

# Spectacles and Festivals of Organization Managing Ahimsa Production and Consumption

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## **PART I. SPECTACLE ORGANIZATION WORLDVIEWS**

### **Chapter 3:**

### ***Corporate Imperialism Spectacle***

This chapter explores the Corporate Imperialism Worldview. It is a spectacle in which land and people are appropriated for commercial purpose. One alternative is a festival celebration of life and a respect for all species. The focus of this chapter is on how frequently people come to believe in a corporate imperialism worldview that legitimates and rationalizes genocide and ecocide as common sense, without apparent ethical reflection.

This chapter is a statement of what happens when monopolistic corporate imperialism unleashes highly violent practices that destroy people's claims on place. It is about what happens when gold (land, forest, and spices) is sought without limits, and the tragedy that accumulates when local native cultures become enslaved to advance and expand Western global and corporate imperial economies. It is what happens when the corporate imperialism spectacles of production and consumption spin out of control to purge and colonize sustainable festivals of local production and consumption. It is one of the several worldviews we are exploring.

**Defining Corporate Imperialism** By corporate imperialism, I mean the colonizing of what is left of the ecology and our everyday festive lives by monopolistic multinational corporate power spectacles, including short-term greed of the largest transnational corporations on the planet and the acts of ancient nation states. Corporate Imperialism includes spectacles of production and consumption that violently unbalance the coevolution of humans, plants, animal, and local technology. The corporate imperial way of dehumanization is to me paving over the festival way of everyday life, squeezing what is left onto the reservation, suburb, reserve, and office cubicle. It ranges from colonization of the native people to colonization of the festive vestiges of everyday life, and now

to the colonization (by corporate patents) of the species gene pool and the claims of meteors and planets by corporations and nation states.

**Table One: Part 2 Corporate Imperialism Spectacle Worldview**

<p><b>2. Corporate Imperialism Spectacle Worldview</b></p> <p>Corporate Imperialism includes the conquest of the New World by capital-entrepreneurs seeking gold, land, and slaves acquired through genocide. It includes the crudest forms of animal slaughter. The rise of modern corporate empire also addresses ecological degradation: soil erosion, desertification, deforestation, ocean pollution, air pollution, and extinction of species. A culture of violence is institutionalized in colonialism, slavery, conquest and factory production. There is a movement to tame corporate domination by returning corporate charter control to communities, shortening the workweek, ensuring a minimum level of social welfare, and promoting leisure time. With Biotech Century we see a eugenic civilization founded in second genesis of species creation. Racist genocide and animal slaughter depend on Social Darwinian and other legitimating and rationalizing narratives to make mass murder seem rational.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Columbus (1492-1494) Admiral's logbook</li> <li>✓ De las Casas (1656) The Tears of the Natives</li> <li>✓ Stannard (1992) American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World</li> <li>✓ Yewell, Dodge &amp; DeSirey (1992) Confronting Columbus</li> <li>✓ Kotke (1993) The Final Empire: The Collapse of Civilization and the Seed of the Future</li> <li>✓ Sinclair (1905) The Jungle</li> <li>✓ Korten (1996) When Corporations Rule the World; (1998) The Post-Corporate World: Life After Capitalism</li> <li>✓ Dyson (1997) Darwin Among the Machines</li> <li>✓ Aronowitz and Cutler (1998) Post-Work: The Wages of Cybernation</li> <li>✓ Rifkin (1995) The End of Work: The Decline of the global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era</li> <li>✓ Rifkin (1998) The Biotech Century: Harnessing the Gene and Remaking the World</li> </ul>
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The summary note in Table One and the books mentioned trace corporate spectacle from the ancient days of mass slaughter and genocide against indigenous people to acquire land gold and slaves. The history extends through the mass slaughter of animals in factory farms, the recent global divisions of labor where divisions between haves and have nots accelerates, and the reengineering of animal, plant, and human species in ways that change the ecology of the planet. These are very different forms of violence, against humans, animals, and planet. They are however related in the corporate imperial

spectacle of colonial production and consumption: the movement of producing and consuming from human race-predators, to cruel and inhumane animal slaughter, to making violence itself a consumable, to the collapse of ecosystems through unsustainable business practice. The hope is that if race learns not to exterminate race, then human species can learn also to appreciate its complicity with the ecosystem. The hope is in festival, a rethinking of the relationship between violence and non-violence! It could mean moving to a respect for all life and to redefining work and leisure, in what some are calling a post-work society, in which a basic guarantee of living quality is a right of all. We will spend most of our chapter time on the race against race genocide that is associated with capital materialism or what I am calling Corporate Imperialism. In the next chapter we will look at animal and ecology violence and festival alternatives, particularly Ahimsa (respect for all life forms). Subsequent chapters will look at festival.

**Body Torture Spectacles** In 14<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, Crown and Church conducted regular spectacles of justice and power in the Village Square. Torture was authorized, and a common sense solution to many problems. The tortures, as Foucault's (1977) opening scenes of the *Discipline and Punish* of Damien depict in gory detail, involved the chopping off of hands, the drawing and quartering of the body, burning from hot metal, and the flogging of the flesh to the bone. Decapitated heads were regular adornments of European City gates warning all that entered that violence was an act of power. Medieval men and women were well acquainted with spectacles of body torture.

To perform torture on persons decreed to be "others" in the New World was not even considered violent. Foucault argues the body-torture spectacle went in doors where modernity could give it proper control. I disagree. I think the spectacle of violence resurfaces in contemporary media and is deeply rooted in modern and postmodern production and consumption. When violent images are created for entertainment and advertising, the elites then appeal to the masses to give them more power and taxes so that everyone may be protected from violence on the streets, in the homes, schools, and in civilian militia.

In early forms of corporate imperialism, we explore below, one consequence is the corporations (or trusts, enterprises, cartels, trading companies) of one political economy can take an exploitative view of the “other” in order to grab their land. And this is common sense from their point of view. The question I want to address in this chapter is how it is that people of one political economy are able to construct a narrative belief system (racist ideology) that tells them they are better, higher, more advanced, more civilized, more evolved, more rightful owners than another political economy? And this extends to our contemporary corporate situation, to animals and ecology, when people take an egocentric instead of an ecocentric, non-violent view.

The role of spectacle is how we invent a story of inequity and superiority, how is it reflected in corporate behavior, in the imperial accumulation of resources in violent ways, and the colonization of non-violent festival? Which is not to say that all native practice is non-violent, but there was much that was peaceful and ecological. I am concerned with how spectacles of racist violence, as a theatrics performing the superiority narrative, sustains a more severe consequence, the genocide, as well as the ecocide, the animal slaughter and lack of biocentric awareness of our contemporary corporate imperialism economy consuming the “other”? Other here can be human or animal. I search for roots.

**Genealogy of Columbus Spectacle** The spectacle invents its heroes scripting stories and theatrics of their journey as paths for societies to emulate in production and consumption habits. There is so much spectacle hype and Wild West sideshow carnival that few people know what really took place and are perfectly socialized by the manufactured narrative of the great American Dream and the personification of global capitalism and corporate entrepreneurship. If I can show that the Columbus myth has grown and metamorphosed over five centuries, then its mythic recreations become more transparent.

**First Century Columbus Myth** For the first century (1492-1592) the story of Christopher Columbus was not the grandiose legend it is today. He was the “errant sailor who brought to Europe news of lands to the west ... this knowledge [that] would dawn slowly on the rest of Europe over the course of the next few

generations.”<sup>1</sup> The legend was not widely known in Europe, so Martin Waldseemuller, a map maker gave the honor of discovery to Amerigo Vespucci who had written and disseminated his own claims of “discovery.”<sup>2</sup> And by this false advertising, what would have been the United States of Columbus became the United States of America. In the first Century of the Columbus myth-building, few paid much attention to Bartolome de las Casas history of “the Admiral” or to the Admiral’s descriptions of the natives as peaceful, gift-giving, non-warring beings. Instead the character of the native in stories was the “noble savage” and soon just “beastly savage,” both subhuman portrayals. In the spectacle story of Columbus, the seaman had shoveled aside the natives to make way for Euro-nation state settlement and commercial ventures. The spectacle provided legitimacy to practice. We will explore these observations by las Casas shortly.

**Second Century Columbus Myth** In the second century (1592-1692) the Puritans began to settle the North American continent, pushing aside the natives as they proceeded. Native agriculture practices were paid no heed, since there were “superior” Euro technologies and land-clearing methods that made more sense to settlers. Foreign animals and the Indians, also considered beasts were exterminated without any moral dilemma whatsoever. To the Puritans natives did not exhibit the requisite Protestant work ethic, and wore too few clothes.

