



The Spiritual Disciplines of Contemporary Business Management at Seeing Things Whole: The Lived Metaphors of Shape-Shifting Capital

Citation

Gonzalez, George J. 2011. The Spiritual Disciplines of Contemporary Business Management at Seeing Things Whole: The Lived Metaphors of Shape-Shifting Capital. Doctoral dissertation, Harvard Divinity School.

Permanent link

<https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37367440>

Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL



DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

The undersigned, appointed by the
Committee on the Study of Religion
have examined a dissertation entitled

The Spiritual Disciplines of Contemporary
Business Management at *Seeing Things Whole:*
The Lived Metaphors of Shape-Shifting Capital

presented by George J. González

candidate for the degree of Doctor of Theology and hereby
certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

Signature Michael Jackson
Typed name: Prof. Michael Jackson

Signature David Carrasco
Typed name: Prof. David Carrasco

Signature Bethany Moreton
Typed name: Prof. Bethany Moreton

Date: 3 May, 2011

**The Spiritual Disciplines of Contemporary
Business Management at Seeing Things Whole:
The Lived Metaphors of Shape-Shifting Capital**

A dissertation presented by

George J. González

to the Faculty of Harvard Divinity School

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Theology

in the subject of

Religion and Society

Harvard University

Cambridge, MA

May 2011

© 2011 – George J. González
All rights reserved

Dissertation Advisor: Michael Jackson

George J. González

The Spiritual Disciplines of Contemporary
Business Management at Seeing Things Whole:
The Lived Metaphors of Shape-Shifting Capital

This dissertation applies a phenomenological and existential ethnographic method to encounter and engage the formal theology and ritual practices of one group of workplace reformers that is comprised of business leaders, organizational managers, lay Christian leaders and, management academics. The group, Seeing Things Whole, has deep historical roots in both organizational management and American Christianity. Seeing Things Whole runs workshops for managers, has published a “theology of institutions” and, engages in ritualized group meditations on sacred, humanistic and scientific texts and images in hopes of producing and generating spiritually inspired solutions to concrete, organizational quandaries. In its work and in its theoretical reflections, the group shares in larger national and international trends to formally introduce “spirituality” into workplace practices and into organizational theory.

Utilizing a mixed approach that includes participant-observation, formal interviews and rhetorical analysis, I carefully consider metaphorical deployment as a way to gain some analytical purchase over broader epistemic shifts and changes in the public construction of the “spiritual”, “organic” and “holistic” capital of today's “knowledge” and “service” economy. As themes, “spirituality”, “holism” and “organicism” are championed by the self-styled spiritual reformers of “new capitalism” and contrasted to the “mechanistic” capital of twentieth century Fordist industrialism that they understand to be a pervasive condition of American capitalism that must be overcome. While flagging certain metaphorical combinations as evidence of shared, publicly accessible “patterns of intersubjective experience”, I foreground the idiosyncratic and irreducible dimensions of “workplace

spirituality” by narrating the highly personalized ways in which shared metaphors are actually used in practice and in everyday speech by individuals. I do so in an effort to track the personal stories that necessarily fuel any large-scale change in the public narratives of capitalism and its metaphorical shape and form. I resist the extreme views that “spirituality” is either a moral elixir or an oppressive opiate and stress the inherent ambiguities of the discourse. Finally, I consider the continued relevance of Marxian critical theories for the study of contemporary capitalist spirituality.

**The Spiritual Disciplines of Contemporary
Business Management at Seeing Things Whole:
The Lived Metaphors of Shape-Shifting Capital**

George J. González

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	vi
List of Abbreviations	viii
Introduction: The Spiritual Disciplines of Contemporary Business Management.....	1
Chapter 1: Seeing Things Whole.....	41
Chapter 2: Living Cosmologies: Dancing (and Dying) on a Wheel.....	109
Chapter 3: Practices of Materiality and Spirituality Among Landry's Workers.....	160
Chapter 4: The Shape-Shifting Metaphorical Body of Capital	209
Conclusion: Historicity, Agency and the Shared Quandaries of “Spiritual” Struggle	257
Bibliography	306

Acknowledgments

The spirit of this dissertation was born in 1990s, when I was a very young adult learning, through tangible experience and in real time, about neo-liberalism, Globalization and the aestheticization of everyday life. Long before I came to believe that neo-liberal discourse covets ritual and religious power, Naomi Klein and Cornel West helped me maintain my critical bearings. Other teachers helped me make my way through these questions and many others. At Trinity School, Marianne David, Carol France, Allan Horlick and Janet Kehl provided me with the critical foundation for further study. At Yale College, Wayne Meeks not only introduced me to religious studies but he became an important mentor as well. At Yale Divinity School, I learned much from Gene Outka, Harold Attridge, Margaret Farley and Thomas Ogletree.

I started working with David Carrasco at just the right time in my life. I have the profoundest reverence for Profe Carrasco's life's work. His understanding of cosmovision and of "asymmetrical hybridity" will guide me in my further thinking about the cosmology of global capitalism. Leading the way on questions of religion and economic life, Bethany Moreton is an inspiration both for her awe inspiring intellectual achievements and for her remarkable collegiality. Michael Jackson is quite simply the most important and influential teacher I have ever had. I feel a profound kinship for his work and for his way of being in the world. When Michael came to Harvard Divinity School, the world turned around for me. Michael has influenced a generation of students at Harvard and his ultimate impact on religious studies, as a whole, might well be Teutonic. In addition to my committee, I would also like to thank all the other teachers I have had at HDS for the challenge and rigor of the conversation.

Juliet Schor, a hero of mine, generously opened her doctoral seminar on consumer society to me as an auditor. I profited greatly from the conversation and enjoyed the weekly trek to Boston College. Christy Green was an immense support during those difficult first years of doctoral study. Carol Duncan is in many ways who I want to be when I grow up. Her combination of impeccable professionalism, empathy, deep concern and rigor as a scholar will be hard to live up to but her standard is what I aspire to.

Dan Hawkins is the best boss an over-extended, poor graduate student could ask for. Since this dissertation is about managers, I am especially obliged to point out an example of a very good manager whose impact on my life was wholly positive. Beverly Kienzle, Karin Grundler-Whitacre, Lorraine Ledford, Father Paul Dupuis were absolute pleasures to work for.

I have the best group of friends and colleagues anyone can ask for. Old friends kept me sane and kept me grounded. At HDS, I want to make special note of special friendships with Nan Hutton, Kat Shaner, Hannah Hofheinz, Mara Block, Shil Sengupta and Chris Ashley. These close relationships provided not only intellectual camaraderie but consistent companionship as well. I am especially indebted to Nan Hutton for assisting with the formatting of this thesis. She could have charged me a bit more than she did and I take her assistance as labor done in cooperative fellowship and friendship.

The staff at HDS helped me, like others, along the way in many ways. Acknowledging in advance that this list is incomplete, I want to especially thank Kama Lord, Suzanne Dossous, Ben Rota and the rest of the IT crew, Kathy Jones, Roy Davis, Wilfredo Galdamez, Maria Marquina, Kathryn Kunkel, Barbara Boles, Maritza Hernandez, Beth Flaherty, Julie Fields, Angela Counts, Paul Corbett, Roy Lauridsen, Nancy Birne, Kristen Gunst, Kimberly O'Hagen, Hayfa AbdulJaber, Michelle Gauthier, Ronnie Ivanoskos, Cris Paul, Lori Holter, Imelda Devlin, Leah Whitehouse, Jaime Johnson-Riley and Jeff Kinnamon.

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents and to my older sister, who sacrificed much so that I could pursue this dream. When I needed to find new reserves of energy, I needed only to look at their examples for inspiration. This accomplishment is as much theirs as mine.

Finally, I need to thank Judi Neal for welcoming and inviting me into what was for me the new world of “workplace spirituality”. The people at *Seeing Things Whole* were the most gracious hosts and took my work and my questions with full and complete seriousness. I want to especially thank Dick Broholm, Tom Henry and Margaret Benefiel for making this dissertation possible. Your work has taught me more about the kinds of questions we ask in the study of religion than any book I have read or any teacher I have had. My hope is that you feel that this work represents an honest attempt to do your lives and your work justice.

List of Abbreviations

AOM -- The American Academy of Management

AOM MSR – The Management, Spirituality and Religion Special Interest Group at the AOM

JMSR – The Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion

STW – Seeing Things Whole

SoL --- The Society of Organizational Learning

Introduction: The Spiritual Disciplines of Contemporary Business Management

Goals

This dissertation has five related goals. First, my hope is to continue to introduce a religious studies audience to the increasingly institutionalized practices and public narratives of “workplace spirituality” within American business management and practice. I do this primarily through my work with a business roundtable, Seeing Things Whole (STW), that has longstanding roots in the American churches as well as deep roots in organizational management. Second, taking “workplace spirituality” as a case study, I explore key methodological questions of how we might write an ethnographic history of the present that is capable of simultaneously accounting for shifts and changes in sociological structures in addition to the irreducible logic and time of lived practice. In particular, I look carefully at the ways in which the membership of STW theologizes and ritualizes tropes and themes borrowed from contemporary management science, itself drawing upon trends in creativity theory, quantum mechanics and chaos theory. Third, I contextualize contemporary “workplace spirituality” within the history of capitalism by considering the ways it partakes of larger trends within organizational theory to deregulate the metaphor of the industrial machine in favor of holistic metaphors that speak of cybernetic webs of associations. Fourth, I consider the continued relevance of Marxian perspectives for a critical theory of religion that avoids ascribing necessary and *a-priori* healing or mystifying powers to neo-liberal forms of “spirituality.” Turning primarily to the existential Marxism of Jean-Paul Sartre, one of the most philosophically important and viable Marxisms of the twentieth century, I consider the ways in which my ethnographic work with STW both confirms the usefulness of this approach, in places, while also challenging it to develop a theory of power and to complexify its understanding of the importance of language in materialist critique.

Fifth, based on the above, I argue for an *intersubjective* approach to interdisciplinary dialogue that would stretch religious studies to materialize its own discourse within a broader social context it shares with the professions and in which it has important insights and lessons to glean from the work and struggles of a group like STW.

The Turn to “Workplace Spirituality” in Business Management

The vignettes included in an article published in *Business Week* a decade ago still offer some tantalizing insights into the shifting borders and boundaries that mark discursive, conceptual and institutionalized categories and denote related sets of practices that we in the modern West have traditionally labeled “religion” and “economics,” respectively.¹ Key public discourses of Western modernity have tended to circumscribe “religion” and “economics” as separate and distinct domains and areas of life and it is the self-reflexive reconsideration of this dichotomy by a collective of management academics and business persons who consider themselves to be spiritual reformers within the rough and rocky terrain of American capitalism that is of central interest to this project.² Among the highlights of the *Business Week* article are stories of a Harvard Business School educated entrepreneur who created a splash at a meeting of young corporate presidents by leading a “shamanic healing journey,” the Xerox corporation sponsoring “vision quests” in the New Mexico desert for senior managers and clerks alike, Talmud classes at a major U.S. law firm, and the outsourcing of Christian ministers to businesses as corporate chaplains. Prior to its collapse and merger with rival J.P. Morgan Chase, the global investment bank, Bear Stearns, formally endorsed and paid for “a weekly Torah class and a biweekly Mishnah class, taught by two

¹ Michelle Conlin, "Religion in the Workplace," *BusinessWeek*, November 1, 1999, http://www.businessweek.com/1999/99_44/b3653001.html.

² Of course, theologies and social scientific narratives have offered diverse justifications for the “reality” of these boundaries, often deploying foundational, ontological claims to police the border.

rabbis and held in company conference rooms.”³ In the 1990s, some media attention focused on the formation and development of a social group called The Spiritual Unfoldment Society at one of the world’s most venerable economic institutions, The World Bank.⁴ More recent examples of “spirituality” and “religion” being introduced into the workplace at publicly traded companies include the Vermont based Green Mountain Coffee, which, like many small and large companies, has incorporated yoga and silent meditation rooms into its physical infrastructure and sponsors yoga retreats for employees, and the Arkansas based Tyson Foods, Inc., which has introduced industrial ministers, some of them Catholic priests, into its organizational management structure. A quick online search for books on spirituality, religion and work returns texts titled *Awakening Corporate Soul—Four Paths to Unleash the Power of People at Work*, *Bringing Your Soul to Work: An Everyday Practice*, *Jesus CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership*, *Seven Secrets of the Corporate Mystic*, *The Corporate Mystic—A Guide for Visionaries With Their Feet on the Ground* and *Corporate Soul—The Monk Within the Manager*.

The move to *explicitly* and *formally* incorporate language and sets of practices coded “spiritual” and/or “religious” into business management continues to grow and gain acceptance at the institutional power centers of American economic life.⁵ In business education, important conferences at elite schools such as the Harvard Business School have

³ David Miller, *God at Work—The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 113.

⁴ Barbara Feinman, "Think Bank," *The Washington Post*, July 3, 1993.

⁵ The explicit corporate narrative and the discrete practices involved can change over time although a larger commitment to “spirituality” can persist. Moreover, key individuals can change firms or leave to start their own consultancy businesses. Richard Barrett, who started the *Spiritual Unfoldment Society* at the *World Bank* is now managing partner at *The Values Center*, a consultancy group that specializes in the transformation of organizational culture, employing the language of “consciousness.” John Elter, who conceived of and led the first “vision quests” at Xerox is now Chief Technology Officer at PlugPower, a company specializing in fuel cell power solutions whose brand narrative emphasizes long term sustainability.

been convened on the topic,⁶ the American Academy of Management has a growing special interest group on management, spirituality and religion,⁷ and a peer reviewed academic journal published by Routledge Press has been established on the topic.⁸ Management, spirituality and religion as a duly circumscribed sub-field has been incorporated into the curricula at M.B.A. programs. *Work and Spirit: a Reader of New Spiritual Paradigms for Organizations, Business, Religion and Spirituality: A New Synthesis*, and *The Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, all edited by leading management academics, offer comprehensive overviews of the state of the management discourse. Religion in the workplace is also increasingly a topic of study at interdisciplinary university research centers. For example, after a career in financial services and having studied under the Reform Christian ethicist, Max Stackhouse, David Miller directed the Ethics and Spirituality in the Workplace Program at Yale Divinity School for several years and most recently founded the Faith and Work Initiative at Princeton University in 2008.

A recent title published by the American Management Association⁹ argues that the inclusion of religion and spirituality in management practice, part of what it calls one of the five sweeping trends in the American workforce, is diverse: “traditional Christianity, however

⁶ In 2002, the Mobius Conference at the Harvard Business School asked: “Does Spirituality Drive Success?” “Mobius Conference--Main Feature--Spirituality in Business - does Spirituality Drive Success?” *HBS Working Knowledge*, accessed February 4, 2008, <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/2899.html>.

⁷ In 1998 a special interest group called *Management, Spirituality and Religion* (“MSR”) began to meet under the auspices of the professional organization of management academics, the Academy of Management (“AOM”). As of March 21, 2011, the group has 724 dues paying members.

⁸ *The Journal of Management Spirituality and Religion*, <http://www.jmsr.com/index.html>.

⁹ According to the sociologist and management historian Mauro Guillén, the American Academy of Management was “a major disseminator of human relations ideas” in the postwar period. Human relations approaches to management share with “workplace spirituality” an emphasis on issues of morale, worker attitudes, human interaction in groups, job enrichment and the emotional lives of workers. Mauro Guillén, *Models of Management: Work, Authority and Organization in a Comparative Perspective* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 68.

ecumenical, is not the only religion inspiring corporate America.”¹⁰ In addition to Christian chaplains who are either on staff¹¹ or who are out-sourced to businesses by organizations such as Marketplace Chaplains USA, the developing *discourses* of corporate spirituality in both the business world and business education include phenomena as diverse as holistic metaphysics,¹² New Age philosophy and the development of bodily practices and techniques that focus on maintaining “trusting” relationships with work activity and one’s place of work.¹³ For example, the Human Performance Institute, a retreat center for corporate executives and a participant at an important conference on “workplace spirituality” at Harvard Business School in 2002, focuses on the uses of *storytelling* and *personal ritual* in “energy management.”¹⁴ The European ethnologist Orvar Löfgren writes about the discourse of the “New Economy” of the 1990s in the language of alchemy, magic and also mentions corporate interest in the “management of energy.” Clearly, there is an increasing openness within *management education* and some *management practice* to the introduction of questions of “spirituality,” “religion” and “holism” in the applied study of human creativity and human labor. This follows the trend identified by the anthropologist George Marcus of

¹⁰ Harriet Hankin, *The New Workforce: Five Sweeping Trends that Will Shape Your Company's Future* (New York: AMACOM, American Management Association, 2004), 101.

¹¹ Alex Johnson, "Walking the Walk on the Assembly Line," *Faith in America on MSNBC.com*, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7231900>.

¹² For example, Richard Barrett argues that we need to live in “soul consciousness,” defined in part by the realization that three-dimensionality and the delimiting of psychology, science and religion as distinct spheres is a “problem with perception, not a property of the world.” To be fearful and to remain fixated on external circumstance is to be stuck in three-dimensional consciousness whereas the fourth dimension is, in the end, characterized by spacelessness, timelessness and the eternal moment in the now. In other words, “soul consciousness” is the experience of a radical unity in which all “delusion” of difference dissolves into the movement of pure energy. Richard Barrett, *Liberating the Corporate Soul: Building a Visionary Organization* (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998), 226.

¹³ For a discourse analysis and ethnographic treatment of New Age capitalism see Kimberly Lau, *New Age Capitalism—Making Money East of Eden* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2000).

¹⁴ "Human Performance Institute," accessed February 4, 2008, <http://www.energyforperformance.com>.

the growth of the “culturally sensitive corporate form,” even if some of these impulses are also not altogether new to the American management of labor.¹⁵

For the scholar of religion, these trends might conjure up, as it were, some of the more intriguing questions of the discipline. First, a new consideration of the diversity of phenomena and practices that can fall under the rubric of analytical terms like “religion,” “spirituality” and “theology” is called for, pushing the extant deconstructive impulse in the field towards a more practical consideration of how and to what ends people adopt and use such terms. Moreover, the always asymmetrical relationship between theory and practice, formal narrative and empirical reality must also be considered. For example, the prevalence of occult practices combining popularized scientific reason, spiritualist metaphysics and “magical” arts challenged the construction of formal divisions between religion, science and magic in bourgeois Victorian society.¹⁶ Whereas religion and business have always been linked in daily practice for many people, this relationship has been differently construed and variably policed and theorized by the public narratives of elite social institutions like corporations, business education centers and the Christian churches. No less imposing figures of nineteenth and early twentieth century American capitalism than J.P. Morgan and Charles Schwab are known to have consulted the occult power of astrology for financial advice, in particular working with the famed astrologer Evangeline Adams¹⁷ all the while Gilded Age industrial capitalism was most often presented by its adherents and admirers in

¹⁵ George Marcus, *Corporate Futures: The Diffusion of the Culturally Sensitive Corporate Form*. Late Editions. Vol. 5 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

¹⁶ Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

¹⁷ Karen Christino, *Foreseeing the Future—Evangeline Adams and Astrology in America* (Amherst, MA: One Reed Publications, 2002).

the Social Darwinistic language of rational progress.¹⁸ This was the case even as the so-called Social Gospel movement pushed for a different theological understanding of material progress.¹⁹ A standout among workers groups due to its social and political influence, the nineteenth century labor organization, the Knights of Labor, borrowed from the ideological well and ritual repertoire of Freemasonry, blurring the boundary between labor activism and ritualized, fraternal organization.²⁰

Other well-known examples of the *actually* porous boundary that has often existed *de facto* between more or less officially separate spheres in the Western world are the introduction of religious arguments in abolitionist causes (and, conversely, in pro-slavery arguments), the appropriation of the tools of industry, especially marketing techniques, by nineteenth century American revivalists like Charles Finney,²¹ the so-called Catholic worker movement²², the Jewish Labor Committee,²³ the Religion and Labor Council of America,²⁴

¹⁸ Sven Beckert. *The Monied Metropolis—New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 212.

¹⁹ Walter Rauschenbusch's *Theology for the Social Gospel*, its most famous theological statement was published in 1917. Like the liberation theologies a generation later, social gospel theologies argued that official ecclesiology, politics and theologies often buttressed and sanctioned unjust economic relations. Rauschenbusch and others attempted to combine theological critique and social criticism. Like some liberation theologies, the social gospel theologies have been susceptible to the retort that they assume too high a conception of Christian morality and historical agency and too low a doctrine of sin.

²⁰ Leon Fink, *Workmen's Democracy* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

²¹ According to R. Laurence Moore, Finney introduced method preaching and employed techniques borrowed from marketing. He calculated the effects of his preaching on audience and used to make approach more systematic. This fed directly into an emerging genre of self-help manuals designed to improve the delivery of sermons. R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God—American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 50.

²² The religious ethicist Jeffrey Stout considers Dorothy Day, the editor of *The Catholic Worker*, which began publication in 1933, and a lay Catholic woman who ran “houses of hospitality” in urban slums during the Great Depression, exemplary of a religiously inspired but publicly accessible democratic spirit. Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy & Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

²³ A brief history of The Jewish Labor Committee can be found on the group's website: http://www.jewishlabor.org/JLC_Basic_History.pdf. For a broader discussion of the religiously and ethnically inflected rituals and tropes of Jewish labor movements in the United States see David P. Shuldiner, *Of Moses*

the presence of worker priests in French factories during the 1950s (and in Britain a decade later),²⁵ the consumer boycotts organized by the Black church during the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1960s, Roman Catholic involvement in the “farm workers movement,”²⁶ the influence of Marxist Latin American liberation theologies on American seminaries in the 1970s, the so-called ministry of the laity movement in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, as I will discuss later in the dissertation, and, at present, the “new sanctuary movement” at the U.S. border with Mexico.²⁷ Of course, many diasporic and immigrant communities practicing within religious traditions other than mainline Protestantism, including Jews, Roman Catholics and Pentecostals, have never worked with the categories heralded by various and sundry secularization theses, both academic and

and Marx: Folk Ideology in the Jewish Labor Movement of the United States (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey 1999).

²⁴ The Religion and Labor Council of America was founded in 1932 by Willard Uphaus, a professor at the Yale Divinity School and disbanded in 1966. By establishing and sponsoring internship programs, it was able to provide opportunities for seminary students to work with established labor groups like the AFL.

²⁵ The introduction of worker-priests in French factories was spearheaded by Father Jacques Loew, a Dominican friar, in 1945. The hope was to forge bonds between the Church and the French working classes. The practice increasingly came under the Vatican’s suspicion given the penchant of worker-priests to engage in left wing politics, including those associated with socialist and communist movements. By the early 1950s, the Vatican had clamped down on the “movement” and officially withdrew its support. For a discussion of Britain’s experiment with Anglican priests on the line. John Mantle, *Britain’s First Worker-Priests: Radical Ministry in a Post-War Setting* (London: SCM Press, 2000).

²⁶ César Chávez, who founded the *National Farm Workers of America* (NFWA) in 1962, was a devout Catholic and explicitly related his union organizing to his religious life. Moreover, many of the Mexican Americans and Filipinos who comprised the “movement” were Catholic.

²⁷ Metaphors of boundaries and borders figure prominently in this dissertation, in both the ethnographic materials and in the literature that is reviewed. Here too, boundaries and borders play significant role. The liberation theologies of first generation liberationists like Gustavo Gutiérrez, the Boff brothers and Franz Hinkelammert are sometimes critiqued for the abstracted conceptions of class and history that they inherit from the mainstream philosophical Marxism of the 1960s and 1970s. These artificial and politically charged borders of class identity and of what constitutes history are thought by many, including feminists, to be reductive and to mask forms of oppression not reducible to economic violence, such as gendered and sexual violence. The “New Sanctuary Movement” which consists of houses of worship willing to provide sanctuary to immigrants in danger of being deported is necessarily responsive to legal definitions of citizenship and national boundaries, changes in the labor market after the passing of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) that encourage certain bodily and “cultural” crossings across borders and claims the religious house as a space held apart from civil law.

popular, and their implicit extensions of Max Weber’s metaphor of life within the industrial “iron cage.” One must be careful not to confuse the official accounts of life by those with social leverage and institutional power with the actual lived realities of people working on the ground---persons whose relationships to these master narratives are irreducibly complex, practical, ambiguous, dynamic and, ultimately, non-identical. Laurence Moore captures the tension well when he writes in his book *Selling God* that,

It does not take much cleverness to see that in all past epochs, despite the distinguishing postures assumed by the church and by the state...each regarding other as enemy, the religious and the secular intermingled.²⁸

Yet, it is true, as if one’s analytical sight were always refracted through a prism, that one’s perspective on the “boundary” is also most certainly affected by what official story one chooses to highlight. For the purposes of this dissertation, it is the ritualizing and theologizing of a stated *corporate* and *business side* interest in “religion” and “spirituality” that serves as the general background for inquiry.²⁹

Ethnographic Sites and Methodological Approach

The ethnographic field sites for the dissertation are two related organizations, STW and Landry’s Bicycles. The former is a business roundtable comprised of small to medium sized businesses that meet in the Boston and the Twin Cities areas to engage in ritualized, group meditation. Several of the group’s officers have also written extensively on a “theology of institutions,” establishing intellectual kinship with the work of Robert Greenleaf, who popularized servant leadership in the 1970s and 1980s, and tracing their organizational history back to the Metropolitan Associates of Philadelphia (MAP), an

²⁸ Moore, *Selling God*, 8.

²⁹ For STW this implies working within organizations for theological reform.

action-research project from the 1960s sponsored by several Christian Protestant denominations that was itself inspired by The World Council of Church's (WCC) study of the "Missionary Structure of the Congregation."³⁰ Landry's Bicycles is a member of the Boston roundtable of STW and is represented by the co-owners of the company, brothers Tom and Peter Henry, at the meetings of STW and at organization wide conferences and retreats. Tom Henry has written a case study for Landry's Bicycles, analyzing its organizational structure and its mission through the STW theological rubric and is himself trained in theology, having received his M.Div. from Andover-Newton Theological Seminary. The basic organizational history of STW will be provided in the fourth chapter, wherein I reflect on the relationship of the writings and rituals of STW to shifts in the metaphorical body of capital. Having introduced questions of metaphor and metaphorical deployment in the central ethnographic chapters, 1, 2 and 3, in chapter 4 I link my methodological focus on lived metaphor to quandaries and issues in the history of American capitalism, especially as this history is often told under the rubric of Max Weber's secularization thesis.³¹

As we will see, the members of STW relate the work they do to a generalized impulse they observe in society to reintroduce "spirituality" and "religion" back into the workplace. For example, through the membership, scholarship and activism of Margaret Benefiel, Adjunct Professor of Spirituality and Congregational/Organizational Leadership at Andover-Newton Theology Seminary, STW maintains an institutional voice at the Management, Spirituality and Religion (AOM MSR) group, a special interest unit at the American Academy of Management with over 600 members. Margaret, who also maintains

³⁰ Dick Broholm and David Specht, "Toward a Theology of Institutions," <http://www.seeingthingswhole.org/PDF/STW-toward-theology-of-institutions.pdf>.

³¹ For a good discussion of the quandaries ethnographers and historians share, see Gabrielle Spiegel, *Practicing History—New Directions in Historical Writing After the Linguistic Turn* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

an active membership with the American Academy of Religion (AAR), has chaired the group as recently as 2008. A journal associated with the group, *The Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion (JMSR)*, currently issued by Routledge Press, has been publishing on the “remarkable explosion of scholarship in the field of management, business, organizations and work” since 2004.³² As I discovered through my interviews, some key members of STW tend to consider the work of the AOM MSR to be in line with the mission of their own organization.³³ While the question of how we might relate the work of STW to broader shifts in the public narratives of capital and changing patterns of society will be directly addressed in chapter 4 and in the conclusion, the focus of the ethnographic core of the dissertation will remain on the workings, sayings and doings in one small corner of what some reformers and academics alike consider a much broader universe of “workplace spirituality,” “conscious capitalism,”³⁴ “Spirit at Work,”³⁵ “Soul at Work,”³⁶ or “religion in the workplace.”³⁷ Ethnographic attention to metaphorical deployment, both off-hand and intentional, remains the orienting methodological move in the ethnographic

³² *The Journal of Management Spirituality and Religion*, <http://www.jmsr.com/index.html>.

³³ Indeed, one outstanding question for any engagement with the emerging discourse of “workplace spirituality” remains how diverse perspectives, approaches and metaphysical commitments might actually coalesce for some under the auspices of what they might consider to be a unifying movement. The AOM MSR is often cited as evidence for a larger movement by champions of faith at work or workplace spirituality.

³⁴ This is the preferred term of Patricia Aburdene, one of my first contacts in the field. See Patricia Aburdene, *Megatrends 2010: The Rise of Conscious Capitalism* (Charlottesville, VA, Hampton Roads Publishing, 2005).

³⁵ This is the preferred term of Judi Neal, my first contact in the field. I turn to Judi's work later in the dissertation. See Judith Neal, *Edgewalkers—People and Organizations That Take Risks, Build Bridges, and Break New Ground* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 2006).

³⁶ Margaret Benefiel, a key member of STW, uses this term. See Margaret Benefiel, *Soul at Work—Spiritual Leadership in Organizations* (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2005).

³⁷ Douglas Hicks uses this term. See *Religion in the Workplace—Pluralism, Spirituality, Leadership* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

chapters while the rhetorical deployment of metaphors of neo-liberal capital are taken up in chapter 4 and the in the conclusion.

This dissertation represents ethnographic research I have undertaken at Landry's and STW between 2007 and 2011. During this time, I engaged in both participant observation field work, observing daily life at Landry's for a year and attending meetings of the STW roundtable on an ongoing basis. In June of 2009, I attended the two day "Theology of Institutions Seminar" in Minneapolis, MN, co-sponsored by STW, the John A. Ryan Institute for Catholic Social Thought at the University of St. Thomas, and the Center for Faith and Learning at Augsburg College and run by leaders of STW. My method for recording ethnographic data at Landry's and at STW was simple: I would jot down notes and descriptions as I could, in private, so as to interfere as little as possible with the flow of lived relations, later recording these notes onto a word processor. I was also fortunate to have been offered the opportunity to audio record a couple of STW roundtable meetings as well as the "Theology of Institutions Seminar." In addition to this participant observation work, I have also conducted and audio recorded formal interviews with field contacts, members of STW and owners, managers and workers at Landry's. In addition to the fieldwork at STW and Landry's, I have also read the substantial materials published by STW and have read deeply in the aforementioned *JMSR* as well as popular self-help texts in the growing bookstore and online book genre of workplace spirituality.³⁸

Theoretical Orientation

At the most general level of treatment, the topic of this dissertation is the developing discourse in business management studies and practice on issues of "workplace

³⁸ Future work needs to be done on the role of self-help market in the cultivation of the discourse of "workplace spirituality."

spirituality” and the contemporary role of “religion,” “spirituality” or “holism” in business management. At more empirical and local levels, the focus turns to a consideration of the ways in which the rituals and written theology of one group of workplace reformers, STW, reflect larger trends in organizational management but also remain overdetermined, existential imperatives and biographical contexts helping to fuel broader patterns of social change. This dissertation is **not** an exercise in business ethics if one intends by this a normative and prescriptive analysis for the application of extant religious and theological principles in the workplace.³⁹ Neither is the dissertation an attempt at writing a comprehensive history of the new management interest in “spirituality.” Instead, the project is an archeology or history of the present anchored in a local ethnography. If it is the case that *epistemic*⁴⁰ or sociological shifts are occurring underfoot, I hope to do justice to this phenomenon at the level of practice, spending my time getting to know one specific life-world that participates in larger trends that help shape but necessarily dwarf it.

Holding the empirical and the discursive fields in tension, the newly explicit and increasingly institutionalized business interest in religion, spirituality and the management of labor, is taken as an occasion for exploring the material and institutional dimensions of a set of localized “spiritual” and “theological” practices, shifts in the cosmological formations of capitalism, the *intersubjectivity*⁴¹ of labor, the non-identity between formal thought on or

³⁹ Hicks’ *Religion and the Workplace* is a brilliant example of this approach.

⁴⁰ In my use, this is a term indebted to the archeological work of Michel Foucault. I mean by it key ideas and concepts that re-occur across institutions. Whereas Foucault was most interested in the ways in which these “rules” or patterns of thought were reproduced despite subjective intention, as an ethnographer I am most concerned with the relationship between intentionality and the diffuse concepts that help shape intentionality.

⁴¹ I use this term much in the way Michael Jackson does. Drawing from object relations, Jackson, like D.W. Winnicott, speaks of primary intersubjectivity patterned on the infant child’s relationship to primary caregivers, typically the mother. However, Jackson argues that intersubjectivity is persistent and pervasive in that social life is lived as a “network of reciprocal relationships among subjects.” Activities as mundane unreflected upon gestures or as self-reflexive as academic discourse analysis partake of a logic of exchange where we

about “religion” and the world of practice and, finally, the ways in which “religion,” “magic” and “spirituality” are fungible and ambiguous concepts that we actively deploy to mark phenomena and realities that escape and exceed our use of words. I am intellectually and politically committed to the proposition that the economic dimensions of all thought and practice, including religious thought and practice and academic thought and practice, must be accounted for. This is especially important given the Western tendency to divorce the problematics of a set apart or ethereal realm of “culture,” including religion, “spirituality” and “humanistic” inquiry, from the necessities of material life.⁴² Although the method is descriptive in sections, there are abiding ethical commitments, to be developed as a scholarly praxis within the following pages, that drive the focus on the irreducibility of practice, the relationship between the one and the many, the asymmetry between the theological and the experiential and, finally, the concretely political implications of our cosmological accounts of the world. The approach is highly interdisciplinary both because the writing alternates between descriptive and analytical modes and because a combination of ethnographic, philosophical, theological and historical materials and methodologies serve as tools for engagement.

Given all the above, what follows is a method driven argument inspired by an appreciation for the interminability of dialectics implied by a certain ethnographic approach.

respond to the environment or attempt to direct its behavior. Distinguishable from theological ideas about “fellow feeling,” intersubjectivity partakes of an *ambiguous* logic of reciprocity in which we attempt to secure or elevate our being, often at the expense of others. Intersubjectivity also implies that we are neither *sui generis* subjects nor simply products of our environments. We struggle with the environment and experience it as a struggle for being. The subjective in-between --between subjects and between subjects and world--is what fascinates Jackson. What is interesting in the context of “workplace spirituality,” as we will see, is that the subjective in-between and the transitive moments of life are points of interest for “new management” as well. The devil is in the details, as I will show.

⁴² Herbart Marcuse, “The Affirmative Character of Culture,” in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory* (London: Penguin Books, 1968).

There is a refusal in the subsequent pages to package contemporary management “spirituality” as some or one *thing* and, in its place, there is an attempt to sustain a thoroughgoing ethnographic encounter with the ways in which going or shared ideas about “spirituality” are reproduced according to the logic and time of lived practice. The treatment of the broader topic, the contemporary management and business side interest in “religion” and “spirituality,” is hindered, from the start, I believe, by two related tendencies in our social understanding of “religion”: 1) The fetishization of terms like “spirituality” and “religion” so that they carry positive or negative valances and become “tools” that, at least in some forms, can be applied to lived relations as mechanisms of straightforward social enlightenment or control; 2) The reduction of the world of lived human practice and the phenomenology of practice into these discursive constructs. Qualitative ethnography, by speaking to the *ambiguities of practice* and by giving audience to the *existentially charged dimensions of “spiritual” practice* in the workplace, can counter-balance this methodological bias towards value-managing, conceptual-analytical treatment over and against concerted, descriptive, ethnographic engagement with the overdetermined realities of lived practice.⁴³

Some further guiding ethnographic questions and issues of the dissertation are: 1)

⁴³ Related to the fetishization of terms like “spirituality” and “religion” in Western thought has been an original removal of the problematics of “spirit” from the material world, a move which makes it possible for “spirituality” and “religion” to take on the roles of vitalizing antidotes to the deadening wounds of modernity. Importantly, the membership of STW itself responds directly to an experienced divorce of theology from the world of business, both in their professional practices and in their public writing. Qualitative ethnography can foreground dimensions of the materiality of practice that are obscured when we assume strict *a-priori* divisions between “spiritual” and “material” worlds. How the mundane, everyday transcendence of the personal projects of the members of STW and the owners and staff at Landry’s relates or does not relate to the Transcendence of the formal theology advocated by STW remains one overarching empirical or ethnographic question of the dissertation. Focusing on the over-determination and ambiguities of practice and the ways in which personal, social and cosmic histories intertwine on the ground simultaneously respects the mutual implication of the real in the ideal and the ideal within the real while also defying rhetorical moves to justify the closure of the gap between the procedures of human conceptual thought and the world that exceeds it. Methodologically, I argue, we can look to the lived deployment and personalizations of shared patterns of metaphor as one way of respecting the fact that personal projects, while shaped by historical conditions, are never reducible to the social either.

How do we account for the structured logic and organization of capital even as we turn our focus to issues of language and practice? 2) How do we tend to use material things, as well as conceptual ideas, as conduits of transcendence? 3) What is the role of popularized scientific concepts borrowed from quantum, chaos and creativity theories in theological and management constructions of workplace “spirituality”? 4) The question of existential control and the pervasiveness, at STW, Landry’s and in the ethnographer’s own life of “magical” attempts to seize at least a temporary sense of control during difficult moments where it would seem that agency and words escape us. This last issue proves especially significant in the conclusion of the dissertation, wherein I argue that something scholars of religion and STW have in common is precisely this pervasive question of how we can come to speak of that which eludes the grasp of what we can see, know and put to words. Politically, philosophically and theologically, the concerns are pressingly germane because, as I will particularly discuss in chapter 4, paradigms borrowed from “new science” often reduce the practical, historical world to the operations of trans-historical criteria marking the supposed creativity of order in chaos and the quantum “truth” of relationship.

