

Spectacles and Festivals of Organization

Managing Ahimsa Production and Consumption

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PART I. SPECTACLE ORGANIZATION WORLDVIEWS

Chapter 2: Spectacle View One

Knowledge Work and Knowledge Management Spectacle

Knowledge Work and Management Spectacle Worldview From the vantage point of the surrounding worldviews (corporate Imperialism, Ahimsa, Political Economy and Postmodern), this one is the fad and fashion of our time, the most popular worldview. It is spreading quickly into all life spaces. Open any current and modern management or organization text and it is the subject of all chapters. It is a celebration of the cyber world, the knowledge organization, the learning network, and the self-organizing firm on the edge-of-chaos.

Table Two: Part 1 Knowledge Work and Management Spectacle Worldview

<p>1. Knowledge Work and Management Spectacle Worldview This worldview is bubbling over with guru wisdom about cyber-corporations holding sovereign over the internet. Virtual companies do knowledge management and supervise knowledge workers across vast distances. The network technologies are transforming an object-based industrial world into the information connectivity-world, a network-based world knowledge culture. In the knowledge economy, non-knowledge work happens “out of sight” of the web executives and web consumers. Managers manage the electronic commerce and capital from their web sites. The social consequences of the web-based economy are temporary contract employment, global separation of producers from consumers.</p>	<p>Books:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Toffler (1980) The Third Wave ✓ Tapscott’s (1996) The Digital Economy: Promise and Peril in the Age of Networked Intelligence ✓ Castells (1996) The rise of the Network Society ✓ Coyle (1997) The Weightless World: Strategies for Managing the Digital Economy ✓ Leonard (1997) Bots: The Origin of New Species ✓ Kelly (1998) New Rules for the New Economy ✓ Shapiro and Varian (1998) Information Rules: A Strategic Guide to the network Economy ✓ Davis and Meyer (1998) Blur: The Speed of Change in the Connected Economy ✓ Casey (1995) Work, Self and Society: After Industrialism ✓ Jacques (1996) Manufacturing the Employee: Management Knowledge for the 19th and 21st Centuries
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It is readily adapted for military use, where it has perhaps the clearest definitions.

The U.S. Army, for example, defines knowledge work(er) (KW):

KW: One who gathers data/information from any source; adds value to the information; and distributes value-added products to others.¹

KW ... a process requiring knowledge from both internal and external sources to produce a product that is distinguished by its specific information content.²

The U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratories (CERL) is a good example of the KW worldview. CERL has implemented the Knowledge Worker Management System (KWMS) to help KW-managers (KM) to capture and organize work activity information, and to allow KWs to learn, prioritize and execute KW tasks more efficiently and effectively. It is part of what is called the “learning organization” or in Army language the KWMS. The manager or KM’ job in KWMS is to use cyber-web-computer applications that integrate info methods, technologies and management to monitor workflow, work scheduling, and work measurement of the knowledge workers (KWs).

The KM delivers the KW task specific information as needed, using the automated cyber tools tracks performance and info needs. KWs and KMs meet in multimedia chat rooms to confer about work progress, learn from each other, and control work task. KW managers do the knowledge-based programming of the spectacle using object-oriented cyber-modeling. In our Army example, KWMS, knowledge is acquired, transferred, accumulated, distributed, and evaluated in a total system of knowledge organizing, as in this example:

For example, an expert's knowledge about the idiosyncrasies of a temperamental office laser printer can be encoded into a laser-printer object. When a knowledge worker is having trouble with the printer, the laser-printer object can help. In a graphical user environment such as Microsoft Windows or X-Windows, the knowledge worker may simply be able to click on the appropriate portion of a picture of the printer. The object can then tell the user how to solve the problem.³

¹ Source <http://www.cecer.army.mil/kws/kwp.htm>.

² Source http://www.cecer.army.mil/kws/kap_supp.htm#abs

³ Source:http://www.cecer.army.mil/kws/kap_supp.htm#abs

In the KWMS the manager simplifies and controls access to KW information, sets up the structure of KW tasks, transfers documents and arranges automated transfers of knowledge and the knowledge meetings required to process knowledge work. KWs are authorized in some organizations to work on virtual teams that self-manage the learning tasks.

The KWMS has its own claimed history and historian. Futurists Alvin Toffler in three books (1970, 1980, and 1990) developed the “Three wave” model which has been the basis of the KMWS. The other worldviews, as we shall explore, tell this history with a very different interpretation.