**Third Century Columbus Myth** In the third century (1692-1792) the United States searched for white male heroes to put on pedestals for the tricentennial celebration. There were proposals to change the name to Columbia or the United States of Columbia.

The first known celebration of the “discovery” of America was held by the Tammany society on October 12, 1792. Monuments to Columbus were erected in New York... and Baltimore. The Tammany Society, also known as the Colombian Order, had grown in part from the Sons of Liberty during the Revolution, and ironically claimed as its two guiding lights Columbus and Chief Tammany of the Delaware Indians, who had welcomed William Penn and his

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<sup>1</sup> Yewell, John (1992) “The day, the pledge, the myth.” P. 167-180. In *Confronting Columbus*. P. 167.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 168.

followers to their new colony in 1682... then in 1828, Columbus-  
mania broke out.<sup>3</sup>

There was now very great demand for Columbus stories, and Washington Irving created a fictional man to inhabit the myth and legitimate the spectacle of Columbus-mania. He wrote *The Life and Voyages of Columbus* (1828). In telling his story, he made a fictional account of the voyage, the mutineering crew, the fear that the world was flat, and invented qualities of entrepreneurial white character and natives standing in the way of progress and commerce that stand firm as believed and unchangeable historical fact. The story was designed to cater to the sentiments of the day, to rationalize the appropriation of lands, the genocide of 100 million natives throughout the Americas since 1492. This is the magic of spectacle to make fiction more believable than real, to create the legend to fit the mania, and to exploit the mania to legitimate and rationalize commerce. Most textbooks and movies based their Columbus account on Irving's fiction, and accept it as authentic. To this very day the truth of Columbus is gauged by its fit to fictional narrative, rather than to eyewitness accounts or to Columbus's own journal writing.

**Fourth Century Columbus Myth** In the fourth century (1792-1892) the Columbus-mania grew by leaps and bounds. The Columbus legend was shaped and outfitted as the main character and role model of the American Dream. Columbus was given courage, optimism, entrepreneurial initiative, and the wealth of nations. In 1890, on February 24<sup>th</sup>, the House of Representatives had a Columbian Exposition. The massacre of Wounded Knee took place in December 1890 "with the West 'won' and Columbus more than ever a symbol of the nation's vitality, planning for the Exposition was well underway."<sup>4</sup> The Pledge of Allegiance was written as part of the Columbian Exposition and circulated to schools across the land. President Benjamin Harrison declared October 12, 1892, a national holiday to commemorate Columbus. The Columbus Exposition, held in Chicago, had "authentic" ethnic displays to demonstrate the progress and

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 169.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 170.

triumph of Western technology over native technology that was viewed in this spectacle lens as barbaric, animalistic, primitive. Here again, “authentic” is a spectacle display to calibrate race theory. The First Columbus Day was in 1866 in the Italian neighborhoods of New York City. In 1869, other cities had their own unofficial celebrations. In 1882, the Knights of Columbus were founded in New Haven and the campaign to elect Columbus as the greatest of all American heroes drew more mania than every before.

**Fifth Century Columbus Myth** In the fifth century (1892-1992) the Columbus myth-making took on new spectacle proportions. In 1905, the governor of Colorado set aside a Columbus Holiday, making it law in 1907. Other states followed suit and in 1937, President Franklin Roosevelt made it a national holiday. There were Wild West shows, dime novels of cowboys and Indians, and at the close of the century TV serials, motion pictures, textbooks, cartoons, Thanksgiving Day and Columbus Day spectacles were crafted to make it appear that pilgrims and Indians lived in festival relationship. The media was triumphant with Columbusmania, transforming in spectacle fashion, what historians and natives knew to be the greatest Holocaust of all time into the American Dream of entrepreneurial wealth and colonization, the rags to riches possibilities of slavery, land grabbing, gold killing, sugar, tobacco, cocoa, and other plantation building. The Columbus Myth was pure western racist propaganda, and for propaganda, there is nothing better than spectacle theatrics. It takes propaganda to diminish the testimony and credibility of eyewitnesses, to cover indigenous Holocaust with American Dream doctrine.

In 1989, President George Bush’s Columbus Day Proclamation embellished the corporate aspects of the Columbus myth. The Columbus myth is made over into the legend of “American entrepreneurs and business people” whom “accepted great risks in order to pursue their dreams.” The Quincentenary Jubilee Commission celebrates Italian and Spanish, but not native heritage. President Bush ends the Proclamation by saying the United States is “to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day day in

honor of Christopher Columbus.”<sup>5</sup> President Bush tells of the “courageous navigator who discovered the Americas” a symbol of the “generations of brave and bold Americans who, like him, have overcome great odds in order to chart the unknown.”<sup>6</sup> Columbus is presented as the “great explorer, challenging the frontiers of knowledge” but we do not hear any mention of the ecological, technical, or cultural knowledge that was tossed aside, or of the Americas Holocaust. The unknown was known by the natives, and there were 100 million people discovered who were soon exterminated, thirty percent by mutilation and the rest by starvation and disease between 1492 and now.

**Two Spectacle Theories (Debord & Baudrillard)** Two theorists approach the topic of spectacle quite differently. Each gives a part of the theory I need to display the situation before you. They answer the question of why Columbus is lionized when it requires so much illusion and fantasy to cover up so very many facts and eyewitness accounts.<sup>7</sup> For Guy Debord, a founder of the Situationaliste International, it is possible to confront spectacle illusion and recover some sense of the camouflaged and remanufactured history. But, to Baudrillard, the spectacle has so covered over the real with historical illusion, and copies of illusions, and copies of copies, that no real can be found. For Baudrillard, the spectacle is the only real we have. The Hollywood Columbus is the “authentic” and any version others or I put forward will be measured against what is already a fake. I take a position that is between Debord who believes that recuperation of real from fantasy is possible and Baudrillard who holds that it is *all spectacle now* with no real to be found anywhere.

The study of spectacle is an effort to reclaim the festive play and freedom of everyday life situation, to resist its total colonization of our inner and outer space. The study of spectacle focuses on what keeps everyday life impoverished for the majority of the world, and lifeless even for producers of spectacle. The

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 201.

<sup>6</sup> Bush, George “Columbus Day, 1989: By the President of the United States of America: A Proclamation.” P. 200-201 in *Confronting Columbus*.

<sup>7</sup> See Best and Kellner (1997) and Sadie Plant (1992) *The Most Radical Gesture*. London: Routledge. Both agree about the recovery in real by Debord and the complete dismissive of real as the condition of postmodernity.

Situationists argue that poverty “happens because everyday life is organized within the limits of a scandalous poverty, and above all because there is nothing accidental about this poverty of everyday life: it is a poverty that is constantly imposed by the coercion and violence of a society divided into classes, a poverty historically organized in line with the evolving requirements of exploitation.”<sup>8</sup> I would add the same statement about ecology. The suburbs, golf courses, factory farms, cityscapes, and roadways do violence to the land and all its inhabitants. The colonization centuries transformed the land and people. For example, when you look at the poverty of Haiti, remember to corporate colonists of 1492 thought this was the Garden of Eden.

The society of the abundant needs a good American Dream Story to not look at itself as a class of ravenous beings feeding off the misery of three billion peasants and indigenous people living outside that Dream. The capitalized nations consume more than their fair share of resources by twenty of more times. The spectacle promises that once it is fine tuned poverty will end, disease will end, hunger will end, and leisure will expand for all.

As an alternative to predatory capitalism (and communism) I am proposing festival. I say get beyond the spectacle and recover and learn the Garden of Eden history of how capitalism first evolved, revealing what it always was, slave catching, land-grabbing corporate imperialism. Then do it differently. Festival is an option to both State communism (with its central bureaucratic structures) and global corporate capitalism (with its monopolizing structures). Festival is an alternative that affirms life.