The implicit deconstructive impulse of the method is ultimately not intended to imply that blurring lines is always perform *just* but, rather, to insist upon the non-identity between the logic and time of existence and that of our conceptual ideas about the world.⁴⁴ Working from the ground up, this dissertation will articulate a *politics of storytelling* that is responsive to the growing corporate interest in “spirituality” and which, it is my hope, avoids both the policing of “true” religion from “false” religion, on the one hand, and the

⁴⁴ The dissertation argues that deconstructions of “religion” and “spirituality” must be evaluated on the level of praxis and that assessing “religion” and “spirituality” according to essentialist binaries (good/bad; enlightening/blighting; liberating/oppressive; true/false) fails to engage the ethical complexities of hopelessly broad questions such as whether religion, faith and spirituality can improve our economic lives and whether or not and in what way one might say that there is even a “Faith at Work” *movement*, as such.

promoting of an unchecked *jouissance* and reverie of boundary blurring, on the other hand. The move to cleanly manage and assign static, *a-priori* values to “spirituality” and “religion” is what my ethnographic method hopes to disrupt, in the end. Therefore, in ethically evaluating these public narratives, I will argue that the danger is not that they call for a re-imagining or re-articulation of boundaries but, instead, that in doing so, some forms, more than others, subsume historicity, violence, contingency and ambiguity within the gravitational pull of the bright light of a vitalizing and moralizing “spirit.” In the end, I will argue that it is precisely the intertwining personal, social and political effects of the re-spiritualization of the American workplace that matter and that any attempt to render ethical generalizations about the marriage of “spirituality” and “work” will fail to do justice to the phenomenology of practice among those committed to “Spirit at Work.” And, as I am reminded by the vignette that follows and my ethnographic work with some of the workers at Landry's who have no or little personal investment in the official management discourse of “workplace spirituality,” we must remember that the constructions of the workplace and of work that we use can occlude as much as do our constructions of spirituality. Whose work and whose workplace? On the one hand, how do experiences of labor differ from one another and, yet, on the other hand, how might they also have important phenomenological dimensions in common? In the conclusion, I argue that the study of religion would do well to contextualize and materialize its own discourse by considering what questions, quandaries and struggles it shares with management discourse as a key public face of contemporary capital. The intent of this move to identify a shared epistemic context is precisely not to conflate disciplines but, rather, to resist the romantic tendency of the humanities to stand apart from the world of the professions while also providing, at the same time, openings and spaces for genuine interdisciplinary dialogue around key differences. As such, I hope to engender

interdisciplinary conversation on *intersubjective* grounds.

Autobiographical Interlude

Along with other existential and phenomenological ethnographers, I strive to respect the differences that exist between people and between contexts but, at the same time, I also hope to account for the ways in which experiences are also shared, if only *analogically* and if only by way of a still irreducible particularity. Implied by the method is an inherent critique of the very idea of scientific objectivity. If I am interested in the “intertwining, personal, social and political effects of the re-spiritualization of the American workplace,” by the lights of my chosen phenomenological and existential method, my own experiences, preoccupations and interests, whether consciously or unconsciously so, are necessarily “intertwined” in my study of this “intertwining.” Moreover, a phenomenological method will aim to engage forms of struggle that we might share but are obscured by our contingent intellectual and conceptual accounts of the world. Pragmatic in nature, the kind of phenomenological ethnography I do, taking up the work and thought of Jean-Paul Sartre, Michael Jackson, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and Mark Poster, in particular, takes ownership of its intellectual commitments but also stretches to keep conceptualizing on par with experience by reminding both writer and reader that, “. . .theoretical knowledge has its origins in practical, worldly activity.”⁴⁵ At a minimum, then, the method assumes that humans work with concepts, ideas and art to make their way in the world much in the same way we use tools to work with our hands. In all cases, however, our grip slips and this slippage is of no small consequence in the worlds I have visited.

I include the story that follows for at least four reasons. First, the story focuses on a

⁴⁵ Michael Jackson, ed., *Things As They Are* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1996), 36.

relationship and on an event that demanded an *a-posteriori* meditation in which I came to certain issues by way of experience which Jean-Paul Sartre also highlights in his Marxist philosophical work. I came to Sartre by way of experience much in the same way in which Sartre claims he came to Marx when he encountered the concrete labor movements of his day. Second, the event *haunts* me and spectrality will play a role throughout the dissertation as a whole and will be approached philosophically in the conclusion. Third, it is an opportunity to begin spinning the interdisciplinary dialectic between the analytical and the descriptive so that the reader has a sense of this aspect of the methodology as well. Four, as Sartre argued, in a phenomenological investigation, "...the questioner, the question and the questioned are one."⁴⁶ There is some continuity between some of the issues and themes that come up in the below autobiographical piece and the ethnographic sections to follow.

Factoring God and Mammon at the Subway Stop

In the years between my Masters work and the beginning of my doctoral studies, I worked at an emergency domestic violence shelter in the center of West Harlem, off of Lenox Avenue. After a dry spell of several months looking for work and, quite embarrassingly for me, having already had to move back in with my parents in my late twenties in order to make *ends meet*, I was very happy to be employed as a continuing care case manager at HELP Haven. Like many of the social workers, counselors and safety officers at the shelter, I felt fortunate that I was able to earn a living while at the same time working with others to improve the conditions of their lives. Especially at first, I was not wanting for a meaningful connection to the work I was doing. What could possibly constitute a better motivation for working in the world than the hope of helping others and

⁴⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York: Random House, 1963), 174.

improving the collective lot?

However, my enthusiasm was soon tempered as I began to discover the limits of what I could personally accomplish in my role and as it became increasingly clear to me that for all of my good intentions and for all of the sage tenacity, creativity and tirelessness of my executive director, a person I greatly admired, the system within which we worked seemed to require us to objectify the very persons whose humanity had been so violated by relationships of abuse. None of this was ever made more bitterly and poignantly clear to me than the day four dollars, or the lack of this money, created a terrible gulf between Sheila, one of my favorite residents, and her freedom to *capitalize* (invest money for a future return, dividends or pay-off) on a meaningful job opportunity.

At the shelter, one often heard the clients and the staff alike give thanks to God for the gifts of family, strength, friends and the solidarity of others in the struggle to get back on one's feet, mourn the losses of homes and relationships, deal with a myriad of pressures and demands: caring for children, keeping appointments with the various counselors at the shelter (therapist, housing specialist, employment therapist, case manager), navigate assorted doctors and different government agencies (public assistance, public housing and sometimes foster care), and, most important, maintain some semblance of an unmanaged life.⁴⁷ The previous evening, Sheila and some of the other women⁴⁸ had participated in a writing

⁴⁷ In addition to having to follow a rigorous, results-oriented schedule, clients who lived at the shelter also had to adjust to weekly inspections of their "living units" during which staff would inspect refrigerators to make sure they were properly stocked (especially if there were children in the household), look through drawers, closets and under beds for illicit items (like alcohol and drugs) and ascribe a cleanliness rating to the unit.

⁴⁸ The executive director was extremely progressive on gender issues and had opened up the shelter to men, coming out of both heterosexual and gay relationships, and transgender people (at the time one of only two citywide) and worked hard to respond to the challenges these clients and their experiences posed for a shelter system that had always dichotomously assumed that women were always the victims of abuse suffered at the hands of men and that was organizationally structured, in any event, around the premise that there were only two genders at play. When Sheila lived at the shelter, there were only women clients "on the roster" as the

forum, the brainchild of one of the therapists and a good friend of mine, which was aptly called “Write to Tell.” According to my friend and organizer of the event series, Nicole, a licensed M.S.W., the therapeutic goals of such a program were many: promoting empowerment and healing through storytelling, fostering a sense of collective solidarity, learning about individual differences in experience and sharing strategies for survival. Sheila read her reflections about God’s role in her life, the ways in which God always protected her family and brought good people and new friends into her life. She also spoke about the ways in which she learned to reject sexist understandings about God and interpretations of the Bible that promoted violence against women.

Many of the women were African American and Latina and most of them were poor.⁴⁹ One also heard, whether with a Baptist, Pentecostal or Catholic twist, about the ways in which God had the power to improve the material lives of people. “I don’t worry. I know God will provide” was a phrase one would hear. Nicole and I reacted somewhat differently to the talk of God in this context. Nicole explained that social work as a discipline had come to understand that “spirituality” was an important dimension of human existence and could be used in healing and further explained that her discipline had begun to understand that its traditional discomfort with religion and spirituality had alienated people of color and the working classes and was the product of its own racialized and classed origins. *For my part, I remember wondering about the theologies that promoted relationships of patriarchal violence, since not all of the women publicly reflected on the relationship in their presentations as Sheila had, and worried that demanding economic justice of God could deter the clients from the important project of demanding this kind*

staff used to say.

⁴⁹ The need for shelter correlates to a large degree to access to money; women and men who have ready access to funds often have choices and options not available to those dependent on the public shelter system for safety.

*of justice from the world.*⁵⁰

On the face of it, what happened the afternoon after this “Write to Tell” event at which Sheila powerfully and eloquently spoke seemingly vindicated my skepticism about the limits of “spiritual struggle” though, in the end, my own non-reflective actions in response to the situation “deconstructed” my point of view and betrayed the formality of my own thoughts. I had run into Sheila in the hallway, on my way to find a free computer in one of the offices so that I could input some of my outstanding case notes into the newly computerized data management system, FACTORS. Sheila was an African American woman in her early forties and the mother of two children: Sheila's daughter, a small toddler, and her seven year old brother. Although I did not at the time officially work with Sheila because I only worked with clients who had left the shelter and had secured “permanent” housing, Sheila and I always said hello, often talked a little about how our days were going and discussed educational opportunities for her son—a very studious young man at whose maturity under difficult circumstances I just marveled. This day, Sheila was visibly upset and stopped me to discuss an urgent matter. She explained that she had a promising job interview in lower Manhattan for an office position, work she had done before, but that she did not have the four dollars that were necessary to travel back and forth on the subway. For individuals and families who often have had to flee their homes, leaving much in the way of material essentials behind, and having severed ties with batterers who had sometimes represented at least partial sources of income, public assistance is often the only option. Unfortunately, public assistance monies are by any standard paltry and never enough and, in

⁵⁰ Interestingly, I was attending services at the local Episcopal church on a weekly basis at that time and though I cannot recall concretely, I am absolutely certain I prayed for God to exact economic justice in the context of the liturgy, nodded along to an expression of this sentiment during a sermon and sent these intentions into the universe in the form of wandering and meandering thoughts during the course of the Mass.

any event, there is an application and waiting process involved. Concretely, residents of the shelter often lacked a steady source of income and this sometimes meant pockets and bank accounts that were literally empty. “What do they want me to do? Rob a bank? Prostitute myself?” she asked.

Truth be told, although we were technically not allowed to so, the staff at the shelter often fronted clients pocket change or a few dollars precisely because the need was often dire: milk for a child, carfare to get to and from appointments, money to get a weekly magazine or gossip rag to take your mind off things when you feel like you are on the verge of a breakdown. I am not sure the homeless shelter system in New York City could operate without these small infusions of monies by staff, much like the public school system depends on teachers fronting cash to purchase school supplies. For all of the ways in which they get ahead of us, seemingly take on lives of their own and elude our individual control, social systems do not simply run themselves. In the words of the historian Gordon Bigelow, they represent “a series of human acts and interventions.”⁵¹ This last point, however, is not self evident to many of those whom I engage ethnographically in the chapters to follow and will be the subject of ethical reflection at various points of the dissertation, most notably the conclusion. If economic systems and institutions are simply a human house of cards, the membership of STW asks, why is our experience of institutional life often one in which human intention and design are overwhelmed?

When Sheila shared her story with me, my instinct was to walk over to my bag and grab a few dollars to give to her but I noticed that my immediate boss, a detail oriented, rules enforcer and less of a big picture advocate than the executive director, was patrolling the

⁵¹ Gordon Bigelow, “Let There be Markets: the Evangelical Roots of Economics,” *Harper's Magazine*, 1 May 2005, 33.

halls. I made the decision not to take the risk this time because, truth be known, I did not feel that I could bear putting my job in jeopardy. I needed to be able to afford the applications to graduate schools I was about to send out and I felt that I simply could not afford to join the ranks of the unemployed again now that some old student loans had kicked into repayment. Frustratingly though not altogether surprisingly, I found out later that day that, in the end, Sheila did not make her appointment because she was not able to track down the requisite carfare.

Of course, I could have made another choice. Or, Kathy, the director of client services whose wrath I feared, could have been on the phone, in a meeting or could have called in sick. Sheila could have found a friend with extra money to spare,⁵² another staff person could have intervened or Sheila could have bucked the system and jumped the subway turnstile. In the abstract, the scenarios through which Sheila could have found a way to get to her interview abound. “Freedom” as an abstract concept can contain the multitudes of which Walt Whitman sings but it is only in its contradictory relationship to boundedness and limitation, *existing both within and without*, that it is properly human. Given the fact that almost the whole of the concrete island of Manhattan stood between Sheila and her appointment and given the fact that she was quite literally broke because she had run into red tape at the public assistance office, only an idealism willing to do violence to the lived reality of negotiated struggle on the ground could incline us to deny the limits of her freedom or to shy away from a word that has come into disfavor in the postmodern academy, *structure*. Simple celebrations of the ecstatic experience of flow, overlays of “spirituality” or unconvincing celebrations of anti-structure do violence to the experience of

⁵² Friendships quickly formed at the shelter, given the intense nature of the experience, and residents often borrowed money from one another, cooked for each other and provided free child care when they could. Romantic and sexual relationships were also not uncommon.

someone in Sheila's boat.⁵³ Exchange-value represents a contemporary historical limit that we do well to account for, even if doing so bursts bubbles, kills joy or reduces pleasure. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer rightly remarked that "culture is a paradoxical commodity. So completely is it subject to the law of exchange that it is no longer exchanged."⁵⁴

As for Sheila, not even God, the master of all possibility, had paved a way for her this time or illuminated an alternate route. In my anger, I silently cursed the whole

⁵³ Especially influential in the management literature, I am thinking specifically, here, of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's *Flow—The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990). I find the work of Jean-Paul Sartre and Michael Jackson especially useful in reminding us that peak, limit and optimal experiences do not escape from the ambiguous logic of intersubjectivity. Exchange-value, as a concept, reminds us that subjective experiences exist within objective conditions of production and consumption in capitalist societies.

⁵⁴ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *The Culture Industry—Enlightenment as Mass Deception* in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ed., Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002). I am suggesting in this dissertation that it is incumbent on social theory to contextualize shifting conceptual boundaries within, in part, an informed and sophisticated materialist analysis. Theodor Adorno writes in "Late Capitalism or Industrial Society?," his address to the 16th German Sociological Congress, that, increasingly, Material production, distribution, consumption are administered in common. Their borders, which once separated from inside the total process of externally separated spheres, and thereby respected that which was qualitatively different, are melting away. Everything is one. The totality of the process of mediation, in truth that of the exchange-principle, produces a second and deceptive immediacy. It makes it possible for that which is separate and antagonistic to be, against its own appearance, forgotten or to be repressed from consciousness.

What happens to "religion" in this process of liquidization? Theodor Adorno, "Late Capitalism or Industrial Society?" accessed December 26, 2010, <http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/AdornoSozAddr.PDF>.

In my view, the deregulation of conceptual boundaries must be assessed in a sufficiently multifarious way that admits of no facile condemnations or celebrations. More care must be made to carefully differentiate between worthy deconstructive projects and neo-liberal deregulations of the bureaucratic state. Russell Berman writes:

[B]oth the neoconservatives and the new social movements have, in addition to their critiques of the state, their respective cultural programs. These however are less interesting than the repetition of the antibureaucratic discourse of deregulation in the postmodernist cultural programs in terms like polyphony, heteroglossia, the mixture of high and low forms, eclecticism, etc. No matter how postmodernist works may differ from the traditional canon advocated by neoconservatives, these same postmodern works in fact reproduce neoconservative values, beginning with their shared hostility to the revolutionary experimentalism of historical modernism.

Russell Berman, *Modern Culture and Critical Theory—Art, Politics and the Legacy of the Frankfurt School* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 134. To what degree is management interest in "spirituality" an example of the ways in which, according to Berman, bureaucratic capitalism and the "aestheticization of everyday life" go hand in hand?

enterprise. I worried again that the spiritual struggle I had witnessed the prior evening was, at best, a distraction and thought that what was needed was sustained political action. What was worse, I knew what the official story electronically inscribed for data management purposes would look like: “Ms. Jones was a no show to her interview.” As Marx knew, bureaucracy often works as a “web of practical illusions,” a formalization of particular experiences, which “everywhere coverts its ‘formal’ purposes into its content, it everywhere (coming) into conflict with ‘real purposes’.”⁵⁵ Interestingly, in his “Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right,” Marx refers to this tendency to abstract from and formalize facts on the ground as a form of “spiritulization” that is, in the end, “thoroughly Jesuitical and theological.” “Bureaucracy is the republic of priests” because it dissolves the details of life by treating them “according to its other-worldly, spiritual essence.”⁵⁶ Spiritualization, in this sense, represents the opposite of freedom for Marx. It represents the radical heights of objectification and mystification. According to this view of things, then, FACTORS becomes a bludgeoning tool, a system for modal *r*epresentation in the Deleuzian sense.⁵⁷ Every two weeks, Kathy, the director of client services, would without fail remind us that the shelter would not get paid by the city if the case managers failed to complete and

⁵⁵ Karl Marx, “From the Discussion of the Executive Power, Hegel’s § 287ff” in *The Portable Karl Marx*, ed. Eugene Kamenka, (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 91.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Generally, modal procedures are for Deleuze and Guatterri those that operate by means of subdivision and hierarchization rather than proliferation and juxtaposition. FACTORS was designed to literally create fact trees of people’s lives, asking case managers to assess risk according to a closed set (of designation levels) and asking them to rank the most urgent and pressing needs presented by the case. If the City of New York demands caseworkers to “factor” life (as in to distill and factor out what is supposedly most important and critical), Nicole’s “Write to Tell” events offset the underlying modal schema somewhat. She and I both shared a general distrust of the idea that clinical work is necessarily and in all aspects improved upon by adopting business efficiencies, as was the talk of the day in social work. For a discussion of modal logic see Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatterri, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Continuum Books, 2004).

(electronically) submit these “progress notes.”

After an inner meditation on the injustice and unfairness of Sheila’s situation and a good dose of self-pity to assuage some of the guilt I was feeling for not having at least tried to sneak Sheila the carfare, I said a spontaneous prayer for Sheila and sent good intentions her way. For all of my *thinking* about the dangers of religious gratitude in the struggle to negotiate personal and institutional relationships of violence, I caught myself swept up in prayerful hope because that was, in the moment, all I really *could do*. Sure, I would continue to suggest to Sheila programs that might open new educational paths not only for her children but for herself as well and I would continue to lend an ear when I could but the reality of the limits of what I could accomplish professionally had become, at least for now, starkly apparent to me. In short, while I vowed to continue to do my job as best I could, somehow I was also compelled at this moment, largely unconsciously, to extend my influence into the realm of unknown possibilities and to surpass the material limits of my situation if only at the level of subjective intention.

What was I to ultimately make of this situation and of what my work with Sheila had taught me? Certainly, this incident has continued to haunt my thoughts and has become almost paradigmatic for me of the humanity of persons negotiating limit situations or in the terms discussed by Jean-Paul Sartre and taken up by the anthropologist, Michael Jackson, the struggle of humans to make ourselves out of what we have been made.⁵⁸ The relationship of human freedom to limits and boundaries is always complex and in many ways is of primal interest to this project. The scholar of lived religion, Robert Orsi, warns us not to

⁵⁸ Michael Jackson, *Existential Anthropology—Events, Exigencies and Effects* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 1.

simply focus on the oppositional resistance and freedom of practitioners.⁵⁹ *Natality*, to borrow from Hannah Arendt, is a result of practice and practice is always embedded in the struggles of individuals negotiating the norms, relationships, and institutional arrangements of concrete places. As I will discuss more fully in the conclusion, a philosophical appraisal of the ethnographic material, what Sartre refers to later in his career as the *practico-inert*, simultaneously limits and is overcome by human *praxis*—which he considers a struggle for everyday *transcendence*. In Sheila’s case, while her freedom to get to a very important, potentially life changing, job interview was, for all intents and purposes, squashed by circumstance, she went on to win a scholarship award for domestic violence survivors in recognition of her many successes in the struggle to heal and to get her family back on its feet.⁶⁰ Last I knew her, was able to reclaim a new, promising life for herself, safe from her batterer. Like many of the residents I met, she had perfected the art of molding light out of darkness. At the awards banquet at which she received her “Survivors” award (worth two thousand dollars), Sheila thanked God and said she could not have done it without *him*.

If Sheila never simply accepted the circumstances in which she found herself and worked hard to cultivate a new garden for herself, I learned through my work with her and the other residents of HELP Haven two important things about the capacity for renewal that feels so urgent and pressing inside the walls of a domestic violence shelter: 1) Against

⁵⁹ Robert Orsi stresses the importance of remaining vigilant, as a discipline, about the ways in which our own values and tastes circumscribe the parameters of the field and help determine the object of our inquiry as scholars of religion. See “Snakes Alive: Religious Studies Between Heaven and Earth” in *Between Heaven and Earth—The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). By looking at the world of capitalist spirituality as someone committed to critical theory, I hope to make good on Orsi’s advice that we not eschew those practices that provoke anxiety.

⁶⁰ Even after she had won the scholarship, Sheila continued to have to endure bureaucratic red tape as her award was held up for months. Nicole and I wondered if the agency was less interested in getting need funds into Sheila’s hands than in the photo op the awards banquet provided for HELP USA and its corporate sponsors.

the bigotry of someone like Voltaire, many of the residents felt that religion helped them overcome violence not beget it; 2) The objective force of economic conditions must be accounted for lest our hope for transcendence degenerate into some maniacal and delusional expression of autonomous freedom. Though I did not have predicted it at the time, my work as a case manager in the domestic violence system in New York City and my academic work in religion and society at Harvard Divinity School both have had in common this embodied compulsion, a ritualizing praxis, towards the question of religion's role in the negotiation of systemic, particularly economic, violence. Although I had powerful examples in my own life, most specifically that of my own mother, of persons religiously working themselves over while negotiating material limits and potentialities, it has also always been the "heavy presence," to borrow a felicitous phrase from Sartre, of concrete workers like Sheila, tangible bodies working spiritualized horizons in the face of need, that has drawn me to the "charged" and "multivalent" boundary between what in the West we call the religious and the economic.

Is the Truth of a Woman Her Wages?

As far as I could understand it, even though Sheila provides us all with a hopeful example of successful projection into the world through struggle, the nothingness of which Sartre writes in *Being and Nothingness* that individuals choose and, in so doing, make selves and worlds out of undifferentiated reality takes on a different resonance, I think, when we consider the gulf her poverty imposed on her movement this time around.⁶¹ For practical purposes, she was stuck in the moment; she was down but not out. What I want to freeze

⁶¹ Before he makes his Marxist turn, Sartre understood authenticity to stem from the subject's choice, which differentiates it from the world. Being-for-itself stands at a distance from being-in-itself. A space of negativity is thus constitutive of responsibility in Sartrian ethics. While he preserves the transcendence of praxis in his Marxist work, intersubjectivity is reworked in Sartre's later work, where the world is understood to thwart movement and constrain choice, negativity now thusly materialized.

for analytical purposes is the temporary chasm her lack of money created, making it all but certain that she would miss her appointment, subjecting her public story, called a “case history,” to ever heightened positivist objectification when the event was inputted by the employment specialist into the data management system of officialdom. Especially for the poor, nothingness is perhaps best conceived of as the struggle of the individual, within a social context, to cope with lack of opportunity, a nothingness of scarcity and need, with the added insult to injury that the actual lived textures of this struggle are so often subject to violent erasure by the bureaucratic spiritualizations of which Marx spoke, a narrative nothingness devoid of actual vitality and life. In other words, the boundaries of who we are for both ourselves and for others are not simply chosen but, simultaneously, also given to us and drawn for us. The gulfs that make and divide us in a capitalist society are economic as well as existential properties. On the other side of the subway turnstile, economic circumstance and bureaucratic procedure prevented Sheila from *being for herself*.⁶² Were the opportunities she missed, the potentialities of what could be and the anguish she suffered, stuck at the line, really worth, equivalent to, four American dollars? Critically so, the setback was only momentary. This, of course, was more to *Sheila's credit* than anything else.

In his *Search for a Method*, which Sartre considered an introduction to his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, he makes a rather surprising claim, given the extent to which material economic conditions were absent from his earlier discussions of human freedom, specifically *Being and Nothingness*. In *Search for a Method*, Sartre states that,

The structures of a society which is created by human work define for each man an objective situation as a starting point; the truth of a man is the nature

⁶² Sheila's plight provides empirical evidence for the soundness of Sartre's philosophical choice to replace being-for-itself with the notion of praxis, which denies the subject the freedom to fully stand apart from the world. Sartre becomes less interested in ideas of authenticity as he does the struggle for being that exists between subject and world.

of his work; and it is his wages. But this truth defines him insofar as he constantly goes beyond it in his practical activity. (In a popular democracy this may be, for example, by working a double shift or by becoming an “activist” or by secretly resisting the raising of work quotas. In a capitalist society, it may be by joining a union, by voting to go on strike, etc.).⁶³

The situation in which Sheila found herself is disclosive, for me, of the ways in which unemployment, a lack of wages, violently curtails human freedom, quite concretely. The loftiness of a term such as “freedom,” then, is, at least in some measure, brought back into respectful relationship with the lived experiences of everyday people when we contextualize in the ways Sartre suggests. Freedom is a practical, everyday category as much as it is the object of philosophical and theological reflection. However, the totality that was my experience of Sheila over time—my relationship with her throughout the years⁶⁴---suggests that Sartre was right, too, to insist that transcendence, the surpassing of limitations imposed on human freedom by such realities as the wage system, is at least as an important fact of human existence, even within a capitalist economy. The truth for Sartre would be that Sheila’s freedom is exercised through a negotiating praxis that is simultaneously, dialectically, limited and overcoming. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, not only was Sheila ultimately successful in her quest to secure employment and housing, not only did it seem that she was on the path to moving beyond a relationship of abuse and violence but she had also become a local mentor, within HELP Haven itself, for Survivors and aspired to play a broader, public advocacy role some day as well. It is for these efforts and successes that Sheila had been awarded the check for \$2000 for which she thanked God and which she pledged to use to purchase interview and work clothes for herself and a computer for her son.

⁶³ Sartre, *Search for a Method*, 93.

⁶⁴ I knew Sheila for a total of 2 ½ years and worked with her as a continuing care case manager for half of that time.

For Sartre, it is in our practical activity, our negotiation with a limiting and generative world, that we are most concretely human. Wages play an objective role in reproducing the material conditions that “circumscribe the field of possibilities (his work is too hard, he is too tired to show any interest in union or political activity)”⁶⁵ for workers in a capitalist economy but the rich and textured world of human struggle cannot be *reduced* to these conditions and, most certainly, the practical force of economic conditions does not amount to an irresistible law of necessity. We are not, so says Sartre, passive instruments in some larger drama beyond the phenomenological world of human ends. He writes,

When one is studying man, what can be more exact or more rigorous than to *recognize human properties in him*? The simple inspection of the social field ought to have led to the discovery that the relation of ends is a permanent structure of human enterprises and that it is *on the basis of this relation* that real men evaluate actions, institutions, or economic constructions.⁶⁶

What my work with Sheila and a good many of the other clients taught me was a dynamic, vexed, anxious, joyous, sweaty, tearful and always surprising *comprehension* of and appreciation for human praxis beyond the positivist e-grammar of FACTORS. What was it about Sheila that allowed her, in her circumstance, not to tire out but to succeed at a litany of tasks I honestly feel now to be beyond my own individual capacities to carry out—the ability to look for and secure work, care for young children and heal, all at one time, in the midst of extreme psychic turbulence, social fragmentation and unemployment? What role did God play in helping Sheila make her own *ends meet*? It is to the contextual human world of practice that Sartre urges us to go in asking such a question and it is in Sartre’s theorizations of *pro-jection*—the carrying out of human projects in the midst of limitation and

⁶⁵ Sartre, *Search for a Method*, 157.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

transcendence that I believe we might work, maybe despite the hesitancy of Sartre himself and with the help of other philosophers more open to “religious” or “spiritual” experience, to construct a phenomenological theory of religion capable of doing justice, according to the particular ends of scholars in religious studies, to the objective context and existential textures of the topic of this dissertation: what many adherents and practitioners themselves refer to as the “Workplace Spirituality,” “the Faith at Work Movement” or “Spirit at Work.” With all of our differences in hand, what might Sheila, an unemployed single mother living in a homeless shelter in Harlem, myself—a doctoral student at Harvard singing for his supper and hoping to hone, develop and refine his academic craft, and the business owners, middle managers and workers with whom I have worked with, ethnographically, have in common? Is it possible to interrelate these relationships without abstracting from the particularities of lived struggle and human ends and what does any of this have to do with theorizing *religion*?⁶⁷

⁶⁷ The later work of Michel Foucault—his work on ethics, governmentality and care of the self—would be immediately purchasable in many ways for my purposes here. Foucault, of course, turns the Kantian question—what are the conditions for the possibility of knowledge—on its head by interrogating the conditions that make the subject a possible object of knowledge. Put another way, Foucault interrogates the generative conditions of discourse and power that enable and make possible the subject who knows. In the process, Foucault presents a counter-history of ideas that displaces the autonomous subject as the sovereign author of knowledge. For Foucault, there is no subject or pure object outside of specific bodies of knowledge. His felicitous turn to ethics late in his career supplements Foucault’s discursive analysis of the truth games and epistemes that constrict and delimit what can be spoken and what can be thought. Power and knowledge, he insists, work together: “no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.”

In short, Foucault eventually moves away from investigations of conceptual systems towards detailed investigations of the ways in which epistemic knowledge works on subjects through micro practices of power and “self-care.” In an interview published as “The Ethic of the Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom,” Foucault insists that power is always present in all human relationships because power is inherent to our wishes to direct the behavior of others. These relationships of power, while asymmetrical, are always changeable, reversible and unstable. He thus avoids static reductions of lived practice to the binary logic of oppression and freedom. While a genealogical reading of the newly institutionalized focus on workplace spirituality as a Foucauldian moment in the epistemic sense coupled with empirical attention to the work of labor and the practices of consumption of bicycle enthusiasts as practices of self mastery and governmentality would be productive, I have made the strategic decision to philosophically engage the topic of the dissertation somewhat differently, though Foucault, in the end, reappears as a uniquely generative resource for engaging the discourse of spirituality in the workplace. My decision to work primarily with Michael Jackson, Mark Poster and even Jacques Derrida, to whom I briefly turn in chapter 4, is that they are all grapple explicitly with the continued

Guiding Questions for Religious Studies

This dissertation is propelled by questions of approach, method and a set of general quandaries and concerns. That the reader might more easily forgive a certain openness in my approach, I will here offer what I consider to be the pressing research questions that position the project within the central concerns of the study of religion. In the case of “workplace spirituality,” the traditional objects of our inquiry—religion, spirituality, mysticism, magic, the occult and the like—are now being defined, constructed and policed not by the Christian churches but, instead, businesses and business education centers. Like many in religious studies, I am loath to consider any of these as objects, whether metaphysical or scientific, with essential properties. Instead, my goal in this dissertation was to explore the interpenetrations of personal biography, ritual design, theological narrative and social-economic structures in the construction of ideas about and experiences of “spirituality” at STW. Through the practice of doing the ethnographic work as well as the secondary analysis and writing for the dissertation, a certain kind of methodology presented itself as particularly illustrative: *dialectical comparison of socially shared metaphors, whether those prevalent at the STW ritual roundtable or even more socially pervasive metaphors for spirituality and capital that are reproduced in the broader management world, on the one hand, and the lived metaphors deployed, off-hand, by persons at Landry’s and at STW, on the other hand.* What might such a comparison tell us about the ways in which the existential and the social recursively relate but are never reducible to one another? What might STW teach me about contemporary ways of understanding the gap between the discursive and the lived and the

relevance of Marxian philosophy and I am convinced that new interrogations of extant and possible relationships between religious practice, theology and social critiques performed as what Derrida calls a “spirit of Marxism” can be especially generative, ethically and politically, if neo-liberalism is increasingly less shy about displaying its own soul in public. For a discussion of neo-liberalism see Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart—The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

various kinds of roles “spirituality” might play at the gap and in shaping our desire to either respect the boundary or, in turn, to fully manage, control and elide it?

Related to these questions about how to ethnographically approach the social construction and the lived experience of “spirituality” in a way that respects both dimensions of the phenomena, is the issue of our moral valuation of religion. As Stanley Tambiah, Tomoko Masuzawa, Ronald Inden and others have argued, Western ideas about religion have often gone hand in hand with denigrations of various forms of magic associated with the supposed un-reason of non-Western peoples, women and the popular classes.⁶⁸ These oppositions tended to depend on hierarchies that established the superiority of reason over embodied forms of practice, formal thought over popular practice, discursive system over and against ritual and, so forth. In my view, “workplace spirituality” issues a kind of gauntlet for religious studies by making these pressing questions in the history of religions and the theoretical study of religion of pressing immediate political concern. Especially because of the fact that colleagues down the hall or across campus are analyzing and studying the uses of “spirituality” for economic life, the work of scholars of religion is of certain ideological interest in contemporary social contexts.

More specifically, the proverbial gauntlet is thrown down, in part, because the “workplace spirituality” stretches us, as students of religion, to avoid facile, *a-priori*, either/or determinations about the place of “spirituality” in contemporary society. We are taught by the history of the field about the grave dangers risked whenever we denigrate the practices of others, from afar, in order flatter our own sense of reality, truth, propriety and politics.

⁶⁸ See Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions--Or How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), Stanley Tambiah, *Magic, Science and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1990), Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1990).

And while we remember that within elite strands of Western discourse governing ideas of reason and convenient construals of an essentially ethical Christianity were once formally privileged over and against non-Western religions, ritual, magic and myth, we would err on the side of undue naiveté if we failed to consider the possibility that new public forms of Western power might very well celebrate what was once degraded. On the other hand, any attempt to avoid an uncritical romanticism concerning “workplace spirituality” does have its own pitfalls.

Marx's worry that the narratives of institutions, understood metaphorically as forms of “spirituality” and “theology,” provide *a-priori* justifications and overarching alibis for the hierarchies of capitalist bureaucracies is a central concern and consideration of the overall dissertation project. Given the anti-modern or holistic associations many Americans have with “spirituality” or related terms like “mysticism”⁶⁹, I was curious to encounter not simply discursive ideas about “spirituality,” which can often exert their own sanitizing force, but, rather, was very keen to engage “spirituality”'s practical significance, on the ground, in the lives of concrete human beings. Instead of focusing on the *essence* of spirituality at work, I choose to encounter, describe and highlight its role in the minute, biographically charged moments of practice that Sartre calls *transcendence*, the mundane surpassing of inherited limits. This is an interminable process, for Sartre, within history alienated by capitalist exchange. However, by way of this highly localized attention to exigencies, events and effects, I came to believe that Sartre is only half right when he argues that persons evaluate the social field, including their *praxis* within economic structures and institutions, solely based on the effects of the kind of transcendence--human surpassing of social conditions--

⁶⁹ For an excellent discussion of the power of romantic associations, especially those that harken to Eastern spirituality, in contemporary markets see Kimberly Lau, *New Age Capitalism--Making Money East of Eden* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2000).

that Sartre is comfortable with. Even in the seemingly mundane doings in the corner office, it would seem, dimensions of social life are experienced as extra-social. Time and again in my ethnographic work with the membership of STW, I was placed in situations not unlike the one I was in with Sheila. What was this “spirituality” that did not seem as self-evident to me as it did to others? And, I remember asking myself a great deal, is not the danger of well-intentioned “spiritual” struggle that it can deter from the important tasks of material struggle? Is “workplace spirituality” not just the kind of mystifying opium Marx worried about?

If this last view is too easy and lazy given its refusal to take other persons' meaning making and the lived textures of existence seriously, do I, as a scholar interested in what “spirituality” does for people in this late capitalist context, risk providing a cover and alibi for forms of neo-liberalism I am eager to critique, on political grounds? Indeed, I have found that the most thoughtful and potent kinds of political critique of neo-liberal spiritualities might precisely be those that foreground a multiplicity of moments, events and persons working out their ends on the ground. Such an approach reminds us that the ideal and the real--the theoretical and practical—are intimately related and forsakes neither precisely by refusing a collapse of perspectives. It is the discursive erasure in some of the management literature of immanence fully folded into transcendence--capitalism molded into spiritual destiny--rather than “religion” and “spirituality,” themselves, that I finally found worrisome. This worry is especially relevant when I came to consider the ways in which certain concepts borrowed from contemporary science are rendered theologically. And from some of the initial comments members of STW made to me, they, for their part, worried that I would perform the opposite kind of move and reduce their experiences of spirituality to some academic understanding they did not share. In working together, we sought a

middle ground.

Brief Chapter Outline

In chapter 1, I introduce STW and narrate my experiences at the group's ritual roundtable meetings. In this first chapter, I pay specific attention to cybernetic metaphors and metaphors that are used to theologize concepts from quantum, creativity and chaos theory during three roundtable meetings, each led by a different member organization. It is also in chapter 1 that I introduce George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's work on metaphor in order to understand STW's spiritual reform as one that attempts to metaphorically rewrite the narrative of capitalism through ritualizing strategies. During the three meetings I describe, biblical passages, Sufi poetry and Aboriginal Dreamtime, for example, are used to weave together new relationships between personal contexts, organizational life, management theory and cosmic time.

In Chapter 2, I introduce and discuss Michael Jackson's work on “thinking through the body,” especially his discussion of the therapeutic and synechdochic qualities of metaphor. I return to the deployment of dancing metaphors at STW roundtable meetings as a springboard for engaging the ethnographic work of Karin Lisa Goldschmidt-Salamon, a cultural ethnographer who writes about the reproduction of an ideology of globalism through the narratives and techniques of romantic management in Europe. I then consider the role of circular and semi-circular images and kinetic metaphors in the formal theology of STW. Exploring Tom Henry's deployment of circular and semi-circular metaphors, I examine the ways in which shared metaphors and narratives are lived out in irreducibly particular and biographically charged ways.

In chapter 3, I narrate some of my experiences working at Landry's Bicycles along with company mechanics and sales staff. I recall one experience with a Lucas, a Latino

worker at Landry's, that highlights the ways in which material things, in this case a bicycle, can serve as existential conduits between past and present. My interviews with Lucas and his co-worker Ryan forced me to consider the ways in which “spirituality” is a contingent term that we affix onto certain experiences and to consider the fact that management’s quandaries regarding “spirituality” in the workplace and those of its workers are not necessarily the same. I discuss an ethnographic misstep I took that reminded me that our social evaluations often depend on, at least in part, context: where we stand and where we have stood.