First Wave Toffler’s first wave was the move from two millennia of agriculture to the future shock of our late industrialization revolution. In the old days, 90% of the people worked on village farms. The industrialization revolution dates from the middle 1800s through the 1960s. The mechanistic logic of industrial machines replaced the organic logic of indigenous farm, ranch, and nomadic cultures. Huge factories employing thousands proliferated. Business moved from organic, spiritual relationship to a living Earth (even before the Gaia hypothesis) and craft employment (in the guilds of feudal times) to the machine age. Before the mechanistic age of factories, instead of going to malls, people fed and clothed themselves; they even made their own houses and even walked to town. For many reasons peasants moved from village life to factory life. They gladly left the arduous life of working in the hot sun and drizzling rain where they had no bosses or employee benefits. Toffler tells us that farm life is toil and hardship, and people naturally flocked to the factory to find the better life. Immigrants were also the source of much factory labor. Henry Ford paid \$5 a day when others paid \$2 to get people to do otherwise repetitive and monotonous factory work. Enterprising tycoons continue to buy up family farmland and consolidate it into factory farms.

Second Wave. In the second wave machine life spread from the factory floor to the office and into middle management. As office workers proliferated to plan the work of the factory workers (Taylorism), the white collar jobs also

became organized according to assembly line principles such as division of labor and each person doing a very specific, fractionated task. Marx said that the skilled crafts people from the trades were herded into huge buildings, and over time capitalists hired managers to figure out ways to extract the knowledge of the crafts person and make it part of factory systems. The systems were very bureaucratic. Every action was timed and people became extensions of the machine. This way cheap, immigrant labor, and female labor (for the office) could be hired as mindless cogs. Deskilling Marx called it. Owners made a pile of cash.”

Third Wave This is the information age that arrived in the 1970s. The way of life of the blue-collar machine worker was displaced by a new, more progressive way of life. The new way of life is the knowledge worker (KW), the highly skilled, technical specialist and professional worker. Only 5% of workers are needed to provide our food, says best-selling management textbook writer Steven Robbins (1997: 7). 72% of Canada jobs and US and 59% of the lagging Italy jobs are in the service sector. While most service jobs are in low-paid fast food, retail, insurance, and rental car firms, you the reader are possible in training for those precious high skill service jobs in information technology, accounting, finance, law, etc.

Toffler has many recent translations. Coyle (1998) calls this the “weightless world” because thanks to miniaturization stuff we import and export is getting smaller. In Tapscott’s (1996) digital economy, he calls it molecularization and says we are virtualizing our exchanges in networks that allow for disintermediation (getting rid of middle persons). Our new high performance teams have gone virtual, using the worldwide web to keep in virtual contact. Kelley’s rules for the new digital economy begin with “embracing the swarm.” Instead of bureaucratic hierarchy, there are leaderless networks of interconnecting nodes. These leaderless nodes by themselves are dumb links, but through connection, like bees and wasps they attain smart results. Instead of centralized traffic control, for example, we can schedule trains, planes or buses by allowing local swarming. Railway owners, for example” are hoping to get a

swarm model running for their rail years ... local lines can autonomously switch themselves, using minimal intelligence onboard” (p. 16). This swarm system is one of self-organization, self-regulation, and attains the edge-of-chaos ideal of self-optimization. It is the latest answer to why markets should be self-steering in order to cope with the complexities of turbulent environment.

Most agree the work force in the third wave has gone bimodal. Picture a camel with two humps. In one hump, unskilled knowledge workers face a lifetime of low-wage employment in insurance companies, fast food restaurants, and car rental agencies. And there are the telecommuting KWs who do data entry work in India and Ireland. Tapscott (1996: 6) argues “millions of so-called virtual aliens are clicking away on keyboards in Shanghai, New Delhi, and Hong Kong – fully networked and employed as members of the U.S. economy. Except that they don’t pay U.S. taxes or live in the United States.” In this first camel’s bump half the world’s population earns less than a dollar per day. Companies that can not relocate to such poverty wage economies can recruit virtual alien workforces. But, on the second hump of the camel, ride the high status knowledge workers, the “technologists,” the engineers, teachers, lawyers, doctors, and registered nurses, that continue to make higher wages to sustain middle class life styles. And given the rapid developments in digital technology many of these can be recruited from the pool of virtual aliens. People from Third World countries with professional or technologist competence can work as virtual colleagues forming a virtual and global division of labor.

According to this worldview, there are still plenty of high paying jobs for everyone willing to buckle down and get the right knowledge skills for jobs available in the global knowledge economy. Lincoln Electric (Robbins, 1997), for example, received 20,000 applications for 200 openings. But most applicants were not qualified as skilled tool-and-die makers, mold makers, machinists, computer-controlled machine operators, or welders. They don’t have advanced math skills in trigonometry and can not read technical drawings. “Knowledge workers are the cutting edge of the third wave” (Robbins, 1997: 8). The KWMS story is very powerful and exceedingly popular. Most people accept this

worldview as pure and reasonable common sense, the hard stuff of business practice and the way of the future.