**First Spectacle: Great Discovery Ceremony** Writes First Admiral

Christopher Columbus, the first ethnographer of the New World, in his ship’s log:

FRIDAY, 12 OCTOBER 1492 At dawn we saw naked people, and I went ashore in the ship’s boat, armed, followed by Martin Alonso Pinzon, captain of the *Pinta*, and his brother, Vincente Yanez Pinzon, captain the *Nina*. I unfurled the royal banner and the captains brought the flags which displayed a large green cross with the letters F and Y at the left and right side of the cross. Over each letter was the appropriate crown of that Sovereign. These flags

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<sup>8</sup> See Situationist International Handbook. P. 70.

were carried as a standard on all of the ships. After a prayer of thanksgiving I ordered the captains of the *Pinta* and *Nina*, together with Rodrigo de Escobedo (secretary of the fleet), and Rodrigo Sanchez of Sgovia (comptroller of the fleet) to bear faith and witness that I was taking possession of this island for the King and Queen. I made all the necessary declarations and had these testimonies carefully written down by the secretary. In addition to those named above, the entire company of the fleet bore witness to this act. To this island I gave the name *San Salvador*, in honor of our Blessed Lord.<sup>9</sup>

What did 3-4 million island people, a few cautiously observing from the rain forest beyond the beach, think of this spectacle of their “discovery”? We do not know since they were never asked. And, it was the common sense of the time not to ask. Writes Sir Arthur Helps (1900: 80) who thinks for them (which is as close as we now get to hearing their voice):

The gravity of the proceedings must have astonished the beholding islanders. Their attention, however, was soon turned to the Spaniards themselves; and they approached the strangers, wondering at their whiteness and at their beards. Columbus, as being the noblest-looking personage there present – and also, from wearing crimson over his armor (*por ir vesido de grana*), - attracted special attention, and justly seemed, as he was, the principal figure in this GREAT SPECTACLE” (emphasis, mine).

If the Taino people had understood the spectacle, would they have greeted Admiral Columbus with a festival of gift giving? It does not matter to the expedition. This great “discovery” spectacle was not enacted for the benefit of the Taino people. They could have been present or not, and the ceremony would have been exactly the same, and duly recorded in the logbook. The Taino people have just been spectators and witnesses to the rituals and formalities of a commercial spectacle invoking God and Sovereigns, that had been reenacted many times before as European nation-states, took possession of Africa this past century, including the Canary Islands in the past decades. There would be future

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<sup>9</sup> Fuson, Robert H. (translator) 1987 *The Log of Christopher Columbus*. Camden, Maine: International marine Publishing, a division of McGraw-Hill, Inc. pp. 75-76.

spectacles performed with the same theatrics and recorded by Admiral Columbus, then Conquistador Cortez, and many others.

This first spectacle in the New World had a very different audience, not the hundred million people then living throughout the Americas or the four million living in these particular Caribbean islands. The word “discover” is a problem. It assumes Taino people did not have claims to their land and their very lives. “Discovery” legitimates the violence that follows, just as it had happened in Africa, and just as it continues to happen around the world.

Who was the audience? The great “discovery” spectacle must be performed with exact ceremonial accouterment, precise ritual, and its story entered appropriately into the logbook, or the commercial claims of Admiral Columbus will not be recognized by the remote spectators in Spain, or by any other Euro-nation states. Spectacle is how conquest is rendered legitimate and entrepreneurship constituted as valid claim in Euro-nation state law. And, more important to First Admiral and now First Governor Columbus, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand would not honor his ten percent commission on all wealth returned to Europe (by any and everyone) along this new trade route to Asia, or to his children, their children, and so on, in perpetuity unless the spectacle was performed according to the rules. I assume that this is a spectacle of capitalist entrepreneurship, a validating spectacle of commercial “discovery” entitling an entrepreneur-capitalist to begin to produce and to consume, to divide up spoils among the State, himself, the members of each crew, and to retain guaranteed dividends to his heirs. To perform the “discovery” spectacle poorly could bring other spectacle consequences to the entrepreneur, including the tortures and horrors of a Spanish Inquisition.

This was the first of many Caribbean Island spectacles, soon to be performed throughout the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, and the indigenous places of the entire planet. It is the “discovery” spectacle, a nation-state-authorizing prelude to the invasive possession of production and consumption (the production of things valuable to Europe and the consumption of native and natural resources by conquest). It is corporate imperialism.

**Second Spectacle: Commercial Gift Exchange** It is not by accident that Admiral Columbus brought trinkets, beads of glass, caps, and bells costing not even pennies. Standard commercial practice in African territories was to trade items worth less than pennies for items worth hundreds and thousands of dollars. Succeeding Monarchs made the informal exchange of worthless items for indigenous gold, timber, spice and slaves into a formal rule, making it illegal to trade anything of value to natives. The purpose is recorded in the logbook. Admiral Columbus was not just trading but accumulating trust in order to gain knowledge of the gold. Writes Admiral Columbus in his logbook:

**FRIDAY 12 OCTOBER 1492.** I want the natives to develop a friendly attitude toward us because I know that they are a people who can be made free and converted to our Holy Faith more by love than by force. I therefore gave red caps to some and glass beads to others. They hung the beads around their necks, along with some other things of slight value that I gave them... I warned my men to take nothing from the people without giving something in exchange.

This afternoon the people of San Salvador came swimming to our ships and in boats made from one log. They brought us parrots, balls of cotton thread, spears, and many other things, including a kind of dry leaf (tobacco) that they hold in great esteem. For these items we swapped them little glass beads and hawks' bells.<sup>10</sup>

Columbus also wanted other knowledge: how much force will be needed to take these, and what it will take to convert people to slaves. Columbus is a man of military-commerce, who, by his own logged accounts been gazing the natives carefully, measuring the commercial-value of these "discovered" possessions, and their ability to resist his conversion to personal capital and state wealth. For example, he describes natives as "friendly and well-dispositioned people who bare no arms except for small spears, and they have no iron." Columbus adds, "I showed one my sword, and through ignorance he grabbed it by the blade and cut himself."<sup>11</sup> Columbus by his accounts is familiar with the slave trade between Europe and Africa, having himself traded many slaves for many years. He assumes that people from India (he thinks he is in India), or near Japan (where

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 76.

he thinks the main gold mines are), or perhaps from his ultimate destination, China). Upon seeing some of the people with scars he also assumes these natives are already being consumed in slave trading by China or Japan.<sup>12</sup> “I believe,” he says “that people from the mainland come here to take them as slaves. They ought to make good and skilled servants, for they repeat very quickly whatever we say to them.” It is a one-way conversation.

He is, by his entries, more interested in gold than the people’s offerings of cotton, parrots, and food. “Also, the gold they wear hanging from their noses comes from here, but in order not to lose time I want to go to see if I can find the island of Japan.”<sup>13</sup>

I contend Admiral Columbus, on this first day ashore, is strategically and systematically planing to set up slave trade, reasoning that China or Japan is already thus engaged. In his logbook, Admiral Columbus compares the naked people to the tall natives of the Canary Islands and to the sunburned peasants of the coast of Africa, remarking that these here are “not at all black” and “their hair is not kinky, but straight, and coarse like horsehair.” Columbus’s references indicate that he understands these people will be highly marketable as slaves, but realizes that they will take some training and conditioning, to be as valuable as African slaves (who have received a century of discipline and training). He notes in his Admiralty log “If it pleases Our Lord, I will take six of them to Your Highnesses when I depart, in order that they may learn our language.”<sup>14</sup> This entry protects him from charges of kidnapping at court. But, I doubt there would be any charges, since what Columbus is “taking” is standard practice, just common sense. It is a standard practice to have slaves learn the Euro language, a proven way to make communication among slaves and their masters more efficient. The corporate imperial enterprise has centered on a second object.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> Actually the scars come from raids between the Tainos and the Caribs, and not from slave expeditions from China or Japan.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 78

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 77.

SATURDAY, 13 OCTOBER 1492 I have been very attentive and have tried very hard to find out if there is any gold here. I have seen a few natives who wear a little piece of gold hanging from a hole made in the nose. By signs, if I interpret them correctly, I have learned that by going to the south, or rounding the island to the south, I can find a king who possesses a lot of **gold** and has great containers of it.<sup>15</sup>

In his log-writing there is planning for the next expedition. The third day in what he terms “paradise,” Columbus set sail around the Island, preparing to go to Japan, noting that the reef surrounding the island would make port large enough for “all the ships of Christendom.” He sites the terrain for a “suitable place to build a fort” to protect the envisioned harbor. It is standard practice to set up the forts to protect the slave trade.