In chapter 4, I consider Max Weber’s popular metaphor of the “iron cage” for modern, rational bureaucracy within the context of a discussion of metaphors borrowed from the going scientific paradigms that were popularized across society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I argue that Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, the scientific management of the time and literary history speak to a socially diffuse fascination with the ideas, methods and forms of modern science and industry even as certain anti-modern impulses were also vital to the development of modern capitalism. If Weber argues that theological ideas were a necessary feature in the production of the “iron cage,” I turn to the “theology of institutions” published by STW and compare and contrast it to the work of two management theorists, Robert Greenleaf and Margaret Wheatley. In their key theological work, the group draws from these theorists, themselves key and leading figures in the management theory of the past decades. If Weber understood a certain Reformed theology to have helped shape society into an “iron cage,” I consider the ways STW’s theology, informed by contemporary management theory, literally *reforms* and *re-shapes* the metaphorical body of capital. I end with a discussion of how we might consider the lived deployment of socially diffuse metaphors as personalizations of what Michael Jackson calls “patterns of intersubjective experience.” Considerations of the relationship

between broad social histories, on the one hand, and personal histories, on the other hand, might be approached in this way. Briefly turning to the work of Jacques Derrida, I argue that this approach is politically salient given the tendency of many neo-liberal narratives to elide the gap between the real and the ideal, the temporal and the cosmic.

In the conclusion, I return to Jean-Paul Sartre's progressive-regressive method and methodological issues presented in the introduction. I provide a philosophical account of Sartre's method and, turning to the work of Mark Poster, consider the ways, in light of the preceding ethnography, I might amend and reconsider aspects of Sartre's approach for my purposes. Turning to Michael Jackson's ideas about the penumbral, I proffer an argument about the limits of language and the limits of existential control that might analogically bridge STW's concerns about "spirituality" with concerns about power, historicity and agency that are native to the study of religion. Religious studies' interests in monasticism, mysticism and spirituality can be compared to and contrasted to management's interest in these as forms of discipline. Such a move requires an admission on the part of religious studies and the professions, such as organizational management, that they share an epistemic context. Intersubjective conversations premised on what is shared and what is not shared hold out some promise for interdisciplinary dialogue. Tom Henry's brother, Peter, once suggested at a roundtable meeting of STW that the group's work had him thinking about "the possibilities of a new order." Although not all of our questions are the same, as a scholar of religion, I find myself interested in engaging with STW at these fault lines the way a moth is drawn to a flame.

Chapter 1: Seeing Things Whole

beingmeta

As I made my way through security and navigated my way up to the correct floor, I was enthralled by the bold and impressive display of global capital that seemed to become truly *one* with the office building. The thing-in-itself, the externalization of capital, one might think, offhand. There were laptops *everywhere* and everyone seemed to be plugged in, chatting and video conferencing. Everything about the building seemed slick, *clean* and minimalist, to my mind's eye much like an Apple computer. I was making my way to my first ever meeting of the Boston area STW roundtable. We were meeting at the Cambridge Innovation Center, a temporary office building for technology and life science boutiques in Kendall Square, next to the campus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The office complex's website extols the virtues of its "no long term commitment" product: fully stocked office space that helps "start up and emerging companies" to "hit the ground running."¹ As I walked into the seminar room in which the roundtable was being held, I remember thinking that my surroundings seemed to harken less to something identifiably "religious" and spoke more to the frenzied, fast, de-territorialized digitized landscape of late capitalist commerce. A good student of the academic study of religion, I caught myself, remembering that there are no essential phenomena one need call *religion*. My first mistake, however, was to assume that my *abstract* understanding that "religion" and "religious" are constructed terms and of no essential consequence would translate into an immediate *experience* of openness to an encounter with "spirits" in a high-tech conference room. So-called "religion," as commonly understood, was not even the first thing on my mind, as I walked into the meeting room

¹ Cambridge Innovation Center, accessed May 8, 2011, <http://www.cictr.com>.

where we were convening. I found it simply fascinating that the office rooms had city names printed on plain white paper and taped to the glass door windows, almost fully blocking the view from outside. One such room had a DELHI sign posted on the door and I could barely make out the South Asian men talking into headphone microphones hooked into gray computers. A microcosm for Thomas Friedman's cosmology of a flat world, I thought?² A nodal point wherein the global is expressed via the local and the far off can be right next-door by means of digital conduction? Was Theodor Adorno correct in his assessment, though he did not live to see these times, that ideology is increasingly diffuse and that, "it is, as it were, equally near the center in all of its pieces"?³ How would a twenty first century *Arcades Project* account for the re-mapping of urban geography through the interplay of physical and cyber space?⁴ Would we need to stress the ways in which complex social, structural and geo-political relations are reproduced as both limitations limiting movement and as opportunities for surpassing through the very lives of individuals who necessarily

² Recently, I ran into a large billboard in Manhattan's Chinatown with an advertisement for an iPad in which the gadget's screen was displaying Friedman's book, *The World is Hot, Flat and Crowded*. As such, I experienced it as a living metaphor in urban space and time for the curiously horizontal dimensions of globalism narratives since it is the case the latter often stress the ways in which distances in space, time and "culture" are mediated by the operations of one, interconnected market that allows geographically and temporally divergent points to digitally converge in the present moment.

³ Theodor Adorno, "Cultural Criticism and Society" in *Prisms*, ed. Thomas McCarthy et al. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), 31.

⁴ As such, today Walter Benjamin's flâneur would also surf the Internet and the embodiment of different kinds of space interests me. In this dissertation chapter, I consider collective and personal work with metaphor that occurs around a conference table. However, the existential imperative to personalize collective forms of narrative or to collectivize individual experience might bridge contexts to a certain degree. Studies of online communities can only supplement our understanding of contemporary communication. At Harvard Divinity School, I benefit from conversations with an up and coming generation of young student scholars that is primed to do this work from an ever stronger place of experience than someone like me, whose whole teen years were not spent online.

work with and deploy the grammar of ideology and work with its fantastic but often ill gotten instruments?⁵

As I took my seat at a rectangular table, I recognized some of the people already there. Tom Henry, the co-owner of Landry's got up from his seat and greeted me immediately with a smile, using his hands to gesture that I could take a seat with the group. He was there with a contingent from the store, most of whom I had gotten to know through my ethnographic work at Landry's' Natick store. There was a middle age man, a marketing consultant, sitting next to Tom that I did not know because it turns out that he works on days that I did not come into the store. David Specht, the man who runs the roundtable was standing at the front of the table attending to his PowerPoint hook up and smiled warmly in my direction. Margaret Benefiel, a well-known pioneer in the field of "workplace spirituality," writer on Quaker spirituality for the everyday and a professor at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary was making sure the coffee and eats at the back of the room were in order. Her husband, Ken H., would be presenting on his company, beingmeta. Ken

⁵ I have in mind, here, Donna Haraway's extremely influential *Cyborg Manifesto*. Haraway argues that biotechnology can be used to displace the very category of gender, thereby dislodging bodies from a heterosexist reproductive model and exploding gendered constructions of the family. Haraway rejects ideas of essential nature and argues that biotechnology can be used by feminists to wrest control not of nature (which is a construct) but of the humanist communication of nature as necessarily gendered discourse. In essence, she argues that late capitalism offers a window of opportunity for a radical re-inscription (that is, erasure) of gender and proceeds to plead her case for a feminist, bio-technical politic that seizes upon this opportunity. In the process, she makes certain conceptual-political moves that, from the perspective of a materialist analysis, are dangerous to poor women, women of color and, labor, generally and, as such, require further consideration and contextualization. Haraway maintains, "...there are...great riches for feminists in explicitly embracing the possibilities inherent in the breakdown of clean distinctions between organism and machine..." In her reverie, Haraway marshals sweat shop labor to the service of her new mythology in problematic ways. She writes, "These real-life cyborgs (for example, the Southeast Asian village women workers in Japanese and US electronic firms described by Alihwa Ong) are actively rewriting the texts of their bodies and societies. Survival is the stakes in this play of readings." We must ask: do these women consider themselves cyborgs and how do they, themselves, feel about their factory work? Do they themselves consider their bodies as the sites of struggle that matter most for Haraway? Donna Haraway, *The Cyborg Manifesto* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 174, 177.

Michael Jackson critiques Haraway on political grounds. Jackson argues that ideas about biopower are already, from the start, "imbricated with the new 'global capitalism'." Michael Jackson, *Existential Anthropology—Events, Exigencies and Effects* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 119-225.

H., according to everything I had already heard, was a computer software genius and was part of the smallest organization in the roundtable as it currently consists only of himself. “Smartest guy you can ever meet. If anyone can pull this off, he can” was the general sentiment about Ken H. that I had gathered from all my conversations in the previous weeks. Such conversations cloud one’s perceptions and help shape one’s experiences of others. Before having actually met Ken H., I thought I knew him to be a mad scientist type, perhaps too smart for his own good and cut from a different cloth than the dog eat dog, to anticipate a canine metaphor Tom Henry would one day deploy, business world where one must productize, identify (or set out to cultivate) needs and demand and cast one’s fate into the turbulent winds of the market.

Of course, just as any anthropologist reads up on the people and places he or she visits with and tries to acquaintance him or herself with the formalities of the lifeworld, its going mythologies for example, and talks to others in advance about their own experiences within that lifeworld, I had done my homework and had briefly looked into the history and work of STW and its membership prior to the meeting. However, an important caveat is necessary here. A recurring philosophical and ethical thread within this dissertation is the claim that reading *about* others, approaching them only in the abstract, and visiting *with* others must always be distinguished even if we are compelled by ethical living to do both. I relearned this lesson time and again during my participant-observation ethnographic work with the Boston roundtable. “Immanence” and “transcendence” in cultural critique--that is, the idea that we assess and engage the lifeworld from either the inside *or* from the outside—

is actually a false dichotomy.⁶ In a Sartrean sense, *transcendence*, whether the ethnographer's, the gardener's or that of the trash collector who is out on the morning run, can only occur within an intersubjective context where we move within worlds already made by others, remaking and being remade by those worlds in the process. I will read briefly from the outside, before returning to what happened within the meeting at the Cambridge Convention Center and note, in advance, that this question of how the inside of experience relates to the outside of experience is one of the strongest themes and a recurring current in the ritual life and formal texts of STW.

Founded in 1993 though indebted to a rich intertwining of much older organizational and personal histories which I will explore in subsequent chapters on the literature of the group and some of its leader's spiritual biographies, STW is, according to its mission statement, a "community of business leaders and scholars dedicated to exploring the intersection of spirituality, values and organizational life and performance...drawn by a vision of a world in which the performance of organizations is measured no longer on the basis of a single bottom line lines which."⁷ An offshoot of a now defunct research center, The Center for the Ministry of the Laity, at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, STW strives to cultivate relationships with educational institutions, especially seminaries. Currently, it has formal partnerships in place with Augsburg College's Center for Faith and Learning and the John A. Ryan Institute for Catholic Social Thought at the University of St. Thomas. In addition to lecturing and doing trainings at seminaries and business schools,

⁶ Adorno, "Cultural Criticism and Society," 31. In the conclusion, I consider the "value" of Adorno's position for a critical "spirituality" of late capitalism.

⁷ "Mission," Seeing Things Whole, accessed October 1, 2010, <http://www.seeingthingswhole.org/1003/who-we-are/mission>.

helping these shape curricula as consultants and, writing and publishing their own “theology of institutions,” STW also convenes roundtables in the Boston and Twin Cities greater metropolitan areas that meet several times a year. These roundtables are designed to “link” “leadership teams of organizations committed to the integration of moral deliberation, spiritual imagination, and organizational life.” Currently, the members of the Boston roundtable are Landry's Bicycles, the Xenon Corporation, beingmeta, Zoar Outdoor, The Society for Organizational Learning and Margaret Benefiel's consultancy group, Executive Soul. The members of the Twin Cities area roundtable include: Quality Bicycle, Reell Precision Manufacturing, World Servants, Hilleren and Associates and Integris. The typical member of these roundtables is a small to medium sized company that is not publicly traded. Landy's Bicycles, the organization I know best given my ethnographic work there, brings in about \$10 million dollars in revenue and operates four retail locations in the greater Boston area. Logistically, the meetings are more often than not held at the offices of the “host” organization, the group presenting an organizational quandary for purposes of shared reflection. Programmatically, “the host organization presents a real-time, unresolved challenge it is facing, and participants serve as temporary trustees who work for half a day with the hosts on this dilemma.”

I had a sense of all of this as David Specht convened the start of the meeting on this July day. He began by asking all the people present to go around the room, introduce themselves and their organizations and answer the question: “*What does summer mean to you in your life?*” Ken M., who is a manager at Landry's used a metaphor: “summer is like sprinting on a moving sidewalk, like at the airport.” At the time, I was too engrossed in what was immediately going on that I did not analytically reflect on this other than to star for myself-- in my field notes, *which I tried to scribble in, short hand, when no one was looking*—the fact that

metaphors are used to bridge experiences and bridge worlds. At this point, in light of the meeting as a whole, I find it interesting that Ken M. bridged nature and technology in this way because that relationship between nature and technology served as a leitmotif for the roundtable, generally, and the connection was ritually strung together during another part of the meeting, as I will discuss.

For his part, Tom said that summer was about attending to relationships with suppliers—that is, having to go visit with suppliers trying to sell to him. He said that being on the other side of the retail relationship, as a potential customer being pursued by sellers rather than his more familiar role of co-owner of a company pursuing customers, can be annoying. That is the part of his job he likes least, he insisted. Following Tom, David Specht answered his own question and told the group that he was spending the summer developing a curriculum for MBA students on moral deliberation and spiritual *centering* using the case method. He also talked about how much he looks forward to spending quality time during summers at the farm where he lives year round in Western Massachusetts with his wife but which he sometimes lacks the time to fully enjoy given the distractions of work.

After he told us a little bit about what he was working on during the summer, David called on us to commit to serving as “temporary trustees” for beingmeta, explaining that the “gift” “temporary trustees” can offer “host” organizations is “to not be immersed in operational life and to be in detached solidarity to help address with wisdom the challenges faced by a member organization with a unique perspective.” David then instructed us to “listen to the story” Ken was about to tell us and to listen “not just with our ears but with our hearts and spirit as if to a loved one you want to understand...with focused attention.” In addition to this, David stressed the fact that part of what it means to be a “temporary trustee” is to “adhere to a covenant of confidentiality.” As a participant-observer, I feel

especially bound by this agreement as the logic of reciprocity dictates that I must observe important ground rules established by my hosts as conditions for my participation. As such, both here and in my descriptions of other meetings, I will gloss over any business details that might begin to approach such confidential status. Luckily, what is most interesting to me given my trade has very little to do with the actual content of business strategy that must remain in the shadows before it is birthed to precarious life through the market.

Having exhorted us to, “be fed by people fed by deep streams themselves, with an attention to the world,” David explained that the work of STW reflects the “Three fold Model of Organizational Life” described in the booklet he was passing out to everyone: *identity* (gathered life, can sometimes include families of employees), *stewardship* (management, owners) and *purpose* (engagement with world including suppliers, competitors and customers) as concentric circles held together by tension and informed by one’s deepest values. David noted that one typical tension is that between ownership’s profit margin and the customer. Nevertheless, he added, the hierarchical pyramid where everything supports ownership is deliberately rejected, also adding that one foundational conviction of the group is that the products and services a member provides ought to be real goods. At the time, I remember thinking that the group was here topographically reproducing the outlines of a move that is often made in the contemporary “spiritual” organizational theory I had read at the time: the narrative substitution of a hierarchical, rigidly drawn modeling of relationships and connections with more dynamic and circular metaphors emphasizing creativity, loops, cooperation across specialties, constrained freedom and interpenetration. I quickly found myself contrasting the situation in which I found myself, where a theological framework underwrites a “reintegration” of what Weber referred to as traditional and legal-rational action and between so-called affective and rational action, to Weber’s original thesis that

Protestant theology facilitated the emergence of a bureaucratic separation of spheres and, so say some scholars, of “facts” and “values” to begin with. I will return to Weber and to these issues in chapter 4.

David explained that when things are working well, the tensions between identity, stewardship and purpose create “synergies,” a word one often comes across in contemporary management theory and contemporary cultural critiques of capital. One thing that has always struck me about the word for purposes of cultural criticism is this: If spirituality and capitalism are dynamically intertwined, do we risk ontologizing capitalism just as nineteenth century capitalists collapsed social Darwinism and destructive forms of industrial capitalism or certain tyrannical societies have married strongly undemocratic forms of socialism to the final purposes of History?⁸ These are issues I will take up in a sustained way in chapter 4 and in the conclusion. Shakespeare was wise to warn us of the possibility that, “With devotion's visage/And pious action we do sugar o'er/The devil himself.”⁹ I have found the leadership of STW to be thoughtfully and consciously aware of these kinds of dangers. In any event, my cautions about ontologizing capital are best considered at the side of Sartre's progressive-regressive dialectic, in light of the empirical situation. The logic and time of lived practice is necessarily messier than our conceptual boundaries can ever be.¹⁰ Because this is the case, questions of existence and of politics can never be collapsed.

⁸ Later in the dissertation, I consider this question more carefully as the issue of what social scientific study of “religion” and “spirituality” can and cannot claim for itself is related to immanently political questions about ending history.

⁹ Polonius speaks this line to Ophelia in Act 3 Scene 1 of Hamlet.

¹⁰ As the Jean-Paul Sartre of *Search for a Method and the Critique of Dialectical Reason* understood, philosophical anthropology can and ought to explore issues of both particular existence and structural-economic conditions. Following Marx, what we might choose to focus on as ethnographers are the ways in which we both make and are made by the world.

After David Specht had finished setting the stage, Ken H., introduced beingmeta. He explained at the time that he was the only full time employee and that the company had *one* customer, an academic publishing company. Ken H. explained that the name of the company is a play on words: Greek $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha$, English *Meta* and Buddhist *metta*, meaning loving kindness, and the company's work grew out of research he had done at MIT.¹¹ The company, founded in 2001, is, in fact, a spin off of the "Media Laboratory at MIT," where Ken H. served as an associate professor, having completed his Ph.D. in Artificial Intelligence Laboratory in computational models of scientific creativity, also at MIT, working with, among others, the famed historian of science, Thomas Kuhn.

Beingmeta, he explained, is blessed with a surfeit of technological research but has had trouble translating this research into product demand that would increase "revenue flow." One such "functionality" is *bricobase*, which he called a "kind of mind of the web," and is, he explained, a "*self-organizing* vehicle for disambiguating and connecting human meaning." Taking its focus to be "meaning" rather than "words" or, as he explained, "shadings and not just specific points," *bricobase*, Ken H. added, "connects concepts across language and context and can serve as the connective glue for worldwide learning." He proceeded to describe some of the educational uses and implementations he has in mind for the future. I

¹¹ According to the company website:

beingmeta brings human meaning to digital information, using semantic technologies in services and applications which enhance life, productivity, and sustainability. being $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha$ (from the greek for 'after' or 'beyond') captures the general patterns which emerge from particular knowledge. beingmeta's core technologies identify and apply the patterns of human meaning in computational systems. being meta (as in the English 'metadata') engages with "information about information" that abstracts, summarizes, or connects digital content or sources; beingmeta's products create and leverage meaningful metadata associated with online digital content. being mettā (the Buddhist virtue of 'lovingkindness') commits to an ethic of positive transformative engagement with all humankind, deploying technologies which can bridge space, time, culture, and language.

Ken Hasse, "Missions," beingmeta, accessed October 1, 2010, <http://www.beingmeta.com>.

have decided not to mention certain specifics here for reasons of promised confidentiality and will only focus on those aspects of what Ken H. discussed that I know to be publicly accessible on his personal web page.

Having established that the core issue he was presenting to group for shared reflection was how to simultaneously engage in cutting edge research and remain viable as a company, Ken H. explained that one thing he wanted to do was “reinvent the book as a ‘database storyteller’” which would serve as a “continuous companion with a computational element for added value.” He added that the technology he is working on “would allow for ‘autonomous content’ and for ‘integrated explanatory experiences’ by culling across connections.” The economic value is integrated into the process in that, “if something gets published, the publisher will get paid automatically by transaction.” Looking around the room, I think many of us were having a harder time than not following Ken H., a point that would be addressed by some of the “temporary trustees” later on in the meeting. Luckily, in hindsight, I have the luxury of now having at my disposal both beingmeta’s web site and a press release about what Ken H. has now come to call sBooks. According to the website these, “*deep texts* reinvent the *software of books* as semantically rich, socially embedded artifacts which combine knowledge bases, web portals, wikis, and traditional texts, connecting readers to networks of knowledge, resources, and individuals.”¹² The interests Ken H. expressed during the meeting in using computer technology to create semantic connections across different contexts and geographical distance, are reproduced there:

Readers of sBooks can see and share selected comments with their friends and colleagues through existing social networks like Facebook. beingmeta hopes that the opportunity for social interaction around texts will draw

¹² Ken Hasse, “Missions.”

readers to gather around the books they love and may even encourage some readers to take on texts which they wouldn't normally consider reading alone. There are so many important ideas and conversations which don't fit into the blogbite or the video clip. A technology like sBooks supports the exposure and exploration of these ideas by providing context, framing, and --- most importantly --- community."¹³

Moreover, in the press release, dated May 7, 2009, the concept of a “*self-organizing* vehicle for disambiguating and connecting human meaning” gains sharper clarity:

Instead of a traditional book's hierarchical index, an sBook contains a knowlet (a small knowledge base) which describes aspects of the real or imagined world that the book is about. This knowledge base is used to describe the content of the book and makes it easier to search, browse, or review. A book's knowlet also captures connections and variations among words and meanings, making search with a *knowlet* more natural and accurate than full text searches across the book's content.¹⁴

Before returning to the actual meeting, which after Ken H's description of what he is working on and a follow up question and answer period turned to the ritual meditation on images and sacred texts that I was most interested in coming in, I want to highlight two key elements of sBook's structure. First, there are analogies one can draw between the conversion of the traditional print book's index into diffuse, cross-linked social reading practices that can be outlined but not known with certitude in advance and the broad narrative of Globalization the aforementioned Thomas Friedman advances or Francis Fukuyama's work on “trust” and the de-Taylorization of American management. Whether at the level of one product, management philosophy or geo-politics, all speak of the breakdown of vertical hierarchy and the development of a horizontal plane of flexibility, creativity and ingenuity. Capitalist cosmology is mapped onto commodity fetishes, in other

¹³ “Sbooks: Reinventing the Software of the Book,” beingmeta, accessed May 7, 2009, <http://www.beingmeta.com/news/sBooks7May2009.html>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

words. Another key point is the idea that “meaning,” in practice, is as much about variation and new connections made in the moment as it is about the static, timeless definitions of words, as it were. Ken’s idea about the *shadings* of meaning, where blurry family resemblances between concepts can facilitate the creation of new semantic connections through human and linguistic *relationships*, has much to teach us about the ways in which epistemic shifts take place and “cultural narratives” change, I think. Power is a practical phenomenon and often exists in its most potent varieties and forms within what Michael Jackson refers to as the penumbral or, “the confusion, turbulence, openness, and instability that compose the ‘liquid history’ of the world.”¹⁵ Conceptually precise logics and instrumental techniques might be at once of great structural consequence just as they are not of conscious existential concern within the logic and time of practice, as Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, William James and Henri Lefebvre, among others, have noted in their own still yet philosophically distinct ways¹⁶ I will mark this point in **bold** for now because my reading of much of the contemporary management literature, including the texts that deploy terms like “spirituality,” “mysticism” and “soul,” is that they are often concerned with renegotiating and restructuring

¹⁵ Michael Jackson, *The Palm at the End of the Mind—Relatedness, Religiosity and the Real* (Raleigh Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 13.

¹⁶ For example, Henri Lefebvre argues that leisure is an attempt to escape the everyday when, in fact, it is part and parcel of capitalist organization. The worker at play sees leisure as a “sharp break” from everyday work when, sociologically speaking, it is not. Mystery and metaphysics return in this experience of a non-alienated space that can escape work. Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life* (New York: Verso, 2008).

For his part, William James emphasizes intransitivity and the ways in which our fields of vision are overridden by a “more” that exceeds it. William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

Famously, in *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault argues that, in the future, the face of man might be washed away, like sand on an ocean beach. What he means by this is that individual agency is itself the achievement of a social grammar that eludes consciousness. The “middle region” of archeological analysis focuses on the coherences and resemblances that ground historical epistemes. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Random House, 1994), xxi-xxii.

conceptual relationships between scientific method and the unknown. I will return to these issues in a sustained way towards the end of the dissertation.

After Ken H. had finished describing his company's background and predicament, which had to do with financial viability despite scientific merit and success, members at the roundtable, beingmeta's "temporary trustees," were given the opportunity to focus on what David Specht called "the organizational story." Several people asked about the product and services, demanding clarity about what it was that Ken H. "did" and how it can be made appealing on the market. Ken H. was responsive to the suggestions although he took the opportunity to clarify to both the friends and strangers present that he is clearly more at home working on the development of technologies than he is working at the "business end" of things. I resonated with Ken's own self-description as a researcher whose questions about profitability are secondary. Even within the study of religion, when I mention that my dissertation topic has to do with the practices and discourses of "workplace spirituality," I am often asked whether or not I plan to teach business ethics at a business school not how these studies speak to my larger concerns about cultural criticism, what we mean by religion, history and society, the existential and discursive intersections of religious and economic life or how I might introduce a sharpened focus on race, gender and geopolitics in later projects. By necessity, academics are pressed to consider the value of our labor on the market.

Michael Jackson writes,

(The) bestowal of consensus implies, therefore, a *social* evaluation of the work, and reflects class interests, shared aesthetic values, a political sense of community, rather than some neutral, dispassionate, objective method of verification. As such, every piece of scientific knowledge, every innovation in medical technology, every paradigm in anthropology wins acceptance and gains currency in part because it is informed by a metanarrative—a hidden

story which is, in effect, the story the group which the group who bestows this acceptance wants to hear about itself.¹⁷

Of course, the value of one's labor in an economic sense—its ability to help one meet existential needs and social obligations—is wrapped up in this *social evaluation*, which is precisely why it becomes so difficult to neatly ascribe causality either to individual intention or the “force” of a prevailing “culture,” for lack of a better term for now, within economic spaces and institutions when destructive and seemingly endemic malfeasance comes to light. As I will detail in the next chapter, connected to its development of a concrete ethics for doing business, STW's published theology takes this dynamic between the individual and the social and the relationships between “interiority” and “exteriority” that are at stake in this dynamic for its “theology of institutions” as one of its central themes. For the group, the traditional modernist view that economic life is dead and lifeless, despite all appearances, is *the problem* and finding ways to argue that institutions possess a *spirituality* despite sociological and legal reductions is of primary ethical and theological interest. For for the first several months of my ethnographic work with STW, I experienced cognitive and experiential displacement because I could not see the spirits.

During the question and answer, Tom Henry made an observation and a suggestion that is perhaps as fitting a reminder as any that not everything can be properly digested and converted into immediate “cash value.”¹⁸ There is always a remainder and, oftentimes, these disjunctures are considered a *waste—as in a useless waste of time*--by our various and sundry

¹⁷ Michael Jackson, “Introduction,” in *Things as They Are. New Directions in Phenomenological Anthropology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 40.

¹⁸ The argument Marc Shell advances in *Money, Language and Thought – Literary and Philosophical Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) would urge us to consider the ways in which such a term is not innocent but, instead, speaks to the ways in which the logic of money structures thought.

analytical methods and models. Tom asked: “what’s your core competency and have you really identified a revenue stream?” Ken H. responded with a somewhat overwhelmed, flustered look on his face. Still, Ken identified beingmeta’s “core competency” in the following way: “creating applications that use concept semantics to connect people and applications. To organize custom Table of Contents. To help with the creation of basic K-12 curricula for the world.” Still unconvinced that Ken H. had touched ground, Tom said: “you don’t have to go *clean toilets* but maybe you have to in some sense get down.” What was immediately striking to me was that during my first ever face-to-face meeting with Tom, prior to reaching our working agreement for my ethnography and months before this meeting of the STW roundtable, had mentioned to me over coffee at the Starbuck’s near Landry’s that he had cared for the sick at Massachusetts General Hospital as part of his clinical internship as a Masters of Divinity student at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary in the 1980s and that this experience was like “*loving the asshole of God.*” I would find out later, from Tom himself and from Dick Broholm, the founder and spiritual father of the group, that Tom also cleaned toilets when he worked as a church sexton, an experience that he claims was particularly formative as he began to develop his interest in the--for him very vexed--relationships between religion, spirituality, business and service and taught him by way of experience what it is like to be mistreated by an organization. For the purposes of the present discussion, what matters is that Tom Henry’s personal, idiosyncratic penchant for using scatological and bathroom metaphors were nowhere replicated in the formal ritual that would follow nor would I ever encounter these aspects of bodily reality conceptually thematized or formally indexed at any meeting of the roundtable. Even if social bodies get

re-imagined, something STW certainly does, certain bodily functions are still marginalized and restructured elsewhere, something that is not of small political consequence, in the end.¹⁹

When it was time to enter into the next phase of the meeting, David Specht turned off the lights and turned on the projector, explaining that what was to follow was “designed to help (participants) get caught in a stream and to be disassociated.” David explained that in the past, the group has used “theological texts from quantum science, ethical humanism, the Abrahamic faiths, Buddhism, Native American spirituality and Christian Science.” He then passed around a sheet of paper titled “THREE PARABLES AND A KOAN—From the Christian Gospel according to Matthew and Sufi Mystic Mulia Nasruddin” and an egg shaped picture of a golden field of wheat stamped underneath. The rest of the page contained four passages, three periscopes from Matthew and a Sufi “Koan,” the latter term belonging more to the world of Zen Buddhism rather than mystical Islam and denoting a genre of sayings that are more accessible to intuitive rather than rational wisdom.²⁰ Both the mystic and the Koan as a specific genre of writing would warrant some investigation as I later began to think of ways to mediate the ethnographic worlds of my participant-observation research and interviews with the narratives, interests and concerns of, among others, scholars of religion and historians of religion.

The sheet David passed out had the following written on it:

¹⁹ Georges Bataille's idea in the *Accursed Share* that bodies resist full commodification through the operations of exchange value due to an inherent excess (waste) is exceedingly important though it must be now explored in the context of “youth culture,” which tends to disavow its disavowals of excess according to ecstatic, “anti-establishmentarian” constructions of consumer subjectivity. For example See The Microsoft commercial cited in footnote 32 of this chapter about the “surfing CEO” who can negotiate and navigate tsunamis because of his use of technology. Keen on music metaphor, Cornel West often refers to this unsanitized excess as the funk of the daily struggles of everyday people.

²⁰ I would later look into Mulia Nassrudin, a thirteenth century satirical Turkish Sufi.

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid...Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls...On finding one pearl of great value, she went and sold all that she had and bought it.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind...when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good fish into baskets, but threw out the bad.

Once, a man found Mulie Nasruddin searching for something on the ground outside his house. On being asked, Nasruddin replied that he was looking for his key. The man also joined in the search and in due course asked Mulia: "Where exactly did you drop it?"

Mulia answered, "In my house."

"Then why are you looking here?" the man asked. "There is more light here than in my house," replied Mulia.

As we read and reflected on the words written on the page, instrumental "nature" music of the kind one hears at New Age shops played and images of country roads, fields and a red barn flashed in and out of the PowerPoint presentation on the screen. As the music played and the images were projected onto the screen, I looked around to see what the others were doing. Most of the people gathered around the table had their eyes closed. Eyes clenched shut, Margaret had a warm, placid smile on her face and Tom, also eyes shut, had a committed, concentrated but somewhat confounded look on his face, the kind one seems to get before one has some sort of a breakthrough or experiences an a-ha moment. Over time, I came to understand that these pervasive gestures and techniques of the body are an important part of spiritual experience at STW.

When the lights came back on, David explained that we were to focus our response to the texts and the images in their own right and that there would be time, afterwards, to

make the different stories, the organizational story and the stories emerging from the texts, images and music, to speak to each another and, thus, to *reframe* the organizational quandary and see it a new light. Tom Henry was the first participant to talk. He said that the texts and the images made him think about “confusion” and “searching for something in the wrong place.” He added, “it makes me think of my son. That’s why it resonates. It’s also the disjuncture there is in theater.” Tom, who was an accomplished actor before he went to seminary and, later, into business, would come back to these general themes, his family and the way theater has shaped his perspectives, time and again during our interviews. Karen, who works for Zoar Outdoor, an outdoor adventure company, said that she was reminded to “*trust* and go for it.” Pat, who is one of Tom’s managers, explained that the various media made him wonder about, “what differentiates good from bad.” David told the group that the experience reminded him of the “anxiety of all or nothing,” especially in the Matthew passage about selling everything to follow Christ. Although I could not have known this at the time, this concern has deep biographical resonances. In his youth, David Specht distrusted American society to such a degree that he moved to Latin America to live among the politically disenfranchised and the poor and has now come to reject the dichotomous thinking that he says, at least partly, brought him there at the time. After David spoke, Ken H. finally added: “I wondered, did he really have to buy the whole field to find treasure?”

At this point in the meeting, David gave us the task of *reframing* the stakes of the organizational story in light of our experiences with the texts, images and sounds we had just read, seen and heard and, according to one of the “Nine Strategic Lenses for Seeing Things Whole”: Celebrating, Hosting and Modeling within IDENTITY; Teaching, Critiquing and Envisioning within PURPOSE; Building, Governing and Managing within

STEWARDSHIP.²¹ The “Three Fold Model for Organizational Life” handbook puts it this way:

The purpose of developing strategic reforms of an organizational challenge is to offer the organization an opportunity to regard its challenge from a variety of new angles through which fresh perspective on the challenge may be gained. Using the “*How to...*” format of the organizational challenge statement, use the space below to create several draft reframes based on one or more of the *strategic lenses* on the previous page.²²

How to..., I began writing yet could hardly continue. I found it difficult to successfully accomplish this task because what we were doing struck me, for the first time, as truly *strange*, as if my experiences and thoughts and the groups’ could not be bridged. On a conscious level, the main reason for this cognitive dissonance and discomfort had to do with the fact that at this point in the roundtable meeting the “spirit” was supposed to work through us. Off the top of my head, there was at least one basic biographical reason for my discomfort here that had nothing to do with STW. I am simply quite often made uneasy by friendly communal prayer, having grown up Roman Catholic and having grown very used to sitting in the back pews, out of sight and left alone by others, my awareness and experience untouched by a sensuous encounter with “spirit” (which is not to say that the longing for this kind of experience has not also sometimes been present when I have worshiped with other Christians). Implicitly, in this disavowal and longing, I seem to assume that Christians worshiping at church have access to some authentic experience of what gets called “spirituality.” Where my academic training broke down (though it was experientially rebuilt by way of the ethnography, I believe) a few times during the roundtable meetings, however,

²¹ “The Three-Fold Model of Individual Life,” Seeing Things Whole, accessed October 2, 2010, http://www.seeingthingswhole.org/PDF/STW_ThreeFoldModel_Individual.pdf.

²² Ibid.

is that I experienced an unexpected and admittedly humbling bias that prevented me from giving these generous, obviously sincere people the benefit of the doubt that there was indeed “spirit” there among them, even if I could not experience it. I thought to myself, they are, for sure, doing theologically inflected business ethics, yes, but *spiritual experience*, that seems to be of a different order, no?

Intellectually, I firmly believe that Western “religious” categories like “spirit” are contingencies laden with power and historical abuses and that phenomena that take place at, say, a soup kitchen, such as the situation at God’s Love We Deliver Courtney Bender describes in her brilliant ethnography, can be felt and understood by participants to be no more or less “religious” or “spiritual” than participation in a church worship service. In *practice*, however, I had trouble seeing the “spiritual” within the business, something that would change during the course of my ethnographic work, especially through my relationships with Tom Henry and Dick Broholm and my encounter with the theologies with which STW defines its mission. A theme I narrate throughout the breadth of the dissertation, I eventually learned to speak with my hosts about “spirit” and found ways to *relate* my own experiences to their experiences of doing “business.”

For now, though, I let my personal alienation from the group stand, as something to underline and consider later, and resumed my role as careful listener. Perhaps not surprisingly, Tom Henry’s comments proved the most memorable during this last section of the roundtable, when the organizational story told by the host is reframed in nine different ways in light of the group’s experiences with the texts, images and sounds that had come before. Tom said that he could relate to the idea that the treasure and the pearl have to be somewhat hidden to be valuable on the market. He explained that there is a company that makes a certain bicycle cable and that the treasure is circumscribed by the company’s

infrastructure—its office buildings and manufacturing plants. Apparently there is a field and a box shaped plant in the center of the field where the cable is actually made. He explained: “very few people are allowed to go into the center where the cable is made. It is hidden for competitive reasons.” What Tom was getting at, he continued, was that this particular company is highly successful and with its profits engages in important philanthropic work. “How will you fuel your economy?” he asked, looking at Ken H. In other words, what Tom seemed to most want Ken H. to consider, at the end of the day, was the fact that in order to be viable in business one must locate and maintain the proverbial “revenue stream” to feed and sustain the operations and aspirations of the company. One common thread in my work getting to know Tom Henry and David Specht, in particular, has been that after tortuous careers variably at odds with financial institutions and cooperating with business in a spirit of reform, they both have come to respect the logic of profit and consider the uses of money many. And yet, even if one respects the *powers*, to borrow a term from one of the group’s favorite theologians, Walter Wink, and promises to be a good “steward,” there is no guarantee that life will not be turbulent, chaotic and even seemingly a-social. At the end of the meeting the representatives of the companies at the roundtable are asked to say something about how their own companies are doing. Speaking of *Landry’s*, Tom explained, “There are negative and positive trends. I mean there are negative trends positively impacting us but also strange patterns and the positive impacts are hiding the negative trends in the economy. I am concerned. Very concerned. I am not sure what economy out there we will inherit.”

Xenon

The idea of hidden space and invisible energies took on especially “magical” qualities at the roundtable led by Xenon, a manufacturer of the light used in Blu-Ray technologies

that at the time was thinking of expanding its Research and Design unit. The meeting began with David Specht telling the members of the roundtable gathered at the offices of the host company in Andover, Massachusetts, that he likes to, “think of this as a diaspora.” He urged us to consider the roundtables a “community of communities.” Just as he would do at meetings that took place at other times of the year, David began by asking us to reflect upon the season. “What’s been your experience with time this summer?” David asked, adding, “summer being set apart and sacred time.” Lou, who was the day’s host, was the first to answer. He told the group that he was a devotee of “practical philosophy” and that he had just returned from a retreat with his group that had given him “a better sense of physical, material and spiritual health.” Lou explained that he had gained a new found appreciation for the biblical verse “when two or more gather in my name” and, with that, thanked the group for coming. Tom Henry told the group that the highlights of the summer for him were the meals he had with friends in Maryland. He explained that he reconnected with his “roots in Baltimore,” explaining that these roots had to do with his days as a gymnast and as an actor. Very evocatively, Tom added that, “skin remembers places...I could tactically feel again that nothing could stop this feeling.” When I asked Tom about what he meant, after the meeting, Tom explained that while in Maryland he had viscerally felt the claims of his youth, when everything still seemed possible. Yet, if Maryland appealed to the sensuous memory of earlier days, Tom’s description of what he enjoys to do during the summer these days was equally palpable. He explained that every summer he looks forward to harvesting the fruit of what his family has planted in the garden and discussing recipes with his wife and teenage son and daughter.