As part of the globalization discourse, to compete with cheap third World wages, and the decline of slavery, global managers are turning to prison labor. Cities across the USA fall all over themselves offering tax cuts to attract prison construction. Prisons provide employment to the community. They also provide prison labor to these corporations (Hightower, 1998):ⁱ

- JC Penney, Eddie Bauer, and K mart (jeans, sweatshirts and tops in Tennessee and Washington State prisons)
- IBM, Texas Instruments, Dell Computer (circuit boards in Texas prisons)
- Honda (car parts in Ohio prisons)
- McDonald's (uniforms in Oregon prisons)
- AT&T (telemarketers in Colorado prisons)
- Spalding (packing golf balls in Hawaii prisons).
- Chevron, Macy's, and BankAmerica (San Quentin prisoners do data entry)
- TWA (Ventura inmates take plane reservations)
- Plastics and Faucet Manufacturing (Folsom inmates do the manufacturing).
- Ostrich-slaughtering facility (Aveala inmates run the facility for meat export to Europe)

Prisons already have health care and prisoners do not take vacations. They always show up for work and they can not join a union. Plus you get the Made in the U.S.A. on every label. Convict-made goods are expected to reach nearly \$9 billion in sales by the end of the decade as the prison population swells, as more companies discover the scam, and as more state politicians learn to cash in on it (Hightower, 1998). Prisoners get 20% of their sub-minimum wage paycheck, while the rest goes to the state government. California offers tax credits on the first \$2,000 in wages. Shut down the Maquiladora and head for San Quentin.

We are headed to what Casey (1995: 188) calls the "simulated social."ⁱⁱ The Knowledge Worker Knowledge Management (KWKM) "philosophy is legitimating the restructuring of the 1980s and the reengineering of the 1990s with its "wage freezes, pay cuts, forced early retirement packages, general cutbacks in benefits and conditions and downsizing in the ranks of line and professional employees" (Casey, 1995: 188). The mutability of the corporate

form from a bureaucratic to a virtual model leaves a senior management in place, while the virtuals obtain free agency status in exchange for giving up “- job security, graded career paths and explicit assurance of retirement and health benefits” (p. 189). To compensate for this mutability of security and to lower the resistance to change, the KWS has created some new spaces in a simulated, artificial and social world. The team rather than occupation or union becomes the social family, the quasi-sports team space. The corporation simulates a “caring, purposeful, related family of nostalgic, pre-industrial myth” (p. 189). The self is being colonized. It is the next wave-frontier of progress. The old self is being emptied and re-filled, even re-stored as a “replica of religious virtuosity.” A new Arc is being floated across the brain of the virtual worker. The employee finds a renewed sense of empowerment in giving to the corporate entity, in performing a role in the team-family, and in serving the customer with selflessness. The virtual bonds of community are served up to replace the occupational callings, the careers that have been dejobbed, the class of workers who have no more class. I work for GE, I no longer have an identity as physicist, engineer, welder, or manager. The designer employee is empowered by company-designed values and behaviors, in sacred awe of the corporate plan for global expansion.

The religious character in its secular manifestation is the structural and cultural form of the organization: (Casey, 1995: 193). Faith, commitment, temperance, diligence, and devotion follow. These family-teams fight for competitive advantage on a global scale. The new KWMS culture architects have launched a new Arc, stored with the treasures of Protestant virtue. The line between public and private is being crossed as the technology of corporate surveillance counts the keystrokes of the telecommuting work, and the number of contact messages per hour with virtual team colleagues. The total of personal space is being integrated into production space in this new and welcomed virtual freedom space. The third wave is a great leap forward from the second wave of the smokestack culture. The new meta-narrative of the KW society, the KW team, KW worker, the KW identity is being written.

But whether one is working by modem, cellular phone and fax machine from one's living room, or from a trans-Pacific jet, the medium and the product of one's work are still controlled by the ethics and values of the corporate culture (p. 195).

The physical place of work has been de-centered from the corporate tower or the factory floor to its new virtual space. To talk against post-industrial global capitalism is an act of secular blasphemy. Therefore Leviathan, reincarnate, I pronounce a curse on your virtual religion. You can not mask your decay and ruin, your Pandemonium and mutability is not an act of progress. Only violence do I see in the sea in which this Arc floats. Foucault (1979: 231) put it this way. In knowledge and power organizations, there are procedures:

Elaborated for distributing individuals, fixing them in space, classifying them, extracting from them the maximum in time and forces, training their bodies, coding their continuous behavior, maintaining them in perfect visibility, forming around them an apparatus of observation, registration and recording, constituting on them a body of knowledge that is accumulated and centralized.