I saw a piece of land that looked like an island, even though it is not, with six houses on it. I believe that it could be cut through and made into an island in two days. I do not think this is necessary, however, for these people are very unskilled in arms. Your Highnesses will see this for yourselves when I bring to you the seven that I have taken. After they learn our language I shall return them, unless Your Highnesses order that the entire population be taken to Castile, or held captive here. With 50 men you could subject everyone and make them do what you wished.<sup>16</sup>

Gold is clouding his vision, he is unable to value anything else. “The men from San Salvador told me that people on this island wear big golden bracelets on their arms and legs. I really did not believe them but think they made up the tale in order to get me to put ashore so that they could escape... It is not my wish to bypass any island without taking possession, although having taken one you can claim them all.”<sup>17</sup> Columbus anchored off shore for the night.

TUESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 1492 At daybreak I went ashore in the small boat. People met us on the beach. There were many people, and they went naked in the same condition as those of San Salvador. They let us go anywhere we desired and gave us anything we asked.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 77-78,

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 79-80. Columbus said six earlier, and now says seven natives were taken.

Admiral Columbus assessed the level of non-resistance, found no gold mine, and only stayed for two hours. The gold and slaves were necessary to pay for his expedition and to finance the next, and the next. As he left, a dugout came alongside the Nina, and one of the kidnapped captives leaped overboard. Another man had escaped during the night in a similar incident. Columbus is beginning to recalculate the worth of his slave possessions.

**The Taino People** Who are these spectators to the great discovery spectacle, the kidnapped captives, participants in the commercial gift exchanges, the slaves, who so willingly giving up their knowledge to Admiral Columbus? By recent estimates the Taino of 1492 were between three and four million people, living in this stable cultural pattern for 1,500 years, their civilization pattern the result of 15,000 years of human ecosystem co-adaptation.<sup>18</sup> They are the Taino people, who did not prefer violence, and they call this island, now christened San Salvador, by the name *Guanahani*. Taino means literally “men of the good” while Christopher Columbus means “Christ Colonizer.” The Taino (and Carib) culture proliferated throughout the Caribbean Island world of the Bahamas, Cuba, and Haiti/Dominican Republic for 1,500 years. They brought festive gifts of food and cotton goods and were ready to accept the strangers in their midst, seeking peaceful commerce, the trading of goods. The Taino spoke Arawak, and in some remote areas a handful survive to this day.

Western scholarship claims that indigenous people everywhere are “primitive” and “savage” but such claims are a matter of ethnocentric and Eurocentric perspective, a convenient cover story for capital appropriation, and worse things. The Taino, by their own standards, were civilized, consisting of three confederated governing groupings (called caciques) and several smaller groups. The three main Taino caciques were Bohequio of Janagua,

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 80.

<sup>18</sup> Willimann, Isidor & Michael N. Dobkowski (Eds.) *Genocide and the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death*. NH: Greenwood Press; Thornton, Russell 1987 *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press. Las Casas estimated three to four million in Caribbean and Mesamerican mainland. Cook and Borah estimates are seven to eight million. The estimate is in North, South and Central America there were over 72 million people which declined to 4 to 4.5 million or 6% of the former native population size by 1800.

Guacanagari of Marien, and Guarionex of Las Vega.<sup>19</sup> Marriage practices across caciques sustained peaceful confederate relationships throughout the Caribbean for centuries. These were a people who did not know starvation, who fed themselves abundantly, lived in balance with their ecosystem, had life spans exceeding the Europeans, did not practice war (though tit for tat gang-type attacks did happen with the Caribs), and had time for dances, storytelling, and festive culture.<sup>20</sup>

The Eurocentric mind determines “primitive” by the non-wearing of clothing, bathing practices, and being at one with the land. Queen Isabella, upon being informed that the Taino bathe regularly, passed a law forbidding it.<sup>21</sup> To the Europeans agriculture was what peasants and slaves did. The Taino sang and danced, had trade relations throughout the region, and lived in generous abundance. The (non-well-to-do) Europeans, on the other hand, lived in conditions of deprivation, with never enough food to be distributed to the majority of people. There was strange sanitation (many never took a bath and smelled quite foul to the Taino), had half of the Euro population was exterminated by plague every other generation. And they lived in a continuous and escalating arms race of weapon technology development, slave trading, and warfare. While the Taino lived in a plentiful and bountiful rain forest with great biological diversity and plenty, the Europeans had already denigrated much of their own ecology, thought agriculture was what peasants (and black slaves), and were forced to send their now starving and expanding population scavenging around the globe.

**Third Spectacle: Embellishing Stories to Gain Commercial Credit** The stories that Admiral Columbus writes in his log and will soon enact and embellish

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<sup>19</sup> Barreiro, Jose 1992 “A note on the Tainos.” Pp. 30-47. In Yewell, John, Chris Dodge & Jan DeSirey (Eds.) *Confronting Columbus: An Anthology*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. p. 33.

<sup>20</sup> Archaeological evidence suggests that the Tainos and a second culture, the Caribs “may have visited violence upon one another, and there is little doubt they did not like each other, but there is little evidence to support any thesis that genocidal warfare existed in this world.” (Barreiro 1992: 12). There were attacks back and forth, much less than the common gang relations of our cities today. It was not a campaign of outright extermination that was methodically unfolding.

in court, set off a resettlement stampede. Admiral Columbus invokes a festive “Garden of Eden” narrative that when retold in the Spanish court will unleash a rush for gold such as the world has never known. He describes the Taino people “as naked as their mothers bore them, and the women also... They are very well-built people, with handsome bodies and very fine faces, though their appearance is marred somewhat by very broad heads and foreheads, more so than I have ever seen in any other race.”<sup>22</sup>

Admiral Columbus continues to elaborate a Garden of Eden narrative. The island, he says, “is green, with many trees and several bodies of water. There is a very large lagoon in the middle of the island and there are no mountains. It is a pleasure to gaze upon this place because it is all so green and the weather is delightful.”

I cannot get over the fact of how docile these people are. They have so little to give but will give it all for whatever we give them, if only broken pieces of glass and crockery. One seaman gave three Portuguese *ceitis* (not even worth a penny!) for about 25 pounds of spun cotton. I probably should have forbidden this exchange, but I wanted to take the cotton to Your Highnesses, and it seems to be in abundance.<sup>23</sup>

Columbus mingles the Eden narrative with a description of how easy commercial activity will be. What Admiral Columbus calls his gaze is two-fold, to assess his Garden of Eden and to inventory its commercial value.

To get King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to bankroll the second trip, after not bringing back much gold and one less ship, Columbus embellished his telling of the Garden of Eden story to include the discovery of gold mines and spices of all description, created a stampede gold fever. His Admiral’s log contains many stories of gold just around the next bend, in the next village, or the next island, but no mention of mines. He tells the Monarchs he has discovered gold mines and gold just lying about. It is not true. The embellishment for the court is needed to secure expedition funding of the second voyage. The Paradise

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<sup>21</sup> See Barreiro, Jose 1992 “A note on the Tainos.” Pp. 30-47. In Yewell, John, Chris Dodge & Jan DeSirey (Eds.) *Confronting Columbus: An Anthology*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc.

<sup>22</sup> Fuson (1987) p. 76

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 78.

narration of a people without arms or clothing, who are afraid of one or two soldiers, sitting on a vast gold reserve, creates the greatest gold rush. Between the tales of gold and the stories of giving, docile, and cowardly natives, Columbus sets up an offer the Monarch can not refuse.

I offer two summary fables, put side by side.

**Figure One: Two Fables of Discovery**

<b>Garden of Eden Festival</b>	<b>American Dream Spectacle</b>
<p>Adam And Eve being unafraid did not hide their nakedness. The Garden was bountiful with all manner of fruit, vegetable, birds, fish, and animals of all variety. They cultivated the garden to blend in with their surroundings. The communities grew peacefully in abundance, with people marrying across the many groupings. People lived longer in the garden than anywhere else in the world. They offered food to the gods coming ashore from their great ships. Young women and boys were being kidnapped to become sex slaves and to lead them to the source of the gold. The gods to disembowel native flesh unleashed armored dogs. As people perished on one island, people from surrounding islands were relocated to take their place. As waves of new settlers came, some native peoples became complete extinct. Others were herded onto reservations where they learned new language, religion, and foodways. The natives work now to teach the white men how to live in harmony with the Garden, and how to care fore it. They fear the Garden is being exhausted and all the water, air and soil polluted.</p> <p>Columbus is the entrepreneur of the genocide in which 100 million Africans and 100 million native Americans were slaughtered. It is a project that is not finished.</p>	<p>Christopher Columbus decided to sail to the Gardens of the Indies, where he would find fame and fortune. Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain financed his expedition. He saw a gentle peaceful people without plague and starvation that besieged war-torn Europe. He saw the natives who did not cover their shameful nakedness and decided their white skin would make them profitable slaves. Strange food grew in the Garden, so he planted sugar so plantations would grow. African slaves were imported to replace the natives who were being exterminated through force labor in the gold fields and mines and from the plagues of small box and influenza. AS the natives worked, they stopped tending the Gardens, and starvation became their way. The Puritans arrived in the 1600s to deterritorialize the land from the natives. They lacked the Protestant work ethic and allowed more land per person than was the Euro custom. The settlers reterritorialized the land as wold and Indian were moved westward or just exterminated since they were both beasts of the wild. The land had to be tamed.</p> <p>Columbus is celebrated and lionized as the embodiment of entrepreneurship, an exploiter of opportunities, a man who created wealth. The assimilation of natives is not finished.</p>

**American Dream Spectacle** I contend that Columbus, performing the standard practices of commerce of his time, began a spectacle campaign that continues our global ecological collapse (ecocide) and ethnocide (some say Holocaust) of Americas' native populations.

