, with Festivalism of liberation as a possible synthesis (D. Boje, 2002)

This book explores the causes of oppression and domestication. Rather than dialectic (Figure 1), I propose trilectic (Figure 2). Figure 1 depicts Festivalism as a synthetic dialectical outcome of the continued opposition of spectacle and carnival. Festivalism

would be a transformation of rigid, authoritarian domination by bureaucratic institutions of power.

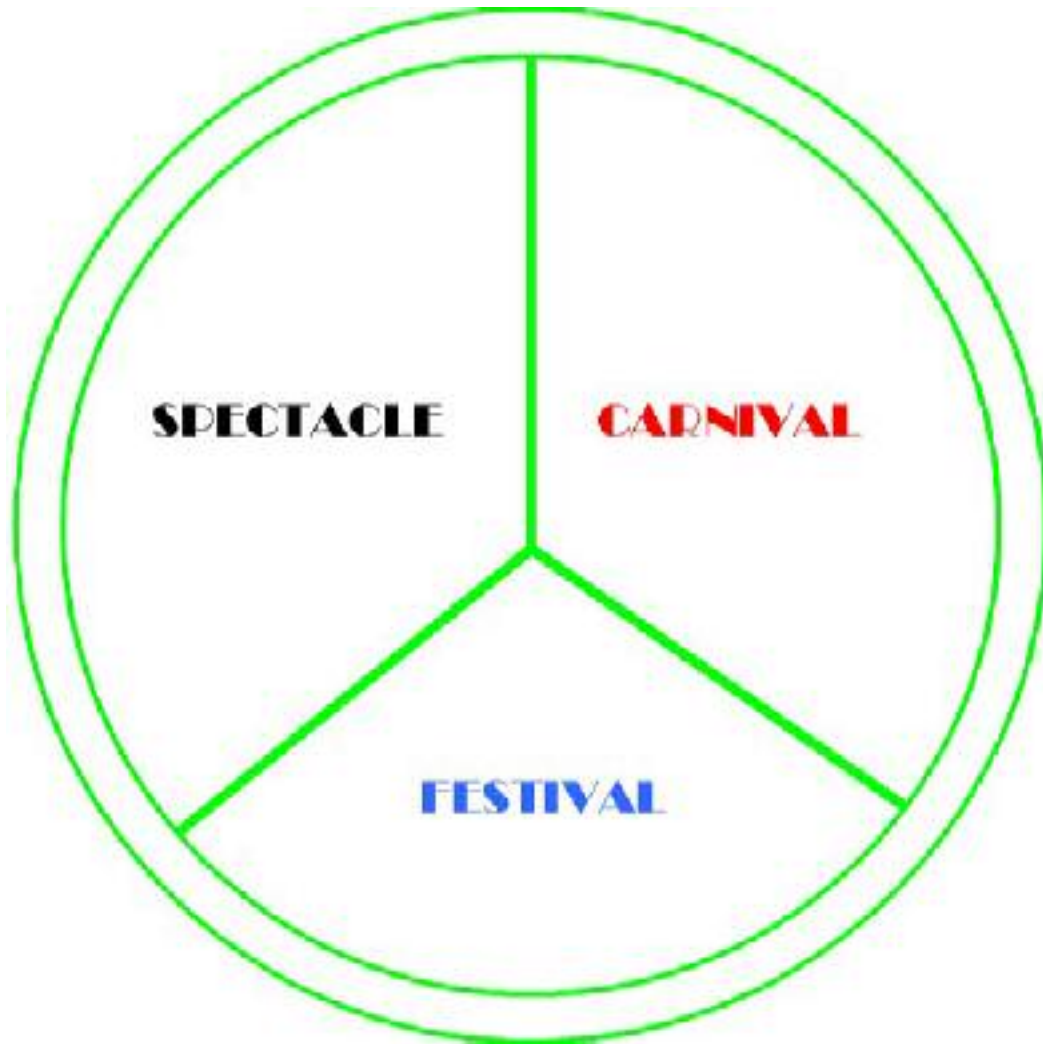


Figure 2: Spectacle, Carnival, and Festival

Spectacle is opposed by carnival and festival. Each opposes the other, morphs into the other. Carnival resists spectacle in satiric acts of ridicule and protestation; festival resists spectacle of Apollo regimentation, more by a Dionysus dance. Festival can be accused of being used by Spectacle, as the attraction to the casino in Las Vegas, a group of artists hired to promote gambling. Or Festival can be accused of being appropriated by Carnival, as a fun way to entertain the police and security guards at a NikeTown blockade in Melbourne or Sydney, Australia. Worse, Festivalism can be accused of being non-critical art, aesthetics for its own Dionysian lust for pleasure.