This to me describes the dark side of the knowledge worker organization that does not get articulated in the management texts. A worker convinced she is empowered, but working in a dark workshop. It is in this sense that Ritzer is correct, McDonaldization reigns supreme. The knowledge worker narrative has its purpose. It is to be memorized in every business college on the planet. I can not even see how to replace it with a more enlightened narrative. For the narrative is already an act of enlightenment, but also a mask for a program of reform that keeps reforming but not really changing the game. What is uninterrupted is management itself, defined here as the will to control. A form of control accomplished in storytelling.

Roy Jacques (1996) explores how management knowledge forms cultural and historical ways of characterizing employees. U.S. management texts characterize employees as deficient, in need of motivation, Taylor's lazy soldiers, without proper Protestant ethic. The U.S. exports this view of the deficient worker

to the post-colonial world, selling a story of development, progress, and scientific knowledge. But such a knowledge is elitist (transcending history), and devalues indigenous (privileging U.S. knowledge) and universalist (denying the validity of local knowledge). Jacques (196: ix) sees this as a time of great transformational change, the advent of post-industrial, in which the old ways of seeing constitute problems a sedimented belief, that is unfit for making the journey to tomorrow's era. The U.S. management and institutional theories is a colonization of the world using a "rhetoric of frontier and community that have been increasingly marginal to lived experience for decades" (p. xvi). In writing a history of management discourse, Jacques seeks to contextualize the transformational trends of today by showing when the discourse of journey is out of touch with the times. The manager is the hero, leading the organization on its revolutionary, transformational journey from industrial bureaucracy to post-industrial, even postmodern enterprise. The problem for Jacques (1996) is that the heroic manager of the 1990s is applying the management and organizational principles of the 1960s, which were out of date when they were written:

All too often we see this manifested in theory which accepts as 'normal' an assembly-line or hardhat workplace that has been declining in importance since the 1930s" (Jacques, 1996: 7).

This is where Jacques (1996) and I separate. I agree that each generation of managers is applying practice suited to the industrial circumstances of their grandfathers, but I see more going on. I see that the old principles for how to conduct or manage the journey of an organization are de-contextualized, reinvented, and oftentimes just mis-read to say mean something quite different. I think each generation, not just ours, sees itself on a revolutionary and transformational journey, and that each generation sees itself braking "this cycle of reliance on obsolete expertise, managers, consultants, and management scholars" (1996: 7). Jacques (1996: 9) points out how Re-engineering is a successor to TQM, but that both are rooted in the statistical quality control ideas of Edward Deming, who, I think rediscovered the 1920s concepts of Taylor, still popular in Japan in the 1970s, and re-imported them into the U.S., in the 1980s

(only to be reinvented by the reengineers of the 1990s). This is Jacques question:

While TQM concepts can be valuable to today's organizations, what does it say about the state of knowledge development in organizational theorizing that the latest theory for organizing people at work comes from half-century old ideas developed by a century-old-engineer?

I think it means the tips of the gurus and popular scholars are being re-surfaced from the tips forgotten by the out-of-date gurus, given new lingo, and sold for profit. I think each era believes it is in the throes of transformational changes, unlike any previous generation, and needs to somehow forget history, especially critical history. I agree with Jacques that we must become applied philosophers and critically reflect on the context of our practices, recipes, principles, and especially reflect on the root-metaphor of each new management and organizing fashion. Organizational and management science is somehow able to de-contextualize one generation's knowledge and through an act Jacques (1996: 147) calls "discursive taxidermy: an exploratory discourse becomes universal and normalized. And this is the project of this book, to critically reflect on the context of each new root-metaphor of the transformational organizational journey of each generation, and the hero of the journey-guide, the manager. "the Puritan ideal of progress toward perfection was recast as endless progress, social 'evolution'" (p. 148). With each new generation of management, the journey, must re-script, or restory the character of the employee, manager, customer, and ecology.

Relationship to Other Worldviews

Corporate Imperialism and KWMS Spectacle The KWMS does not view itself as a colonial or imperial force. Yet, from the Corporate Imperialism perspective, multinational and transnational corporations rule the world. KWMS presents itself as what is most progressive and enlightened about the civilization of commerce. The free, unrestrained trade, and open-to-all competition model is presented as natural law in the KWMS. Current interest in self-organizing systems, managing on the edge-of-chaos and other complexity logic is seen in

Corporate Imperialism terms as another reinvention of Social Darwinian theory. According to Social Darwinism, those who survive are the strongest and fittest of species. Yet empire is a culture of coercive social power, colonization, and grows until it has no more resources to appropriate. It then collapses upon itself.