For his part, Pat explained that he was trying to “lower stress” and “changing how I grew up in the company...a new image.” He somewhat nervously turned to Tom, who was

sitting next to him on his left, as if for reassurance. Tom was looking down at the table, smiling approvingly. Tom had once mentioned to me in passing that he had invested a lot of time and energy in Pat, helping him through some issues he was having, and that it had been his own “holistic commitments” that had compelled him to do so. Whether or not Pat was on some, most likely not conscious, level connecting Tom’s different roles as cultivator of tomatoes and virtue I cannot know but the timing pops out on the page in my notes. In any event, my momentary temptation to connect dots here reminds me of own past days as a student of comparative literature, where readings took us far beyond the possible intentions of the authors we read and associative thinking went wild, our risky creativity affirmed and valued by our teachers. In this case, not having full transcripts of the meeting at my disposal, unlike what I was able to compile from the formal interviews, I am loath to do more than wonder. What is it about finding patterns and seeking connections that feels so concretely human? Why do we so often want to turn ellipses and jagged edges into straight lines, boxes and circles?

Ed, who is now the executive director of STW, told the group that he and his wife have a cabin in Maine, in a rural and poor part of the state, though they hardly ever get a chance to spend too much time there. This summer, he explained, they have been able to get to the cabin more consistently. He told the group that he thought that the quality of life is higher in rural town in Maine where the cabin is than it is in Boston. Even though the former is “materially poorer,” there are advantages to being there: “the roads are so different, there is so much traffic here, there one can breath.” Finally, Ed mentioned that he and his wife had gone down to New Orleans this summer with a church group on a volunteer rebuilding trip and that he had enjoyed himself.

Margaret spoke of finishing her book and having it go to the publisher for printing. She said that she was on a Quaker tour and was able to stay in the home of Margaret Fell, a personal inspiration, while proofing the text for the book and writing her acknowledgments. At the time, she explained, she spent time reflecting on the “African word *Ubuntu*, which means that a person is a person because of other people.” Ken H., Margaret’s husband, told the group that there was “no real new organizational news” but that he was “feeling God with God’s hands lifting (him) up.”

Finally, David Specht explained to the group that he was able to spend more quality time with his family at his farm, “wandering, raspberry picking, mowing the field.” He told the group that he was working on, “belonging to a place again, settled in a place where I often feel like a visitor given my schedule.” With this, David began the second stage of the roundtable meeting, reiterating the trustee model and asking the group to “pay attention to your intuitions.” How is it that you know things?” For now, the lights remained on.

Lou stood up and walked over to the computer and projector and started the PowerPoint presentation. The introduction screen came up and Lou introduced the company for the benefit of newcomers to the roundtable. He explained that Xenon is in the “light business,” “pulse light over continuous” to be more exact. If the sun was a source of “continuous light,” a laser is an example of “pulse light,” he added, because it lasts for a short duration of time and temporarily provides intense bursts of energy. We also learned that the company was founded in 1964 and the company motto is “bringing new technology to light.” Currently, Xenon’s biggest market is in Blu-Ray technologies, which utilize the light the company has developed in the curing of video and data discs. However, reminiscent of Tom Henry’s reminder at the end of the previous roundtable that positive impacts can mask negative trends in the economy, Lou explained that although the past fiscal year had been

Xenon's best yet, he was concerned not just because "mercury light" was an able and worthy competitor but because just as the DVD market was dying, pushed out by Blu-Ray, so too one day will Blu-Ray's day in the sun be over. As such, Lou explained that it was imperative that Xenon identify new markets because "too much of our profit is from Blu-Ray."

Lou identified the organizational quandary he wanted to lift up for counsel in this way: If Xenon is to succeed at opening new markets, this would mean "opening an R&D division *across the river*" because "others will come in first and claim the market." In order to broaden the demand for its products and services, Xenon needs to take some Tier II and III products and markets and take them into the core of the company's production." In order to accomplish this, Lou said, he needs "a brain surgeon" at the helm of operations. Speed and risk taking are essential when one is shooting in the dark for markets and "the longer you take to do the data, the less *flexible* you are." Lou identified two markets Xenon was hoping to *expand*, both of which at the time of the meeting were confidential but are now announced and discussed on the company website: 1) Solar energy or "Green" technologies; while it is certainly true that the sun is the example par excellence of "continuous light," the testing of the solar panels themselves requires pulse light; 2) Pulse light treatment of mushrooms, which increases their Vitamin D content.²³

Currently, Xenon's operations are run by someone who is more risk averse, a proceduralist and, as such, more of a "heart surgeon." He does not like to make promises he is not sure he can keep and likes to "be in control," qualities Lou thinks are still extremely attractive for daily operations. Yet, Lou explained to the group that while he values what this

²³ "Food Safety and Enhancement," Xenon Corp., accessed May 10, 2011, http://www.xenoncorp.com/food_enhancement.html.

manager does tremendously and respects the important contributions he makes to the company, the company is hoping to find a way to operationally combine “heart and brain surgery,” especially if Xenon is to open an R&D unit. I like to think of R&D units as corporate “sand boxes” wherein industrial researchers are entrusted with the task of experimentation and creation, out of plain sight and with copious resources at their disposal. How to sell the need for an R&D unit on an interpersonal and human level was what was on Lou’s mind on this day. Above all, he said he was afraid to lose the “heart surgeon” to retirement or to recruitment by another company if the organizational transition to a heightened research focus is not artfully done.

As Lou finished his presentation of the “organizational story” and David Specht took over, I remember wondering whether or not Lou had connected, for himself, the relationship between “continuous” and “pulse” light, on the one hand, and the two different management styles he had contrasted, the so-called “heart” and “brain” surgery approaches to operations. If “continuous light” is steady and routine, like the rising sun and the slow burn of daytime, “pulse” light is powerful and short term, like a “bolt of inspiration” or a “bright idea” one has all of a sudden. As I was thinking this, the lights were turned off and images of the moon, a sunset, fields and harvest flashed across the video screen. David asked us in a soft voice to “connect through the **metaphors** and don’t set boundaries first” and passed around a sheet of paper on which were printed the “sacred” stories we were to reflect on. The handout was entitled “**Three Poets and a Physicist**” and was double-sided. On the front page there was an image of green leaves on a tree that were just beginning to decay, captured in a small box on the right page, and, on the left side of the page, was printed a rather long poem by Mary Oliver:

The Journey, by Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you kept shouting
their bad advice—
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
“Mend my life!”
each voice cried.
But you didn’t stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the streets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do—
determined to save
the only life you could save.

On the back page, was written:

don't establish the
boundaries
first,
the squares, triangles,
boxes
of preconceived
possibility,

and then
pour
life into them, trimming
off left-over edges,
ending potential:

A.R. Ammons

...But follow me,
for now it pleases me to go.

The patterns of the stars are quivering
near the horizon now,

the north wind's picking up, and farther on
there is the cliff's edge we must reach
to start down from.

Dante

“To live in an evolutionary spirit means to engage with full ambition and
without any reserve in the structure of the present, and yet to let go and flow
into a new structure when the right time has come.

Physicist Erich Jantsch

When the lights came back on, Tom Henry stated the group off. “I was struck by
Mary Oliver and being a victim of complexities, chaos, damage and also the sense of
calling...the deeper into yourself you go the closer you are to the world.” Tom continued, “I
thought of the market as shedding light, I thought of Oliver and how the market is brutal,
(how it) absorbs everything you do and all is co-opted.” He ended on a positive note, telling
Lou that the world is “holding its breath for solar energy” and that, as such, Xenon’s work
gives him reason to hope. Peter Henry, Tom’s older brother and co-owner, along with his
wife Jeanne, of Landry’s, and, interestingly, someone Tom would later describe in interviews
as “left brain” in contrast to his own “right brain” personality, added that he found himself
thinking about “the possibility of a new order.”

Rather poignantly, Lou talked about how he thought his “fear of
abandonment,” in this case abandonment by his trusted manager, had to do
with the fact that his mother had died when he was young. On the one hand,
said Lou, he was “worried about losing my employee” and, on the other

hand, he realized that in business “you have to innovate or die.” Tom followed up Lou’s comments with what I found to be a rather elusive comment. Tom said, “We all feel a motion to the edge...the world is moving and the crisis is here. I am wondering, Lou, maybe that’s what happens...that guy becomes a part of your own voice.” What strikes me now, able to review and narrate my notes in conjunction with the theoretical materials I have reviewed, is that Lou and Tom are both alluding to the language and logic of *sacrifice* in some way. In Lou’s case, the whole idea of an R&D unit is premised on the promise wild, spontaneous creativity, energies literally cultivated “across the river” and away from the more publicly visible corporate offices and, might hold for the world of rational operations represented by his trusted and dutiful “heart surgeon.” In other words, order has to be sacrificed to chaos, Tom Henry’s “motion to the edge,” for the sake of better order.²⁴

Tom, I am fairly certain not in a fully conscious way, wonders if the “heart surgeon” might come to actually exist within Lou’s voice, as if the moment of crisis implies the dialectical incorporation of order into disorder for the sake of a better order. I am not altogether convinced it is too great a leap to think about the positional similarities that might exist between the “bush” in the life of the Kuranko people with whom Michael Jackson has worked in Sierra Leon and the “cybernetic” place occupied by R&D units in late capitalist societies. Of the Kuranko, Jackson writes,

In all Kuranko narratives it is axiomatic that viability of the social system (the village) depends on infusing social positions with qualities such as magnanimity and intelligence whose distribution and appearance are contingent, which is to say ‘wild’. In cybernetic terms, the social system defined as a domain of nonnegotiable roles, fixed rules, given practices, ancestral values, and received wisdom—tends towards entropy. To counteract this continual drain of energy from the system, the descent into inertia, people must bring life to the village from outside it—symbolically from the bush. Obviously, this involves making farms, growing crops, hunting game,

²⁴ David Carrasco describes the ways in which Aztec human sacrifice was premised on an ontology of order. Human sacrifice renewed Aztec society at cosmic levels. Tensions between center and periphery contributed to greater human sacrifice at the great Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan. David Carrasco, *City of Sacrifice: Violence From the Aztec Empire to the Modern Americas* (New York: Beacon Press, 2000).

In our own society, energies from the periphery might be brought into the center and therein reworked through ritualized modes of consumption. Marxist analysis is indispensable because it tracks and marks structural forms of violence.

marketing and exchanging produce. But it also involves ritual and conceptual strategies that tap into “wild” and unbounded powers of the bush. In other words, the ancestral order of things cannot perpetuate itself through inertia or mandate; it must actively draw on the very energies and forces that are potentially inimical to it—the craft and the intelligence of the young, the powers of the djinn, the resources of strangers, and the reproductive power of women.²⁵

R&D units too, Lou had explained, are often kept apart from operations precisely because they are two separate but necessary dimensions of a thriving business and what R&D does might unnerve folk used to more predictable rhythms in their daily work lives. If Lou’s “heart surgeon” is risk averse and this enables him to maintain corporate operations running smoothly, such reticence to go beyond routine works against the creation of productive “synergies” that are extolled by the contemporary capitalist organizational philosophies. The fast and free experimenting done in R&D units adds new energy, provides new opportunities for and sustains the stolid day to day operations through infusions of “creativity” that can open up new markets. For at least this reason, it is no wonder this activity is often discussed in “spiritualist” terms in the literature. However, as in the case of the Kuranko, or any human society for that matter, antinomian energies must eventually be controlled once they are brought back into continuous contact with “polite” society. Indeed, a point to which I will return in chapter 4, one key dimension of contemporary capitalism, which has, among other things, brought us “phantom money” and the baneful practice of “shadow banking,” is that it seems to have embarked on a self-reflexive pilgrimage into existential hinterlands in search of “knowledge” and “value.” Judith Neal, who runs a center on spirituality in the workplace at the University of Arkansas's business school, argues that

²⁵ Michael Jackson, *Minima Ethnographica – Intersubjectivity and the Anthropological Project* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 62.

spiritual reformers in organizations are *edgewalkers* who, like shamans, walk between worlds and “visit the invisible world.”²⁶ When Neal writes that, “without a shaman, the tribe would be at the mercy of the unseen gods and spirits, the vagaries of the cosmos,” her argument for organizational theory is that institutions also need edgewalkers who can “get guidance from the invisible world.”²⁷ For Neal and many other citizens of spiritual capitalism, the corporate world is cybernetic and alive with hidden spirits and invisible forces. It is precisely not dead, inert and mechanical.

When it was time to reframe the organizational story according to the nine “strategic lenses,” Margaret Benefiel, who was assigned “celebrating,” an aspect of the IDENTITY dimension of the *Three-Fold-Model*, reframed the quandary this way: “How to name and celebrate the great place you are in now and the talented engineers who got you here while at the same time acknowledging the challenge ahead and the truth of fear as you meet the challenge?” She continued, “you need to be able to tell stories in celebrating teams/people including talking about failures.” David Specht, whose strategic lens was “hosting,” reframed Lou’s situation this way: “how to let people know what a great thing they are a part of while promoting the initiative to be creative?”

Once the conversation turned more free form, Peter Henry observed that, “we always hear that we have to change to stay *afloat*.” Pat confessed to the group that when Lou was describing his “heart surgeon” he kept thinking to himself: “this guy used to be me because I didn’t like rapid change. I liked things just so.” In fact, over the years Tom has mentioned to me that one of the areas on which he has worked with Pat as a mentor is

²⁶ Judi Neal, *Edgewalkers—People and Organizations That Take Risks, Build Bridges, and Break New Ground* (Westport, CT, Praeger Press, 2006), 2.

²⁷ Ibid.

precisely on this issue of striving to become more flexible and multidimensional in his management style. For his part, Ken M., also a manager at Landry's, told the group that he thinks Lou's dilemma speaks of the need to "make marketing speak in engineering language" and to be able to talk about "constraints" as a part of the company "culture." He added that "St. Paul's example of a body having different gifts" is a good resource for "thinking about the differences between quality control and *brainstorming* types."

At the end of the meeting, Tom Henry spoke a second time and brought the group back to the reading from Dante. He said, "Like in Dante's *Inferno*, we must learn to talk about the process towards the love object. You need process for evolving and you must go towards the thing that would destroy you. You must map your process. This is the tension between innovation and quality." He added, "We have a perverse tendency to want to negotiate what is real." What I took Tom to mean is that operations, in the sense of quality control, might seem to be the most *real* process there is in business to some managers because it deals with manipulating things that are already there in front of you but innovation and descent into a process of discovery is just as real and just as important for long-term financial viability. The dialectic between the ideal and material is, for Tom, unresolvable, something about which we spoke much about during our lunchtime interviews.

The Society for Organizational Learning

The Society for Organizational Learning joined the Roundtable in 2010 and, along with Margaret Benefiel's group, Executive Soul, is one of the newest members of the Boston group. Sherry Immediato, its managing director, led the last roundtable that I would attend directly pursuant to my dissertation research. Founded in 1997 by the organizational theorist, Peter Senge, to continue the work and research undertaken at MIT's Center for

Organizational Learning, SoL, an acronym that Sherry explained is intended to evoke both the Sun and the Soul, is committed “to the interdependent development of people and their institutions in service of inspired performance and meaningful results.”²⁸ As “a not-for-profit, member-governed corporation,” SoL hopes to serve “as a space in which individuals and institutions can create together that which they cannot create alone.” It generates around \$3,000,000 USD in business a year, running workshops, holding conferences on its management paradigm, publishing written and video materials for purchase and, doing consultancy work for organizations. Given the connection to MIT, it seemed appropriate that the roundtable meeting was held at the Charles Hotel, in nearby Harvard Square.

Also appropriate given the theoretical directions in which I found myself heading was a brief experience of displacement and confusion finding the conference room that I think underscores the powerful analogical dimensions of thought. When I arrived at the lobby of the Charles Hotel, I needed to look at the events schedule because I had forgotten to ask David Specht for the room number. There was no listing for The Society for Organizational Learning and reading up and down the list a few times, I decided that the listing for “The Institute for Health Improvement” must be what I was looking for because it *sounded* closest to what the Society for Organizational Learning might do. As is my custom, I had done some but not an extensive amount of research into the group before the meeting so I had no way of knowing for sure. It turns out that I was correct in my assumption and I successfully found the conference room where we were meeting, with some time to spare. It also turns out that this other group had financially sponsored SoL’s roundtable and, as such,

²⁸ “About SoL,” Society for Organizational Learning, accessed October 2, 2010, <http://www.solonline.org>.

was listed on the official hotel calendar of events. Yet, something about what was conveyed by the name of one group had led me to the other group, the one I was actually looking for. This moment made me think about my own academic world and the ways in which precisely defined specialties also intersect with general groupings that make possible and reproduce politically, professionally and intellectually fashionable terms and positions like “modernism,” “Globalization,” “postmodernism,” “narrative” and “practice.” Although academic schools and careers are built around the preservation and reproduction of specialties and their technical differences, logics that are so vital in some arenas, an academic text, a seminar room or lecture hall, often blur into gestalts, patterns and constellations in less formalized contexts. So, for example, Sartrean existentialists, Marxists, Foucauldians and Derridians can all find something of themselves, their work and their commitments under an umbrella term like “theory and practice” despite the important contestations that occur when one is in the weeds, engaging various academic traditions in all of their linear details. At a conference, an array and assortment of scholars and students would likely be brought to a talk that falls under such a rubric. Or, famously, a remarkable diversity of Americans can in good conscience and faith claim for themselves the identity of “spiritual but not religious.” In addition to this, I would want to argue, associational thinking also assists the process Mark Poster refers to as “the mediation of clusters of meaning generated by advertising teams.”²⁹

Once we were all seated, David Specht began the roundtable meeting by asking those gathered around the table to “reconstitute the circle” and to tell those present

²⁹ Mark Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism—In Search of Context* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 119.

something about the organizations that are their “object of attention and care.” Dick Broholm identified the United Church of Christ (UCC) parish he attends, the long-lived workplace spirituality group, Luminos (formerly Faith at Work), and, of course, STW. Jim Emrich, who had traveled from Philadelphia for the meeting, explained that he was at the meeting on behalf of his consultancy group, Servant Leadership Associates, which, according to its website, is a member of the Worldwide Network for Servant Leadership and is committed to “helping to discover and develop the spirit which defines and motives people and their places of work.” As a tribute to the Quaker background of the father of Servant Leadership management, Robert Greenleaf, Jim’s website plays an instrumental rendition of “Tis a Gift to be Simple” as one searches through its digital content. Tom Henry reported on behalf of Landry’s and told us that business was booming though it seemed to me throughout the meeting as a whole that Landry’s own business health was perhaps of less concern to Tom than it might have been at other meetings. Earlier, before the roundtable meeting had officially begun, I had overheard Tom say in conversation that he was currently reading a book of sermons by the popular Reformed writer, Frederick Buechener, called *Secrets in the Dark* in addition to the *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw it Coming* by the environmentalist, Paul Hawken, and Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. I note this because, once again, the imagery at the roundtable would revolve around mysteries in the dark and because the membership of SoL, in particular, is uniquely interested in questions of broad social change and global movements.

After we had all had an opportunity to describe our own organizational contexts, David Specht asked us to “step into a brand new world...ears, eyes and hearts wide open.” He reminded us that the focus on the group are the places of tension between the

organization's IDENTITY, "its gathered life," its PURPOSE, "its acting in the world," and STEWARDSHIP, "its governance and resources." He explained that those gathered around the table to help SoL discern and reflect are "temporary trustees" whose "balcony perspective," being committed to serving the institution but not enmeshed in its operational details, provides the context for a unique ability to follow the host organization down a "journey" wherein "questions are *emerging*." In particular, he asked us to consider whether or not there is a "dimension (you) feel is particularly good or bad these days, one that is *under siege*." Before asking Sherry, the managing director of The Society for Organizational Learning, to introduce her group's quandary, David asked us to engage "habits of listening in all the ways we can, all the ways we are capable of knowing, hearing, seeing and feeling." "What's going on in a story or an image?"

Sherry, who also recently joined the board of directors of STW, began the roundtable by telling us a little bit about herself because her organization was new to the group. She began with a representative quote from Peter Senge, whose theories ground the work SoL does. Sherry explained that for Senge, learning is "an ongoing expression of the capacity of a group of people to create what they want." She proceeded to explain that the group's lineage dates back to the publication in 1990 of Senge's *The Fifth Discipline—The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*, called "one of the seminal management books of the past seventy five years" by the *Harvard Business Review* and near the top of any list of the most influential management titles of all time. As a research center based on this work, The Center for Organizational Learning, ran at MIT between 1991 and 1997. Sherry explained that Senge's work and what it has inspired reflects the "shift in the 1980s, when the only competitive advantage became being able to learn." SoL, as an offshoot of the center, Sherry continued, "broadened the net" and "brings together practitioners, consultants and

researchers to advance in *theory and practice* the interdependent development of people and their institutions.” The “key” to SoL, she explained, are consultants because these are “the intermediaries between theory and practice.” She summarized the organization’s mission this way: “SoL’s purpose is to support systems in being life giving, affirming and to transform management into a holistic discipline that supports life.” As a way of conveying the give and take, feast and famine experiences of this work, Sherry offered the following allusion to the teachings of Jesus: “there are times you are a mustard seed on a rock and sometimes you are *gardened*.”

Sherry then played an Internet video for the group that she said portrays the very kind of “life affirming” behavior she wanted to claim as the “ordinary state of affairs.” The video was of a student group at Kansas State University called K-State Proud that raises funds for a pool of money that is then used to distribute cash and resources to needy students without expectation of return.³⁰ For example, one young student shown on the video received funds to cover book costs. Sherry choked up and was visibly moved, even tearing, as she explained to us that this video spoke to the ways in which “simple acts of kindness are life affirming.” She added that that she is herself motivated by the desire to build and better *see* the ways in which “human relationships are related to the communities of which they are a part.” In order to build these bridges for the sake of reducing “unsustainability,” she explained, “*loyal* customers and a *trusting* public are needed.”

Sherry then turned her attention to framing the organizational dilemma she wanted to present to the group for reflection. As background, however, she first provided some

³⁰ “Students Helping Students,” YouTube video, 4:54, from Spring 2010 Class of Digital Ethnography to get the word out about K-State Proud, an organization that helps students help students, posted by “mwesch,” February 8, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_npqbMKzHl8.

necessary details about the basics of the SoL's corporate structure. The organization has five full time salaried employees, of which Sherry is one. There are divisions involved at different levels in which approximately three thousand people "interact in pockets" along "Shell and Ford models" and communities of praxis and in ways highly indebted to spaces and potentialities opened up by the Internet. She explained that in order to keep these interactions dynamic, "a top-down and bottom-up approach is needed." Sherry put her organization's struggle and goal this way: "How to transform SoL into a global institution?" "How to do a global infrastructure?" At this point in the meeting, I could not help but consider the interesting ways in which SoL's interest in mediating between different scales of experience--that is, in drawing connections between the relationships that exist between institutions as well as the relationships that exist between persons and institutions--reminded me, in a skeletal kind of way, of Marxian *totalization*. Specifically, Sherry's discussion reminded me of Sartre's idea (and hope) in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* that non-vital associations, what he calls *serialities*, carry with them the potential to foster more organic forms of human sociality. Mark Poster writes,

Sartre distinguished the series from the more intensive mutuality of the group. If relations in the series resembled the inertness of matter, the group had the vitality of free projects. Groups were always constituted from the background of the series, replacing mechanical solidarity with organic solidarity...the series was negated in an explosion of fraternal reciprocity, an abrupt alteration of consciousness in which "each person continues to see himself in the Other."³¹

According to Poster, Sartre saw these "groups-in-fusion" as forming on the basis of an external threat, such as the imperial threat that pressed hard on the work and hopes of the French revolutionaries. In Sherry's case in and in the writings of many reformers of

³¹ Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 288.

workplace spirituality, the threats of ecological collapse and economic non-viability are often presented with a powerful urgency. And the “institutional theology” of STW, generally, is exceedingly concerned with critiquing “mechanical” models of human and social relationships with an understanding of the “spirituality” that binds workers both to one another and to their places of work. Of course, the conceptual tools of Sherry’s twenty first century spiritual reformers of late capitalist excess are necessarily a product of the times. As she explained, in attempting to foster the creation of “consulting convergences” and “corporate greenhouses,” it has become clear that Human Resources and Informational Technology personnel have *emerged* as very important agents in influencing “systems thought” and in providing the “glue” that bonds different groups across space and time.

Peter Senge, Sherry explained, had certainly been the “*strange attractor*” who initially brought the group together and, even as he pursues his most recent interests in Chinese economic development and in K-12 education in the United States, continues to play an important role in the life of the organization by running workshops and serving on the board of SoL. For her part, Sherry explained to the group that her dilemma, related to the need to create a truly global SoL that remains “economically viable,” could be expressed this way: “How do I pass the baton and not abdicate responsibility? How do I balance selflessness with taking care of myself?”

Sherry continued. The groundwork for the movement to expand globally must be the realization that organizations are characterized by “preciousness” and the related commitment to “holding in trust the *human energy* gifted to them,” she explained. According to this view, business organizations are “living asset stewards,” the further realization of which on their part increases the levels of “conscious capitalism,” a phrase that at once makes me think about my first time at one of the Boston roundtables, wondering how

capital is externalized in space, time and bodies and also resonates with my many experiences to follow, where the ways in which capital is internalized and spoken by persons within irreducibly practical and existential contexts seemed to take on new life. Indeed, it was one of my first contacts in the field, Patricia Aburdene, also a Boston area resident and a pioneer in the workplace spirituality world, who popularized the term “conscious capitalism” in her *Megatrends 2010: The Rise of Conscious Capitalism*. Generally, relationships between individuals, groups and even entities beyond the full reach of either were key to Sherry’s presentation. On the one hand, “spiritual hunger” was listed as a variable likely to assist in the growth of the group and technology was positively claimed as a tool for networking across time and space. On the other hand, “*religious fundamentalism*” and “superficial” relationships within modern capitalist organizations were presented as hindrances to the goals of the group.

In chapter 4, I will place these kinds of schematics within contemporary discussions of the broader historical and sociological contexts for present day fusions of capitalism and “spirituality” in American management. There, I will also spend a few pages on the work and thought of Jacques Derrida, which seems especially prescient for its ability to theorize non-reductively across spiritual and spatial metaphor, economics, technology and geo-politics and to bring our attention to the ways in which neo-liberal descriptions of the world might, in fact, employ moves that mimic and parrot deconstruction but which are themselves always deconstructable. Even though Sherry bemoaned that fact that “NGOs that don’t trust business” and “traditional educators” can stand as roadblocks to the kind of progress she would like to see, I am of the opinion that respectful engagements and encounters across disciplines with different agendas will prove most helpful and useful, in the end, because the stakes are so clearly important and so obviously shared by so many. Sherry’s description of SoL as a “loosely organized network wanting self-organizing to happen” might well force a

Sartrean like myself to consider the theoretical astuteness and deficiencies of Sartre's discussion of "groups-in-fusion." SoL's expressed desire to "align" organizational theory with "nature" might conjure up questions of cosmological reproduction for anthropologists and might just as easily conjure up the specters of Hegel, Locke and Marx for philosophers interested in the contemporary inheritance of Enlightenment ideas about subjectivity, historicity and agency. Finally, the association between the goal Sherry identified, that of influencing the world "*on a scale beyond what we can control*" and what she called "the sense of the *mystical body* that's the whole and developing a consciousness to aid this," gets at the heart of my thesis. One important byproduct of the discursive and institutional shift away from "modern" industrial machine metaphors to so-called "postmodern" digital and organic metaphors of economy is the reconstruction of "spirituality" and related terms like "mysticism" within late capitalist organizational contexts, a process in which language, existence, practice, psychology and economic structure are all implicated, necessarily so, and the stakes of which turn out to be nothing less than some of the most vexed and contested issues within the cultural study of religion (and its methodological sub-fields in ethics, history, philosophy, social science and theory). And, most obviously, perhaps, the relevance of theology for economic analysis and critique and, hence, in social processes of economic change, is restated for a world Max Weber could not have anticipated.

After Sherry had offered the example of AARP (the American Association of Retired Persons) as a group whose social role, "on the edge between interest group and movement," SoL wanted to emulate, she concluded that SoL was, in effect, seeking to cultivate a "network of networks as a new paradigm." David Specht then called upon the group to switch gears. David explained that Sherry's presentation had made him consider the ways in which, in the end, there are no "organizational" stories apart from "sacred" stories.

“Organizational stories themselves are also sacred,” he said. Upon this account, he exhorted us to conceive of what was to follow as a bringing together of two kinds of still always sacred stories. I confess that I felt and experienced my primary commitments to negative dialectics and secondary interests in deconstruction rather palpably at this point but, along with the rest of the group, tried my best to step back and remain open in the encounter. I tried to as, David put it, place “a temporary firewall” between my own experiences listening to Sherry tell SoL’s story and the present moment, which at this point in the roundtables always feels like an edge or a precipice because we have no idea what texts and traditions will be presented to us for “spiritual” reflection and prayer.

As usual, David distributed a print copy of the second set of stories. Given the fieldwork my academic adviser has done, I was surprised, even shocked, to learn that we would be meditating upon the connections between “An Aborigine Creation Story” and Margaret Wheatley’s application of complexity and chaos theory in organizational management. The sheet David passed around had four pieces of clip art on the front and the back: a small island with a tree standing alone in a sea that surrounds it, a desert mountain range at night, musical notation and the sun. The sheet read as follows:

An Aborigine Creation Story

This is the story of Dreamtime. It comes from the Aborigines of Australia:

When the earth was new-born, it was plain and without any features of life. Waking time and sleeping time were the same. There were only hollows on the surface of the Earth which, one day, would become waterholes. Around the waterholes were the ingredients of life.

Underneath the crust of the earth were the stars and the sky, the sun and the moon, as well as all the forms of life, all sleeping. The tiniest details of life were present yet dormant: the head feathers of a cockatoo, the thump of a kangaroo’s tail, the gleam of an insect’s wing.

A time came when time itself split apart, and sleeping time separated from waking time. This moment was called Dreamtime. At this moment everything started to burst into life.

The sun rose through the surface of the Earth and shone warm rays onto the hollows which became waterholes. Under each waterhole lay an Ancestor, an ancient man or woman who had been asleep through the ages. The sun filled the bodies of each Ancestor with light and life, and the Ancestors began to give birth to children. The children were the living things of the world, from the tiniest grub wriggling on a eucalyptus leaf and the broadest-singe eagle soaring in the blue sky.

Rising from the waterholes, the Ancestors stood up with mud falling from their bodies. As the mud slipped away, the sun opened their eyelids and they saw the creatures they had made from their bodies. Each ancestor gazed at his creation in pride and wonderment. Each ancestor sang out with joy: "I am!"

One Ancestor sang "I am Kangaroo!." Another sang "I am Cockatoo!" The next sang "I am Honey-Ant! and the next sang "I am Honey-Ant!" and the next sang "I am Lizard!"

As they sang, naming their own creations, they began to walk. Their footsteps and their music became one, calling all living things into being and weaving them into life with song. The ancestors sang their way all around the world. They sang the rivers to the valleys and the sand into the dunes, the trees into leaf and the mountains to rise above the plain. As they walked they left a trail of music.

Then they were exhausted. They had shown all living things how to live, and they returned into the Earth itself to sleep. And, in honour of their Ancestors, the Aborigines still go Walkabout, retracing the steps and singing the songs that tell the story of life.

We Get the Whole Web

When my children were small, I had a refrigerator slogan that read: "If mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." Perhaps that was my children's first lesson in systems thinking. We adults are learning this too. If others don't feel safe, we aren't safe. If others are struggling, we experience the consequence of their struggle. If others are poor, no matter how wealthy we are, we experience the consequences of their impoverishment. Many great teachers have been trying to teach us this for thousands of years. Buddhism teaches that any one thing is here because of everything else. The great American naturalist, John Muir, commented that if we tug on any part of the web of life, we get the whole web.

--Margaret Wheatley

After we had mediated on the stories, Margaret Benefiel started the group off, saying that the stories made her think about "the web of life" and the ways in which "we are all interconnected." Representing Zoar Outdoor this time, Karen's husband, Bruce, said that

the story disrupted his ideas about “creation time.” Further elaborating, he said that, at least for him, the story is about “the God within ourselves” and about being “creative selves,” having no need for a “Being” to create life but, rather, living as if tasked with “making ourselves.” For his part, Tom Henry told the group that he finds that he is most productive between “dream and wake time” and that he feels like he is “dying inside when he is not there.” Echoing Bruce, Tom told the group that he found himself wondering, “what creates?” and thinking about the role *dancing* plays in creating the very people who dance. Substitute discourse and language for dance and keep the embodied musicality of what is at stake between self and world and there you have the phenomenological outlines of some of the most vexing questions in the study of religion, I would submit.

Ken told the group that the Aboriginal creation story reminded him of the ways in which “dreams is how reality is made.” Peter added that the story had expressed for him the view that “ideas create reality.” This “sophisticated view,” he said, was at “odds with the notion that Aborigines are primitives.” I remember recalling here Jacques Derrida’s discussion of Karl Marx’s quarrel with Max Stirner about “real” and “ghostly” bodies.³² Needless to say, the specters of longstanding philosophical debates pitting idealism against materialism presented themselves to me, providing me with an experiential foretaste of how I might come with speak to the membership of STW about “spirituality.” Lou reproduced the universalizing power of a term like “spirituality” by adding that the Aborigine creation story “made me think about “Gandhi and (his saying) I am a Jew, I am a Christian, I am Hindu...”

³² In chapter 4, I will return to Derrida’s discussion of Marx in *Specters of Marx—The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (London: Routledge Press, 2006). According the Derrida, Marx accuses Stirner of substituting conceptual critique for the “real” work of material critique but himself falls prey to a metaphysics of presence that requires him to “ghost hunt” in the name of politics.

Sheila, who was the second person from SoL present at the roundtable told the group that her brain got scrambled thinking about “walking on the ceiling.” She said her experience of the story, “reminds me of how rigid my thinking has been” and that she was happy that the roundtable had been able to “open” her up. Sherry added to this that, having just published a book, she found herself thinking about “giving birth and being exhausted” and “feeling the need for new energy.” A recurring theme among the group, it seemed, she also asked, “what animates the dance?” If SoL’s diagram of what it is and how it works is, like STW, is built around concentric circles and loops intersecting at energetic and creative sites of cooperation and tension, something Tom pointed out also impressed upon me the image of dynamic, circular movement. He explained that the day’s conversation had made him think about something his sister in law had once told him about: so-called “kinetic learning” and the ways in which some educators now argue that desks, as a structure of rigidity, are like “death” for early childhood learning and that, instead, grammar school students in their earliest years should be taught while sitting on balls that sway in all directions. Like Ken H’s conception of interconnected reading publics, this model of learning is better captured with metaphors of loops and circular movement. The vertical example of the dutiful child who sits still and upright in his seat that most Americans have been raised on as a model breaks down, like the binding and index of the traditional print book. For me, the image of a kid learning from a teacher while moving around on a bouncing ball speaks forcefully to the idea current in many contemporary public narratives that subjectivity is simultaneously anchored and rooted *and* free to move about within certain institutionally managed limitations and constraints.

When it came time to correlate and think across SoL’s story and those of the Australian Aborigines and Margaret Wheatley’s management theory, Sherry started the group

off by telling a story. As if to mark the moment, Jim Emrich rose from his seat and proceeded to walk about a corner of the room for the remainder of the meeting, his hand at his chin. Sherry explained that she had recently been in India and that as she was working her way up to her posh hotel room, she thought of “the people sleeping on the street” and immediately “meditated on how we are all in this together.” She explained that her personal work and that of her organization is precisely to mitigate against the “survival mechanism of not seeing it,” “it” referring to the ways in which we are all “interconnected.” In other words, the day’s reflections had encouraged her to try to “see” what sometimes remains invisible and hidden. With this, David exhorted the participants gathered around the conference table to have “courage...choosing to see” and asked us to now read the two stories together. He told us to “slowly move the stories together until we hit magnetic fields or sparks fly.” Indeed, a child balancing herself on a ball must, of course, come back up because if she does not, this means that she has, in fact, gone too far down and has managed to completely fall off.

Lou told Sherry and Sheila that he was convinced of “the unity of the global and the local.” Following this, Peter asked a question that visibly took Sherry aback and to which she ponderously nodded, not unlike what I do when a professor asks me to consider something difficult or new. Peter suggested to Sherry that SoL needs to consider for itself whether or not “SoL is an ancestor or creating the ancestors?” His brother, Tom Henry, took up the theme and, for his part, suggested to the two gathered members of SoL that they might think of “Senge as (your) ancestor” and to consider the need to “create Walkabouts who help discovery.” He added: “What is the self organizing? What is the force or *spirit* that drives SoL?” Sherry responded to the brothers Henry by complicating the question of agency, blurring the distinctions between being and creating ancestors. “We are in the middle of

Dreamtime. The image is forming. The *Being* is emerging. We are at the edge of Dreamtime,” she offered.

Margaret then asked anew how dancing was part of the life of SoL but now added particular concerns with the ways in which “joy and singing” can be part of how SoL celebrates its gathered life. Following this, Ed, the executive director of STW asked: “how can a new world *emerge*?” Tom Henry, seemingly inspired by Ed’s question, waxed mystical: “we often think of the sun being above us but it comes from the ground. I can’t sustain this thought. Language doesn’t work. But work is not about just the doing but more like worship. It blows my mind.” Following on Tom’s coattails, David Specht drew the following analogy: “it’s like the sun bursting through the crust of the earth.”

Dick, the spiritual leader of the group and someone who had, at that point, said very little at the meeting, told the group that he found himself thinking of Paulo Freire’s contrasting “vision with reality.” He explained that while vision has an obvious power, if “someone says that’s just not where we are at, it can be dismissed.” He asked: “how can we keep the *contrast* alive?” Sharing this concern with Dick, the latter portions of the dissertation represent an attempt to do justice to the similarities and differences in our perspectives and backgrounds.

Related to the vexed and vexing idea of contrast, Lou said that he wondered about the “displacement of religion in our culture” and “what’s replacing it?” Ed’s comments to follow evoked the general contours of the now banal public discourse of Globalization that celebrates the ability of markets to express and honor diversity under a unifying banner, a play of differences that mines existential and local “energies” without overheating the system. He said that reading the stories together, he thought about “cultures adopting differently but doing similar praxes.” For his part, Bruce, from Zoar, spoke of the good and

bad that come with such horizontal spatializations. He explained that he had spent the whole meeting thinking that World Wide Web (“WWW”) was a “great metaphor” for what SoL does, to which Sherry nodded in agreement, seeming to indicate that this was her intention all along. But, Bruce continued to explain, the problem with the WWW is that there is room for both “brilliance” and “trash.” He thus wondered how SoL, better than “the web,” might “guard against the shadow of false prophecies.”