Rather than dialectic, in a trilectic model, we look at the negotiations among the three types of theatre. From WTO protests in Seattle to the one we will see in September (2001) in Washington D.C., the police, corporatists, and protest organizers decide which

zones of the city will be peaceful protest, which will engage the police line, and where the more violent property damage action will be located. Each city is mapped out, and there are definite zones for peaceful and less peaceful theater. In the negotiation process leading up to, and then every day of the action, the boundaries change. In recent action, the peaceful protest zones of carnival street theater have been machinated and forced into the zones of more violent theater. In the engagement of spectacle (corporate PR and advertising wedded to media and state power), the strategy is to make the opponent look more violent than they are. The strategy is to demonize the carnival protestors, so that violent state police action will be viewed by the public spectators as justified and legitimate.

In premodern times, the Crown and Clergy encouraged carnival. Carnival was a safety valve, a way for the oppressed masses to blow off some steam, and not erupt into revolution. As such, we can state that the carnival can itself be appropriated by the spectacle of corporate power, as a way to perpetuate its global rule. In carnival, to act out critical reviews of managerialist corporatist practices, and to give expression to consumer and worker alienation is part of the critical postmodern turn. At the same time, it is a way that spectacle co-opts carnival, as a safety valve to let the people blow off steam, while not addressing the hegemonic aspects of corporate and state spectacle control.

Planetary Carnival mixed with Festival is a cry of distress and repression by women working in sweatshops whose voice is drowned by the media spectacle of celebrity endorsements and purchased star power. Carnival is mixed with the laughter and humorous, and even sexual exhibition of Festival. Both are meant to jolt Spectacle power into awareness of their psychic organization.

Spectacle elites are afraid that when carnivals of resistances invite people to think critically then liberation could erupt at any moment. Critical consciousness, critical thinking, and Liberatory praxis are threats to the status quo and its hegemony.

Festival - By festival I mean the less violent more transparent celebration of coevolution of human and ecology. Festival is defined as the pragmatics of long-term sustainability in a non-violent culture, in balance with the whole planet. Festivalism is the dream of a metamorphosis of capitalism into festivalism. We can make the transition from predatory capitalism to festivalism. Festivalism is what comes after not only modern, but postmodern. It is what is manifesting in the postmodern turn. Festivalism begins with the deconstruction of advertising, texts of spectacle, and exploitation, but begins where postmodern ends.

Festivalism transcends global racism, by purchasing garments made by liberated workers paid a living wage, purchasing non-logo goods by workers who are not wage slaves to predatory capitalism. When the slaves of the equator make the garments for the

north and south, that is global racism; when the Third World works in slavery to franchise the consumerism energy gluttony of the First World, that is global racism. The aim of Festivalism is a reconstruction of Spectacle and Carnival into Liberatory dialog between leaders and people.

Festival requires a transformation of world religions that are ruined by spectacle. I think every religion can learn from Ahimsa. Ahimsa is a philosophy of non-violence to all life. It is the affirmation of all sentient life through the practice of non-violent capitalism. Indigenous people, from New Zealand, Australia, Bolivia, Greenland, Alaska, India or Botswana -- view land as essential to survival. The relationship to Mother Earth is sacred, part of cultural and spiritual identity. The extraction of indigenous land-resources through mining, logging, tourism, etc. -- threatens traditional ways of life. Models of economic development imposed by the "developed" nations exploit natural resources without regard to the survival of traditional communities. Spectacle presents the world with a lack of concern for local environmental and social ethics and spiritual needs.

Americans, who make up only five percent of the world's population, used nearly a third of its resources. The poorest 20% of the world's population that consumes just 1.3% of the earth's goods and services. We Americans produce almost half the World's hazardous waste. Since 1950, Americans have used more Earth-resources than everyone who ever lived before them

Some protest organizers have dubbed Melbourne 2000 World Economic Forum (WEF) protest, as the "Festival of the Oppressed." I am committed to non-violent carnival and festival. I seek a critique to unmask the lies.

Beyond the oftentimes-violent (to humans and ecology) spectacles of "free market" global capitalism and defunct "state-bureaucratic" state communism, there is a third path I call festival. I do not mean the Chile or Enchilada Festivals of New Mexico, or the Shakespearean, Music, of Film festivals – these are just spectacles in disguise.

Festival is not yet alive. I am in search of the simple festival, a way of living, consuming, and working that is less violent than spectacle. It is my fervent hope that we will unplug our brains from the TV, the corporate-controlled newspapers, the education system that feeds the war machine – and see the spectacle for what it is, a horrific

existence. I do not expect a Garden of Eden. I know there is no utopia. I believe there is a less violent option. In a world where spectacle rules with velvet fist, no one is free.