David Korten's (1996) book, When Corporations Rule the World promotes democratic governance structures and ecological practice. For 4.5 billion years, the earth has sustained a diverse pool of species and resources. Spectacles of production and consumption, in three hundred and fifty years, since the Industrial Revolution have had two consequences. Korten's statistics tell us two things. First, spectacle has allowed the gap between rich and poor to widen and accelerate. Second, spectacle has allowed population to jump from 1 billion to 5.5 billion people making sustainability a suspect goal. The world population of 5.5 billion shares a total annual income of \$20 trillion dollars in broken and unsustainable ways.

Richest 1/5 get 82.7% of the world income and consume 80% of extracted natural resources

11.5% of income goes to 1/5th

2.3% of income goes to 1/5th

1.9% of income goes to 1/5th

Poorest 1/5th get 1.4% of total world income and extract all their natural resources to richer populations

Burrell (1997) in his ground-breaking retro-organization theory book *Pandemonium* has argued that living outside, what I term spectacle, is the proletariat, and more than two billion people are rural or urban proletariat. Some are unemployed, others just under-employed living on the edge of the spectacle, but not immune to its fragmentation. Some bohemian professors, like myself, critique the system but live among its trappings. We are the "society of the spectacle" and we are the global world of spectacular organization. "What hides under the spectacular oppositions is a *unity of misery*" (#64). As a result of spectacle our world population of 5.5 billion people will become ten billion by 2020. The gap between rich and poor is accelerating. In 1996, 358 billionaires

have net worth of \$760 billion, which is equal to the net worth of the poorest 2/5th of the world's people. In 1999, just 225 billionaires earn as much as half the world's people. If we count energy in measures of barrels of oil:

1860 10 million oil barrels a day (equivalent)

1998 150 million barrels of oil per day

2020 250 million barrels of oil per day

The richest 1/5th consumes ten times the energy, twelve times the steel, and fifteen times the paper than the other 4/5ths of the world's population. The U.S.A. is six percent of the world's population, but manages somehow to consume fifty of the world's resources.

Ahimsa and KWMS Spectacle The KWMS is a cosmology of materialism. People are taught through spectacle that things will bring them material happiness. Growth is presented as without ecological or any other limits. Ahimsa acknowledges that the global economy, even one with a digital spirit, is prone to inordinate acts of violence. Violent forms of production extend from fur animal factories, factory farms, slaughter houses of all kinds to many of the goods that we find in places like Wal-Mart and the Home Depot. With the global division of the consumer from the producer of goods, spanning the world, people have little or no idea how goods they purchase have been manufactured. We do not directly observe the workers in China make our name brand-sneakers or those in Haiti make our Mickey Mouse and Goofy T-shirts. We do not see how foxes and mink are treated when breed in captivity or killed to fashion our fur coats. Consumers know very little about how things that they buy are made or who makes them. At the same time we live in a world addicted to violence at many levels. We consume violence in Television programs and advertising, in movies, and in many sports arenas. We are addicted to violent consumption in our systems of easy credit, workaholism, and shopaholic world.

Political Economy and KWMS Spectacle No worldview is more skeptical of the knowledge worker discourse than the political economy writers. The main focus is on how capital accumulation is alienated from how goods and

services are produced, distributed, and consumed. The work of Guy Debord sought to transcend Marx's focus on giving workers more democratic control over their own work to how consumers can have more control over their consumption. In the new political economy, it is argued that the KW is getting fewer wage increases, working longer hours, and given temporary attachment to the virtual organization. The virtual organization has a few well-paid permanent hires, such as the CEO and a few executives and their assistants. However, the trend is to disemploy everyone else and release them to become temporary workers or consultants, employed here and there. The distributed global division of labor allows a detachment of the corporation from any one place, finding its labor in the cheapest possible locals, obtaining scarce resources from other locals in the Third World, and moving the accumulated capital to the First World.

Postmodern and KWMS Spectacle There are many postmodern positions. Each has some critique of the KMMS spectacle. Most focus on the culture industry, the use of mass media, advertising, and popular culture to sell the spectacle way of life. KWMS masquerades as the newest version of Enlightenment thinking, progressing linearly to some universal point of perfection. Humans are coevolving with their machines, including their genetic gene-splicing machines to initiate new life on the planet. Man the tool maker has graduated to man the species-maker. The KWMS presents itself as a utopia wrought by the spectacle of cyber production and virtual consumption. Yet, beneath this utopia veneer reside real people, plants, animals, and even spiritual beings. Nature ceases to be authentic as in Disney's vinyl leaves or Luxor's pyramid, or Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas. At the same time these are our very measure of authentic, and we expect the real thing to live up to spectacle. "In the spectacle, one part of the world *represents itself* to the world and is superior to it" (#29). New, York in the spectacle of Las Vegas is more authentic than real New York, more real than the real. The spectacle, to me, enacts a storytelling theater to persuade us that the fragments of our fractured lives and the fragmentation of nature itself is whole and not fragmented at all.