**Sex Slaves and Consumptive Appetite** Admiral Columbus on his second voyage of 17 ships had 10 native women kidnapped as sex slaves when the first islands were cited. As an Italian nobleman tells this story (we do not have a telling from the native view), there is I think, evidence that during the second

voyage, before coming to the Hispaniola fort, there was a change in how natives were to be treated henceforth:

While I was in the boat I captured a very beautiful Carib woman, whom the said Admiral [Columbus] gave to me, and with whom, having taken her into my cabin, she being naked according to their custom, I conceived the desire to take pleasure. I wanted to put my desire into execution but she did not want it and treated me with her fingernails in such a manner that I wished I had never begun. But seeing that (to tell you the end of it all), I took a rope and thrashed her well, for which she raised such unheard of screams that you would not have believed your ears. Finally we came to an agreement in such manner that I can tell you that she seemed to have been brought up in a school of harlots. – Michele de Cuneo, an Italian nobleman and passenger on Columbus's second voyage.<sup>24</sup>

From this account, it can be argued that Columbus had little or no intention ever of restraining the consumptive appetite of those on this second voyage and had perhaps changed his mind en route, or even earlier. This is no gift giving exchange. Nor, can it be argued without silliness or blatant ignorance that Admiral Columbus was on a religious or cultural mission to civilize the New World into sex slavery.

The spectacle has no choice but to defend the American Dream against charges of carnage. We can argue that Columbus was doing a service to Noblemen that was standard Euro-slave trade practice. However, the point is to look at the rewriting of history.

The spectacle of Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, cowboy and Indian movies, dime novels, presidential speeches, manifest destiny and our typical textbooks have fashioned a mythical heroic character to embody the American Dream. It is an account that does not mention sex slaves, kidnapping, and what comes next. Yet, to most of the indigenous world, Admiral Columbus is not heroic, he is fabricated by Hollywood to cover up rape, torture, and worse. The spectacle invents and twists its cosmological history to keep the corporate imperialism in legitimate and celebrated operation.

It is unfair to judge Columbus by contemporary mores, or to judge at all. Yet, there were eyewitnesses that did not appreciate the consumptive habits of the Europeans, and there is always the Taino view. Bartolomeo de las Casas, a Dominican priest, for example, spent fifty years trying to change the direction of the Americas' conquest from Holocaust to conversion. And to some extent he succeeded in petitioning various monarchs to change the rules of commerce. But says Todorov (1984: 172) las Casas had a shallow victory, because the goal of imperial colonization and land/person appropriation was resolute. Las Casas wanted the war of genocide on the Indians to stop, arguing that they were not to be made slaves, as were the Africans. He practices selective racism, but did not challenge the profit motive. As he wrote in his letter to Charles V:

It is good to prevent any Indian from being reduced to slavery, for it is they who must make the territory profitable, and insofar as there will be great number of them, the Spaniards will lack for nothing.<sup>25</sup>

Las Casas had owned Indian slaves and continued to own a black slave from Africa. He appealed to the monarch's profit motive to see the wisdom of having more long-term profit by banning Indian extermination, but did not propose any change in black enslavement. In 1573, Philip II responded in spectacle (disinformation) fashion. He banned the use of the word "conquest." "Discoveries are not to be called conquests. Since we wish them to be carried out peacefully and charitably, we do not want the use of the term 'conquest' to offer any excuse for the employment of force or causing of injury to the Indians."<sup>26</sup>

**Fourth Spectacle: Pretending to be Gods** The three spectators, the Columbus expedition, Spanish Court, and the Taino people are taking very different readings of the expeditions. From the first expedition on, Admiral Columbus, planned slave trade (he has already "captured" six or seven to take to Spain), gold mining, and confiscation of all that he surveys (parrots, spices, trees, cotton, natives). On the other hand, it is clear from several accounts that the

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<sup>24</sup> Stolcke, Verena "A Conquered Women, pp. 55-64. In Yewell, John, Chris Dodge & Jan DeSirey (1992) *Confronting Columbus: An Anthology*. NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. p. 55.

<sup>25</sup> Todorov, p. 172.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 173.

Tainos thought that Admiral Columbus was a sea-faring God. During the first voyage, Admiral Columbus wrote in his log, the natives were “shouting and praising God” and they “brought us water; others things to eat... By the signs they made I think they were asking if we came from Heaven... They threw themselves on the sand and raised their hands to the sky, shouting for us to come ashore, while giving thanks to God.”

On his first voyage Columbus enacts the God Spectacle to gain more knowledge and to lower resistance, as he continues to sail on his quest to find Japan and gold, stopping to perform another spectacle of discovery (appropriation and possession), on an island he names Santa Maria de la Conception (probably the north coast of Acklins-Crooked).

**Fifth Spectacle: Spread Disinformation to Spectators** In his logbook, Admiral Columbus is methodically calculating each of his interactions with the Taino people on each island. He observed from the poopdeck, several of his sailors jumped into the sea to seize a man who had paddled along side to trade a ball of cotton. In this spectacle, Columbus changes the commercial gift exchange spectacle into one that pretends equanimity to spectators. He refuses the ball of cotton, but gives the man a red cap, several glass beads, and two hawks’ bells, then let the man return to his dugout and paddle off to shore. Why?

I could see that he was surrounded by people when he reached shore, and they held it a great marvel and were convinced that we were good people. I wanted them to think that the men who had fled had done us some harm and that was why we were carrying them along with us. Thus I used him for these reasons and gave him all the aforesaid articles in order that the people might hold us in such esteem that on some other occasion when Your Highnesses send men back here they will be well treated. All that I gave him was not worth two cents.<sup>27</sup>

What to me, is remarkable about this Machiavellian account, from the Admiral’s logbook, is the calculated staging of a spectacle to disseminate disinformation. He masks his intentions, knowing what happened in Africa is about to happen again, and theatrically stages the God ruse on this fifth day in the New World.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid p. 81.

Perhaps there is ruse-exchange. At the same time, the kidnapped Taino men held captive on the Nina are giving the responses that their captors prefer “They said that there is a lot of gold there and that the people wear it on their arms, lags, ears, noses, and necks. I do not know if this is another ruse of theirs or not, for I am beginning to believe that all they want to do is escape and they will tell me anything I want to hear.”<sup>28</sup> The Taino kings and villagers that Admiral Columbus met along his first journey promised that gold was just a bit further on, hoping to keep God in their midst. Columbus continues to embellish the God spectacle.