Spectacle is behaving more violently to carnival and festival. Darth-Vader costumed corporate security and state police in country after country assault the free speech and "free theatre" rights of citizens. There are goons and infiltrators who pretend to be demonstrators, that perform acts of violence that will legitimate to the spectators, the retaliatory acts of violence by police, that we see on the evening TV news. While 90% of all protest action is decidedly and purposely non-violent (in the mimetic of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King), there is violent protest. When there is a breaking of the Starbuck's and NikeTown window, the spectacle media paints the non-violent majority of carnivalesque protesters as a violent menace to the state. Read coverage of a peace movement protest against one of the oil wars, and you will only read about "Drop Bush, not Bombs," the media is too scared to print the critique from the microphone that links spectacle administration to the oil industry, to corporate lobbyists, to a nation whose war and energy policy are written in some corporate boardroom.

Festival is both post-capitalism and post-communism because there is a resituation of both these violent extremes in favor of non-violence. Post-capitalism has moved us from nation state to corporate state, without a decrease in world warfare, without an increase in living wage, without attention to limits of sustainable life on the planet. Post-communism, whatever was to follow the collapse of State communism has reproduced worker and animal as slaves to the production machine. It is time to leave the cold war behind, and try festival.

Festival makes five assumptions:

First, festival assumes we can create companies that earn a capitalist profit and maintain non-violent ecological and social practices.

Second, festival assumes local stakeholder groups of workers, citizens, and managers can balance the burgeoning power of global corporate monopolies by expressing their non-violent preferences through their market behavior.

Third, festival assumes the myopic corporate focus on short-term accumulation could be abandoned when there is an understanding of the living whole.

Fourth, when festival citizens recognize the difference between living to work versus working to live, then they will be able to tame their shopaholic and addictive consumption appetites, thereby letting others live.

Fifth, non-violent work, fun, and leisure are possible.

Festival is a critical postmodern project of emancipation from the spectacle of violent production and consumption. Critical postmodern is a blend of critical theory (material conditions) and postmodern (a theory of situation). Festival is critical postmodern because it confronts the ideology that internationalizes corporate monopolies, questions corporate-welfare in a global economy, stimulates small business (small farms, small shops) for healthy (locally accountable) production and consumption practices.

Festivals are rich with joy, fun, singing, and dancing. Spectacles which simulate festivals inevitably spin out of control and turn to excess, becoming predatory, with horrific violent consequences. Spectacles have become lifeless, sucking the vital energy of the majority to subsidize the excessive lifestyle of the minority. Our global economy has impoverished the joy of everyday life by surrendering festival to spectacle. Festival restrains economic growth that benefits only corporate monopoly in order to proliferate local business, employment, and trade.

The spectacle organization The modes of production in organizational behavior produce spectacles for mass consumption. The spectacle organization is all the stakeholders, the investors, managers, employees, vendors, and customers who produce and consume spectacles. Spectacles are managed and designed, choreographed, and reformed. There is a good deal of high tech in spectacle, from the infrastructure that keeps the Disney rides going to the volcanoes in Las Vegas. Spectacle organization worships technique. As Ferre (1976) observed, “the worship of technique is in fact becoming the dominant religious reality of our culture” and now our planet. Through the production, distribution and consumption of spectacles we attain the Kingdom of Material Heaven. We know there are spectacle organizations all around, but can we look to festive and Ahimsa organizations for ideas for spectacle transformation?

Spectacle Society. We accumulate spectacles: the Clinton impeachment, the OJ trial, and explaining both Kennedy assassinations, as well as those of Martin Luther King

and John Lennon were media spectacles preoccupying global social life. “But the spectacle is nothing other than the sense of the total practice of a social-economic formation, its use of time. It is the historical movement in which we are caught” (Debord, 1967: #11).

I have read some interesting trends about spectacles of consumption and production in the news. Families and retired citizens are moving to Orlando, to the perfectly designed and performatively efficient, spectacle of Celebration Village in Disneyland. There are biospheres being built to allow people clean air, water, and soil. Who will enter the Biosphere domes if air, water, and soil quality can only be maintained for the rich? Maybe we can move underground into Caesar’s Palace spectacles of consumption, actually moving into the Palace, opening up shop on the Piazza. The main reason for the popularity of Star Wars and Star Trek is the celebration of technologies that would allow us to move to other worlds once this one is no longer user-friendly to humans, centuries before the Sun goes nova. Meanwhile spectacles of Clinton sex scandals, Super Bowls, and the Home Shopping Channel distract our minds, providing many spectacle choices to occupy our need to be passive spectators.