I was led to this project by the seminal work of Best and Kellner (1997: 80) who trace “the theoretical trajectory from Marx through Debord and the Situationists to Baudrillard and postmodern theory.” Best and Kellner (1997) do not see postmodern as a break with the modernity of late capitalism, nor do I. Rather than modernity being replaced by postmodernity, it is more appropriate to regard modernity as the producer and distributor of the spectacle of consumption. I also follow their lead in critiquing Baudrillard for assuming that in the postmodern the distinction between real and unreal has been erased. Best and Kellner (1997: 80) reverse Baudrillard’s formulation. Instead of the commodification of reality they address the “reality of commodification” spectacles. I also analyze the reality of spectacle by looking at how spectacle interacts with nature, social systems, and machine system, in contemporary theories of coevolution. I agree with Best and Kellner’s critique of Baudrillard that there has not been a break from capitalist modernity to capitalist postmodernity. The modern theory of “Marx, Nietzsche, Weber, the Frankfurt School, and others—is not only far from being obsolete, but is of central importance in making sense of our contemporary situation” (p. 80).

Conclusions There is much that is of value in the KWMS worldview. It is progress personified, the opportunity to feed the world, and obtain digital networking among all humankind. Yet, to realize this opportunity, it will be necessary to look at nonviolent forms of production and consumption, the problems of colonizing the as yet unvirtualized spaces, the conditions of political economy that produce and consume such a spectacle, and the postmodern conditions of the new Biotech Century. This we shall do in more depth and detail in the next few chapters. In doing so, I hope that we can develop a more holistic appreciation for the global conditions of late capitalism.

Best and Kellner (1997: 80) have noted the postmodern turn in spectacle theory from a focus on the modern spectacle of the bureaucratic massification process (Fordism), to late modernist fragmentation of competing market spectacles (Late Fordism) to Baudrillard’s postmodern simulacra, a “dematerialized society of signs, images, and codes” (late global capitalism).

Best and Kellner (1997: 80) describe it as “a movement from the society of the *commodity* to the society of the *spectacle* to the society of the *simulacrum*, paralleled by increasing commodification and massification to the point of implosion of the key phenomena described by modern theory.” Our simulacrum world of virtual reality play, cyberspace work, cybersex leisure, and our new cyber university education has not however left spectacle behind. It is only translating spectacle into a new genre.

The Modern Conversion of Festival into Spectacle It is the tragedy of festival, that they are colonized into spectacles. This is a critical point, because, spectacle and festival are not alternatives. They have co-existed since humankind stepped from the cave. Festivals are of course big business opportunities for spectacle. Mitsubishi Entertainment Corporation, for example, is reported to be setting up its 100" screen, lovingly labeled "PLEASURE VISION". And there are McDonald's, Subway, and Kodak-moment stands at many festival events. Go to the Renaissance Faire and get a photo eating your "Happy Elizabethan Burger." Spectators can watch the screen to get closer to dueling knights on horseback dressed in 16th century costume. You can of course, just sit at home and watch the whole thing beamed by satellite or cable into your living room. You could pop in a Kevin Costner, Sean Conrey, or Mel Gibson video of knightly novel. Or you can plug in the latest Virtual Renaissance Reality into your Nintendo and just become one of the cyber knights.

With the formation of capitalism, Adam Smith tells us that fragmentation was accomplished through the division of labor. We have given the system of bureaucracy various reforms, and even invented new language, but the result is the same: spectacle colonizes festival. There is a language conversion. Departments are now teams, managers are not coaches, and bosses are now facilitators, instead of delegation there is empowerment. But, the festival of everyday life slips away. Workers are fragmented and then recomposed as knowledge workers integrated into team projects in integrated knowledge organizations. Beneath all the rhetoric, the peasants continue to slave. The Third World continues to send its resources to the Knowledge World. The

organizations is a spectacular pseudo-culture, a manifestation of the fragmentation of production and consumption in modern capitalism, which for Debord “aims to recapture the fragmented worker as a ‘personality well integrated in the group’” (#193). The function of the spectacle “is to *make history forgotten within culture*” (#193). The role of festival is to recover the forgotten memories.