**Sixth Spectacle: Capture and Release** Columbus conducts the spectacles, described above, in theatric ways to keep the God ruse and disinformation image management in tact. He also enacts another variation of gift spectacle to keep the natives believing that the Spanish are fair, reasonable, honorable, or Columbus repeatedly says “good.” In this next spectacle, he would capture and release natives, along the way, giving them lots of trinkets costing a penny or two... In this way” says Columbus of one such person “he will give a good account of us when, please be Our Lord, Your Highnesses send other men here. Those who come will be made welcome and given all that they need.”<sup>29</sup>

The spectacle has its intended result. Each time the person released with the booty invites a local village to bring food and gifts to the Gods. Admiral Columbus uses each spectacle enactment as an opportunity to find where the kings of larger villages live, whom might, he believes, best know where the Mother load might be. “I must move on to discover others and to find gold. Since these people know what gold is, I know that with our lord’s help I cannot fail to find its source.”<sup>30</sup>

**Seventh Spectacle: Gold Accumulation** In the first voyage, Admiral Columbus moves from island to island and finds his way to Cuba, which he believes to be Japan, and then moves on to Haiti/Dominican Republic where he expects to find gold and spices. He trades beads of glass with the Taino for

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p. 81.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 82.

pieces of gold hanging from their necks, noses, and ears. He instructs his men to alter the gift exchange spectacle, to focus on trading for gold: “I ordered that nothing be taken so that they would know that I sought nothing except gold, which they call *nu cay*.”<sup>31</sup> “The *Pinta*’s crew traded for a great deal of gold; for a piece of leather strap they were given good pieces of gold the size of two fingers, and at times as large as the hand.”<sup>32</sup> For the gold-accumulation to continue, the spectacle had to continue. “Especially, they should be on guard and avoid doing injury or using violence toward the women, by which they would cause scandal and set a bad example for the Indians, and expose *our own infamy*, we whom the Indians are certain come from Heaven.”<sup>33</sup> The gold accumulation spectacle in combination with the other spectacles so far described succeeds in safeguarding their *infamy*, knowing I hypothesize that (legitimated) violence (beyond kidnapping) will come in due course. My theory is that the gold accumulation spectacle organizes all the other gift giving and discovery spectacles. Admiral Columbus sees the natives as “very meek and shy: naked... without weapons and without government”<sup>34</sup> and as people “so liberal in giving, and so timid, that they strip themselves of everything to give all that they have to us and, upon arrival, run to bring us everything.”<sup>35</sup> He orders his men to treat them gently, not out of some sense of Christian duty, but in order that these “gentlest people in the world” lead him to the gold, and become good slaves for future voyages. “Columbus questioned everyone about the gold. He had the addictive fever, the one that drives people to excess.

**Eighth Spectacle: Slaving the New World** Admiral Columbus uses the spectacles introduced so far to masque the entrepreneurial slave trading that he is planning since his first day ashore. I reiterate, it is clear from his logbook that slaving, not Christian conversion is objective of his commercial enterprise. On the first voyage, Admiral Columbus instructs his men to take six youths in a canoe

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 83.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 99.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 167.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 162.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 102.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 145.

captives, but one escapes. He uses disinformation spectacles to counter any resistance organized by the escapees. He also sends his men to find women. "I did this so that the men I had taken would conduct themselves better in Spain than they might have otherwise, because of having women from their own country there with them." In the following quote, it is clear that Columbus has done slaving along the coast of Africa and knows how the game is to be played. He knows that having some slave know the language allows better slave management and resource mapping:

On many occasions in the past I have taken men from Guinea to Portugal in order that they could learn the language, with the thought that when they returned, they might be made good use of, especially because of the good company they had enjoyed and the gifts that had been bestowed upon them. But this did not prove to be the case. So with these people, if I let them have their wives they will be willing to undertake what is desired of them, and these women will teach our people their language, which is the same throughout these islands of India.<sup>36</sup>

Admiral Columbus is annoyed on his journey because despite the gift giving spectacles and not raping the women the expedition captured, the captives (slaves) keep escaping, and he is not collecting near enough gold to justify the expedition to the sovereigns. He is expectant that the Taino being fair (even white) skinned will be worth much more than the black slaves of Africa. But, he knows the conditioning will be expensive. As he sails along the coast of Haiti/Dominican Republic, he notes "they are the handsomest men and women I have found up until now. The commercial calculation of his potential profits continues to dominate his journal entries. They are exceedingly white, and if they wore clothing and were protected from the sun and the air they would be almost as white as the people in Spain."<sup>37</sup> On the trip to Spain, the slaves kidnapped along the journey by Admiral Columbus did not fare well. "As a harbinger of

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p. 107. A man comes to Columbus offering himself as captive so that he can be with his wife.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 136-7.

things to come, only a half-dozen or so of those many captured native slaves survived the journey to Spain, and of them only two were alive six months later.”<sup>38</sup>

**Ninth Spectacle: Theatrics of Techno Arms and Combat Dogs** The spectacles to maintain and manage the public image of Columbus and his crew as “Good” Gods, combined with playing the role of harmless gift-giving traders, and the catch and release theatrics are not sufficient to the Admiral’s objectives. A new theatrics is arranged for the spectators, the display of cross bow, musket fire, cannon, and combat dog technologies. The long bow is also a technology, one that could launch a missile for two, even three hundred yards and one that the English used to defeat over a thousand French knights, in one battle.

In March of 1495, Admiral Columbus set out with a force of twenty combat dogs, twenty-five horses, and two hundred soldiers across the Island of Haiti/Santa Domingo. The dogs were assigned to Alonso de Ojeda, who knew warfare from fighting the Moors of Granada. Ojeda yelled, “sic ‘em” “and the royal attack dogs “hurled themselves at the Indians’ naked bodies, grabbed them by their bellies and throats, threw them to the ground, disemboweled them, and ripped them to pieces.” I mention this to give context to Admiral Columbus’s use of the Combat Dogs. Swords, cross and long-bows, and combat dogs are violent technologies. Seeing the performance of techno arms, Kings instructed villagers to bring gold to the seafaring Gods. On his first voyage, Admiral Columbus suspected King Guacanagari of prohibiting “everyone from trading gold to us, so that it might all pass through his hands. But I have learned about places where there is so much gold that they do not assign a price to it.”<sup>39</sup>

Shortly after arriving in the Second Voyage, on May 5, 1494 Columbus finding his 39 men slain and his fort in ruin, “concluded the time had come to make a display of Castilian arms.”<sup>40</sup> Not just a display, but a spectacle, and one enacted many times before in the Canary Islands. Columbus instructed Juan Ponce de Leon, an aide in charge of the royal hounds (gifts from monarchs

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<sup>38</sup> Stannard (1992). p. 66.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 161. And also spices in large quantities.

<sup>40</sup> Varner, John Grier & Jeannette Johnson Varner 1983. Dogs of the Conquest. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press. P. 5

Ferdinand and Isabella), to unleash one gladiator combat dog on the natives of what is now the Island of Jamaica.

Three of the ships drew near to the shore and the soldiers fired their crossbows. They then disembarked slashed many Indians with swords, and continued to fire. The Indians fled in surprised terror, pursued by a great dog that bit them and did them much harm; for one dog against the Indians was worth ten men. Columbus then went ashore and took possession of the island in the name of the Spanish sovereigns.<sup>41</sup>

Here we see two spectacles. First the spectacle of Royal Combat Dogs to hasten subjugation was carried out in Jamaica, as it had been on the Canary Islands. This was followed by the second spectacle of commercial discovery and appropriation (see spectacle one). The use of the Combat Dog technology became more pronounced.

Bartolome de las Casas reported with passionate censure that in one hour each dog ripped to bits one hundred Indians and that the animals found the skin of these wretches far easier to tear than boar or deer hide... Columbus, the explorer and mariner, apparently experienced that peculiar and tenacious thrill of the lands-man for the hunt. He was impressed by the havoc his hounds had wrought under the efficient guidance of Ojeda; and, as the cacique Guatiguana and his surviving Indians fled in terror toward the wilderness, the admiral realized the potential use of his dogs.<sup>42</sup>

**Human Genocide Theory** The role of modern spectacle is to masquerade and otherwise camouflage the genocide of 100 million indigenous people between 1492 and 1900, as deserved common sense, or accidental extermination. A postmodern question looms large: can the current genocide associated with commercial imperialism be stopped? Genocide means, “race killing” and “ethnic cleansing.” Some prefer to reserve the term genocide for the World War II holocaust, labeling everything else ethnocide. I prefer the term genocide for both.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

Genocide originally included the killing of people for political reasons, but the former Soviet Union vetoed that in fear that Stalin's massacre of several million would fit the genocide definition. I include political genocide below. I shall argue genocide oftentimes has an economic and material connection realized through spectacle. 102 nations by 1951 had ratified the Genocide Convention of the United Nations proposed in 1948 after the Holocaust of World War II. The U.S., like the former Soviet Union prefers to change the definition genocide in international law. Fearing legal liability for systematic extermination of native Indians, the culpability in African slave trading to former-plantation states, annexations of Mexico, and the unfolding Afro-American Civil Rights implications, the United States has as yet not provided unconditional ratification to the Genocide Convention agreement. After 3,000 speeches, one on each day the Senate met in session since 1967, Senator William Proxmire did, it seems, single-handedly, convince the U.S. to adopt a highly qualified ratification with restrictions and exceptions in 1986. The qualifications mean that UN enforcement would not be possible.