For a discipline like mine, as concerned as it is with the ways in which material and sensorial practices and processes shape persons, what came next was exceedingly compelling. Tom Henry, who had been raised in a Reformed family but who more often than not speaks of poetry and theater when talking about “God,” pointed out that while he is personally on board with the search for a new way of life, he believes that “Catholics have practices to change themselves but Protestants lack the tools.” Responding to the idea that we need practices of “self cultivation,” Dick explained that George Prince’s work with analogical reasoning, metaphor and unconscious processing, Synectics, had helped him develop his own thinking about how transformation happens and how adults might recapture the “creative processes of children.” For me, this statement highlights the ways yet another modernist hierarchy, the relationship between adults and children, seems to be inverted by the public discourses of late capitalism. As Mark Poster reminds, we are no longer Victorians. As such, our theories and models need to keep current with changes in the family and the institutionalization of social relationships.³³ Indeed, even a Nietzschean transvaluation of morals has no necessary resolution. Time outs are called to do political and existential work in the world.

³³ Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism*, 143-169.

Finally, two issues arose at the end of the roundtable, the point during the meetings when David normally asks the group to offer updates about their own organizations, that I want to mark for now in red. First, Lou explained to the group that his “heart surgeon,” the risk averse proceduralist he was afraid to lose when his company opened an R&D unit, had retired when the announcement of the organizational change had been made, just as he suspected he would. However, Lou continued, the relationship had been later repaired and this manager had actually come out of retirement to help with the daily operations of the company, something Lou thought he was uniquely positioned to do. Second, national politics were put squarely on the table in, at least for me, unexpected ways. Tom Henry told that group that the bike industry’s annual advocacy push in Washington D.C., something which Tom himself was essential in starting a decade ago inspired by his work with STW, had gone very well this year and that he thought that the atmosphere in the national government towards bicycling and to finding alternatives to cars seemed very different under the new administration. He explained that Obama’s Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, had, in fact, publicly adopted many of the group’s talking points and principles. Sherry responded to this revelation by telling the group that SoL, too, was working closely with the new administration in Washington, having met just the week prior with the head of Organizing for America, an organization that, at least at some points, has understood well and in a rather explicit way—for better and for worse--that people are driven to personalize public narratives and that political movements are necessarily stocked by existential energies. In days when Aboriginal Dreamtime narratives and complexity theory can be ritually woven together, it should perhaps not surprise us that Saul Alinsky and Paulo Freire can also be made to partner with Margaret Wheatley and Peter Senge. Perhaps one might also expect

nothing less of days that have also seen a master symbolist in his own right, the son of a cultural anthropologist, ascend to the American presidency.

New Metaphors and Writing the Stories of Spiritual Capitalism

Obviously, nobody needs to convince the leadership and membership of STW that metaphors matter. As such, I will read my experiences at the roundtables in terms of the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson for the following reasons: 1) Everything I have read about STW's theological use of social scientific theory suggests to me that they would be open to this kind of reading; 2) Lakoff and Johnson's work on metaphor stresses the activity of working with metaphor, something which the group explicitly and self-consciously does; 3) Lakoff and Johnson's work on metaphor also nevertheless suggests that our use of metaphor is not merely volitional but also reflects the conceptual gestalts which shape experience and, as such, works well with Jean-Paul Sartre's idea that the world makes us just as we, in turn, make the world; 4) Even if theologies and ritual action can work to shift "reality" by attempting to re-write patterns of experience, Lakoff and Johnson's method also gives us some purchase for noting the ways in which formal narratives, even those positioned as marginal or reformatory, are always shot through with personal dimensions, idiosyncrasies and unreflected upon details that can be approached by looking at metaphorical deployment and issues of metaphorical entailment; 5) Lakoff and Johnson's method also gestures at ways in which the scholar can make him or herself an object and not just the subject of analysis given that the metaphors he or she unconsciously deploys unwittingly historicize the scholar's projects. What Lakoff and Johnson's work does not help me do, however, is substantially bridge the experiential chasm between STW's determination to engage the "spirituality" of business and my own life in ways that appeal to my own formative gestalts. Lakoff and Johnson do not help me begin to *feel* something akin to what

they do. This is due to the fact, I suggest, that the kind of analysis I undertake here, while informative in its own right, is still too arch and analytical to begin to approach the shadowy, blurrier and supra-human textures of what the roundtable means by “spirituality,” for which necessarily elusive ideas about power and spectrality are more suitable analogues. What I need, in other words, is to turn to what in my own vocabulary conveys the limit situations inherent to what Michael Jackson refers to as the *penumbral*.

In their classic study, *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that:

The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities, and what we do is very much a matter of metaphor.³⁴

According to Lakoff and Johnson, however, “our conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of.” Two key attributes which they ascribe to the classical “comparison theory” of metaphor are: 1) The assumption that metaphors describe preexisting similarities but do not themselves create similarities; 2) An implicit understanding of language in which metaphor is understood textually and not as a central matter of thought and action. Against both of these tendencies, Lakoff and Johnson argue that the similarities which metaphor signal are *experiential*, having to do with our embodied relationships with our environment, and not *objective*, having to do with the qualities of objects which metaphors make use of. So, while it is the case that “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind

³⁴ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3.

of thing in terms of another,”³⁵ what Lakoff and Johnson focus on are the experiences which relate and are related by metaphorical reason. That is, according to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors are very much about thought and action even if, as I have already suggested, from this it does not follow that we are always in conscious control of our deployment of metaphor. “Conceptual systems” are implicated in “most of the little things we do every day, (how) we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines.” Language, understood here as writing and text, while distinguishable from the experiential use of metaphor in thought and action, still provides “an important source of evidence for what that system looks like.”³⁶

Concepts are highly metaphorical and concepts help share our experience. One concrete example of what Lakoff and Johnson mean by this is provided by the conceptual metaphor that ARGUMENT IS WAR. Some examples of the deployment of this conceptual metaphor in everyday language are: “Your claims are *indefensible*,” “He *attacked every weak point* in my argument,” “Her criticisms are *right on target*,” “I *demolished* his argument,” “I’ve never *won* an argument with her,” “You disagree? OK, *shoot*,” “If you use that *strategy*, she’ll *wipe you out*,” “He *shot down* all of my arguments.”³⁷ Lakoff and Johnson’s contention is that the conceptual metaphor, ARGUMENT IS WAR, shapes our general experiences of arguments because it is a conventional metaphor, that is to say commonplace, even if certain individuals might not have “internalized” it in the same way and do not deploy it outside of the vagaries of biographical and empirical contexts. If ARGUMENT IS WAR shapes our general

³⁵ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

experiences of arguments, it is also the case that the conceptual metaphor, ARGUMENT IS DANCE would shape our experiences of argumentation differently, which would affect our thoughts about and actions within the context of arguments, something which is, in turn, of concrete ethical and political consequence. I will detail some of the nuances of Lakoff and Johnson's theory in what follows, as demanded by my analysis of the language and ritual of the STW roundtables.

First, one key aspect of the work STW does is that is that they attempt to *reframe* what they call "organizational stories" by having these stories of everyday institutional life speak to and to be spoken to by an assortment of texts and images from diverse religious traditions, humanistic disciplines, new physics and literature. In chapter 4, I will detail the theological reasoning the group deploys as they argue that social systems and institutions possess an "interiority," which is akin to "spirituality" and phenomenologically equivalent to the "powers and principalities" mentioned in the New Testament. For now, what matters, if we turn the prism to specifically focus on the ritualized meetings of the roundtable, is that ritually using language to alter "spiritual" reality is a key dimension to what the group self-consciously sees itself as doing. As I will detail in further detail in later chapters, these practices imply an intertwining of personal, national and cosmic histories or, put otherwise, a weaving together of individual, collective and cosmological "destinies."

If "conventional metaphors" are those metaphors which structure ordinary, everyday conceptual systems and are often un-remarked upon and of which we are often not consciously aware, Lakoff and Johnson note that sometimes we actively and self-consciously attempt to create "new meaning" by creating new relationships of similarity. New metaphors, they write, "make sense of our experience in the same way conventional metaphors do: they provide coherent structure, highlighting some things and hiding

others.”³⁸ For the negative dialectician or deconstructionist, there is room here to methodologically account for the fact there is always a *remainder* that haunts human efforts to speak and to write. For the sociologist, there is room to engage questions of social change and conceptual re-structuralizations of institutional relationships. For the phenomenologist, there is an opening, as I suggested earlier, to refuse the scholar the uncontested position of *subject*. I have caught myself yet again, as I seem want to do in this dissertation. What could it possibly mean to make *room* for methodologies? It is not like I can put them in my garage, can I?

Why might David Specht begin the roundtable meetings by inquiring about the group’s experiences with the season? There is no necessary relationship between the structural concept of “room” and methodology in research but this relationship is drawn metaphorically through the weaving of an experiential similarity between methodological openness and making room for objects in space and time. Similarly, there is no necessary relationship between business cycles and the natural rhythms of life—the waxing and waning of tides, the turbulence and smoothing over of waters, the rising and setting of the sun—but in initiating the meetings the way he does, I believe that David Specht is analogically shoring up such a bond, metaphorically and through ritualizing activity. One observes this tendency in corporate commercials that depict “surfing CEOs” trying to ride the wave and in the banal logic that markets necessarily come and go, as if, for example, we can live with the reassurances of daylight after the long night of recession.³⁹ That is, we can *trust* that the

³⁸ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 139.

³⁹ “Microsoft People Ready Commercial QuickSilver,” YouTube video, :30, posted by “SampleUpload,” January 11, 2009, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nH6IMF61ln0&feature=player_embedded.

market is, in the end, socially responsible and that it will not let our hopes and prayers go unheeded.

When David Specht exhorts the group to listen “not just with our ears but with our hearts and spirit as if to a loved one you want to understand...with focused attention” the basic metaphor he is drawing is something like LISTENING TO ORGANIZATIONAL STORIES IS LIKE CAREFULLY LISTENING TO A LOVED ONE. Implied in this conceptual metaphor is one of one Seeing Thing Whole’s fundamental theological convictions, as I shall detail in chapter 4: the idea that organizational stories have to do with our relationships with “spiritual” entities in their own right. As Lakoff and Johnson suggest, new metaphor, like conventional metaphors, obscure some things just as they foreground others. Here, the ontological metaphor--that is a metaphor which views “events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc. as entities and substances”⁴⁰--of the organizational story as a loved one seems to highlight care, concern and personal interest over formal proceduralism and dispassionate reason, the opposite of what we would expect in Max Weber’s iron cage. Immediately less obvious, however, might be the “complex coherence across metaphors” that is most likely at play here. LOVE is also a theological concept for the members of STW and, as such, entanglements between different experiences of love are inevitable and, I think, intended by the ritual. Lakoff and Johnson write:

...a metaphor works when it satisfies a purpose, namely understanding an aspect of the concept. When two metaphors successfully satisfy two purposes, then overlaps in the purposes will correspond to overlaps in the metaphors. Such overlaps, we claim, can be characterized in terms of shared metaphorical entailments and the cross-metaphorical correspondences established by them.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 25.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

In this case, the theology of STW makes the commonplace Christian theological claim that GOD LOVES THE WORLD. When one reads into the “theology of institutions,” it is clear that listening at the roundtables is formally intended to be a practice of love and that this activity partakes of divine love.

The vulgar varieties of modernism that speak of economic life in fully structural-political and structural-economic terms and theologies that refuse to consider the practical entailments between popular religion and economic life are confounded by David Specht’s instructions to the group to allow themselves “be fed by people fed by deep streams themselves, with an attention to the world.” The conceptual metaphor, SPIRIT FLOWS WITHIN AND BETWEEN PEOPLE, implies the conventional and ontological metaphors that LIFE IS FLUID and that SPIRIT IS FOOD. Theologically, it would seem important to consider how ideas about incarnation and Eucharist do and do not come into play in members’ experiences, on the ground, of “spiritual” feeding.

Of course, structural metaphors are evident in the desire to *reframe* organizational stories, which is to redraw the boundaries of business and in the metaphor of “concentric circles held together by tension and informed by one’s deepest values.” This will be made clearer when I review STW’s theology and will be a major focus of my readings of contemporary management theories but it is important to again note here that a traditional theological concept, that of the three offices of Christ, is re-circumscribed as a triangle held together by overlapping and concentric circles. Circles are metaphorical containers within which spirit flows dynamically, that is, in creative tension, but ultimately in harmony and coherently because the circles are understood to exist under Christ’s good providence. The

images of nature displayed on a screen during the group's ritual meetings weave the natural world into this circular pattern of divine creativity and purpose. This differs from the reframing a negative dialectician would likely do, stressing incongruencies, irresolvable tensions and the non-identity between discourse and practice. Yet, it is also important to note that while the formal theology of the group posits an ultimate coherence of purposes, it also stresses the fact that, to paraphrase Tom Henry, the tendency to take the part for the whole is the root of evil. Very similar to the dangers faced by sociologists, cultural theorists and historians, a tension I have observed in the larger project of STW is manifested precisely by the fact that we sometimes aim for a bird's eye view even as our perspectives are necessarily contextual and limited, making it imperative to ethically distinguish between the two windows, if only discursively, lest we collapse perspectives. Put in a more pedestrian way, even narratives and models that acknowledge that parts are not wholes and champion complexity, openness and dynamism do not, thereby, become repositories of reality. Hence, the methodological importance of the fact that Lakoff and Johnson place such a premium on experience.

Even so, the cosmological significance of the *Three-Fold-Model* held together by concentric circles existing in harmonious tension should not be underestimated. In *More Than Cool Reason—A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*, George Lakoff identifies THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING as a particularly Western conceptual complex comprised of “a metaphor, a commonsense theory and a communicate principle”⁴² THE BASIC CHAIN OF BEING, Lakoff argues, is one key component of THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING and

⁴² Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 172.

“is defined by attributes and behavior, arranged in a hierarchy.”⁴³ From top to bottom, these are the hierarchies Lakoff identifies: “*Humans*: Higher-order attributes (e.g., thought, character); *Animals*: Instinctual attributes and behavior; *Complex Objects*: Structural attributes and functional behavior; *Natural Physical Things*: Natural physical attributes and natural physical behavior.”⁴⁴ For many Christians, God represents the best human characteristics to the highest or infinite degree (God is infinite wisdom, love and justice, for example). According to the STW mapping, the concentric circles represent the flattening of hierarchies, both theologically and in organizational management. So, for example, following Walter Wink, institutions are understood as being endowed with God created spiritual powers that are fallen but, in the end, redeemed and good. They specifically do not operate merely functionally. The common orientational metaphor that GOD IS UP is also challenged by STW because heaven is now spatialized horizontally. Wink writes,

Our image of heaven as the inside as the inside of reality is, of course, just another form of spatial metaphor. It takes heaven out of its location in the sky and anchors it firmly on the earth, seen as an integral part of the universe. On this view, transcendence is symbolized not by height but by invisibility and withinness. Only by locating the invisible in *metaphorical* space can we know how to look, and by looking, to discern the spiritual essence of material and cultural phenomena.⁴⁵

In the last chapters of the dissertation, I will offer some philosophical resources for considering the benefits and dangers of this pantheistic fusion of horizons that can also take seriously the group’s theological commitment to a Christian doctrine of sin.

⁴³ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 170.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 170-171.

⁴⁵ Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers—The Language of Power in the New Testament* (New York: Fortress Press, 1988), 146.

Tom Henry's use of the metaphor of "cleaning toilets" when exhorting Ken H. to touch ground works well with the above re-spatialization where even the "unclean" is worthy of one's best efforts. Yet, we must proceed with caution. On the one hand, nothing in the ritual texts of the meetings or in the theologies themselves would specifically suggest such a connection even if one might personalize the theology and read oneself into it. Therefore, irreducible biographical details can often tell you much more than formal narratives can about how particular individuals actually tick because *existence precedes essence*, as Sartre claimed. In addition to "cleaning toilets," something Tom actually did as part of his clinical internship for his Masters of Divinity degree, I knew that that caring for the sick was something Tom had likened to "loving the asshole of God." During another roundtable meeting hosted by Xenon, Tom also made use of scatological and cleaning metaphors in some rather interesting ways. Speaking to Lou, he lamented: "costs will run up your butt if there is no revenue." He added: "cost effectiveness is about cleaning; people can't plan in black space." When he later told Lou, "I have noticed that many of your new markets are about curing and cleaning," I chuckled inside because it felt poetic that Tom had observed in Lou an interest in cleaning when I had observed the same in Tom. Yet, what is critical for the present analysis is that the metaphor of cleaning is multivalent for Tom: it can speak to service and caring for the sick as a way of caring for God *and* it can speak to streamlining operations so that costs are expiated and expunged from the system without fear of return and the further despoilment of profit. The metaphor is alive for Tom as a complex.

In a similar vein, the idea of *self-organizing* systems and emergent order implies a metabolic regulation within social processes. At the second roundtable with Xenon, having carefully listened to Lou's quandary, a continuation of what he had presented that first time, Margaret Benefiel explained to the group that: "what is *emerging* for me is chaos and catching

and riding the wind; being in the midst of turbulence and attuned to what is emerging.” An idea that, again, I will return to, one thing that is striking to me about the application of complexity and chaos theory to management theory, which has become a fairly common move, is that it explicitly tries to make room for experiences of displacement, risk, danger and blindness. Lou once put it this way: “Entrepreneurial spirit is about learning to live in turbulence.” This is a long way off from the idea of well-oiled, mechanistic bureaucracies, iron clad cages and the dispassionate predictabilities of *Zweckrationality*. What might have otherwise been a discursive contradiction no longer is. Relationships between scientific management and that which eludes full management are refashioned. Tom Henry’s idea that “like in Dante’s *Inferno*, we must learn to talk about the process towards the love object. You need process for evolving and you must go towards the thing that would destroy you” is powerfully telling, approaching the matter from this angle. Even if one learns much from reading and engaging the public narratives of capital, Galina Lindquist's work on the relationship between risk, danger and magical practices in post-Soviet Russia reminds us that we cannot understand how those narratives are reproduced on the ground without accounting for the role of extant local folklore.⁴⁶

When Lou says that in the current economy, “there is no visibility in the *black fog*” and “no ability to plan for surprises” and yet talks about opening up an R&D unit “in the hinterland” in order to “find markets” and “produce revenue,” one gets a sense that what is required these days are magicians who can enter into the dark spaces of chaos and return with insights and formulas that can temporarily restore financial order. The popular self-help

⁴⁶ Galina Lindquist, *Conjuring Hope—Magic and Healing in Contemporary Russia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

genre of “workplace spirituality” literature often positions these practices as forms of “mysticism.” However, when Ken M. tells the group that he found himself “thinking about the differences between quality control and *brainstorming* types,” we remember that the connection between chaos and brilliance precedes and predates the application of chaos and complexity theory to organizational philosophy. “Mysticism” is not, as it were, a necessary term.

Lou, the same man who said that “time kills deals,” once explained to the group that “SONY has chosen to control Blu-Ray, ensuring a *steady rate of demand* but not the *explosion of the market*,” something that, according to Lou, means that other companies are “*starving to death*.” Ontological metaphors are deployed in the concept of deals having lives to lose and of companies being starved to death. A metaphor of potential chaos, the *explosion* of the market, is what has the potential of feeding companies that find themselves in precarious situations and are in need of finding markets in the dark. Doug, a less frequent member of the roundtable now that the company he worked for, a manufacturer of car parts, succumbed to the “economic crisis,” once told the group that in an effort to “embrace change” his new mantra has become “you want to ride the waves, you have to forget about the shoreline.” Going into the deep dark, unknown places of creativity, however risky, is what brings new life for the membership of STW.

In my opinion, perhaps the most interesting roundtable discussion of all revolved around the potential relationships between SoL’s operationalization of complexity and chaos theory and Aboriginal Dreamtime. This is the case because it highlights patterns that exist across the data I have compiled on the roundtables, especially patterns of how instrumental reason relates to the unknown. The new metaphor, ORGANIZING PEOPLE IN BUSINESS IS LIKE DREAMING AND DANCING, foregrounds the ways in which

social organization is as much a “poetic” process as it is “instrumental.” Dreaming and dancing are metaphors often deployed to speak to experiences of *possession*—of being vital and yet not in full control of oneself. Certainly, both metaphors escape and elude humanely quantifiable *blueprints* for movement. *Organizing reason* must reckon with a mysterious world that exceeds it, even threatens it, hence all the conversation about risk, dangers and movement in the dark. If, to some degree, dreaming is *done to us* or we “are gardened,” as several of the participants, including Sherry, wondered about, it is no wonder that the forces described by complexity and chaos theory can be compared to an underlying “mystical body” given prevailing associations between mysticism and unknowing. Dancing is also a metaphor that conveys the artful and only partially planned “colonization” of space through ambulant processes of *ritualization*. Selves shape the world and are shaped by it, kinetically, in energetic swaying motions, rather than by planting themselves in place, as static parts in a machine. In the process, heaven and earth are made one, a commitment reflected in the name of Sherry’s other consultancy company, Heaven and Earth Incorporated. This is, I would venture, a cosmology likely to collide with more vertical and spatially distinct ways of differentiating between the world of God (or ancestors) and the world of people.⁴⁷ Interestingly, the collapsing of sun, earth and soul at work in David Specht’s image of sun bursting out from the earth’s core might also reflect broader pantheistic tendencies that might well exist within popular deep ecology movements and the like.

When Lou therefore says that he needs “a brain surgeon at the helm of operations... speed and risk taking are essential when one is shooting in the dark for markets,” this can tell us much about how in many sectors of the American economy, organizations are no longer

⁴⁷ “Heaven and Earth Incorporated,” accessed October 2, 2010, <http://heavenandearth.com>.

viewed as industrial machines only needing oil to be pumped into them by an engine, a *heart*, to keep them going. Instead, now they are often understood to work best when there is also a “brain surgeon” present that can help secure the generation of knowledge and to ensure that complex systems and thinking across regions can occur as a matter of flow. Aspects of this contemporary metaphysics are reflected in popular titles like *When Things Start to Think* by Neil Gershenfeld and *Blink—The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* by Malcolm Gladwell, a book David Specht considers to be particularly influential in the development of his own thought.

In the end, however, while these restructuralizations of conceptual boundaries are fascinating, we need to resist the temptation to therefore suspend our review of the mundane, existential textures that make life on the line between markets, spirituality and magic possible. At one roundtable, Ken M., one of Tom and Peter Henry’s managers, relayed a personal story about hubris. As he explained to the group, he is an avid sailor and boat racer. One day his family was entered in a race and he was at the helm. The beginning of the race was simply magical. His boat was far in front of the rest of the competitors. No boat was even close. As he put it, this was the best job he had ever done. He was certain to win. Suddenly a crosscurrent took the boat off-course and, in the end, after arduously working to regain position, Ken M.’s boat lost the race. Ken M. used this an example, within the roundtable context, to talk about forces beyond one’s control and the lesson that one should never count one’s eggs before they hatch. As a scholar, one can only begin to engage the ways in which a personal narrative such as this one is highly overdetermined. A race as a metaphor for economic life implies that markets are competitive, which is a tautological truism in a capitalist economy, perhaps, but neither politically nor linguistically inevitable. The idea of a current of water taking one off course might imply an inevitable dimension to

economic turbulence, as if strategic modeling, structural-legal activism and the individual choices of the financially powerful do not have something to do with it. Yet, in the context of Ken M.'s story, these sociological concerns are less important than the use he makes of the metaphor of a boat race to understand his own experiences.

Similarly, something Karen once said reminded me of the ways in which cosmological, sociological and institutional boundaries intersect with lived relationships, the boundaries between self and other. She spoke of parenting issues “*spilling into*” other aspects of life and how she was in the process of letting go of an older child that is asserting her adolescent independence. I was struck by the ways in which family and business were so intertwined in what members of the roundtable would say. Tom Henry spoke of a painful situation with his daughter “*bleeding into*” the other areas of his life, including his work life. Bethany Moreton’s brilliant *To Serve God and Wal-Mart—The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* makes it clear that grassroots models of the family, developments in management theory and popular religion can combine on the ground to simultaneously feed the lived existential needs of otherwise marginalized workers and propel global structural economic change.⁴⁸ In neither the case of Wal-Mart, obviously, or of the STW roundtable is the abolition of private property on the table. If Marxist theory, at its worst, can only see structural alienation and not existential transcendence within human relationships, even those mediated by commodity exchange, it can tell one little about how so-called “markets” actually grow and are actually lived.

⁴⁸ According to Moreton, one can trace the migration of servant leadership theology into Central America by way of scholarship and exchange programs that both provide hope to young Latin American recipients of American corporate noblesse (such as the Walton International Scholarship Program) and ritualize ideology through sharing and singing in the pews. Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart—The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 222-247.

When Tom Henry speaks about viscerally feeling his *roots*, I am reminded that it is people, *related to other people, places, things and ideas*, who feed and thus allow an economic system to bloom. And, yet, it was my tendency to consider economic systems as inherently lifeless before emplacement and employment by people that, to some degree, stood in the way of further bridging my experiences and those of the members of the roundtable. Through my participation at the roundtables, I came to value and highly respect the persons with whom I was working. Although the roundtables often reflected the most pressing, practical concerns people had and, as such, did not immediately go in the loftiest directions formal ethics often want to take us, this is no different, on an existential level, from anything that happens Sunday morning in the pews. Textually driven theology, like all theory, has a unique role to play that *distinguishes* it from practice; it cannot claim to speak for the world of practice.⁴⁹

My commitment to viewing economic systems the way I do developed over time, through my own experiences with the world and through my relationship to, among others, my own privileged canon in critical theory, deconstruction and existentialism. When I looked around the room during the roundtables and saw good, honest people doing their best to manage and make sense of a risky world, I also failed to see the spirits—Tom Henry once called them “ghosts in the rafters”—they said they saw. This changed over time. Among other things, I would need to experience Tom weep in public, hurt that the world makes him feel like an alien for thinking of his company “as like the Beloved.” I would need to spend time talking with Dick Broholm, the founder of STW, at length. As I suggested, I would also

⁴⁹ Kathryn Tanner makes this point from within the systematic Christian theology. Her theological method would seem well positioned to intervene in questions of theology and workplace spirituality. Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture-A New Agenda* (Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1997).

need to turn to a toolkit other than the one I am using in this chapter. I mark these points for now and will return to these questions in the conclusion.

To conclude, while the ethnographic material, narrations of my actual attendance at the roundtable meetings of STW, is central to the work of this chapter, it is appropriate to offer some preliminary thoughts, in the form of readings, of the texts that we reflected on at the three meetings that I described in detail. These readings do not stand on their own and ought to be related, dialectically, back to the ethnographic descriptions they follow. The general aim of the readings is to anticipate ways in which the formal theology of STW might be bridged with contemporary management theory not, obviously, to provide academic exegesis or academic studies of literature. I am benefiting from patterns already discussed and looking ahead to patterns of rhetoric I find in the formal literature:

- 1) *The Passages from Matthew*: The “Kingdom of God” is likened to treasure that is hidden and invisible although not unconcerned with material life but actually existing within the field, an earthly metaphor for agricultural labor and material subsistence. To access that treasure one must make a risky investment. The “Kingdom of God” is not only like the object of wealth but is also the subject of wealth, the *merchant* that engages in commerce and looks for pearls of great value in the world. Finally, the “Kingdom of God” is like casting a wide net into turbulent and unknown depths and having that process return delectable goods and dead ends.
- 2) *Mulia Nassrudin*: The key to wisdom is not to be found in the conventional structures, like one’s house, but elsewhere, even if the wisdom one seeks pertains to that conventional structure.

- 3) *Mary Oliver*: Life is a journey. Along that journey, different and conflicting demands are placed on you. Sometimes these demands are voiced by those in dire need, in need of mending. Pressing on ahead and following your intuition, you might feel as if the structural foundations of your life, your house, might be rattled and shaken. Walking into the night, the path will be rocky. Eventually, the light will break through the clouds and your voice and path merges with that of the divine. You realize that in order to do anything else you must save yourself first.
- 4) *A.R. Ammons*: We must let go of our preconceived conceptual boundaries, often represented geometrically, if creativity is to bloom.
- 5) *Dante*: Movement forward is like trying to walk down a cliff into unfamiliar depths, under potentially treacherous conditions, and to bid known horizons adieu.
- 6) *Erich Jantsch*: New structures of life emerge as we passionately engage the structures of the present and if we learn to let go and to let ourselves flow into these new patterns.
- 7) *Aboriginal Dreamtime*: As I narrated, the group's reading of this creation account highlighted extant themes about self-creation, the divine within the earthly and the need to find a balance between conscious and unconscious states if one is to succeed in business. Rhymes are reasons and reasons are rhymes we sing and dance.

Chapter 2: Living Cosmologies: Dancing (and Dying) on a Wheel

Printed on much of the teaching material of STW uses during group trainings and the ritualized roundtable meetings are intersecting, co-centric circles linking “identity,” “purpose” and “stewardship.”¹ Specifically for Landry’s Bicycles, Tom Henry has developed the diagrammatic schema of a triangle enveloped by a circle, indicating, he will eagerly explain, that organizational hierarchies are, whatever else might be going on, already always enveloped by a greater whole to which they must remain accountable.² Trek Bicycles, one of the giants of the biking industry, has designed a marketing campaign and an attendant community service program centered on the slogan: “one world, two wheels.”³ According to the company website, the goals of Trek’s program are: to “give \$1 million to the Bicycle Friendly Community program of the League of American Bicyclists to increase the number of Bicycle Friendly Communities in the U.S.,” to make a contribution of “\$600,000 to the international Mountain Bike Association for their Trail Solutions Program,” and finally, “to increase the number of trips taken in the U.S. by bike from the current 1% to 5% by 2017.”

Circular metaphors were also prevalent, as we saw, at the roundtable meetings of STW, both as part of the ritual design of the meetings and in the spontaneous remarks of those gathered. On the most general level, the ritual work of the group is formally understood to occur within the dynamic spaces of creative tension where the three main dimensions represented by the concentric circles of the “Three Fold Model of

¹ “Three Fold Model of Organizational Life,” Seeing Things Whole, accessed October 1, 2010, http://seeingthingswhole.org/PDF/STW_ThreeFoldModel_Organizational.pdf.

² Tom Henry, “Landry’s Bicycles and the Three Fold Model,” University of Saint Thomas | Center for Catholic Studies | John A. Ryan Institute, accessed May 8, 2011, http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/publications/seeingthingswhole/STW05_Landry.pdf.

³ “1 World, Wheels,” Trek Bicycles, accessed May 8, 2011, http://www.trekbikes.com/us/en/company/1_world_2_wheels.

Organizational Life” simultaneously attract and resist one another. In this understanding of the importance of creative conflict, it is important to note that the “Three Fold Model” clearly partakes of the same tendency within corporate storytelling to discuss economic growth and creativity in terms of “synergies,” a term David Specht often uses. The formal ritual design of the roundtables that is developed by David Specht through his deployment of poetry, sacred and scientific literature, images and sounds of nature also links organizational life to the change of seasons and the movement of daylight into night and back again, thereby framing economic life within the steady, consistent and dynamic loops of “life as a whole.” To the extent that social time and the primeval time of nature are reduced to the functioning of one and the same (finally capitalistic) operation, deep ecology movements might actually naturalize capitalism through an *organicism* consciously intended as a radical critique of capitalism.

However, as a matter of the lived practice of the group, circular patterns were also presented in biographically specific ways. David Specht spoke of teaching MBA students the art of “spiritual centering.” Having walked around the Cambridge Innovation Center, I myself thought of Adorno’s idea that ideology exists at the center of all of its pieces and wondered how one might come to represent the form of capital when digital and electronic media allow any one center within a vast network of commerce to connect to any other at any given moment despite the traditional barriers of geographical distance. For his part, Ken H. described his brainchild, *bricobase*, as a “self-organizing vehicle for disambiguating and connecting human meaning” that accomplishes this task by expanding the number of readership groups engaged with a given text, thereby connecting “concepts across language and context.” As I learned by consulting Ken’s company website, instead of reproducing the hierarchical index of the print book, *bricobase* aims to explode the form of the text by linking

meaning to interactive social networks of diverse readers rather than peg it to some linear schemata known beforehand and printed in advance. In other words, we might metaphorically think of a *bricobase* text as a circle populated by interactive circles that press against any static representation of form. As meaning is constantly redoubled, the larger circle must remain responsive to its generative interactions with a co-creative environment. Hence, the form of this kind of text, much like a membrane sac, might also be said to move like an *amoeba* or a a kind of *worm* because form and unity are made as flexible and dynamically responsive to the particularities of experience as possible.

The roundtable hosted by the Society of Organizational Learning (SoL) was perhaps uniquely interesting to me for what was metaphorically presented in terms processes of dynamic circularity. The group's acronym, Sherry explained, is designed to link the concepts of Sun and Soul. She also stated that the organization hopes to create a true *self-organizing* global network from the already three thousand people who comprise the group across the globe and that currently "interact in pockets." In addition to these more formal conceptualizations, however, I was interested in a couple of spontaneous moments from the meeting, both involving Tom Henry. As we recall, after the presentation of the Aboriginal Dreamtime Narrative and the chaos theory of the management theorist, Margaret Wheatley, in light of each other, Tom Henry wondered out loud *what actually creates* and whether or not the *dancing creates the dancer*. In the context of the roundtable meeting, the circumscription of the world by Aboriginal ancestors who sing and dance becomes an example of the order within chaos and co-creative quality of complexity that serve as the foundation of Margaret Wheatley's organizational philosophy. I will return to Wheatley in a focused way in chapter 4 when I consider the relationships between the history of capitalism, Christian theology, and management theory. The second moment I want to reintroduce now, however, is Tom's off-

hand comment that the conversation of the group had reminded him of the “kinetic learning” his sister in law had told him about, an experiential model of education in which *desks* become the signifiers of rigidity, passé hierarchies and a death knell for “early childhood learning” while *balls* on which students learn against or sit on in class become the signifiers of a more dynamic, fully embodied kind of creative learning. For people like Tom’s sister in law, the ways in which the traditional and kinetic models of Western education envisage and hope to reproduce patterns of social relationships are telling. According to the conventional model, knowledge is reproduced via discrete hierarchies that establish the relationship between teacher and student, who are conceived of as separate entities. The student’s body is hidden below the desk, unimportant to the intellectual work of the mind. In the case of kinetic learning, the doings of body and mind are brought together and knowledge seems to imply the honing of balancing skills in which situatedness and freedom of movement necessarily exist in tension. Whether or not the hierarchical relationship between student and teacher is actually eradicated remains to be seen, of course.

Yet, however strongly one might be committed to Karl Marx’s idea that the work of philosophy is to change the world, stepping back to *take stock of ideas* or to use a different metaphor, taking the time to smell the roses, which implies immersion in experience, is necessary if one hopes to learn something about the shifting “patterns of intersubjective experience” that ground our attempts to do so. Playing with metaphor is exceedingly practical, necessarily ambiguous and unquestionably political work. However, in acknowledging this, my method also operates against the romantic and anti-modern impulse to assign transcendent and largely healing qualities onto the logic of poetry or to privilege the supposed purity of peak or flow experiences and, stands against the assumption that spirituality is *necessarily* beneficent. Instead, the point in this chapter is to foreground the

thoroughgoing ambiguity of the practical and embodied activity of our conscious and non-conscious work with metaphor and to begin to trace and mark the metaphorical boundaries of the new forms of “spiritual capitalism” that are of broader interest to the topic and the disciplinary conversations out of which my project “emerges.” I will return to these efforts from a different angle in chapter 4.

The Therapeutic Qualities and Synechdochism of Metaphor

As I described in the previous chapter, the ritual work of STW can be understood in terms of a “spiritual” re-narration of personal, social and cosmic relationships in which the conscious deployment of imagery and of metaphor becomes a tool for drawing anew the boundaries between business and other spheres of life as these have often been defined by Western modernity. On the one hand, the basic phenomenological fact of the matter—that, in Michael Jackson’s words, “personal, social, and natural aspects of Being are made to correspond and coalesce”⁴—presents nothing new. Jackson notes that this “analogical mode of understanding is pervasive in all human societies” and offers the cosmologies of the ancient Greeks, the Vedic hymns, traditional Chinese philosophy, Medieval Europe and a Dylan Thomas poem as examples of forms of social organization in which “metaphorical correspondences...link personal, social and natural bodies.”⁵ On the other hand, however, the work of STW takes place within a particular historical context and social field. It is work that is necessarily performed within a shared and contingent epistemic context and, thus, its irreducible newness must be approached through engagements with the material concreteness of its local practice, the group’s particular narratives and, ultimately, the

⁴ Michael Jackson, *Paths Towards a Clearing-Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1989), 137.

⁵ Ibid.

individual life experiences of its membership. *Shared metaphors and narratives are lived out in irreducibly particular ways.*

This chapter represents one attempt, rooted in empirical analysis, to engage the broader discursive and institutional context for the ‘spiritual’ reform of capital without reducing phenomenological experience itself to discursive analysis alone. The general procedure is this: With the one hand, I will turn to the ethnographic work of Lisa Karin Goldschmidt-Salamon in order to establish a connection between the patterns of “spiritual management” she has written about and the ritual work of STW. With the other hand, I foreground important biographical details of one key figure in the “spiritual reform” of the group, Tom Henry. If there are discernible “patterns of intersubjective experience” that an attention to metaphorical correspondences can help us discern, if only instrumentally, then biography and autobiography become a vehicle for exploring how such patterns are personalized and therefore actually lived and breathed in concretely irreducible ways.

On the subject of “thinking through the body,” Michael Jackson writes:

...immediatization and concretization of space-time brings the world back home. Moreover, working with a common fund of accessible images—trees, paths, houses, the human body—and making personal, social, and natural domains coextensive, a seamless, unified whole places self and world on the same scale. Not only does this make the universe coherent and comprehensible; it enables people to act upon themselves in the conviction that such action will have repercussions in social and even extrasocial realms. Conversely, this view enables people to manipulate external objects and words—as in divinatory, healing, and cursing rites—in the conviction that such actions will have repercussions on themselves or on others. Thus mastery of the external world is linked reciprocally to mastery of self, and people act as if the universe were extensions of themselves and they of it.⁶

So, for example, Jackson provides the example of an anecdote related by the psychologist Erik Erikson, who worked with the Yurok people of Northern California in the 1930s.