Spectacle employee. It takes many employees to produce spectacles for others to consume. The employees are separated one from the other, and do not always see how their respective tasks make up the spectacles being produced for consumption. Each task may appear totally and completely non-violent. Yet, as in the Holocaust, the sum of many non-violent tasks, can be organized in the bureaucratic and rational administration of the theaters of cruelty and death. No one, who calculates formulas or assembles parts for a missile, thinks too deeply about how it looks to the consumer, at the moment of explosion. The clerk, or shelf stocker, or manager, at the Home Depot does not see where the old growth hardwoods come from. The Wal-Mart employee does not see the conditions of the factory workers making the products put out on sale. The spectacle employee is sometimes, maybe often, the distracted workaholic, the sacrificing breadwinner, never seeing how little leisure is left, or their children growing up without them.

In the spectacle of consumption we live out the fantasy of spectacle by working “harder and harder” not seeing how we “are trapped in the squirrel cage of working and

spending, spending and working – and increasingly borrowing money a high interest rates” (Best & Kellner, 1997: 88).

Spectacle consumer. We are taught to be spectators, to look, but not to see, to be spectator but not to be active participant when we consume. Firat and Dholakia (1998), in marketing, are also writing about “theaters consumption” that are becoming more interactive, blurring the line between producer and consumer, by allowing consumers to self-design their experience. They argue the separation between production and consumptive activities are changing, but corporate control remains.

Global capitalism is now able to sustain standardized production, while reaching deeper into fragmented constructions of alternative life modes in postmodern consumption styles. The plus side is that consumers are able to design and experiment with their own modes of consumption. Consumers can try out this or that temporary life style, accentuating through holograph or permanent surgery this or that part of the anatomy, and like superman, enter a phone booth as Clark Kent and dash forth as Harley man or drag queen. Global multinational and transnational corporations are able to design their modes of production to market products and services to this fragmentation of self.

Preface is several short stories I wrote to give an integrated understanding of spectacle and festival. These are stories I participated in. They tell the reader something about my perspective on a new American Dream.

Part I starts with a chapter on why we need to study spectacles. The next five chapters cover five worldviews on spectacle: knowledge work and management, corporate imperialism, Ahimsa, political economy, and postmodern. In terms of a model for the entire book, my approach is critical (political economy), postmodern, and Ahimsa confrontation of traditional corporate imperialism and the fashionable knowledge work spectacle. In my view, the corporate imperialism worldview looks violence squarely in the face and does it anyway, while the knowledge work spectacle cocoons itself in cyber space so it can not see its own effects. The purpose of this section is show how deeply embedded production and consumption is in old and new spectacles of violence. Others have written of a “critical postmodern” perspective, my contribution is to draw upon that body of work to develop non-violent or Ahimsa perspectives. With this Ahimsa perspective I not lonely reframe critical and postmodern questions, I will suggest avenues

for developing solutions. I also will cite contemporary examples of Ahimsa-festival production and consumption practices.

Part II looks at the concepts and models of spectacle, types of spectacles in late modern capitalism, and the design of these spectacles. I want to get practical here, so I have analyzed common movie themes from a spectacle perspective. The idea is to translate the worldviews of part I into contemporary examples. The stance is one of how to cope with the spectacles around us and how to seek some spaces for festival in our production and consumption patterns. The theme of the “Americanization of globalization” and living a life of simplicity are two themes. The context I paint in these chapters is one of the growing fragmentation and simultaneous standardization of postmodern capitalism. There is tremendous fear out there that the world apocalypse is at hand and that there is no way to put the breaks on population growth, energy consumption and our general ecocide. Yet, there are flickers of hope, here and there, of consumer and producers movements that want to do it all differently.

Part III focuses on the transition from spectacle to festival. Is it possible to design, lead, change, and manage festivals in a world of spectacle? The chapters focus on festival organization, festival leadership, festival change, and festival universities. In these chapters I look at ways of developing and nurturing non-violent forms of consumption and production. I seek a perspective that is a third way, a non-violent way between capitalism and state communism. As such, I think I offer an alternative business and consumption paradigm. We as humans can choose violent or non-violent production and consumption. The purpose is to explore more festive alternatives.

We have a choice, to decide to engage in spectacle, the mindless consumption and production of the spectacle that is late modern global capitalism, to engage in the critique and protestation of the carnivalesque, or just wear the clothing and be spectators and gawk at the theater of power between spectacle and carnival.

Festival is the stooge of spectacle. Carnival is misrepresented as violent, when it is mostly non-violent. In the World Trade Organization (WTO) demonstrations in Seattle, some dressed as Sea Turtles to symbolize their cause, a few broke windows (though some that did were impersonators) and did other violence, others did not know why they were protesting, but most of the 400,000 participants engaged in quite peaceful marches and

demonstrations to critique transnational corporate power and express their sense of alienation. The media made its own spectacle interpretation of the Seattle events by focusing on the more violent enactments.

Festivalism is peaceful, non-violent action. It is like carnival, such as pelting tanks with rose petals. Festival is also appropriated by power. Every city has its festival, and instead of fun and aesthetics, it is one more spectacle of selling corporate goods.