What is the Genocide Convention? According to Article II of the UN Genocide Convention, genocide includes any of the following (non-political) acts that have the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:"

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.<sup>43</sup>

While retrospectively these seem highly sensible foundations for international law, I am trying to realize that if I lived in Spain in 1492, I would have likely believed that human lives were not all equal, and that this rationalized the appropriation of their economy and their very lives. If I lived in Washington State

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<sup>43</sup> Leblanc, Lawrence J. (1991) *The United States and the Genocide Convention*. Durham: Duke University Press. P. 245.

in an era of horse-drawn covered wagons, I would have grabbed land from the Indians like everyone else.

The question is, if genocide can be made common sense appropriate then, is it so now and in the future? If I walk on an inhabited planet in another galaxy, will I believe it is OK to privatize the space frontier by exterminating alien species? The question therefore is not to condemn, but to understand how such inequity and racist thinking is socialized and accomplished. There are right now, many racial, ethnic, and political groups that are the object of genocide to accumulate and otherwise consume their human and ecological resources for commercial and political gain. Why does this trend keep recurring?

Table Two lists some current genocide estimates (it includes political genocide). Genocide can happen quickly as in a mass murder in an afternoon or more slowly over decades in the destruction of language, religion, mal-nutrition, other acts that affect long-term health, and dissolve national identity.<sup>44</sup>

**Table Two: Genocide Estimates, Then and Now**

<b>Where</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Oppressor</b>	<b>Oppressed</b>	<b>Best Estimate M = millions</b>
Africa & islands	1300-1600	Spain, Britain, U.S.	African people	100 M
Caribbean Islands, Cuba, Haiti/Dominican Republic	1492-1494	Christopher Columbus's administration	Taino people	250,000-500,000
Mexico, South & Central America, Florida	1495-1530	Cortez and other conquerors after Columbus	Native populations	70-110 M
America, North of Rio Grande, moving from East to West.	1650-1800	British Colonialists	Native American Indian peoples	15-40 M
German SW Africa	1904	German Troops	Hrero people	65,000
Ottoman Empire	1915	Kurds	Armenians	200,000 to 1.8M
WWII	1941-5	Germans	Russians Jews Gypsies Serbs/Croats	3 M 5-6 M 48,000 ?
Sudan	1955-72	Sudanese Army	Sough Sudanese	500,000
Indonesia	1965-7	Vigilantes	"Supposed Communists"	200,000-500,000
Nigeria	1967-70	Other Nigerians	Ibos	2-3 M
Bangladesh	1971	Tutsis	Hutus	100,00-200,000

<sup>44</sup> See Lenkin, R. 1944. Axis Rule in Occupied Europe p. 79, as cited in Leblanc, p. 18.

Paraguay	1968-72	Paraguayans	Guayakdache Indians	1,000
East Timor	1975	Indonesian Army	Timorese	60,000 – 100,000
Kamuchea	1975-9	Khmer Rouge	Kanpuchians	740,800 – 3 M
Today in former Yugoslavia (Bosnia) and Border of Turkey/Iraq	1999	Serbian Army	Ethnic Albanians	300,000 and more

There are many ways to conduct a genocide campaign, including purposefully and naively introduced disease, enslavement, starvation, forced resettlement, systematic rape, eugenics, and destruction of language and religion for assimilation. The purpose is all the same, get rid of the unwanted people in order to consume their land, possessions, and life.

But, how does a political economy rationalize that such practices are legitimate ways to obtain commerce? I submit that before, during, and after each genocide event (see Table One), there was ample role for spectacle. The main roles of spectacle are to disseminate a legitimizing inequitable cosmology (those people are sub or inhuman, more primitive, beasts, devil worshipers) to permit it, to conduct the act itself, and to rationalize it in narrative performance (god directed their extermination; it was a case of the survival of the fittest race; it is our manifest destiny to have this land; they lack the Protestant ethic needed to efficiently work the land).

**Tenth Spectacle: Tribute Systems of Production** Columbus implemented a “tribute system” that drove people to run for their lives. What kind of so-called “tribute system” would make people commit mass suicide, flee paradise to live in the mountains, or try to fight a force with superior war technology? The Tribute System was as follows:

Every man and woman, every boy or girl of 14 or older, in the province of Cibao (of the imaginary gold fields) had to collect gold for the Spaniards. As their measure, the Spaniards used... hawks’ bells... Every three months, every Indian had to bring to one of the forts a hawks’ bell filled with gold dust... Cooper tokens were manufactured, and when an Indian had brought his or her tribute to an armed post, he or she received such a token, stamped with the month, to be hung around the neck...

Whoever was caught without a token was killed by having his or her hands cut off.<sup>45</sup>

**Spectacle Eleven: The Genocide Machine** The genocide machine turned within months of the second landing, from conversion to slavery, to the genocide of extermination. To the commercial soldiers, the natives were non-human. Estimates are that within two years two thirds of the Taino (in 1492 they were 3 to 4 million) were wiped out. Here is how eye witness, Bartolome de las Casas tells the story:

Women with child, whose bellies they would rip up, taking out the infant to hew it to pieces. They would often lay wagers who could with most dexterity either cleave or cut a man in the middle, or who could at one blow soonest cut off his head. The children they would take by the feet and dash their innocent heads against the rocks, and when they were fallen into the water, with a strange and cruel derision they would call upon them to swim. Sometimes they would run both Mother and Infant, being in her belly quit through at one thrust.<sup>46</sup>

There were ingenious devices constructed for mass torture and execution, to herald in spectacle display an increase in subjugation and gold production.

They erected certain Gallows, that were broad but so low, that the tormented creatures might touch the ground with their feet, upon every one of which they would hang thirteen persons, blasphemously affirming that they did it in honor of our Redeemer and his Apostles, and then putting fire under them, they burnt the poor wretches alive. Those whom their pity did think fit to spare, they would send away with their hands half cut off, and so hanging by the skin. Thus upbraiding their flight, *Go carry letters to those who lye hid in the mountains and are fled from us.*

This Death they found out also for the Lords and Nobles of the Land; they stuck up forked sticks in the ground, and then laid certain perches upon them, and so laying them upon those perches, they put a gentle fire under, causing the fire to melt them

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<sup>45</sup> Citing Koning's book in Bigelow's Rereading the Past, p. 69.

<sup>46</sup> Bartolemeo de las Casas. *The Tears of the Indians*, was translated by John Phillips in English in 1656. I have adapted the old style spelling to modern English. Stanford, CA: Academic reprints (of the John Phillips book). P. 8.

away by degrees, to their unspeakable torment... Of these and other things innumerable I have been an eye-witness.<sup>47</sup>

He describes the use of the manhunt dogs:

Now because there were some that shun'd like so many rocks the cruelty of a Nation so inhumane, so void of piety and love to mankind, and therefore fled from them to the mountains; therefore they hunted them with their Hounds, whom they bred up and taught to pull down and tear the Indians like beasts: by these Dogs much human blood was shed; and because the Indians did now and then kill a Spaniard, taking him at an advantage, as justly they might; therefore the Spaniards made a [wager] among themselves, that for one Spaniard so slain, they would kill a hundred Indians.<sup>48</sup>

The number of dogs expanded from the original twenty by reinforcement and by breeding. In future times, one of Cortez's favorite dogs could shear off the head of its victim. To feed the dogs, market stands displaying Taino body parts, hung on hooks were set up along the expedition route.

The natives had become prey to the Spaniards, but in the Varner and Varner (1987) account (like most others) each act of violence and genocide, is excused as a rational response to native revolt. The received view of the Columbus narrative is the natives caused their own rape, mutilation, murder, and suicide.

**Spectacle Twelve: The Requerimiento** It had for decades been the custom in Spain, after the intermingling of Jews and Moors with the so-called pure-blood Spanish, to read a proclamation, whereby Spanish people were offered the chance to convert to Christianity, die, or be exiled. While not attaining full (blood) rights, it was a way to resolve racial issues. Cortez, and other businessmen following Columbus to the Americas, had a newly drafted Requerimiento read aloud in Spanish to natives, and supposedly any that did not submit, were summarily enslaved, mutilated or slaughtered. Just what did it say?