Debord argues that modern media capitalism is a “diffuse spectacle” where the apologetics of advertising for the catalogue of fragmented commodities is realized into a “unified spectacle” in advertising (#65). Various automobiles, motorcycles, and other transport products are presented as “star-commodities” without showing how other star-products National Forests, clean air, clean water, etc. are destroyed by the transport star-products (#65). The “consumption of the whole” is contradicted by the oppositional fragmentation of contrary star products. Each “actual consumer can directly touch only a succession of fragments of this commodity happiness, fragments in which the quality attributed to the whole is obviously missing every time” (#65). Globalization is also the fragmentation of space while constructing a theater of cyber-image unification we experience in the commodity spectacles. Urbanization also fragments the ecology into an artificial ecology of road spaces, suburb sprawl spaces, and cityscape spaces. City parks and state forests recreate “pseudo-countryside” spaces (#177). The ecology has to be organized and managed territory to keep “the peasantry from undertaking independent action and from affirming itself as a creative historical force again today: (#177). The fear of the artificial society is that the peasantry might reestablish natural rhythms of tasks to the seasonal time of agrarian society and threaten all artificial spaces.

The fragmentation of the peasantry “called for bureaucratic centralization ... as a product of the conditions of growth of modern state bureaucracy” (#177). The city and industrial-scape liquidates the natural landscape to form its own exclusive and artificial landscape. And the global fragmentation of natural

landscape becomes less real than the authentic landscape of managed and synthetic urban and State Park ecology.

Knowledge, like time, has become irreversible. If there ever was a time when knowledge was unified in comment and coherent language, that time has past.

In the case of knowledge, the accumulation of branches of fragmentary knowledge, which become unusable because the approval of existing conditions must finally renounce knowledge of itself, confronts the theory of praxis which alone holds the truth of them all since it alone holds the secret of their use (#185).

As the disciplines of knowledge fragment and accumulate, they are no longer able to explain social totality. “Like philosophy at the moment when it gained its full autonomy, every discipline which becomes autonomous has to collapse, first of all as a pretension to explain social totality coherently, and finally even as a fragmented tool which can be used within its own boundaries” (#182). The knowledge organization and the knowledge society seeks to be an artificially reunited social totality, a coherent spectacle of unfragmented knowledge. As Debord might put it, “artificial recomposition in the commodity spectacle, the illusory representation of the non-lived” (#185).

The spectacle of consumption seeks to sell us the illusion that we are being empowered, working in more participative and enlightened corporations, while our standard of living progresses to greater heights of human fulfillment. We work in teams, not committees, in networks, not bureaucracies, we are coached not bossed – and yet, through this rhetorical veneer, we experience acid rain, a loss of species diversity, in a polluted planet. Consumption has been constructed to give us happiness, but who by consuming more and more stuff is truly happy? If there is all this automation and technological sophistication, then why not six-hour days, and fewer days – seven, six, five is too many workdays. Why, I think it is because we have become a workaholic society, working to accumulate stuff, we do not have time to enjoy, and if we did have the time, would stuff and more stuff make us happy? Everyone knows that 500 billionaires earn as the starving half of the world’s burgeoning population (Korten, 1996).

Everyone know that it is not food production, but food distribution that prevents us from feeding everyone. Everyone knows that the richest countries consume the resources of all the other countries, leaving those citizens access to TV in return. The fear is that if we fed, clothed, and housed everyone, the Third World would overpopulate, refuse to surrender their resources to stronger nations, and threaten the survival of the rich. The fear is that guaranteed income would eliminate our desire to work long hours at minimum wage. That feeding the humans and increasing our leisure is a radical thought reveals, I think, the pervasiveness of spectacle rhetoric. We do not think leisure is ethical, only work is ethical in the spectacle of production and consumption. Our fear is that if we shifted funding from the military industrial complex, from the war and violence machine to the peace machine, our stock market would collapse and our Pleasantville life would cease to exist. Our fear is that if business students got a liberal arts background, they might pursue liberal passions, such as art, music, and even leisure. “The new world of post-work is a rupture with both the economic and cultural assumptions of work without end” (Aronowitz, Esposito, DiFazio & Yard, 1998: 69)

The converse of spectacle is the situation, the situation of festival, the workers’ and consumers’ self-activity, and a self-managed life beyond our primordial soup of violence, necessitating a restored relation of work and leisure. A festival in which stupid work is taxed, surveillance is outlawed, radical participative democracy is common, and technology must be adapted for ecological sustainability. Best and Kellner (1997: 81) argue that the work of Debord and the Situationists was influenced by Sartre’s and also Lefebvre’s “notion of human existence ... lived within particular context of situation and that individuals can create their own situations” of everyday life. Some speak of it (SI, 1966) as a revolution of the everyday life situation. The problem becomes how to construct new situations of production and consumption in a society dominated by spectacle.