⁶ Jackson, *Paths Towards a Clearing*, 137.

Erikson, Jackson explains, met a Yurok woman who had grown melancholy and withdrawn after she had seen a small whale enter into the Klameth river, which is simultaneously the “source” of her people’s “livelihood and the focus of their cultural existence.”⁷ According to Jackson, after “exchanging notes” with the woman, Erikson came to believe that she had chosen mute withdrawal according to a metaphorical logic that expresses correspondences between natural, cosmic and fleshy bodies. In the first place, a saltwater creature swimming along a fresh water river represented an ominous crossing of the “freshwater barrier” that portended potential catastrophe beyond the immediate world of the river. This apprehension is experienced according to “the underlying principle...that contrasted fluids such as blood and water, semen and water, or urine and water should never meet in the same aperture or channel”⁸ Similarly, then, the Yurok would tend not to wash their hands with water after eating meat because water and blood are mutually antagonistic liquids that ought not meet. The mouth of the river and the mouth of the person metaphorically correspond given the fact that “a healer must have superb control over the oral-nutritional canal.”⁹ Jackson thus suggests the following:

We can now understand how the saltwater whale entering the freshwater stream signals more general disturbance of the geographical-anatomical environment. Something alien and inedible enters the mouth of the river, which only edible things like salmon and sturgeon should enter. This suggests an inversion of the oral scheme of things in which control of the mouth is fundamental to social and ethical integration...her first reaction was to keep quiet about it, possibly hoping that by so controlling her mouth she might induce some change in the external world.¹⁰

⁷ Jackson, *Paths Towards a Clearing*, 139.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 140.

For my purposes here, what is important is that, as Jackson suggests, we tend to schematize the world, creating ritualized boundaries around what is done and experienced when and where and the idea that we also develop *therapeutic* relationships with these boundaries so that we might work on extra-social worlds in the hopes of engaging in activity there that can have consequences in our personal and social worlds. Jackson, whose larger point is that we must resist the temptation to deny the “interdependency of mind and body” (and, the desire to set apart conceptual thought from the metaphorical thought which undergirds our practical relationships with the world) makes an exceedingly important observation that will serve as the springboard for my re-entry into the ethnographic world a little later on. In advancing his greater point that that metaphor *does things* rather than merely *describe things*, much like Lakoff and Johnson, Jackson discusses the ways in which this is no more readily apparent than in moments of crisis, which can involve “an unbearable conflict between two or more ideas” (“being in two minds”), between two or more practical possibilities (“being pulled or tugged in two different directions”), or between conceptual and practical alternatives (“wanting or knowing what to do but not how to do it”).¹¹ We speak of “double-bind” situations in terms of “dilemmas” and “contradictions” or, more physically, in terms of a “bind,” a “knot,” a “spasm,” “tearing” and “splitting.”¹² Metaphorical instrumentality and metaphor as therapy makes our split world more livable. Jackson writes:

In forging links between personal, social, and natural worlds and in reforging these links when we break them, poetry fosters wholeness of Being. But poetic metaphor also accomplishes this act through a scale reduction in which social, natural and personal worlds correspond evenly, so allowing us to feel equal to the wider world.¹³

¹¹ Jackson, *Paths Towards a Clearing*, 149.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 155.

“Synecdochism,” as such, makes personal, social and natural domains “coextensive, a seamless, unified whole, (placing) self and world on the same scale”¹⁴ so that people might, “as in divinatory, healing and cursing rites,” live and act “in the conviction that such action will have repercussions in social and even extrasocial realms” and, conversely, “in the conviction that such action will have repercussions on themselves or on others.”¹⁵

A Marxian Metaphor: Criticism as a Scalpel

Following Jackson’s own tendencies, we must be careful, in my view, not to reproduce an ontology that privileges the humanness of poetry over and against the inhumanity and experiential poverty of instrumental life. We might equally protect against a tendency to politically privilege wholeness over the claims which the shattered bodies of other people (and our own), the gaps constitutive of our own thought and, the corrosive qualities of our most cherished ideals might make on our imaginations and upon competing accounts of ethical responsibility. This becomes especially important when we do cultural histories of capitalism or ethnographic work on specifically capitalist bodies precisely because in doing this kind of work it becomes clear that the anti-modern impulse and the romantic critique of capitalism have often served to foster the goals and aims of unjust systems of power and to bolster the moral reputation of capital. If, as I describe in this dissertation, important aspects of contemporary American late capitalism might already be properly described as exoterically romantic, esoterically instrumental, confidently Christian or ebulliently New Age, we have good reason to make sure that our hermeneutics of suspicion remain sharp. This is the case precisely because ours is an economic situation most

¹⁴ Jackson, *Paths Towards a Clearing*, 155.

¹⁵ Ibid.

of us would not describe as patently just or morally responsible. As of yet, there is precious little evidence that “spiritual” and “values” inflected capitalism or the “knowledge economy” are actually more *just* than their modern industrial predecessors even if the local efforts of people like Tom Henry must also be acknowledged.

To our detriment, we often overlook the more sophisticated discussion that surrounds Marx’s famous denunciation that religion is the “opium of the masses.” In his *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, Marx acknowledges that, “religious suffering is at once the expression of real suffering and the protest against real suffering.”¹⁶ However, Marx’s view is that religious experience creates alibis for capitalism and presents distractions that deter from the “real” work of critiquing economic conditions and dialectically overcoming the bourgeoisie’s rise to power in industrial capitalism. He writes: “religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opium of the masses. The overcoming of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness.”¹⁷ More specifically, in fact, religion is defined by Marx as a kind of theology whose operations justify an almost Gnostically inverted “spirituality” that speaks on behalf of the “whole.” He puts it this way:

Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopedia, its logic in popular form, its spiritualistic point d’honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement and the general ground for the consummation and justification of this world. It is the ghostly realization of the human essence, ghostly because the human essence possesses no true reality. The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion.¹⁸

¹⁶ Karl Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right: Introduction” in *The Portable Karl Marx*, ed. Eugene Kamenka (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 115.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 115.

I will briefly return to this point in a later chapter but it is precisely on this point of Marx's attempted conjuring away of ghosts that Jacques Derrida finds it as important to disagree with Marx just as he also finds it important to continue Marx's line of criticism. Marx, Derrida argues, misrecognizes his specific battle against the ghosts of capitalist production as a (winnable) battle against the persistence of ghosts *per se*, a view that holds out hope for the possibility of non-alienated human relationships and true species living once private property is abolished and the rule of the people by the people is realized. What Derrida's own deconstructive efforts continue, in the end, is the critique of general theories and narrative justifications of reality that occlude the gaps and spaces that must be covered over in order to speak of *reality as such*.

I too have always had a conflicted relationship with Marx's thought precisely because I do not feel that utopian cosmologies are necessary for political struggle and I fear that even the whispered possibility of utopia tends to cover up and render invisible the myriad ways in which life is ambiguous, wrought with different modalities of power and, in the end, shot through with violent exclusions and alienating fragmentations, in addition to the loving embraces. Indeed, if the work of the dissertation has renewed my commitment to a deconstructive impulse in the critique of economic storytelling, it has also forced me to confront and question some of my own deep-seated biases in ways that have helped me struggle to better articulate a method for myself that is capable of at once remaining sharply critical and able to speak to the contingencies of life as it is lived by actual people. This must include an attempt to wrest descriptions of religious experience away from the fetishized extremes that either praise its inherent morality or world transcending capacities or which,

conversely, denounce it as “false consciousness” and “unreal.”

Marx writes:

Criticism is a scalpel, a weapon; its object is to destroy its enemy...critique is not an end in itself but a means to an end. Its pathos is indignation and its essential task is denunciation. Theory also becomes a material force when it takes hold of the masses. In order for revolution to occur (wherein thought and practice meet), the needs of thought and practical needs (of people) need to correspond.¹⁹

One way of putting one important ethical consequence of my ethnographic work is that as I have learned to measure my critique against the empirical world of phenomenological experience, I have realized that if, as Marx precisely hopes, the “needs of thought and practical needs of people” are to correspond, it becomes necessary not to let either prong, theory or practice, assume a superior position. On the one hand, to revel in the messiness of practice without theoretically accounting for the systemic and institutional grounds of practice is a dangerously a-political and avoidant move. On the other hand, to focus too heavily on the theoretical architecture of one’s formal critique does violence, necessarily so, to the experiences of others since the logic and texture of practice and that of formal thought are not the same. If criticism is a scalpel, we need to make sure not to inadvertently harm people with such a potentially cutting tool. Simply put, in an effort to rail against the mystifications of a social system, capitalism, and to keep practice responsive to thought, we must not conveniently look past the irreducible ambiguity of actual people’s lives in an effort to sharpen the clarity, intensity or focus of our critiques of capital. This kind of shadow boxing can have violent consequences that we might not intend but which, in the end, do concretely matter; they have unforeseen consequences that can have material effects upon material bodies.

¹⁹ Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right,” 117.

Life on the Other Side of the Tracks

When I stepped back to broaden my consideration of why I chose to begin the dissertation by introducing some of my experiences with Sheila at the homeless shelter, many strands of possible autobiographical narration became apparent, even if my understanding of the irreducibly complex relationships that connect the various angles of approach still remains murky, reminding me that the lived qualities of experience exceed, confound and are often, in fact, obdurately uninterested in the logic of systematic thought. First of all, it is true that I derived some nerdy pleasure in softly evoking Robert Bellah's famous (and problematic) declaration that American religion has become such a privatized affair that what matters for most people are their own personal worlds around which they cobble together eclectic forms of de-politicized spirituality. Bellah's thesis has always struck me as much too coarse. My experiences with the Sheila I met at HELP Haven confounds any attempt to draw easy boundaries around collective and individual forms of religious expression, for example. My experiences with the membership of STW and the practical and intersubjective activity that has been the work of the project do likewise. I suppose that this whisper of a critique of Bellah was one "reason" I wrote about Sheila.

Second, a formal and highly intellectualized aspect of my decision has to do with my desire to keep the experiences of racial minorities, women, working people and gender non-conformists at the *center* of what is being considered. Especially given the fact that my chosen topic this time around did not provide me with the opportunity to meet too many people of color or many women, especially at the bike store, I found it important to analogically consider experiences across different sectors of the larger economy right from the onset. However, if the structuralizations of race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender within the broader American economy are of strong political and intellectual interest to me, I have

now come to understand my existential decision to introduce the theme of spirituality in economic life by recounting Sheila's story in somewhat messier ways than an exclusive focus on the conscious and explicitly political dimensions of decision making might hope to engage.

When I was a young boy, probably between the ages of seven and nine, my father, a committed and self-styled realist who, I am told, liked to engage in parodies of nuns in his play with my older sister when she was young, would solicit my help in helping to communicate with my mother about certain issues of personal safety. My father is the kind of person who has almost perfected the art of anticipating every form of imaginable danger. In this case, he worried that my mother was too lax and careless at the subway platform. I suppose he had seen her cross the yellow line or he had observed her penchant for leaning over to see if the train is coming. Like many New Yorkers, my mother would lean over *a lot*, seemingly less out a need to see where the train was or was not and more out of a desire to bring it into the station by sheer act of will. As she left the apartment to visit relatives or go to Macy's, my father, made uneasy by my mother's casual gait and posture, would ask me to plead with her to exercise due caution on the subway platform.

So, trains figure prominently in my memories of childhood. On the one hand, I spent many enjoyable days further building and playing with the Lionel train set my father had built and, on the other hand, I spent some of my more anxious boyhood moments worried that my mother would fall onto the subway tracks, considering the gruesome consequences of such a catastrophe. My father, by the way, also once placed my hand over my grandmother's forehead when she lay in her casket at the wake. He did this, he explained, to mark the cold reality of death for me. "She's not there. Just cold meat like what's in the freezer" he said. For several months after the funeral, I became a "vegetarian." I can still

recall the powerful stench at the cemetery and the associations I drew with the steaks, hamburgers and chicken legs that, until then, I had enjoyed eating. My father did all these things in an effort to educate me in a realism that had helped him survive some of his own childhood struggles growing up mixed race in Cuba, the son of a single mother and *mulata* who eked out a living as a seamstress as her husband's Spanish family lived it up in style *on the other side of the tracks*. My biological grandfather, moved by a letter my uncle wrote to him as a ten-year old boy asking the hardest of questions and demanding some answers, hanged himself. It is not what my uncle had intended, of course, but this desperate act of a guilty conscience adds another layer of tragedy to the story.

I have begun to wonder now, as an adult, whether or not the form of my own conceptualization of the body politic has something to do with this early childhood training I received from my father. In college, it became clear to me that romantic capitalism was the representation of capital most likely to disturb and unsettle me. The euphoria of the early and mid 1990s over new technology and Globalization tended to justify itself by speaking in terms of the liberation of youthful, "anti-establishmentarian" desire, the celebration of different cultural identities (and of identity, more generally) and by focusing on the fluidity of consumer experience over and against the potentially jarring realities of global production, especially the sweatshop labor that actually made many of the new totems of youth culture. I was by no means alone, of course, in my unsettling. The most sophisticated and effective attacks on the power of capital at the time often involved critiques of the brand narratives of corporations in which the reality of corporate practice was juxtaposed against the idealized stories corporations were telling about themselves. So, for example, an ad-busting poster would replace the image of a white woman runner below Nike's "Just Do It!" slogan with the image of brown *maquilladora* in an effort to call into question the

associations with feminism and women's rights that the Nike brand wanted to evoke and manage as cultural capital.

My own burgeoning political consciousness as a young adult often took as its *central* focus the dangers of market mediated consumer experiences of oneness and wholeness—of a neat sugaring over of the contradictions, instrumental commodity logic and violent relations that make ecstatic consumer experiences possible. In my powerful attraction to theories of alienation, I was a “natural” Marxist in many ways. However, my point here is to suggest some biographical details that might complicate the idea that I simply chose an intellectual tool kit as a matter of reasoned analytical thought according to the formal demands of politics. Metaphorical associations seem to demand a place in my narration. Why is it that when metaphorically describing my political commitments I have often tended to speak in terms of split and broken bodies or the cannibalization of others through the play of commodity fetish? Why are these the images that come to mind when I relate to my critique of capital as an emotional matter? Why am I fascinated by the ways in which commodity logic and commodity logic dissect consciousness, both from the inside and from the outside, separating certain aspects of ourselves and of our experiences from others, casting dismembered parts of ourselves into a stream of effects and web of relationships we cannot possibly experience? Why have I always found the thought of domination by mechanical life less frightening than celebrations of the fluidity of contemporary capitalism that cover over economic and political violence and the cold realities of commodity logic with the niceties of poetry and talk of the sublime majesty of the soul?

I have included this autobiographical foray in the dissertation to suggest that my decision to begin the narration of the dissertation with the story of Sheila's alienation and overcoming of some temporary setbacks on the *wrong side of the proverbial subway tracks* seems

to have derived some of its existential force from my associations with trains and the trail of bodies the metaphor leaves in its wake for me. In a darkly surreal turn of events, on my first day as an ethnographer, traveling back into Boston from Landry's in Natick on the commuter rail, the train was stopped for over an hour and a half because a man had placed himself on the tracks and the train I was on had run him over and had crushed him to death. The conductor "apologized for the inconvenience" in a placid voice that only increased the grotesque quality of his bureaucratic, if "necessary," gesture. Some around me giggled in horror and others gasped in disbelief. If my father worried that my mother's relationship to her immediate environment at the subway stop was not anxious enough, this event, not surprisingly, provided a shock to my system.

At the time, I experienced a powerful nauseous feeling in my gut. These were the first days of the economic collapse and I remember that I wondered if, much like the news was reporting around the country, this lost soul might also be a suicide driven to such a violent fate by circumstances beyond his control. No sooner than had I this thought, however, I had an equally powerful counter reaction. It occurred to me that I knew absolutely nothing about this person or his situation and experienced this powerful feeling that authoring the lives of others or speaking for them, as if they were inert slabs of flesh, can be gruesome. Because we work with others in such a direct way, ethnographers have a special ethical responsibility, I think, to train ourselves to remain *intersubjective* in our work. For a committed phenomenologist interested in what people say about themselves and the ways in which they narrate their own lives or describe their experiences, if there is no empirical relationship with living, breathing people, there is often not much one can say outside of doing nonetheless important theoretical work on discourse or systems analysis. To this day, in an act of what some might call "superstition," I have refused to research the

incident and to look into the identity of the man we ran over. My silence commemorates whom and what I cannot know. Refusing to tell stories and to place certain experiences within a narrative arc is an important ethical discipline and some occasions seem to demand the practice of silence, I believe.

In short, I have come to consider the ways in which my cosmology is drawn from my experiences of transferring meanings and drawing non-analytical correspondences between various kinds of bodies in ways that are simultaneously social and idiosyncratic. On the one hand, the collective metaphors and analysis of the generation that wrecked riotous havoc in Seattle by demanding the accountability of corporate narratives were of a common stock I could and did share. On the other hand, my relationship to train metaphors is existentially irreducible. My embodied work with metaphor during the course of my life represents an important and often theoretically overlooked dimension of the development of all analytical and political thought: analytical thought is shaped by our embodied metaphorical activity through the course of mundane, everyday storytelling. Michael Jackson writes that, “every story told, then, shifts elusively and continually between idiosyncratic and collective levels of meaning. Like coins and leaves, stories are Janus-faced: the surface is a reverse image of the underside.”²⁰ Hence, we can no more reduce storytelling to subjectivity than we can explain it away by simply taking recourse in an analytical appreciation for the collective grounds of social life. The *intersubjective* and negotiated qualities of storytelling are, in fact, the point. I am interested in what Jackson calls the “subtle movement to and fro between particular and totalized subjectivities.”²¹ And I

²⁰ Michael Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling—Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity* (Copenhagen : Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002), 139.

²¹ Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling*, 140.

agree with Jackson, following the work of Hannah Arendt, when he writes that the “very purpose of storytelling is to invoke and counterpoint various points of view.”²² This becomes of primary ethical concern when I consider the work of Margaret Wheatley directly in chapter 4. Here, though, I will repeat the procedure of interrogating both the social and personal qualities of metaphors when I narrate what I learned in our interviews about Tom Henry’s lived relationship to the wheel as a social and personal metaphor and conduit of cosmological relationships in light of Karin Lisa Goldschmidt-Salamon’s path breaking ethnographic work.

Globalism, “New Management” and The Dance of Universal Peace

The neo-conservative ethicist and philosopher, Francis Fukuyama, argues in his book, *Trust*, that the most successful and most productive corporations emphasize “face-to-face, egalitarian and intimate” groups working within a more “communally oriented workplace” of shared values.²³ The focus on the relationship of the individual to the group is also evident in the work of Karin Lisa Goldschmidt-Salamon, who, specifically describing the European context, argues that “command and control” management has lost favor in the profession, replaced by “holistic” and “spiritual” management techniques which, “promote techniques to further employees’ subjective identification with their corporate institutions.” Importantly, she adds, these techniques and disciplines enable the creative “self legislation” of shared values by workers.²⁴

In a second essay, published in an anthology entitled *Magic, Culture and the New*

²² Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling*, 140.

²³ Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 55.

²⁴ Karin Lisa Goldschmidt-Salamon, 'Prophets of a Cultural Capitalism: An Ethnography of Romantic Spiritualism in Business Management,' *FOLK* 44, (2003): 89-115.

Economy, Goldschmidt-Salamon writes,

During the so-called ‘New-Economy’, a romantic vocabulary of ‘genius’, ‘holism’, ‘spirit’, ‘belief’ and ‘deep values’ was re-employed in a celebration of frantic workaholism, megalomaniac self-promotion, economically promising boundary transgressions, mad genius innovators and poly-semantic, anti-rational forces. As day-to-day management continued to turn ever more functional, centralized, instrumentalist and concerned with precise measurements and accounting (according to the dictum of ‘what gets measured gets done—and turns into value), management rhetoric became romantically possessed by free innovation and eccentricity.²⁵

Nigel Thrift argues in the same anthology that, “capitalism sinks into the very fiber of our being through a kind of neuropolitics.”²⁶ He points out that, of course, the institutional attempt to produce “will-ing workers” is “surrounded by a vast penumbra of reflexivity, from business schools to management consultancy to various forms of media.”²⁷ It is perhaps unsurprising that global companies, with their structured incentives and relationships might find aspects of scientific management (with its “efficiency experts”), human relations theory (and its focus on worker sentiment and morale) and structural analysis (as tools to assist with diversification and multinationalization) appealing and important in different ways.²⁸ But people are not companies or systems and that is one of my larger points in this ethnography as a whole even if the ethnographic encounter with the people of STW has forced me to refine my position, something I will nuance in the conclusion. For now, I want to stress the following: if we simply assume that workers do

²⁵ Karin Lisa Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Possessed by Enterprise: Values and Value Creation in Mandrake Management” in *Magic, Culture and the New Economy*, ed. Ovrar Löfgren and Robert Willim (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 52-53.

²⁶ Nigel Thrift, “Making Sense: An Afterward” in *Magic, Culture and the New Economy*, ed. Ovrar Löfgren and Robert Willim (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 135.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

²⁸ Mauro Guillén, *Models of Management—Work, Authority, and Organization in Comparative Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 90.

what companies tell them to do, we provide additional political cover to economic elites and we fail to do justice to the richness of the lives of persons whose relationships to capital are exceedingly more interesting. Along with Sartre, I feel that we must encounter the actual living out of capitalist relationships on the ground. If we want to “comprehend” how and why capitalism as a system reproduces itself we must, to borrow from Foucault, engage the ways in which its disciplines are actually embodied by people giving ethical shape to their lives.

In the essay which is my focus here, “‘Going Global from the Inside Out’: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace,” Karin Lisa Goldschmidt-Salamon takes issue with the idea that the discourse of Globalization, as a public narrative, actually describes phenomena that are altogether new. She writes:

A complex system of integrated world trade and communication has been in existence for more than a century. An open, international economy involving significant transnational investments of capital and massive exchange of goods across continents is thus not a recent phenomena. The globalization of the economy has risen in total figures, as the total amount of transnational trade has grown (and fluctuated) massively during the past hundred years. In relative terms, however, economic globalization was as significant prior to the First World War.²⁹

On the one hand, Goldschmidt-Salamon considers the fact that: “with certain reservations as to the novelty and social diffusion (to the less privileged) of globalization,” it is still, nevertheless, possible to argue that “world society has reached a higher level of complexity” and that this world is indeed characterized by “more unexpected and unpredictable changes and, above all, more interlinked dependencies and interdependencies.”³⁰ However, she also

²⁹ Karin Lisa Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace” in *New Age Religion and Globalization*, ed. Mikael Rothstein (Denmark: Aarhus University Press), 151.

³⁰ Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace,” 151.

contends that it is impossible to assume an empirically grounded position that affords the “observing sociologist” the kind of “astronaut’s angle of vision” or the perspective of a “prophet” who can see the ways in which “the trans-regional interactions might add up to the whole global system, in which all parts are mutually dependent.”³¹ In other words, to have phenomenological knowledge of the global system, to experience it as the unifying totality of discourse, would require a “constructed extra-planetary perspective.”³² In the end, Goldschmidt-Salamon wants to simultaneously hold that interpenetrating structural effects are real and that, as it becomes the subject of discourse and science, “this ‘global system’ (becomes) a theoretical and social construction and a matter of ideological references and cosmology.”³³

In addition to making the critical phenomenological point that individual and cosmic perspectives cannot be finally collapsed, Goldschmidt-Salamon’s work also suggests the concrete, political force of this observation. Even if the metaphorical form of capital shifts and capitalism “goes global,” certain structural conditions of capitalism might still persist relatively unchanged. Exchange value comes to mind. Structural inequalities might even intensify at the same time that equality becomes one of the explicit values of new management. Put another way, capital and social violence still remain concentrated and are not distributed equally around the circumference of the globe. Goldschmidt-Salamon importantly reminds us: “even though finance is global, most people of the Globe have no access to any sort of investments. And where armed conflicts draw their technological

³¹ Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace,” 151.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

resources from global arms markets, most killings remain local issues involving very little transnational concern or intervention.”³⁴

Goldschmidt-Salamon would seem to be in agreement with the progressive economist Joel Magnuson, who argues that institutionalized economic relationships affect the “the nature of certain social relationships” in multiple and radiating ways. She would also seem to agree with Sartre that our attempt to view the “system” or the “whole” from the place of experience will fail even if we might reproduce cosmologies that reassure us of our place in a social and greater universe that escapes us. Goldschmidt-Salamon argues that, in the end, “both positions might be argued together, as they relate to different ontological levels.”³⁵ Here, in this particular essay, Goldschmidt-Salamon focuses on the practices of “self-reflexive globalizers” who imagine the world as a “globe.”

According to Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Globalism” in management is “an ideological formation that intersects business strategies and management ideology with new forms of spirituality and a strong belief in a single, global system and world-society.”³⁶ Choosing to engage one “particular version” of Globalism as “a goal and cultural icon in itself,” Goldschmidt-Salamon examines how “the formation is produced by a number of business consultants, entrepreneurs, management academics and corporate managers in their writings, social rituals and organizational strategies.”³⁷ Goldschmidt-Salamon puts one of her ethnographic queries in an exceedingly helpful way, for my own purposes in this dissertation.

³⁴ Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace,” 151.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 152.

³⁷ Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace,” 152.

She writes:

I find it semantically paradoxical that individual, earthly identity and happiness are articulated in terms of a global consciousness and existence, when actual life is lived as such close proximity to the earth's surface that a global perspective is unobtainable (for anyone who happens not to be an astronaut).³⁸

A consideration for me is this: if we create correspondences between worlds as a phenomenological matter, what basis is there for distinguishing cases between the existential drive for integrity and our theoretical accounts of the whole? If Sheila and most working people, certainly most people around the world experience barriers to movement, what ethical obligation do those tracking the new global cosmology of capitalism have to highlight the fact that, as Goldschmidt-Salamon puts it: “the global condition ideally portrayed here is only for the few—those elites who have their right to belong to those for whom obstacles are removed.”³⁹ And in our cutting critiques, what ethical obligation is there to respect the phenomenological drive for health, the resolution of crisis and a livable peace with the world? Goldschmidt-Salamon herself provides some answers and my ethnographic work with Tom Henry also proved exceedingly instructive as I considered this quandary.

In her ethnography, Goldschmidt-Salamon is specifically interested in the ways in which the managers and workers who are drawn to workplace Globalism, “attempt a re-articulation of business to an individual spiritual pursuit of global dimensions (and how) this re-articulation takes place mainly through a re-definition of the workplace in spiritual terms.”⁴⁰ Methodologically, Goldschmidt-Salamon approaches the knotty question of how to

³⁸ Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace,” 152.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 152.

“define” “spirituality” this way:

Following ethnographic tradition, I let the informants and the practitioners of the field define the central concept of their ideology, rather than trying to conclude on a single, synthetic meaning of the concept, as seen from the “outside.” Definitions differ from convinced belief in ‘common consciousness’ and higher spiritual orders as inspirational sources to managers (cf. Salamon 2000a) to less metaphysical, more Human Potential inspired understandings.⁴¹

According to Goldschmidt-Salamon, “spirituality” in the workplace often gets operationalized as “values based management” which appropriates “concepts usually associated with religious traditions—such as path, mission, vision, preacher and spiritual intuition.”⁴² She adds to this that the traditional resources for the larger phenomena of spiritual management are diverse: Asian management theory such as Japanese production-systems, classic eastern religious traditions, European romanticism, aspects of American Puritanism, modern New Age spiritualism, Gestalt psychology, Human Potential and other holistic approaches.⁴³

The “new managerial teachings and practices” Goldschmidt-Salamon writes about, as I mentioned earlier, focus on “methods for creating and maintaining a stable organizational identity and solid loyalty from employees whilst keeping the workforce flexible and the organization-structures fluid in ever more competitive transnational markets.”⁴⁴ More basic, Goldschmidt-Salamon suggests, is the general acknowledgment in the management discourse that the “creation of economic value depends on their ability to

⁴¹ Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace,” 153.

⁴² Ibid., 154.

⁴³ Ibid., 156.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 155.

create and organizationally maintain particular modes of symbolic production and cultural references.”⁴⁵ Something that I confirm time and again in my own research, spirituality in the workplace, just as Goldschmidt-Salamon suggests, is often described as a set of “globally valid phenomena, addressed in holistic and monistic terms.”⁴⁶ And it is a cosmology that must be internalized. Goldschmidt-Salamon quotes Cynthia Barnum, the founder of *Consulting Network International, Inc.*:

And because globalization requires a commitment that won't quit, it must become part of you, part of your belief and value system. To do this you have to personally internalize the global experience in a powerful way. Doing this will affect your most intimately held beliefs, but only you have the power to decide what's important at the core level. Unless globalization means something to this inner part of you, you will never become sufficiently motivated to acquire new attitudes, new skills, and the knowledge necessary to profit personally and professionally from globalization...Awareness of global interconnectedness is the key...regardless of how the awareness began, it generally culminates in a sense of global citizenship.⁴⁷

According to Goldschmidt-Salamon, it is a common feature of the management practices and discourses she studies to assume that “the global must come from within each individual and can only arise from individual transformations of consciousness and values.”⁴⁸ In the movement towards this paradigm of labor subjectivity, “old-style, bureaucratic, top-down mechanistic systems of creating rational order in the production are viewed as negative, anti-human, mechanistic and void of spiritual enlightenment.”⁴⁹ Moving towards “an organic, holistic, all-encompassing and spiritualized corporate culture” often entails an implicit

⁴⁵ Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace,” 155.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 157.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 159.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 160.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

critique of the “divisions in social life as symptoms of a destructive ‘fragmentation (that) pervades society” and enjoins the view that “the goal of the company can and should accordingly be encompassed in each individual worker’s ideals of existence.”⁵⁰

Of particular interest to me in light of the ethnographic narrations I presented in the last chapter and in light of the work of Margaret Wheatley, whom I discuss later in the dissertation, are some of Goldschmidt-Salamon’s descriptions of the “commodification of multiculturalism and also of various spiritual reform movements in the business world.”⁵¹ These rituals, inculcating the mythos of a borderless world, tend to follow a “pick-and-choose use of traditional rituality, (whereas) the mono-culturalism of the work practices and the all-encompassing capitalist consumer culture remain relatively unchanged.”⁵² These rituals can include *dance*. When Goldschmidt-Salamon did fieldwork at the “1998 International Conferences on Business and Spirituality” in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, she was able to witness business consultants from “20 nations” partaking in,

-called Dances of Universal Peace, honoring all spiritual traditions... (including) chant for Krishna, recitation of Sufi love mysticism, medieval, Spanish, Christian Aramaic and biblical Hebrew songs that all were supposed to sing together whilst dancing in a circle with the other men and women present.

Goldschmidt-Salamon concedes that her experience of the dances, meant to be “ecumenically global and in respect of cultural hybridity,” differed from those of her fellow participants. Where she observed “a holistic, monistic, markedly Western and mainly Christian rooted discourse of universalism and globalism,” the organizers and her “fellow-

⁵⁰ Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace,” 161.

⁵¹ Ibid., 165.

⁵² Ibid.

participants in the dance” explained that, for them, the “Universal dances represented the cosmological and spiritual approach they want to introduce in corporate settings.”⁵³

My only critique of Goldschmidt-Salamon’s path-breaking essay is that, while she recognizes the diverse sources that make their way into the “monoculture” of “spirituality in the workplace,” including traditional Christian theology, she ends up assuming a final perennialist orientation among its champions. She writes,

(Globalism) individualizes ritual experience and celebrates experiences of an ‘authenticity’ that is also simultaneously constructs as a perennialist mythology of holistic monism, neglecting materialist analytical understandings and historical perspectives. It attempts to reconstruct the workplace as a holistic community of positive believers and business as a spiritual pursuit, all within the Oneness of global capitalism.⁵⁴

One must, of course, contextualize Goldschmidt-Salamon’s analysis within the European scene she mostly explores. However, in the case of STW, as I will describe in chapter, 4, very traditional Christian theological concepts are made to partner, even silently so, with “new management” and it is not so much “perennialist” philosophy that inspires the quest but, rather, theological appropriations of the so-called “new science” of Quantum mechanics and chaos and complexity theory. When Goldschmidt-Salamon writes that Globalism in management implies “a view of society as a hybrid, morphing form in which multitudes of individual cells communicate and exchange,”⁵⁵ in the STW literature and ritual meetings this same view is attributed to the nature of the Body of Christ and to the work of management theorists who conceive of the world as an interpenetrating network of loops that constitute the “living system” as a whole. In what follows, I will explore the ways in which this view of

⁵³ Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace,” 166.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 169.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 162.

the dynamic play of form and deformation, a version of idea that dancers perform but are performed by the dance which was introduced in formally and offhandedly at roundtable meetings, is entwined, for Tom Henry, with the biographically invested metaphor of the wheel.

Theatricality, Poetry and Quantum Science: Tom Henry's Spiritual Power

Tom Henry is currently the General Manager of *Landry's* Bicycles, which he co-owns along with his older brother Peter and sister in law, Jeanne. Tom is a well-known fixture in the local and national biking worlds, especially in activist circles. Much like “spirituality in the workplace,” biking activism began to grow in the 1990s, only to explode, comparatively, in recent years. According to Tom, when he and others decided to establish “the first industry-wide lobbying effort in Washington” in 1999, there were only twelve members of the biking community who “went to share our vision with Congress” about the need to increase bike lanes and to improve the social infrastructure for biking, more generally. A decade later, upwards of 700 activists converge on Washington, compelled by a passion for biking and the conviction that the world would be a far better place if we biked more and drove our cars less.

Tom's résumé in the biking universe is impressive and his accomplishments concrete. Tom served as the President of the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition, MassBike, for three years. Among other advocacy successes, Massbike have successfully lobbied for the expansion of hours during which bikes can be brought onto Boston subway trains and for the creation of “safe bicycle routes for students.”⁵⁶ Margaret Benefiel, who is a fellow traveler in the work of STW and a professor of spirituality and leadership studies at

⁵⁶ Margaret Benefiel, *The Soul of a Leader: Finding Your Path to Success and Fulfillment* (New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 2008), 45.

Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, profiles Tom in her most recent book, *The Soul of a Leader—Finding Your Path to Success and Fulfillment*. She writes:

Tom also invited partners to help strengthen the National Bike Summit, held annually in Washington, D.C. Founded in 2001, the National Bike Summit lobbies legislators regarding cycling issues. As the Bike Summit, sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists and industry representatives can attend presentations dealing with legislation affecting cycling. They can also take the opportunity to lobby legislators and to recognize government officials who have helped improve conditions for cycling in America. For example, in 2005, Sen. John Kerry, in accepting the National Bicycle Advocacy award, spoke about how honored he felt to receive it, having been a bicycle enthusiast since childhood.⁵⁷

It was under the rubric of these efforts that Tom reported to the STW membership gathered around the roundtable that he and his fellow advocates had met with the Obama Secretary of Transportation. Certainly, from what I gathered during my many meetings with Tom hopes to affect history on the state and national levels through his biking and through his activism.

During the two-year stretch during which I conducted most of my empirical research, I would, of course, see Tom at the store, where he keeps his office, and would also see him at the roundtable meetings. In addition to this, we would meet periodically for luncheon meetings during which we would do formal interviews that I audio-taped. If one ever needs to be reminded that biographies, like all narratives, are not lives, interviewing someone with such a rich life story like Tom quickly does the trick. There is much from our interviews that I simply cannot even begin to pursue here.

Our first ever meeting was at Legal Seafood in Harvard Square and it was also one of the most interesting. Tom, who is fifty six, is in many ways a dream conversation partner for someone undertaking ethnographic work on the self-reflexive narratives of self-styled

⁵⁷ Benefiel, *The Soul of a Leader*, 45.

‘spiritual’ reformers of capitalism within business management.⁵⁸ Tom received his M.Div at Andover-Newton in the early 1980s, was a former professional actor who worked closely with Herbert Blau, the performance theorist and director of experimental theater, and is exceedingly well read. A modern day Renaissance man, I came to expect that almost anything could come up at one of our meetings. That first time we met for a formal, taped interview, Tom started off by telling me about a conversation he and other leaders of STW had with Mark Wallace, a professor of religion at Swarthmore College who had recently written a piece on the group.⁵⁹ He explained that the group had discussed “kenotic leadership” (from the Greek *Kenosis* to indicate self-emptying), Christian “metaphors, ideas and stories,” “Green” living, the “biosphere,” “biotic” ethics and, differences between pantheism and panentheism. Tom explained that what is at stake in the difference between pantheism and panentheism has interested him since the early 1980s, as he was making the transition from the theater to seminary.

Pantheism, he explained, holds that “nature itself is sacred” or divine and contrasted this perspective to panentheist thought, in which God is considered to be irreducible. Tom, who worried that he was getting off topic, reassured me that “these ideas will round about to my own story.” I, of course, was increasingly *fascinated*. Since I am myself highly interested in cosmological relationships and politics, Tom had himself provided a wonderful window for entering into the kinds of questions that I will write about here. Tom set the stage by taking matters back to biblical times.

⁵⁸ Henry, Tom. Interview by author. Audio digital recording. Cambridge, MA., 26 January 2009.

⁵⁹ Mark I. Wallace, [Draft] “Salvation Capitalism: Management as Sacred Mission in a Time of Crisis,” (paper presented at the Theology of Institutions Seminar, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 10-11, 2009), accessed Sept 29, 2010, <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/leaderdevel/TOI/TOIpdf2/Wallacepaperreformat.pdf>.

“In the Hebrew scriptures,” he said, God is “clearly defined as holy other ground;” “They are ambivalent about the pantheist idea that God and nature are one.” Whether it is “the burning bush or visions at Mt. Sinai,” in the Bible, Tom explained, God is “always shifting.” “The prophet goes back to the same place and God’s not there.” There is “a tension,” he continued, “between the site of revelation and the presence of God.” Panentheism, which is attributed to the process theology of Alfred Whitehead, he explained, claims not that “everything is God” but, rather, that “God is in everything.” For Tom, the difference between pantheism and panentheism is ultimately that each deploy a “different kind of gapping...spatial arrangement in the architecture of things.”

Tom did finally “round” things back to his story when I asked him if and why he thought the distinction was important. He explained that his own “spiritual journey, or, mental model, really” revolves around remaining careful not to engage in a “romanticizing or sacramentalizing (of) things and losing a hold of things as they are.” “Nothing except the thing it is.” He stressed the point: “I think I said this to you many times but it’s a touchstone for me, an absolutely defining idea for me, and that is the Wallace Steven’s poem, “The Snowman”.” Tom recited the poem from memory, explaining afterwards that what he finds so important and moving is that the poem introduces “this way of perceiving,” especially in the line with which it ends: “For the listener, who listens in the snow/And, nothing himself, beholds/ Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.” I reminded Tom that the first time he and I ever met, which was over coffee at Starbuck’s, he had also referenced the poem.