I certify to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke of

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 9

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

obedience of the Church and of Their Highnesses. We shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as Their Highnesses may command. And we shall take your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can as to vassals who do not obey and refuse to receive their lord and resist and contradict him.<sup>49</sup>

Once again, this spectacle was performed and recorded so that the appropriation of people and goods could be considered legal and binding in its contract. It was not done for the benefit of native spectators/participants. In practice, it was read in Spanish, without interpretation, and the Indians were usually manacled before the reading of the Requerimiento. The point was not to satisfy the native spectators and participants it was to give rationale to the fanatically religious and juridical in Spain. With this spectacle enacted and duly recorded, commerce could be legitimately enacted under cover of religious rights, avoiding a rationale of greed or violence being posited. The spectacle also served as a defense against evangelist challenges that the cross was not being offered as a choice to slavery and mass murder. It did not matter if some did or did not submit to the Requerimiento, the lands and all its resources became the lands of Spain and its commercial entrepreneurs by the “discovery” spectacle. De Casas argued that the natives needed to be informed before they were offered the choice, but this did not stop the conquest or the violence.

Was there a program to convert natives to Christianity? Several commentators of the time point to the strong desire to find the hiding places of the gold, and downplay conversion. For example, Motolinia: “If anyone should ask what has been the cause of so many evils, I would answer: covetousness, the desire to store in one’s chest a few bars of gold for the benefit of I know not whom.” Las Casas: “I do not say that they want to kill them [the Indians] directly, from the hate they bear them; they kill them because they want to be rich and have much gold, which is their whole aim, though the toil and sweat of the afflicted and unhappy.” The spectacles, then as now, has the same message:

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<sup>49</sup> As cited in Stannard, David E. 1992 American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New world. Oxford University Press. P. 65-66.

“With money men acquire all the temporal things that they need and desire, such as honor, nobility, estate, family, luxury, fine clothes, delicate foods, the pleasure of vices, vengeance of their enemies, great esteem for their person” (las Casas).<sup>50</sup>

**In Sum** The Columbus account constructs a narrative of global production and consumption among 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> world nation states, as well as multinational and transnational companies and “pools of labor.” The native pools of labor, like the natives in the Columbus narratives are silent. We hear the story told from the vantagepoint of the conqueror, and even that is severely edited and reinvented in most accounts. The Columbus account is how most students of business and the wider society are educated into belief in the spectacle. Having said, why I proceed, I turn to the grimmer consequences.

De Casas indicates that by the year 1509 what was a fruitful garden on the islands of St. John and Jamaica was thoroughly depopulated. Gold Mines had been discovered and the work in the mines was done under starvation conditions. He estimates that six hundred thousand Taino were murdered, with only two hundred remaining, none of whom were taught anything of God. By 1511 the Island of Cuba is also in ruins as is Haiti/Santa Domingo. While one Taino, who was tied to a stake, about to be executed for having evaded capture, he was asked by a Monk of the Saint Francis order, to swear his faith in God.

Upon which words after hath had a little while paused, he asked the Monk if the door of heaven was open to the Spaniards, who answering, Yes, to the good Spaniards. Then replied the other, Let me go to Hell that I may not come where they are.<sup>51</sup>

There is a more directly economic role of spectacle, to consume the “other” and the resources of the “other” by murder, slave trade, or appropriation by assimilation theatrics are performed for the benefit of the consumer and the about to be consumed. There are, for example, spectacles meant to lure the victim to the trap or merely display such terror that the “other” submits. Some monopolistic corporations and nation states produce such spectacle array in

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<sup>50</sup> Todorov, quotes in this paragraph from p. 142.

order to legitimately and rationally consume what they want. The spectacle makes all acts self-fulfilling; they are only inhumane to the victim and the outside observer; to the insider every act they see only confirms the necessity of the final outcome.

**Modern Spectacle Times** - What is the modern blueprint? The value of instant material accumulation heralds modern spectacles of production and consumption in which money purchases all other values. And, it heralds the enjoyment of violence as a form of leisure. Something more is going on than mere material greed when we look at modern spectacles of violence on television and in the movies. Violence has become a form of consumable pleasure. There is a modern insensitivity to violence that takes root in the violence that Conquerors unleash on the natives. As Todorov concludes, there was and still is “an intrinsic pleasure in cruelty.” . Do slaves work harder and more efficiently when they are slaughtered, starved while working the mines, when the foremen sleep with their wives, when their infants are thrown to the dogs as food? There is more going on here than just the efficient extraction of resources or the ritual of religious conversion. The monster beast enjoys the consumption. What Stannard (1992), adding a line to Todorov’s descriptions of a massacre: To see the wounds which covered the bodies of the dead and dying was a spectacle of horror and dread.<sup>52</sup>

**Ecocide** is the catastrophic destruction of human, plant, and human species for short-term profit. Ecocide happens through acts of arrogance as people evolved in one ecosystem try to make over an entirely different ecology in their own image and pattern. The Spaniards and Puritans practiced arrogance that led to the degradation of ecosystems in the so-called “New World” they knew nothing about. They presumed that technology, culture, and agricultural practices worked out in the Euro ecosystem of colder climate and moderate rainfall would fit the rainforest and dessert ecosystems of the “New World.” The arrogant

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid. p. 23.

<sup>52</sup> Stannard on page 71 quotes Todorov, but the last line about spectacle is not to be found in Todorov p. 139-141. I assume that Stannard meant the line to be add to the description. The

refusal to accept that naked people could have coevolved advanced agricultural and living practices led to making the New World into a replication of the Old World.

Ecocide is related to genocide, the destruction of own race (ethnicity, political group) by another in order to acquire all that they have (land and life). People were moved about in resettlement and enslavement; Euro plants and animals were also moved into the New World ecosystem. Old World arrogantly defined the natives as “beasts,” “savages,” “primitives,” “devil dogs” and “missing links.” There was an arrogant misunderstanding of how native people had coevolved in very unique ecosystems, making gradual changes to their plant and animal ecology, introducing domestication, but in harmony with nature. The arrogant forget what had happened to their own ecology as they sought to replicate it elsewhere. The result was catastrophic changes in the New World ecosystems with the resettlement of human, plant, and animal life resulting in what are now ecosystems that do not support life nearly as well.

The arrogance of colonialism began with African resettlement and enslavement from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Millions of African people were moved from the place where the language, animals, plants, and culture had successfully coevolved for many millennia. Historically, forced resettlement has been disastrous. Thinking the black race was fit only for slavery, wanting the land, timber and gold, Africans genocide consumed 100 million people during this time span. African ecosystem conversion to Euro ways was well under way when the Columbus expedition set foot on the New World and began to mold it into the shape of the Old World. The deforestation of Africa, resulting in its short-term agriculture, then its long-term desertification continues to escalate. My point is that the role of spectacle is to make this and other degradation appear to be progress, development, advancement, and natural free-market evolution. In the Americas the Taino, Inca, Myan, Aztec had coevolved with animal domestication, plant agriculture, and highly advanced technology (crop rotation, irrigation,

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original text comes for las Casas, eye witness account while he is chaplain to Navarez's troops in Cuba.

aqueduct) practices slowly and cautiously over the millennia. We are only now rediscovering what was lost.

The point of this chapter is simple. I want to look at a holistic living system of festivals in gradual coevolution and the catastrophic consequences to coevolution when spectacle arrogance rules choice making. While we can not change the past, we can draw lessons that will let us see the dangers of arrogance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, what Rifkin (1998) calls the Biotech Century. We arrogantly modify and splice the genes of plants, animals and people, introducing artificial changes to the natural ecology. Perhaps the most arrogant is Monsanto's "terminator seed," designed to produce seeds that can not be replanted, in order to keep the farmer buying seeds each year. Balance and harmony worked out slowly and carefully in gradually coevolution is being tossed aside to yield radical changes, from family farming to factory farming, from life surgery to cosmetic surgery, from natural birth to cloning. There is a difference between progress that is respectful of all life forms and progress that is potentially catastrophic.

A spectacle understanding of arrogance can be demonstrated by looking at the genealogy of the Columbus myth and contrasting it with eyewitness accounts of what took place in the so-called Garden of Eden. I assume a festival perspective of respect for all life species including the biodiversity and coevolution of plant, animal, human, and techno-culture. I seek to understand how spectacle came to dominate and subordinate festival, so that the process might now be reversed, and re-balanced.

To get across the concept of spectacle in its inequity legitimation and rationalization, I will tell genocide stories from the view of *competitive Imperial materiality* and from the view of *community and sustainable* culture being consumed. In what follows, I assume many people knew many of the grizzly violent facts, more or less, but the spectacle allowed interpretations that we only now find strange, racist, irrational, or genocidal.