Transition to Next chapter The Knowledge Society, we reviewed refuses to know two things. The Knowledge Worker story is an evangelical narrative of

the enlightenment of globalization, virtual reality, cyber teams, empowerment, and intrapreneuring. It presents an universalist narrative, a sort of religion of the true and only way to happiness and world prosperity. The received wisdom of the first worldview is that bureaucracy, division of labor, command and control, and even unemployment are relics to a dead industrial past. Who would argue with this? What it leaves out is the plight of the Third World, the second class slave labors behind the knowledge class workers and managers.

The modern KWMS spectacle is transforming from the concentrated, under one roof bureaucratic spectacle, to the diffuse spectacle of production sites distributed around the global economy (Debord, 1967). The distributed spectacle is a global division of labor that includes the virtual shell of the corporation subcontracting to whatever cheap, sub-contracting labor pools and formerly permanent, now temporary professionals, without benefits and reduced wages. Higher CEO profits comes from surfing on the edge of the networked, digital economy. As Brown (1997) puts it:

Today's new class of executives, managers and specialists – the "knowledge workers," the "symbolic analysts," the "buccaneering breed of entrepreneurs and visionaries, men and women from the entertainment, communications, and computer industries, whose ambitions and influence have made America the one true superpower of the Information Age," the industry celebrities such as Rupert Murdoch, Michael Eisner, David Geffen, Ted Turner, Bill Gates and Jeffrey Katzenberg.

The trend is to vertically integrate the telecommunications and culture industries until a handful of "media firms" are dominant. To the Corporate Imperialism authors this is a reenactment of the forms of robber baron monopoly capitalism of over a century ago. Yet it is also different, in that it combines global standardization and fragmentation. It is still concentrated production, but one that fragments its products and appeals to attract local consumer life styles.

There is also a different form of global division of labor: the simultaneous spectacular concentration of monopoly ownership and control of a more distributed virtual information networks and global subcontracting of poverty wage-paying factories. With tele commuting, the life of the virtual professional

changes the time and space relationships inherent in the traditional industrial production. “The difference between work and leisure is no longer spatial: it is now temporal, a division between ‘billable’ and nonbillable’ time” (Brown, 1997).

Finally, there is a change in what is being colonized. The theory is that after the market spaces of the earth were corporately claimed, production and consumption spectacle turned to a colonization of culture, those social spaces of formerly private life, hospital life, education life and free-form leisure that had been beyond capitalism. This new colonization of the social is changing the consumer, with a new sense of both time and space. “The spectacle proclaims that soon, very soon, we will be able to do everything we once did in a variety of locations – work, shop, bank, entertain ourselves, visit with friends, see the sights, and so forth – through our [personal computers], which will be integrated into a variety of telecommunications networks” (Brown, 1997). This says Brown, is the divine plan of modern knowledge work that consumers, workers, managers, and owners are approaching with blind faith.

Rifkin (1998), Korten (1996) and Kotke (1993) from different vantagepoints, each add a fourth wave to Alvin Toffler’s narrative of the history of spectacles of production and consumption. We have accelerated from test tube computers in the 1940s to test tube babies in the 1960s, and in 1978 to cloning sheep and in the 1990s we clone infants. Rifkin calls this the Biotech Century, a second genesis global experiment in species creation and cross-species DNA splicing. Korten and Kotke are more concerned with inequitable distributions of earth-resources. The richest 1/5th consumes ten times the energy, twelve times the steel and fifteen times the paper, than the other 4/5ths of the world’s population. The U.S.A. is six percent of the world’s population, but manages somehow to consume fifty percent of the earth’s resources. The Corporate Imperialism writers frequently call this the fourth wave.

First the ecology of the planet no longer sustains the predatory capitalism of corporate imperialism or the life-draining central bureaucratic planning control of state communism. With corporate imperialism, the resources are consumed

faster than the planet is not able to recycle the produced waste. With state socialism, the bureaucratic plans are too non-adaptive to changing patterns.

Second, the Knowledge Society with all its learning organizations and cyber knowledge has not learned that the global society of capitalism, like state communism is collapsing into ruin, while accelerating the six century ruination of the indigenous world. I have articulated the festival solutions. Live according to local resources, do not consume more than your fair share, and put a lid on mega-corporate imperial exploitation of local resources. In short, get the spectacle of global production and consumption under control, by putting some real restrictions on multinational and transnational corporate behavior that allow festival to survive.⁴

ⁱ Hightower, Jim

1998 “The next best thing to slaves.” Funny Times: Humor, Politics and Fun. 13 (11): 7.

ⁱⁱ Casey, Catherine

1995 work, Self and Society: After Industrialism. London: Routledge.

⁴ See David C. Korten's books: (1996) *When Corporations Rule the World*; (1998) *The Post-Corporate World: Life After Capitalism*. In both books he argues that the market economy principles of Adam Smith for small firms under local citizen control are being violated by a pseudo-free market rhetoric of monopoly power.