Excitedly, Tom recalled our conversation and reminded me that Wallace Stevens also once said in a “book of theory” that “poetry changes nothing but at least it changes that.” Having just had to explain the same thing to a grant writer that STW had hired to make their

case with foundations, Tom explained to me that, “nothingness also implies an emptiness, a void, an absence” and added that, “in that absence, something shifts.” He returned to an earlier point, saying: “you don’t want to lose a hold on what is there, things as they are” but then also continued, at length, to discuss the supreme importance of “imagination, wonderment, absence, a sense of your own absence.”

One of the most illuminating segments of any of our interviews occurred next, when Tom, who had been a valuable member of Herbert Blau’s experimental theater group, KRAKEN, spoke about his personal performance theory and what he believes happens in the encounter between an actor, a role and the audience. He described actors’ presence as “that something that we can’t quite define where you begin to see yourself in the other person and to feel something larger than the person who is there.” He called this “some kind of knowing, some kind of awareness” and added that this is “what you look for in great art and certainly in great theater.” Presence for Tom though is “directly relational, it’s in a direct relationship to their absence.” Tom recalled that one of his theater directors once went to see Marlon Brando in *The Iceman Cometh* and had described to Tom the ways in which Brando had literally become “an icicle” because he was “that frozen, that absent.” Continuing, Tom said that “an absence *cycled* through presence, death and life, living, breathing and dying all coexisting” is what he finds beautiful about acting, poetry and the imagination. Tom made a point next that I now read differently. He explained that there was a new book out that discussed the fate of the biosphere after humans. “It’s an interesting experiment,” Tom suggested, “if I am the perceiver, what happens if I am not there perceiving it? What is there?”

For my purposes in this present chapter, it makes sense to pause and consider a few issues before moving on to the road that took Tom from the world of theater to the stage of

business. Until I had to research the work of Margaret Wheatley and other creativity inspired management theorists, I had little awareness of the ways in which major principles from “new science” were being actively introduced into organizational science. When Tom made the last comment above over lunch at Legal Seafood, I took it to simply as an extension of his interest in the dynamism of poetry and performance theory. Now, in retrospect, I realize that in the discursive world of STW and the influence Margaret Wheatley and Peter Senge have there, I need to also consider it an echo of the quantum idea that the observer evokes reality, an idea popularly expressed by the principle “Schroedinger’s cat.” Again, I shall return to Wheatley later in the dissertation but for now, her description of the principle will help me illuminate a specific point. In her now classic manifesto, *Leadership and the New Science—Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, Wheatley writes:

A live cat is placed in a box. The box has solid walls, so no one outside the box can see into it. This is a crucial factor, since the thought experiment explores the role of the observer in evoking reality. Inside the box, a device will trigger the release of either poison or food; the probability of either occurrence is 50/50. Time passes. The trigger goes off, unobserved. The cat meets its fate. Or does it? Just as an electron is both a wave and a particle until our observation causes it to collapse as either a particle or a wave, Schroedinger argues that the cat is both alive and dead until the moment we observe it. Inside the box, when no one is watching, the cat exists only as a probability wave.⁶⁰

For my part, I am sure that the life or death of the cat would matter to whatever kittens it might have or to its loving caretakers in ways that quite differ from the supposed impact the steely gaze of the quantum scientist who has come to think of cats like wave particles might have on its living, breathing reality. *Here, what I want to highlight is the fact that Tom Henry’s question might simultaneously represent a cultural dominant, the popularization of quantum scientific*

⁶⁰ Margaret Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.), 61.

principles, what Foucault might speak of in epistemic terms, and also speak to his personal background in theater and love for poetry, especially Wallace Stevens. In other words, power operates in misty ways that have some solidity (patterns of intersubjective experience) but which can allow Herbert Blau and Jacques Derrida through him to wed Margaret Wheatley in or as the Body of Christ. As it is lived, power is, in other words, liquid.

If what I suggest is possible, it becomes unsurprising, then, that Tom Henry immediately added this “quantum” touch to his personal theology: “my own instinct is formed around the idea that reality, truthfulness, the thing to be perceived, is in motion, it’s an a state of flux. It’s been so many years since I read theology but I think it was a process theologian who talked about the panentheism idea, it keeps a little distance between the Ultimate Knower and the reality.” Tom said quite emphatically that: “nothing could be more relevant to business.” Tom explained that he had just had to explain the importance of STW to the group’s newly hired grant writer and that one of the things they had discussed was, “the fixity of a certain core. There are certain things that just aren’t negotiable. Woe be unto you if you do not do something that is socially redeeming.”

A systematic theologian will likely be most interested in investigating what is discursively meant by “core” in the theology of STW and how that core gets articulated. Given the particular interests I have as an ethnographer, I will take the opportunity to focus exclusively on the related set of metaphors of “core,” “center,” “cycle,” “world,” “whole” and “wheel” in Tom Henry’s life and consider the ways in which these are conduits for linking his world to the Globalism Karin Goldschmidt-Salamon writes about and for considering the ways in which his deployment of circular metaphors are finally irreducible.

Picking up Tom’s declaration that work must be socially responsible, he explained to me that whenever his mother would take him to the theater or to see a work of art, she

would ask him “what redeeming value it had for society;” he confessed that her lessons about the social value of art had stuck with him all these years later. The importance of these childhood lessons for his work in business is obvious to Tom. He strongly believes that “in terms of building a company...a connection to a higher sense of purpose, is really important for the *esprit du corps*, the joy, the sense of meaning.” Tom believes that we, in fact, hunger for meaning. Waxing somewhat rhapsodical, Tom confessed that, “personally, I have always felt that nothing less than a chorus of angels descending from heaven is ever enough for any of us. Some romantic poet said that.” “Nothing but containing the universe will ever satisfy me,” he continued, “I resonate with that.”

We should consider the relationship between Tom’s thoughts here and Karin Lisa Goldschmidt-Salamon’s ethnography. Is this an example of the quest and desire for the ideal Goldschmidt-Salamon talks about: the single individual that “contains the global”? Does Tom Henry mirror her observation that workplace spirituality “presents opportunities for the individual to gain self-knowledge, greater consciousness of existence and greater opportunities for living out dreams and potentials”?⁶¹ I feel that one can indeed read Tom’s comments in light of Goldschmidt-Salamon’s observations that “values based management speaks in favor of creating a general, overall sense of purpose in organizations and having employees imbibe particular cultural values.”⁶² In other words, one can consider his comments, as my own thoughts and musings must also be considered, within the context of “cultural dominants” in the contemporary cosmological form of capital. However, one must also simultaneously read them in light of Henry’s valued relationships and formative

⁶¹ Goldschmidt-Salamon, “Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace,” 162.

⁶² Ibid., 154.

experiences as an individual. In short, Tom is, as we all are, an idiosyncratic and historical subject.

To get back on track, then, at least with my discrete purposes here, I resume my description of the interview at the point where I told Tom that is sounded like the issue of pantheism and panentheism and the gaping of the space or non-space between God and creation was also at issue for some favorite theologians from my youth, namely Reinhold Niebuhr, who worked hard not to collapse the ideal of Love with the reality of Justice. At this point, Tom began a rather remarkable soliloquy. I will quote it at length. Tom said:

I was so informed by Niebuhr and by Barth. It's got to be almost unconscious for me at this point. But so is also a lot of modern poetry making that distinction. Really, the thing that fascinates me about the Renaissance was watching how the imagination of the activity of the divine and the presence of the divine have shifted from religious imagery, which was "all times present at one time" so that the Crucifixion of Christ and the Italian emperor are co-existing in the same picture because, really, all time is kind of a reflection on eternal time in the Middle Ages, in Medieval thinking. And there are symbols. Perspective doesn't matter because meditation upon these religious symbols is the way to knowledge. And whole knowing. And grace...And then the adoration of the human form. Pretty soon we are taking cadavers and looking at every muscle. And you see paintings by Botticelli and you feel that the revelation of the Madonna, of the feminine principle, of God, and of Christ is enacted in the very presence of human flesh. Human flesh becomes imbued with divinity, which is completely different than Medieval paintings. You see that kind of awakening of everyday life, the human, the present moment, this moment in history. You see the emergence of perspective, which is a penetration of reality. It's essentially, it's virtually a sexual penetration and a control over nature. By the time you get to Wallace Stevens, to Picasso, to Cézanne, the impressionist painters, they are breaking that down. They are breaking the hold of perspective, that highly organized, from a single point, from a single point of power that sees and organizes all of reality. That's being broken by the impressionists...These are all movements from the Renaissance ultimately to the death of God because there is no longer an organized **center** to the idea of God because the Protestant sects have broken into 500 different denominations or—and this is how my mind works—you think about the connection between—it wasn't Luther but the guy who was the first guy to hand the loaf of bread, the bread of the sacrament, to the parishioners and have them break it themselves. I see the connection between that and the emergence of Renaissance perspective in painting. There is a direct relationship between that—handing the bread to the parishioners and not the

priests and the emergence of Bottacelli, the Renaissance, seeing the divinity in the human form, and the emergence of the city state, the breaking of the Roman Empire, new armies. These are shifts in power, these are shifts in perception, these are shifts in religious ideas. I think at Seeing Things Whole we are trying to create a new kind of shift.⁶³

Certainly by these and other comments, it became clear to me rather quickly that Tom considers his life on cosmological and world historical terms, as one might expect of a “spiritual reformer” of capital. In what follows I turn to an intriguing aspect of Tom’s “spiritual discipline”—the ways in which it is kept in motion, at least in part, by the synecdochic and therapeutic metaphor of the wheel and its close circular cousins.

The Moral Center of the Wheel

The first time I spoke to Tom, he explained to me that he likes to give jobs to kids who have somehow had it rough. In taking on at risk youth, Tom explained that he hopes to give them meaning in a life full of transient and uncertain moments. He believes that work can provide a center. Also true, I gathered from our interviews, is that *the wheel is at the center of Tom’s biography of work*. This is the story I will now tell and with which I conclude this chapter.

Tom was born in Gloucester, MA and moved to Exeter, NH when he was very young. His family was Congregationalist and attended at United Church of Christ (UCC) church. There was no crucifix, he recalled, only an “abstracted cross.” The white church only had clear glass. Along with Herbert Blau and Dick Broholm, Tom considers the minister, George Booth, one of the three most important mentors in his life. He said that he “preached sermons that revolved around “*the world*,” justice. Civil Rights and the Vietnam War.” Pastor Booth, Tom qualified, was a critic of the war but he was not an “uncritical protestor” either.

⁶³ Henry, Tom. Interview by author. Audio digital recording. Cambridge, MA., 26 January 2009.

When he was a boy, one of his best friends was a Catholic and Tom remembers thinking that the stained glass windows and the incense of this boy's world seemed “weird” and “cultish.” Now, he chalks this attitude up to his parochial upbringing. Tom’s admits that his religious education was thick though progressive and mainline. Looking back, he realizes that he was “informed by that kind of mainstream Protestant tradition” that trained him in biblical exegesis at an early age and exposed him to liberation theology early in life. The church building was at the “*center* of the town,” he recalls, and Saturday potluck dinners at the Church were the *center* of social life. One thing he still appreciates about his religious upbringing is that “George was widely traveled around the *world*” and that, in keeping with the virtue of the Protestant tradition in “being critical of itself,” Tom remembers growing up knowing that one can be judged for one’s “materialism” and for one’s “ignorance of the world.” Are Tom’s *post-facto* memories more examples of the privileged ideal of globalism in the management world that Karin Goldschmidt-Salamon discusses? Yes, this would seem plausible. But they are also narrations of Tom’s own life, a life that needs neither Goldschmidt-Salmon’s assessments nor my own curiosities about it to exist.

Tom’s father was a chemical engineer who worked as the plant manager at a local textiles plant. The plant was owned by a family who trusted Tom’s father and who treated him well. The plant, Tom explained, “was right on the river” and, he added, “it still had, I have one at my house, the old wooden *wheel* with leather belts that drove the weaving machinery in this big old factory.” Tom explained that, “it had since gone to fossil fuels to drive the engines and electricity and all that so the *water wheel* was no longer working. But it was there.” In addition to the wooden wheel he has conserved, Tom said there were also “big, old, wooden pulleys” in the factory and that he has turned one of them into a coffee table that sits in his “sun room.” The bond between workplace and home was tight. “Work

and house were close. There was the river, there was the church.” Since the family lived right next door and Tom’s father was able to walk to work. Tom, for his part, “developed a real love of workplaces.” He especially loved being around the forklifts. Introspectively, Tom added: “in many ways I feel like I am trying to recreate my life in Exeter...to recreate this kind of amazing town.” I remember thinking at the time that not only does Landry’s share with Tom’s father’s plant the fact that it is family owned--in this case by Tom, his brother and sister in law---but I also recalled that Tom often speaks of the importance of treating his employees like family. The Henrys have recently announced plans to convert Landry’s into an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) company and have begun to plot out what they call a “succession plan.”⁶⁴

However, Tom’s own father, for his part, found out the hard way that businesses often do not run like families. The factory was bought by “Milliken & Company,” which was “taking over the textile industry in America.” When they took over, Tom explained, the new brass “brought in all the management from Carolina” and “brought my father down there for training and all this new management theory.” At the time ownership switched hands, the family “had moved out to the countryside” because Tom’s father had, until that point, been doing very well.” It was Tom’s mother’s “dream house.” For a while, Tom’s father did well at Milliken & Company and life in the country could continue.

Before things fell apart for Tom’s father at Milliken, there was first a change in management strategy at the company. As Tom put it: “there was this incredible drive for bonding with all the workers. All of these guys from South Carolina came in. My father was

⁶⁴ Tom likes this corporate structure because he wants employees, through stock ownership, to have leadership investment in the company. The idea of collective ownership amongst a chosen core group of employees also appeals to Tom’s view that Landry’s is a family.

hosting parties out at our house in Kensington, which is right outside of Exeter.” At this point in the story, Tom seemed especially interested in foregrounding the rural aspects of his home life, telling me about the vegetables they grew, the sheep he was raising for his 4H project, the barn he and his father built and, the tractors they owned. “It was this whole kind of rural thing we were into. The guy next door was a farmer. The guy down the street was a farmer. I was living that life at one point, which even then seemed amazing.” Sadly, this idyllic world was rudely disrupted by the realities and eventualities of corporate life. Milliken & Company demanded more and more of Tom’s father’s time. In the end, Tom’s father wanted to spend more time with his family and did not oblige. Tom explained: “family is sacred to him. He wanted to be home for dinner and on weekends. He didn’t care. He was a very independent guy.” Tom says that the day his father was fired was “a big, defining moment of his life.”

Interestingly for my discussion in this chapter, Tom went on to surmise that one of the problems might have been the change in leadership. He put it this way: “*when you start changing leadership, a lot of the spokes come out of the wheel because you are talking often about, you know, culture shift and loyalties and all these ties that bind and they start to come apart. Churches, organizations...when a leader goes, lots changes.*” At this point, when Tom’s father had finally lost his job, the family was forced to leave their magical “green house in the country,” moving to Sharon, MA, where Tom still lives.

The next time Tom mentions a major crossroads involving work and vocation in his life is also the next time Tom mentions a *wheel*. Having worked with Herbert Blau at Oberlin, Tom had signed on to work with his professor’s theater group and very much enjoyed life as an actor. When Blau disbanded the group, however, Tom explained that he was lost and “didn’t know what to do.” He briefly went to work for his brother, Peter, who was already in

the bike business. At first, Tom said, “I couldn’t stand it!” “This is horrible!” Tom recalls that one day he was “just standing at a work bench and I was *showing wheels* and standing under these florescent lights and I was in so much grief about the end of the theater work. I think I was angry in those days.” It was at that moment, a moment which to him felt absurd, that Tom decided to go to seminary, just as his father had predicted, and despite the fact that he lacked traditional theological commitments, preferring instead the “spirituality” of theater and poetry and their play with absence and presence. Once there, his fellow students at Andover-Newton sometimes accused Tom of “not having faith” because he could not confidently describe, represent or speak about God. Tom recalls that in those days he simply felt the urge to say to flip off these detractors, many of whom he felt were “anti-intellectual.” Tom’s unorthodox humanism coupled with his strong appreciation for and command of Christian literature has made him a valuable conversation partner, Dick Broholm once told me. What matters for me, here, is that, from Tom’s perspective, his deep agnosticism and ambivalence about “churchly” things is actually an attempt to make good on the injunction against idolatry. It is a working of, with and in the gaps that separate the “Great Knower” from all knowers even as the panentheist relationship between human and divine is entwined in a play of absence and presence, lightness and darkness or, in other words, the interminable *cycles* of imagination Tom likes to talk about.

Many months after our first formal interview, during another long conversation over lunch, wheels again appeared at key moments of Tom’s narrations.⁶⁵ Much like in our other interviews, Tom came back time and again to his experiences in the theater. “Theater,” he said, “is in many ways a spiritual discipline because it’s a kind of confession, a kind of

⁶⁵ Henry, Tom. Interview by author. Audio digital recording. Cambridge, MA., 20 June 2008.

revelation, a kind of prayer.” “Theater acting at its best is fundamentally about revealing something. How do you come to know true love of God, self and other? Most theater is about that. The failure of that. The tragedy of that. The success of that.” I noted the ways in which Tom contextualized acting as a play of form and formlessness accomplished by “self emptying.” “One part of the actor,” he said, “has to do with the teleology, the goals and objectives of the scene, the larger arc of the movement. What is the arc of this play? *The arc of history*. The movement towards justice and love. Every play has an arc. You have to also *track* that. But you also have to be present to the thing as it is.” While reality shifts for Tom, there is a core that persists and orients the dynamism of life. At several points in my ethnographic work with Tom, he referred to this center as Love. Love is a risky business, as we will see.

Demon Possession and the Cycles of Virtue and Vice

“The ability to let yourself be possessed” is a necessary part of the spiritual discipline of theater, Tom said. What I want to now consider more fully is the motion of coming in and out of one’s self and one’s role, of the *semi-circular movement of form and formlessness* since this comes up, as a strong pattern, in the management theory inspired by so-called “new science.” For example, Margaret Wheatley argues that one can only see dimly and only in the midst of a fog of borders that collapse and reconstitute themselves, also implying a swaying motion between self and other. *In order to bring more light into the environment, intimate acquaintance with the darkness is required, a theme which I also noted at the roundtable meetings and a mechanism which implies circular movements of ascent and descent.*

The *demonic*, a word Tom uses a lot, is the power of unconscious possession. Companies and organizations can become trapped by “*cycles of power*” in which certain behaviors are reinforced without conscious thought or moral awareness. The competitive

free market, Tom explains, says that “there is *no central control* but it says you can save, accumulate money...whoever has the idea, find the need...this wild, competitive, free ranging kind of thing. Some people have a faith in that.” Our strengths need to be brought back together and made “*whole*,” Tom tells me, if we are going to have any chance at all to withstand the demonic forces that allow corruption to become endemic. In fact, Tom credits his work with STW in guiding him to take a principled stand against an industry trend that he thinks was driving a “race to the bottom” that would have wrecked havoc on independent bike retail.⁶⁶ When Specialized, one of the major American bike retailers, announced plans to go “big box” and expand the market within stores like Wal-Mart, its CEO told industry leaders that more profit could be made all around. To the independent bike shops, like Landry’s, he said that “big box” bikes would mean a greater demand for bike repairs. With a wink and a nod, the CEO of Specialized smiled and laughed and the industry leaders gathered around him did the same. For Tom, this is the paradigmatic example of demonic possession. The people in the room did not even realize, he says, that they were suggesting that they wanted to provide worse products and put people at risk for the sake of profit. Tom stood up and gave a damning speech that has become part of urban lore in the bike industry. He says he took his stand from a position of “whole self,” a concept which resonates with themes in the management literature I will review in chapter 4.

As one might expect, Tom says that at Landry’s, ‘spirituality’ provides the incentives and the fuel for a “race to the top” which is about profitability for purpose and the growth of people and the company as a whole. What one might not expect are some of circular metaphors that Tom uses to discuss a healthy organization. A working organization, he says,

⁶⁶ Henry, Tom, “Seeing Things Whole,” sermon preached at Grace Episcopal Church, Newton, MA, February 9, 2009.

runs according to “*the fly wheel of inertia*,” a metaphor he says he picked up from Jim Collin’s popular management text, *Good to Great—Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don’t*. For Tom, competence and a healthy balance of goals can be built into a system, which implies an ability to temporarily control the environment. But since these must become what Tom calls “momentum wheels,” they also imply possession by light demons, or angels. “*Feedback loops*” and “*reinforcing cycles*,” terms that pervade the management theory of Margaret Wheatley and Peter Senge, Tom explains, implies “being played by the music, the music playing us.” It is akin to, he will say, being “in a mantra state.” *For Tom Henry, music and dance are more adequate metaphors for experience because they imply the semi-circular and interminable movement of presence into absence and back again.*

Biking to Save the World

If fear and unconscious possession by destructive systems fuels the demonic aspect of capitalist life, conscious reform that leads to unconscious possession by balanced systems is what will save the world, says Tom Henry, echoing management theory but speaking by way of his life as a whole. For Tom, biking is a bodily, spiritual practice that one practices to drive towards a destination one might never see. Even if his reformed pessimism inflects his performance theory, Tom speaks with enthusiasm. He speaks of the “urgency of biking to save the world systems” and he does so because he notes an elegant symmetry between bicycle and human body, on the one hand, and spiritual cycles, on the other hand. The bicycle, he says, “is in perfect balance with the human body. It fits the body very nicely.” “To this day,” Tom adds, the bike is “the most efficient means of transportation on the earth.” Tom quotes the head of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, who writes that the bicycle can help us “turn the hydro-carbon economy into the carbohydrate economy.” In a productive, *self-regulating loop*, this would also increase fitness levels and overall health.

Tom will remind you that the first highways were originally built for bicycles but were literally taken over by cars. He will also argue that the bicycle was key to the development of women's rights because it gave women the ability to move around on their own terms. Perhaps most interesting of all, in this interview, several months after his excursus on liturgical history and aesthetics, Tom linked capitalism to the dream of efficiency of transportation, which he connected to the sacramental reforms of the Reformation. Repeating the story of the reformer who put the sacred bread in the hands of the people, breaking the sacramental system of the Roman Church, Tom links the reformation of the sacred economy of the time to the modern "imagination of freedom" that is built around a fundamental respect for the individual. The car betrays the dream because it requires and reproduces vicious cycles and addictions that increase political and environmental harm. By being fueled by apples and bananas, the bicycle is in harmony with its environment and with goals of health and sustainability, Tom argues. I sensed a twinge of nostalgia when Tom had told me about his father's factory and how it no longer was fueled by the water wheels. I wonder now if this is, in part, due to his pining for the elegant and harmonious self-sufficiency of a wheel that churns for power without, in its very movement, also breeding socially destructive addictions and inculcating demonic habits.

Conclusion: Tom Henry's Dramaturgical Cosmology

In a sermon he was asked to deliver at a friend's church, Tom presents his formally organized thoughts about many of the issues we touched upon in our interviews. There, he writes that, "organizations today are remarkable and highly-engineered vehicles through which we (might) express our aspirations."⁶⁷ STW is committed to reconnecting deepest

⁶⁷ Henry, Tom, "Seeing Things Whole," sermon preached at Grace Episcopal Church, Newton, MA, February 9, 2009.

values and economic life since it is the case, Tom summarizes, that “the separation of our spiritual life and our business life has led to an unanticipated increase in the power of the demonic.” To see things whole in business, for Tom, is to make decisions, consciously and unconsciously, according to a “full range of our sacred values” that exceeds a limiting and demonic hyper-valuation of profit at any cost. ‘STW’ is a spiritual discipline that hopes to wrest control over our demons, an image that “conveys the sense of power beyond our control.” As Michael Jackson’s discussion on the therapeutic uses of metaphor might anticipate, the attempt to overcome moral knots in business and to heal the wounds of its separation from values and ‘spirituality’ is poetic. Tom says leaders “reframe” reality, in the process shaping it, like he did at the meeting with Specialized where he stood up and spoke truth to power.⁶⁸ In his sermon, Tom reads Jesus as someone who was able to partner with seemingly unqualified men by poetically redefining their skill set.⁶⁹

If Max Weber provided us with the metaphor of the “iron cage” for modern industrial life, consider the shape shifting that occurs in Tom Henry’s account. In his vision, he is influenced by his mentor, Dick Broholm. Tom describes a moment from a class he took with Dick at Andover-Newton which, in one fell swoop, called into the question the Weber’s cosmology of autonomous spheres. Tom writes:

I first encountered the ideas that led to Seeing Things Whole while enrolled at Andover Newton Theological School in the early 80s. There I met Dick Broholm, a professor teaching a class called the Ministry of the Laity. Dick put two images of the church in front of the class. One showed the church as a separate place in the midst of the world with schools, factories, shops, restaurants and government buildings all around. The other image was of

⁶⁸ Tom Henry, “Landry’s Bicycles and the Three Fold Model,” University of Saint Thomas | Center for Catholic Studies | John A. Ryan Institute, May 11, 2011, http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/publications/seeingthingswhole/STW05_Landry.pdf.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

the church as if it were composed of all the organizations in the neighborhood. Factories, shops, schools, banks, restaurants, art galleries, theaters, farms, town halls, fire stations, even the churches – all together – were the hands, feet, heart, belly, nose, mouth, ears and eyes of the church. All these – together – were, in Dick’s image, the church, the *mystical body* of God incarnate. This alternate picture of the church – not as separate from – but rather composed of the organizations in our neighborhoods has been one of the most powerful defining ideas of my life.⁷⁰

This monistic ‘mystical body’, something that Karin Lisa Goldschmidt-Salamon’s ethnography might have anticipated is, to summarize, reproduced by vicious and virtuous cycles of habit and patterns of thought that Tom calls demonic and angelic. He uses the language of feedback loops to discuss the wheels of momentum that churn for good and for ill, just as the wheel is the spoke in Tom’s life for his mixed biography of work. On the one hand, the wheel represents his father’s betrayal by new management and was a conduit for a dissatisfied Tom to make the decision to go to seminary. On the other hand, the wheel also represents the vehicle for success in business and the bicycle, most concretely. The bicycle, Tom believes can save us from our dangerous addiction to fossil fuels, thus also reducing our need to engage in destructive politics, and can make our bodies stronger and healthier. With every leg that comes down on a foot peddle, we train ourselves in a spiritual discipline that can change the course of history, believes Tom Henry. When it comes to thinking about economic life, the circular dynamism and the windy energies of a wheel that turns is more to the point for Tom than a clad iron cage, with its clear boundaries of separation between the various spheres of life.

My focus here in this chapter has been to personalize through one brief biography, and however unsatisfying, what, can also be approached in epistemic terms. With its stress on an ebbing and flowing impermanence that has a final center, Tom’s story can read like a

⁷⁰ Henry, “Landry’s Bicycles.”

quantum critique of Newtonian mechanics in organizational life or the recognition of order in chaos at work. However, when, in the context of an interview, Tom says: “an organization is not us, is also passing away before your very eyes, is as nothing” and speaks of the “utter impermanence of things” in the greater scheme of things, I find it vital to insist that he does so wearing many different hats.

First of all, he makes a concrete point about the practice of business management. The play of absence and presence, what in the roundtable was conceived of metaphorically as the relationship between the dancer and the dance, implies that organizations must look beyond themselves to their role in the larger arc of the story. For Landry’s, this meant recognizing that beyond just being a quality bike store, they want to change the world by changing infrastructure for biking and changing our attitudes towards transportation and towards bikes, Tom says. Letting go of narrower ideas of identity is what will lead to the expanded consciousness of organizations, however frightening and painful this process might be.

Second of all, as will become clearer in subsequent chapters, the cosmology Tom has drawn shares a strong family resemblance with those of the formal theology of STW and “new management” of thinkers like Margaret Wheatley and Peter Senge, who stress the importance of invisible force fields, unseen forces, cultural DNA and reinforcing cycles of power in their work. The insert to Peter Senge's book is a Navajo sand painting that, as he positions it, celebrates the circularity of life. Senge, the MIT researcher whose work led directly to SoL, writes that "from a very early age, we are taught to break apart problems, to fragment the world."⁷¹ Business, he says, is "bound by invisible forces of interrelated actions

⁷¹ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline—The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Currency Books, 1990), 3.

which often take years to fully play out their effects on each other." Mastery is a discipline of intuition, in this world, and he writes, "the roots of this discipline lie in both Eastern and Western spiritual traditions, and in secular traditions as well."⁷² According to Senge, "reality is made up of circles but we see straight lines....language shapes perception. What we see depends on what we are prepared to see. Western languages, with their subject-verb-object structure, are biased toward a linear view."⁷³ Continuing, Senge writes, "if we can to see systemwide interrelationships, we need a language of interrelationships, a language made up of circles."⁷⁴ Circles represent "any reciprocal flow of influence," for Senge.⁷⁵ In what he calls a "circular economy,"⁷⁶ "the championship sports teams and great jazz ensembles provide metaphors for acting in spontaneous yet coordinated ways."⁷⁷ Organizational boundaries are not static for Tom but, instead, necessarily partake of the cycling ebb and flow of presence and absence that is a key aspect of all life. In this sense, too, Tom and the formal management literature seem to be on the same page, as we will see. Please consult the appendix for examples Peter Senge and Margaret Wheatley provide of the new shapes of the world and, given the unification of knowledge both seek, of markets and of capital as well.

Third, and most important for my considerations in this chapter, however, Tom also speaks of the dance of presence and absence, with its sense of motion blur and kinetic

⁷² Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 7.

⁷³ Ibid., 73.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 74.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 365.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 219.

movement, as a trained professional actor. For Tom, theater as spiritual formation preceded his formal training in seminary or his on the job training at Landry's. The actor is trained in the art of proper possession because he or she is able to self-empty to the point that a role can come to life and a performance can impact an audience. Leadership for Tom is an extension and prolongation of his scope as an actor. It is precisely not the commodification of theater. He lives his dramaturgical role at the bike company with a sense of hard earned authenticity. Experience and consciousness are not the only aspects of power that matter, of course, and later chapters will directly engage the question of what I, as someone strongly influenced by Marxian existentialism, has come to think about the phenomena of "spirituality in the workplace."

Chapter 3: Practices of Materiality and Spirituality Among Landry's Workers

Introduction

In this chapter I relate two stories, the first based on an unscripted moment that I shared at Landry's with an immigrant from Latin America that forced me to rethink my understanding of our textured and layered intersubjective relationships with *commodities* qua *things*, and the second based on interactions and a formal interview I had with a sales guy at the store that reminded me that our off the cusp uses of metaphor can reveal the ways in which we are, to some degree, shaped and *made* by our immediate and social contexts but also personalize and remake our worlds through our use of language. In both cases, "religion" and "spirituality" come to intertwine with the politics of family, the politics of society and existential imperatives and are vetted out within intersubjective borderlands still circumscribed in part, currently, by what Marx identified as exchange value. My relationships with both of these workers forced me to think about the ways in our most cherished objects and the words which we use to make sense of the world are conduits of intersubjective relationships and of social modalities of existence that we are rarely in a position to directly approach.

To get things started on my first full day at Landry's, Tom Henry gave me a tour of the store space, the sales room, various backrooms and office. As we walked around, Tom also spoke to me about the different work teams there are at the store, like the building team and the mechanics team, explaining what they do. When we crossed paths with Lucas in the loading zone, a hub that connects the different workstations to one another, Tom explained to me that Lucas was his trusted "jack of all trades." On this day, Lucas was finishing up woodwork on what Tom called "fitting tables." Tom explained that these tables would be moved to the fitting area and that bike stands would eventually be placed on top of these

tables. The idea is for customers coming into the store looking for individualized measurements and adjustments to peddle atop bicycles held in place by these stands as one of the personnel especially trained in the physiology of biking and the functional relationships between body and bicycle makes observations about how fluidly and efficiently the biker is able to manipulate the vehicle. The person doing the fitting, either Mark or Andy, the two store managers, then makes adjustments to the seat or the handle bar and recommends items for purchase that can enhance this or that dimension of the ride.

Ryan, one of the young sales guys, once made the point to me during an impromptu conversation that, as far as he could tell, the main reason these fittings exist is to increase points of sale. Ryan's point reminds me that the human body itself can become a field of consumption, a multiplicity of discrete sites of pleasures and needs: hands that require gloves, feet that require specialty shoes equipped with clips, torsos which require different spandex pants according to the season, stomachs which need to consume energy bars so that legs can churn efficiently during arduous rides, and so forth. In an exceedingly mundane way, the human body is *spectralized* across the field of consumer goods at Landry's and this relationship between human body and consumer goods is mapped out physically by the very layout of the fitting room. During one of my first visits, Mark explained to me that he had arranged the merchandise according to the general areas of the body whose various purposes they served so that, starting from left to right, one could find accoutrements associated with the head, torso, buttocks and feet. When Mark explained this to me, I thought to myself that in this society we are not likely to conceive of such an arrangement as anything other than a naked and strategic sales ploy. However, if the proverbial Martian anthropologists were to finally set foot on earth, they might find these symbolizations of the body, through

consumer circuits and marketing narratives, much more interesting. Commodities materialize relationships between persons, places and things.

The Bicycle as Vehicle of Existential Conduction

Lucas is a forty nine year old Latino man, an immigrant to the United States from Guatemala. Perhaps because I had emphasized with Tom Henry my desire to approach my ethnography as an opportunity to *work with others*, I was given a hands-on task my very first day at Landry's: to help Lucas and Mark put up some wood boards on the walls right below the windows of one of the rooms. We were to do this in order to block excess sunlight and to make room for new merchandise to be hung on the walls. As we drilled holes in the wood, took measurements and used a saw to cut the board, Lucas and I were also able to speak and to further introduce ourselves to one another that way. Lucas asked me *where I came from*, a question which among U.S. Latinos usually does not mean what state one was born in or from which city one hails but, rather, regardless of whether one was born in the U.S. or not, which Latin American country one's family originally immigrated from. I told him that my mother is Peruvian and that my father is Cuban. Lucas told me that he had recently been able to go back home to Guatemala for a visit. I asked him how his visit had gone. "Fantastic," he said. One is able to "enjoy life" in Guatemala, he continued, but here, "it's work, work, work." Smiling, he said that one also eats much better in his homeland.

As we put up the wooden boards together, Lucas was very helpful, taking the time to explain what needed to get done, and why, to someone like me for whom this was obviously not old hat. As we were hammering atop ladders, Mark Gray came over and pretended to squeeze Lucas' buttocks. "Hum. Maybe I shouldn't do that, what do you think?" he puckishly asked, looking right at me. It took a few visits to Landry's for me to get used to Mark's towel snapping approach to working with others, his stories about his younger days

as a professional skier and member of collegiate and national ski teams helping to fill in some of the blanks. For his part, though, Lucas was all business. Still, he managed to make me feel immediately comfortable by taking the time to explain the task at hand and patiently showing by example what I needed to do. As has been the case with friends and family who have tried, seemingly in vain, to teach me to cook throughout the years, patient is often both needed and much appreciated. From the beginning, Lucas was one of the most helpful and inviting people I worked with at Landry's, always stopping to ask if there was something I needed help with if I looked particularly lost or disoriented, which was often.

The event that triggered the following discussion took place a couple of months after my first day and, as such, a couple of months after I had met Lucas. On this day, I arrived at the Natick commuter rail station in the morning only to find that the tires on the "beater bike"¹ Mark had given to me were shot. As I always did, I had chained my bike the night before to the fence on the overpass between the inbound and outbound platforms. I was not alone. Many commuters did this. On any given night one would see much, if not most, of the fence taken by up persons wanting to park their bicycles at the station overnight. Since I had been told by some of the guys at the store that neighborhood kids sometimes liked to poke the air out of the tires of these bicycles, I immediately guessed that this is what might have happened to my green colored hybrid.² I knew that one of the guys would be able to confirm (or not) my initial diagnosis but, first, I needed to somehow get to Landry's with my bike and it was chilly. Since the walk to Landry's was far and would take me up hills and across busy avenues and streets, I called for a taxi van big enough to transport a bicycle.

¹ This was a throwaway bicycle used just for the purpose of getting to and fro Natick Station and Landry's, which was a 10-15 minute bike ride away. It was given to me by the staff of the store on my first day.

² Hybrid bicycles combine the graceful design of road bikes and the rugged, knobby tires of dirt bikes.

Within fifteen minutes, a van was honking at the corner, ready to take me across Natick to the store. The driver, a tall, lanky, white man in his forties or early fifties asked me where I was headed. I told him that I needed to get to Landry's. As we drove away, the driver had something to say about my intended destination. "I am happy Landry's is better now," he said, "I went in there the other day and they were nice." He continued: "a few years ago they were real snobs. I know rich people—I am friends with rich people—so it's nothing against rich people." Of course, I was more than curious to hear more about Landry's from this unexpected source. Taking me back to an interesting ethnography I had read years back about the "Harley-Davidson lifestyle," the driver explained that, just like Harley bikers, bicycle aficionados can be cultic. "They're like a cult, really," he said. Continuing, he explained that he used to have the distinct impression that those who work at Landry's "looked down" on people who ride what they consider to be inferior bicycles or who do not have the "right equipment." It is precisely this feeling of customer alienation that Tom Henry hopes to prevent with his push for hospitality as a core company value in the store's management vision.

After this interesting and quirky cab ride to begin the day, replete with an impromptu discussion of the elitism of lifestyle cultures, I began my day, rolled up the proverbial sleeves and followed my usual program: doing legitimate work for the store (answering phones, cashing out customers and stocking inner tubes and other merchandise) and attempting to engage my fellow workers in organic conversation and running to the rest room to jot down notes. On this day, I spent most of the day working the register. Since the store had been fairly busy that day, I felt like I had put in an honorable day's work. I was ready to go home. The thing about ethnography, I was finding, was that once you put in your time in the field, you still have to also factor in the time it takes to organize your notes and to transcribe

interviews. I had a lot to do and was eager to leave the store. Outside the front window of the entrance to the store, I could see that some people, including some Landry's employees, were apparently only just now getting started. A group of customers and employees congregated outside of the store, waiting to go on a ride.

On my way to the office to pick up my knapsack and jacket, I walked by the builders' room. Lucas was in there alone, polishing a red road bicycle. I walked in cautiously, almost unsure I should bother him. He seemed very serene and very focused on what he was doing. I immediately sensed that this bicycle was special, somehow not like the many bikes the builders and mechanics work on every day. I asked Lucas what he was doing. Crouched on the ground and polishing the top tube of a very sleek and very red Specialized road bike, Lucas turned and looked at me, smiling warmly. "It's my toy," he said, proudly. I told him that the bike looked quite impressive, at least to a complete non-expert like myself. I asked Lucas how much it had cost him. He said that the bike normally sells for \$5000 but that he had been able to purchase it for \$2700 with an employee discount and an installment plan. I asked him why he felt like he needed to purchase such an expensive bicycle. "From my country, I have always dreamed with something like this," he explained. Somewhat pensively and, it seemed to me, part of his attention brought elsewhere, Lucas told me that he thinks that he could have been a professional racer if he had only had, "someone to guide me, like this *place* when I got here." Lucas was referring to Landry's, reminding us that we personalize places.

Gabriel, the leader of the building team, walked in a few minutes later with his bicycle, also a fancy looking red vehicle, in his case a Cervelo. As he began to work on it, Lucas turned to him and asked him if what looked to me to be a minute piece of metallic paint that had peeled off the one of the peddles was covered by the warranty. From what I

could tell, nobody but the proud owner, looking up close, would actually be able to notice such a microscopic irregularity. But I understood the feeling. When I have had to purchase a new computer in the past, I have tended, at least initially, to take meticulous care to clean it, small pieces of lint on the keyboard and all. There is something about preserving something in mint condition that feels powerful.³ For his part, Gabriel told Lucas that he did not believe that the paint on the peddle was covered by the warrant. Lucas was visibly disappointed, even worried.

I asked Gabriel about his bike. He explained that it had cost him \$2000 and that, “it was a once in a lifetime opportunity” to be able to get it. For my part, I had by then taken note of the fact that two Latino employees, one from Guatemala and the other Puerto Rican, seemed to have bought two of the sleekest looking and fastest road bikes in the shop, Lucas even choosing to do so through an extended payment plan. In the past, I had heard some of the young white sales guys, especially those who see themselves as part of a bike scene opposed to the dominant suburban culture of cars, make fun of the expensive, flashy and “conservative” road bikes like the ones Lucas and Gabriel seemed drawn to. They associate these bikes with the professional yuppies who, they say, come into the shop looking for ridiculously expensive bikes that will only see the road three times in one season. On the one hand, the sales guys understand that these men and women are important customers and can be very nice people yet, on the other hand, they often remain utterly unconvinced by their devotion to the sport. Not unlike *indy cred* in the world of popular music, these sales guys tend to have the “coolest” rather than the most expensive bikes. We must remember that

³ Of course, after a few days, the exigencies of life tend to get in the way and I abandon my computer or other gadget to the rough elements of my apartment. I am not a neat person by nature so my momentary desire to immaculately preserve a tool has always intrigued me.

counter-culture and “cool” might sometimes assume ostensibly anti-capitalist postures but, are, in fact, vital to the reproduction of booming markets in youth culture.⁴

Although my few minutes with Lucas and Gabriel had presented me with enough, empirically, to avoid coming to a rash conclusion, I seized on a totalizing explanation for Lucas and Gabriel's attraction to expensive bikes. Of course Lucas and Gabriel had wanted the most expensive bikes, I thought. The bikes were symbols of prestige and markers of successful Americanization, conduits for the American Dream. The most expensive bikes, I continued in my head, are valued differently by the Spanish-speaking immigrants and the cool, young, white hipster biking enthusiasts because they inhabit a different *habitus*. Pierre Bourdieu, of course, might draw an analogy to the French petite bourgeoisie's love of Strauss's *Blue Danube*, as flashy a representation that there is of popularized classical music tradition in the West, when it is, say, Mahler that enchants those who consider themselves to be part of the cultural intelligentsia.⁵ It all seemed to make so much sense. Except, when I actually looked at my field notes again in the context of my interview with Lucas months later, I realized that rather than pursuing, for example, Lucas' statement to me that he thinks

⁴ For an influential discussion of the “commodification of cool,” see Naomi Klein, *No Logo—No Space, No Choice, No Jobs* (New York: Picador Press, 2002).

⁵ Juliet Schor and Douglas Holt summarize Pierre Bourdieu's work on distinction in the following way: Bourdieu showed that differentiation extended to areas where cost was hardly a factor, as in styles of art, music, décor, and film, and to how, rather than simply what, one consumed. Consumer tastes varied in predictable ways, and depended on “cultural capital”—family upbringing and formal education as well as economic resources. At each place in the social hierarchy, individuals were inculcated into specific taste groups. Bourdieu showed that the class patterning of consumption had become far more sophisticated and complex. Those in the higher reaches of the hierarchy used their superior taste to create “distinction” for themselves, and to distance themselves from those of inferior tastes. Thus, the possession of “good” taste became a mechanism whereby individuals assured their social and economic position; consumption; then, was an integral part of the reproduction of inequality. Bourdieu argues that cultural aficionados such as academics and intellectuals tend to distinguish their tastes from those of the ostentatiously wealthy. Douglas Holt and Juliet Schor, eds., “Introduction: Do Americans Consume Too Much?” in *The Consumer Society Reader* (New York: The New Press, 2000), xvi. Bourdieu's idea about a taste group, the *habitus*, is considered too structural and abstracting by existential anthropologists like Michael Jackson and poststructuralists like Judith Butler.

he could have become a professional road racer had a few very important things gone differently in his life, I somehow choose to look past this suggestive detail. The truth is that while Lucas has seemingly little interest in keeping up with the *Joneses*, his bicycle is impressed with the “spirituality” of cooperative labor and it also provides him with the means for keeping up with and reworking his past. Thorstein Veblen was right to focus on *positionality*, the drive for distinction and the role of social markers of prestige in the reproduction of consumer society.⁶ However, these ideas only begin to scratch the surface of the kinds of the layered relationships we have with the world of things.

Many months after the event that prompted this discussion, I finally sat down with Lucas for a formal interview. I was eager to discuss his bicycle and to confirm my theory that it was, for him, an emblem of successful Americanization. As had been the case with the interviews I had done with other employees of Landry’s, I offered Lucas several lunch options. He chose the most informal and the least expensive option I had presented. So we sat down to talk at the local pizza and sandwich shop. I began the interview by asking Lucas about his homeland and where he grew up. He told me that he had grown up in a village, or small town, about 100 miles away from the Guatemalan capital, Guatemala City. He also said that in the twenty-four years since he had left, his home village had developed and grown. As an example of this growth, he explained to me that when he had left, there were only black and white televisions in town and scarcely a few radio stations. Now, he said, all that had changed.

⁶ Conspicuous consumption, Veblen argues, is premised on the public display of wealth in the hopes of raising one’s place in the social hierarchy. Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class—An Economic Study of Institutions* (Delhi: Aakar Books. 2005).

I asked Lucas when he had immigrated to the United States and why. He told me that he had left for the U.S. in 1986 and, having paused, said that, “it’s a long story. Kinda sad but... the main thing was that I had to leave my country.” I was caught off guard, both because Lucas had to compose himself before speaking, taking a deep-breath and because I had not prepared myself to have the kind of conversation we were about to have. He continued, “my older brother he was killed by the army. When I tried to get information, a guy offered to kill me right there. So I had to leave my country.” Lucas explained that, at the time, there was much political unrest in Guatemala and that three groups vied for power: the government, the guerillas and, the rich. In this dynamic, the army wielded a tremendous amount of power: “You say something against the government, the army comes to you and can kill you just like that.”

Lucas explained that before he had been forced to flee Guatemala, his father had been kidnapped twice and his older brother had been murdered. When he had sought out information about his brother’s murder from his brother in law’s brother, who was in the army, this individual offered to kill him on the spot. Lucas knew that this man and his older brother had had their differences in the past and he suspected that he was involved, at least indirectly, in the violence that had befallen his family. It was also somehow reported that Lucas intended to seek revenge against those who had done violence to his family. As he was telling me the story, I noticed in Lucas’ squinting eyes what I took to be the controlled residue of anger. Lucas confessed that while he had once been unable to speak calmly about what had been done to his family, he felt able to do so now. He explained that he had not needed to retaliate; the men responsible for his brother’s death had themselves been killed over another matter. This paved the way for Lucas to return home, a journey he has made three times since moving to the United States.

When Lucas left Guatemala, he immediately went to Boston, to his uncle's house. Although he had let his uncle's family know that he was coming, he was shocked by the poor treatment he received. "What are *you* doing here?" asked his uncle's wife when he knocked on their door. Feeling unwelcome, he stayed with his uncle for only three months. However, Lucas also explained that he believes that this unexpected hardship actually made him stronger in the end, forcing him, as he put it, to "adapt" to life in the United States. He explained that in contrast to his homeland, "this kind of life in the USA...it's very different." I will quote at length Lucas' response to my follow-up question about how life in the U.S. and Guatemala differ. He said:

Over here, you don't have money, you cannot pay your bills so you are alone. In my country no, it doesn't matter if you don't have money. But you can go with your family and your friends. And, it's not...we can say...so metallic like here. Still, your family can support you. Over here you have to work to pay. Ah, over here, you pay for anything you want. For anything you need. Everything is money. Money, money, money. There, you can do favors. People thank you and you don't have to pay.

If Trek Bicycles positions itself as a globally conscious brand, according to the logic that bikes can wean us of our dependence on cars and foreign fuel, through its logo and slogan, "One World, Two Wheels," Lucas seemed to discover that proverbial lesson that money still makes this world go round.

This theme, that the logic of money interrupts and even disrupts other potential forms of human sociality, reemerged when we discussed Lucas's relationship to the other Latino workers and what he perceives to be a "mixing of cultures" at Landry's, one based on the formal logic of monetary exchange and another based on barter and the carrying out of favors. The logic of money also came up when we discussed the good fortune of his older son, who is able to receive an expensive education through a scholarship opportunity. When it comes to his co-workers, Lucas explained that he senses this one fundamental difference

between the Latino and the “American” men⁷ with whom he works: while the Latinos help one another out with the work they have on their plate and with the maintenance of their personal bicycles according to a system of “favors,” what some would call a system of barter, most of the white, non-Spanish speaking staff expect a payment of money in return for work or, alternatively, seek to compensate others for their labor with money. Interestingly, Lucas considers Mark Gray, his back slapping “American” supervisor, to, “(do) things that, ah, you can say that is Spanish culture” precisely because he engages other employees according to a system of favors. In this mundane conversation about work relationships we already have the seeds of a powerful philosophical criticism of identity politics: Mark Gray, a white, college educated, former Olympic skier in his mid 30’s from a professional family acts in ways that seem to Lucas, an immigrant from Guatemala, akin to what he calls Latino culture not because of some linguistic or ethnic detail about Mark but, rather, because he works with others in a certain way.⁸ Mark *looks* as *gringo* as they get. If, as Lucas explained, one was able to engage in barter with Mark Gray, he said the following about Andy, the other store manager: “if I need to do some work for him, it’s going to be for money.”

Lucas explained that Gabriel helped him build his Specialized road bike since there were still things he could not do himself, as broad a skill set as he has when it comes to bicycles. When I asked Lucas if Gabriel had, in fact, done him a favor, Lucas was visibly concerned to drill home the point that he had felt the obligation *to return* but *not repay* the favor: “It was a favor. But, ah, to show him my gratitude, you could say, I invite him to

⁷ Landry's was a highly male working environment. At the Natick Store, all the mechanics and the sales staff were men. At other Landry's stores, there are some women sales staff and mechanics.

⁸ Lucas also pointed out that there were also important differences between himself and his Puerto Rican workmates: “Yes. Ah, we are Spanish. But, ah, let’s say, the building team, all of them, they are from Puerto Rico. So, we are Spanish but we have different backgrounds. Or habits. So, at some points we don’t agree. But, yeah, we have good relation.”

dinner. But not for...it wasn't for money. He didn't ask me. It was my idea. It wasn't money. Just, ah. It was a kind of (retribution) for the favor he give me." While Lucas recognizes that money can be used to expand the spectrum of one's choices,⁹ he was unwilling to collapse economic choice and organic friendship. To underscore the difference between the two, Lucas would say that one can do favors for another, exchange that way, so long as there is cooperation and fellowship whereas the logic of monetary exchange does not require these kinds of sociality.

During our interview, Lucas explained that his older son is enrolled in a local private school, having earned a merit based scholarship. His eyes beaming as he spoke, Lucas explained that he is very proud of his son: "He is a special boy. He likes the school. He is very focused on the school, on books, on his homework." Continuing, Lucas added, "for his age, I think he has a point where he is going...a decision where he wants to go...he wants to go to a very important school or college. I think he is working hard for that." However proud of his son he might be, something of Lucas' collective ethos also came to the fore when he explained that while he knew that his son was very fortunate, he also had problems with the barriers money can present to achieving a good education. He said, "...rich people can have more opportunities. That school is really expensive to pay. We can say we are talking about, a year, about \$17,000. Yes. So, not many people can afford to be in that school. My kid is lucky. Very lucky. Cause he is so focused on school, he deserves that."

If I noted a strong cooperative bent to Lucas during our discussion about exchange value, as it were, this ethic was reproduced, importantly, when Lucas connected, *transitively*, if

⁹ Lucas said this of money: "Now I can see it's not bad. We have choices, we have. It's not bad. On this way: if you do something for somebody, ah, that person has to pay you because you are working for something. So, I understand that."

not formally, relationships of camaraderie, fellowship and friendship to a sense of “spirituality.” Having explained to Lucas in the middle of what been an open-ended conversation that my initial interest in Landry’s had to do with Tom Henry’s public role in the promotion of “workplace spirituality,” I asked Lucas if he was at all religious and if he thought that religion or spirituality had any bearing on the work he did. Lucas explained that his family was Mormon and that, growing up in Guatemala, he went to temple once a week. Lucas explained that the demands of his current life, however, do sometimes interfere with his ability to get to temple. Regarding the frequency of his attendance, Lucas said: “Not very often. Once a month. I wish I can go but sometimes you’re tired or too much work to do. Or, I have to bring my older kid to games cause he plays hockey.” When he does attend services, Lucas told me that he goes to the “Spanish” temple in Somerville. Having spent some time myself at Latino Mormon congregations growing up,¹⁰ I have my own sense of the “mix of cultures” that can occur in those spaces.

When I asked Lucas if his *religion* has any influence on the work he does, Lucas put it this way: “Ah...the only thing that is relate to my work and my religion is the principles that I have from the church to be honest...things like that. But, ah, something that I have to talk on my work about church, I don’t talk too much about it. Is this what you are asking me?” This kind of response is in keeping with the focus of scholars of religion in the workplace, like Douglas Hicks,¹¹ who attempt to articulate theologically and democratically informed principles for the expression of religion at work. Yet, in the end, what was most interesting

¹⁰ My immediate family was Catholic (mother) and agnostic if not atheist (father). My mother’s family had converted to Mormonism back in Perú, my mother had not. When I was growing up in New York City, my mother’s family lived in Queens and we would see them often, on weekends.

¹¹ Douglas Hicks, *Religion and the Workplace: Pluralism, Spirituality, Leadership* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

to me as an ethnographer was not so much Lucas' formal thoughts about religion in the workplace or what he thought I was interested in but, rather, the interaction between what he said *transitively*, without formalizing connections.

Given that one of the longstanding debates in the workplace spirituality literature involves the contestation of meanings and definitions for "religion" and "spirituality" and discussions about the relative appropriateness of each to the workplace, I also asked Lucas about *spirituality*. When I asked Lucas what "spirituality" meant to him or evoked as a word, he answered: "Peace, ah, happiness, and um, friendship, share everything." When I pressed him further, he added a dimension others might refer to in the language of virtue ethics, focusing on changes in subjectivity, "Share. Yeah. And being a better person: A better father, a better husband, brother, friend. Something like this." Interestingly, when I asked Lucas whether *spirituality*, which he had already sharply distinguished from institutionalized *religion*, had any bearing on his work, he reflexively returned to his definition of the latter, *religion*, an institutional teacher of principles to live by:

When I feel...ah, it's not depressed but low energy. Something like that. I start to think the principles that I learn at the church to comport myself. The church helps me help myself better. Like if I see somebody angry I say I don't have to overreact like the other person is. Cause, ah, my mother said, "nothing is worth to make you angry." It's up to you if you want to be angry or you wanna open your mind for the angryness. It's up to you if you. Anybody can go up to you and (screams). It's up to you if you let that feeling get into you. So, that thing that help from the church...I think that's good.

I wondered if perhaps Lucas had reverted to a definition of "religion" because of some perceived formality that his understanding of "spirituality" failed to convey. But if the church formally teaches the means by which to control oneself, allowing for some ethical protection against the little devils, like anger, that can creep into the mind, what I found so curious was the fact that our own thoughts, words and actions betray the fact that ethics and

morality are not always clearly codified and can remain largely beneath the surface, inchoately. Although Lucas *said*, here, that spirituality had a rightful place at work when it came to the relevance of the principles he takes away from temple, he had earlier actually already defined spirituality in the hues of cooperative fellowship and sharing. Without him formalizing this as a position, as it were, it would seem that Lucas' bicycle, as something he worked on with Gabriel in the spirit of friendship, is a site of precisely this kind of kindred spirituality, the kind Marx understood from afar (even if one wishes he had taken his own philosophical commitments to their logical conclusion and engaged, himself, in empirical study). The bicycle is a metallic object that confounds, to some degree, what Lucas refers to as the *metallic* quality of American capitalism. Working with others is what Lucas does, spiritually, but without obsessing over the words and definitions. This is what Lucas did when he agreed to take time out of his busy day to do an interview, resisting as much as possible the tit for tat exchanges that have defined some of my other interviews. He has simple tastes, he told me. So I had soup and Lucas ate pizza. It has been the cheapest of my interview luncheons but, so far, the most enriching.

One focus of this dissertation can be described as an ethnographic examination of human relationships to “the beyond self” *in their various guises* within the “workplace spirituality” discourse. In *Search for a Method*, Sartre writes the following about practice, what he, in fact, calls the human *project*:

Whatever the discipline considered, its most elementary notions would be *incomprehensible* without the *immediate comprehension* of the *project* which underlies them, of negativity as the basis of the project, of transcendence as existence outside-of-itself in relation with the Other-than-itself and the Other-than-man, of the surpassing as a mediation between the given that is simply there and the practical signification, of *need*, finally, as the being-outside-of-itself-in-the-world on the part of a practical organism.¹²

¹² Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 171.

For Lucas, I want to argue, cooperative work, an ethic of barter and doing favors is one way in which he surpasses need, the limits of chapter 4, if not fully, within the context of work. A wound that he felt sharply when his uncle's wife rejected him, Lucas learned quickly that the logic of money exercises a powerful social force in America. His bicycle does not (failingly) represent the elusive ideal of the *American Dream* and *Americanization*, as I had originally concluded, but, rather, the bicycle actually connects him with an ethnic fellowship, an ethic of barter and of doing favors that confounds the logic of money, mixing it up, as he said. Lucas reminds us, I think, that transcendence, the relating of oneself to the "Other-than-man" of which Sartre writes can also be realized by relating oneself socially to others, horizontally. It can also mean relating oneself to principles, ideals and far-off goals with the gulf between reality and possibility serving as a well of existential power as in the case of the low-energy moments that Lucas mentions that try our patience.

If the bicycle can become the site of cooperative fellowship and a counterpoint to the logic of money, it can also connect its builder and rider, in this case the same person, to a geographically distant homeland, a lost possibility, allowing the immigrant to remake his reality in the present. In other words, one object can be the site of intersecting imperatives. And our projections of "Other-than-itself" and "Other-than-man" onto the objects with which we work can be temporal, whether forward looking to the future or backwards looking to the past and can transcend spatial distances. We recall that Lucas congratulates his son for having marked for himself "a point where he is going" and "a decision where he wants to go" and working hard to achieve this goal. While I will discuss at some length in the conclusion the implications of a sure resonance here with some self-help literature and aspects of the management philosophies I have studied, what I note here is that one might

consider the fact that gaps between expectation and possibility or expectation and reality might likely fuel motivation and energize the soul, as it were, if one feels that one has the resources or stands a chance of succeeding at bridging the divide and, inversely, deaden motivation *as the limits begin to feel more like the sky*, to borrow from the American comedian, Chris Rock.

Lucas, like Sheila, the woman whose story I relate in the introduction, came across painful limits which were violently felt. In Lucas's case, members of his family fell victim to civil war, his life was threatened, he was forced to immigrate to the United States, he felt ill received at his uncle's house, and he has found the logic of money, so dominate in American sociality, often alienating and unfair. Like Sheila, he has transcended, never fully, these circumstances. As we will see, Lucas's bicycle, in addition to being a site of cooperative friendship, is also a vehicle for going back home, going back in time by training for the future and reliving possibilities compromised by war.

Even though I had missed the importance of this admission the day I observed Lucas polishing his bicycle and fretting over the small specks of paint that had come off one of the peddles, Lucas did tell me then that he is convinced that he could have become a professional level racer if he had only found some guidance when he had first arrived in the United States. In the course of our formal interview, it became clear that Lucas's prowess on the bike, which he has developed in the context of the weekly rides Landry's hosts during the New England riding season not only harkens to a possibility that never was (a potentiality that by Lucas's own admission burned out fifteen years ago), is also linked to his concrete past as a professional "teacher of sports" or physical education teacher in his homeland before the war.

Lucas explained that during his youth, in Guatemala, he had preferred at least three sports to biking: “Over there I...my favorite sport it was swimming. Then volleyball and then soccer. And the last one was biking.” In those days biking, “was for fun.” Eventually, having attended university, Lucas taught physical education at a couple of schools. In fact, chocking up, one of the first things Lucas told me in the interview was, “in my country, I was...I was a teacher of sports. That was my profession.” However, once he was forced by death threats to leave his country and move to the United States, he was also forced by necessity to conjoin work and sport. Lucas explained, quite pragmatically: “(in) this country (biking) has to be the first one cause I used to ride my bike almost everyday to my work.”

Not unlike a woman from Ecuador I had worked with at HELP Haven who has a college degree from a university back home and had worked as an accountant before immigrating to the United States, where she now cleans apartments to pay the bills, Lucas has had to take various kinds of jobs of non-professional jobs over the years to make his *ends meet*. One might imagine that it could not have been an altogether easy transition to move from professional work back home, a relatively high status teaching job, to the so-called “unskilled” jobs Lucas had to take when he got to the United States, having to learn on the job and yet, at the same time, also amassing the broad skill set he relies on to do his job at Landry’s in the process.

When I asked Lucas when he had begun to ride with the Landry’s team, he answered that his first ride was approximately three months into his employment, more than three years ago. He explained that the builders had begun to give him a hard time about his résumé, which states that Lucas taught sports and fitness back home. “Oh no, no, anybody can come here and say I am a lawyer,” they would said. When Lucas protested that he did not understand why he would want to lie about being a teacher, one of his colleagues

responded by suggesting that they should test each other's riding skill: "...you are a teacher of sports you can ride a bike. Let's go for a ride." Lucas admitted to his coworkers that he was not in proper shape but vowed to train for a month and get into shape. For purposes of my discussion, this becomes the critical moment. Lucas puts it this way: "I have the decision to do that...I...I got in good shape." Like his son, whom he believes to have staked out a future for himself, Lucas marks his goal and begins to work hard to get into shape and to train, *for the first time in his life*, for long distance road biking. Lucas accepts the challenge to learn how to ride a road bicycle at a certain level as a test of fitness. However, it is no insignificant fact that this test is ultimately also a test of the veracity of Lucas' claim that he had once been a "teacher of sports." In these ways, the tension between being for oneself and being for another, what Michel Foucault refers to as power, is "the source of energy" that seems to motivate Lucas.¹³

Therefore, I wonder if this gap existing, at that moment, between himself and where he wanted to be represents not only the gulf between a self in the present and a future self that will be worked for and shaped but, also connects back to a past self, in at least two ways. First, Lucas only begins to train for road races at this point, having until this moment ridden only recreationally for fun, not competitively, and purchases his fancy Specialized bicycle in the context of his decision to try to silence those colleagues who challenge the stories he tells about his past. In other words, by training for a future ride, Lucas seeks to vindicate his past for the present. Second, if it is the case that Lucas only began to train for competitive rides at Landry's, when he states in the same interview (having mentioned the same to me casually in passing the day he introduced me to this bicycle) that he could have been a professional

¹³ Existential energies can thus be managed as surplus energy by managers.

rider if he only had been guided and developed fifteen years ago, when Lucas rides he connects to a potentiality that has passed but also never really was—until now. Boggling our linear, teleological and progressive sense of time, it is, as it were, a retrospective future that is already past yet also confirmed by the present.

Although his chain came undone the first time he went for a ride, leaving him “embarrassed” as the group left him behind and although he was initially intimidated by José’s accounts of strong men with “huge legs,” professional riders going on the rides, by the fifth ride, Lucas said that he was feeling so good that he left José and the others behind. Then he laughed. His hard work had paid off. Now, he says, with his new bicycle, dusting his coworkers has become part of the course. However, I find the fact that Lucas mentioned the fear of “falling back of the group” more than once rich with multivalent possibilities. Lucas literally and quite intentionally set out to train for a future fitness prowess in order to prove and vindicate his past life as physical education and sports teacher in the eyes of his workmates. However, is it possible that, by riding, Lucas not only coolly confirms his skill for others but also, in the process, is able to relive the past *for himself*? By testing himself on the bike, he is able, to some degree, to bridge the distance between where he stands now and the possibilities that were violently taken from him? By training now, does Lucas regain for himself some of that old trajectory, where he taught sports for a living?

For a phenomenologically inflected project, these are precisely the most interesting questions. It is a pity that I had initially sought to round things off by focusing primarily on the issue of conspicuous prestige and “Americanization.” Bringing home the inadequacy of this initial approach, Lucas told me that his cousin, from a more well to do branch of his family, recently came to visit Boston. He had not seen his cousin in twenty-two years. When Lucas arrived to their meeting destination by bike, his cousin, a successful businessman and

the son of a senator in Guatemala, was incredulous, asking Lucas where his car was. When Lucas explained what he did for a living, his cousin suggested that working with bicycles is not a “real job.” Lucas, whose father had been a taxi cab driver, put it this way: “So, for me it is a bigger step. For him is step back. He is not a bad person but if you always has money and I start to get money I feel more proud at getting that.” In this moment of reunion, the bicycle is charged with the politics of family and of class and travels back in time. First, it is a sign of *unsuccessful Americanization* in the eye’s of Lucas’s snobby cousin. Second, for Lucas it is a sign of the fruits of his labor and the distance he has traveled since his uncle’s family failed to take him in with a spirit of hospitality. Most poignantly, it is for Lucas a conductor between a past violently taken away from him but also a past that he can vindicate and remake for himself in the present.

If the neighborhood kids had deflated my tires, a *thing* as mundane as a bicycle can pump up what Michael Jackson refers to as our sense of ontological security, even allowing us to remake the past so that we might continue to live in the present. A problem with much of the critiques of consumer society is that the ritual objects of Western capitalist society, what Marx calls commodities, are further objectified and reified by sundry celebrations and denunciations that, analyzing things from afar, miss the fact that our intersubjective relationships with objects are ambiguous, practical and idiosyncratic. In its critique of consumerism, a policy statement from the *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)* makes the Veblenese argument that in a consumerist society, “...the chief purpose of life is to “make it” in the eyes of God or our neighbors.”¹⁴ By initially focusing on social prestige and, well, the power

¹⁴ “God’s Work in Our Hands: Employment, Community, and Christian Vocation (Policy Statement Approved by the 207th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)),” accessed May 8, 2010, <http://www.winnebagopresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/05/Principles-of-Vocation-and-Work.pdf>, 12.

of *bling*, I could not see, at first, what exactly Lucas is making or remaking when he goes on those long and arduous rides he seems to love.

Lucas' own understand of work is much more instructive than my own initial gross and overdrawn critique of the power of commodity capitalism. When I asked him what work meant for him, he explained, "Money. Of course. But work means also superation, opportunities in the life to be better, to learn, to see what I can do, challenge. In this case, to be part of the Landry's family. Things I can bring to the company or support the company. Work for Landry's mean doing something that I like. Bikes, I like bikes." I could not help but be reminded of Sartre's idea that in a capitalist society, wages and freedom are inexorably linked. Material conditions are given subjective force and are overcome, although never completely. As Sartre also argued, what we do necessarily expresses the logic of capital though our stories of practice also always speak of much more, irreducibly so, than capital.

Exchange Value as Existential Borderland

A television advertisement of the early days of the Obama administration heralds the new "green" harmony between man, nature and machine.¹⁵ Admittedly, what interests me are the small, minute steps of praxis and un-theorized moments of speech that point not to an enchanted land of radical, ethical unity and material plenitude but, instead, a choppy, more jagged existence which simultaneously includes moments of transcendence, elements of objectification and need, estranged and alienated as well as fulfilling and cooperative relationships. Sartre argues that the material stage of modern, industrial life itself is imbued with an objectified and objectifying social life of its own. The following passage about the materiality of space is indicative of Sartre's point of view:

¹⁵ "The Making of the Prius 'Harmony' TV Commercial," YouTube video, :30, from ToyotaUSA, posted by ToyotaUSA, May 11, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tq4nrmnqY9o&feature=related>.

...I must myself become the lived surpassing of our material situation. Within the room, doors and windows are never entirely passive realities; the work of other people has given to them their meaning, has made out of them instruments, possibilities for an other (any other).¹⁶

Following Marx, labor, such as the craftsmanship that went into Lucas's construction of the "fitting table" Tom pointed out to me on my first day, exists within the objects of production as a residue, existentially, of projected human effort and as a marker of historical conditions. Yet, as something Ryan later said reminded me, whatever enjoyment and pleasures we might at times derive from commodities, these objects are also all too often signs of the alienation of workers from the fruits of their own creations. If we personify the objects of our labor through our play (and are objectified in return by those same things), the terrain of practice is haunted by the efforts of countless others whose presences radiate horizontally across the stage and vertically, that is psychically within us, as we realize ourselves through their creations. After his Marxist turn, Sartre came to better recognize certain opacities in our awareness and knowledge about the very things that are so vital to the making and remaking of the self. In the same vein, he came to stress our inabilities, under current historical relationships, to see let alone give recognition to the other persons who manifest possibilities for us through their labor within unequal and unjust political and economic relations.¹⁷

Michael Jackson argues that the Western conception of the political self is itself the product of particular culturally dominant narratives and, as an anthropologist working in Australia and West Africa, engages stories as intersubjective "artifacts of dwelling,

¹⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method*, 153.

¹⁷ If feminist psychoanalytic theory tends to emphasize the ethical ideal of a living otherness within the self, a Marxian variation on the theme might focus on the alienated labor that is internalized through our existential use of and play with commodities. In making use of other's work, what kinds of responsibilities do we have towards them?

articulating relations of identity between people and places.”¹⁸ The political repercussions of narratives of social and material relationships that were at issue for Karl Marx, were alluded to by Lucas and, as I will mention shortly, are very much at the forefront of Ryan’s articulations of the dangers and limitations of advertising. Lucas, as we saw, contrasted the “metallic” chapter 4 he finds prevalent in American society to a spirit of cooperative fellowship and family that he associates with his life in Guatemala. It is in precisely in these kinds of associations that one might hear echoes of Marx, who, nevertheless, does misstep in this passage in critical ways, as I will discuss in detail in the conclusion. In “The Communist Manifesto” Marx writes,

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part. The bourgeoisie, whenever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound men to his “natural superiors” and has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest than callous “cash payment.” It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egoistic calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value and in the place of the numberless infeasible freedoms has set up that single unconscionable freedom: free trade.”¹⁹

More recent philosophers and theorists like Jean-Joseph Goux and Marc Shell highlight the ways in which the logic of money effaces difference. Goux writes,

The institution of FATHER, PHALLUS, and LANGUAGE, of the major “signs” that regulate the values market, in fact stems from the genesis whose necessity and whose limits are doubtless most pronounced, theoretically, in the origin of MONEY.²⁰

¹⁸ Michael Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002), 31.

¹⁹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The Communist Manifesto” in *The Portable Karl Marx*, ed. Eugene Kamenka (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 206.

²⁰ Jean-Joseph Goux, *Symbolic Economies After Marx and Freud* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 13.

What Goux means--most basically--is that Freud's discussion of the role of the father in the development of the superego, Lacan's preoccupations with the phallus as master signifier and Derrida's critiques of the pretensions of the sign share with Marx's identification of exchange value a certain preoccupation with the logic of general equivalency. In Marx's case, it is money that irons out differences and effaces particularities. So, for example, payment for my running shoes obscures the materiality of labor that went into them and their historical conditions of production, performing a mystification in that sense because not only are my running shoes not the same as my friends' pair (even if they are the same make and model) but discrete moments of labor, because they are performances of discrete human bodies and happen in time, while actually irreducible, are quantified and then standardized by pricing and the determination of monetary value. However, even if we agree with Marx about the basic structure of exchange value as applied to labor, it is not the case that practice within the social and political boundaries of capitalist exchange is therefore necessarily cold, mechanical, lifeless and reducible to these historical and sociological structures.

For the purposes of my discussion here, I want to focus on the fact that Marx and Goux both suggest that economic relationships necessarily bear strong relationships to linguistic landscapes and lived narratives of self and other. Indeed, the economic historian Emma Rothschild argues that Adam Smith politically understood burgeoning capitalist relationships to present standardizing and democratizing buffers against entrenched aristocratic and monopolistic relationships that conferred undue privileges and made fair dealing impossible.²¹ Throughout my interview with Lucas, I heard whispers of the idea that the dominance of money keeps certain other injustices at bay but also a strong contention

²¹ Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments--Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

that something is lost when the thickness of cooperative sociality—a set of “idyllic relations”—gives way to the callous logic of “cash payment.”²² Lucas’ story reminds us that we find ways to live our lives within the contexts in which we find ourselves, Sartre’s *practico-inert*, and that it makes no empirical or phenomenological sense to strictly oppose freedom and alienation, instrumentalization and vitality or even exchange-value and use-value. We struggle to find ways to make our *ends meet* even if and as the limits threaten to become the sky.

After a hiatus of several months, I returned to Landry’s to begin the next phase of my research. It was good to run into Lucas. I asked Lucas how things were and he told me that his son had been declined a scholarship to the private high school he wanted to attend. The school he had been attending, an expensive private school, only went through the eighth grade. Lucas explained that his son had excellent grades in school and was actually a better student than someone he knew would be attending, the son of the woman his wife works for. This boy, Lucas explained, was admitted even though he was a worse student and not as hard working as his own son. Poignantly, his wife’s employer had apparently suggested that “it must be the economy” when she heard that Lucas’s son had been declined admission to the school with a scholarship. For his part, Lucas tellingly explained that while his son was initially depressed, he was now “*adjusting to the situation.*” He said, in the way we often do, needing to make the most of a situation, that this temporary setback was probably good for his son, who would now no doubt better “appreciate what he has.” Like Sheila, the woman with whom I worked at the domestic violence shelter in New York, Lucas emphasized the

²² I will return to Derrida later but I find his argument in *Specters of Marx* that exchange-value is a historical rather than a meta-historical category important. The ambiguities of intersubjective life are not reducible to the forms of capitalist exchange.

ability to overcome limitations that had been clearly marked and tracked by relationships of and with money not fully under his control.

Metaphors We Live (and War) By

*“You are just **throwing it** around because it has no meaning. But I think that’s the point of spirituality versus religion.”* This is a claim about the social uses of “spirituality” made by Ryan towards the end of our interview at an Italian restaurant in Natick. The concept of “throwing around” things or words is a recurring theme in my interactions with Ryan. Ryan, who forthrightly states that he is neither “religious” nor “spiritual,” is a twenty three year old part-time sales guy at Landry’s who has been working at the store, in one capacity or another, since he was seventeen. When I first began my ethnographic internship at Landry’s, Ryan was completing his B.S. thesis in product design at the Wentworth Institute of Technology, focusing on ways to improve biker safety on roads bicyclists must, by necessity, share with very imposing and potentially dangerous automotive vehicles. During the same impromptu conversation I briefly mentioned at the beginning of the chapter in which Ryan bemoaned the “selling of the whole experience” as a ploy to create more points of sale, he also made the related point that the drive to emphasize accessories has the effect of “keeping the industry from *expanding* because it *concentrates* it among the wealthy.” Ryan further explained that while he understands that there is a need for a “*bottom line*” in business, he would personally rather “design useful things that are *useful to people* rather than sell them things.”

On another day, months later, I ran into Ryan on the floor room and asked him how things were. He said that he had finished his degree and was looking for work but that he was not having much success because, “the economy is bad. Nobody wants to buy anything.” Ryan took the opportunity to reiterate his dislike of retail sales, telling me that he

prefers to do “things that are real” instead. To illustrate a point, Ryan took me over to a bike and pointed to a piece on the fork and the seat stand and explained that this is what Specialized calls FACT (Functional Advanced Computing Technology) only to differentiate it from Trek’s OCLV (Optimum Compaction, Low Void) technology. Pointing, he said, “all these materials come from Taiwan or from China and they’re the same. I hate the ways they come up with terms like Desert Insert and all those absurd symbols to sell the same things. It’s all spin.” Ryan’s comments readily reminded me of Adorno and Horkheimer’s discussion of the “magical” qualities of names in a capitalized society. Giving a critical and practical edge to our appreciation for the atomic power unleashed when the bond of signifiers and signifieds is broken, Adorno and Horkheimer argue in their famous essay, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” that:

The blindness and dumbness of the data to which positivism reduces the world pass over into language itself, which restricts itself to recording those data. Terms themselves become impenetrable; they obtain a striking force, a power of adhesion and repulsion which makes them like their extreme opposite, incantations. They come to be a kind of trick, because the name of the prima donna is cooked up in the studio on a statistical basis, or because a welfare state is anathematised by using taboo terms such as “bureaucrats” or “intellectuals,” or because base practice uses the name of the country as a charm. In general, the name – to which magic most easily attaches – is undergoing a chemical change: a metamorphosis into capricious, manipulable designations, whose effect is admittedly now calculable, but which for that very reason is just as despotic as that of the archaic name.²³

Or, as Marx also understood, “all fixed, fast frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away,”²⁴ warning us that linguistic critiques of essences and “natural” relationships and a radical critique of capitalism, while intimately related, cannot be reduced to one another.

²³ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 134.

²⁴ Marx and Engels, “The Communist Manifesto,” 207.

My ethnographic focus here is on the use of language by a worker who claims no personal investment in either “religion” or “spirituality” but whose deployment of those and other words is still illustrative of the ways in which ontology, history and existential imperatives can interact at borderlands circumscribed, at least in part, by capitalist relationships. By the time I was packing up my recorder after our interview and preparing my things for the train ride back to Boston, it had become increasingly difficult to neatly separate out Ryan’s talk of money, spirituality, language and sociality. There are four aspects of our conversation that I want to focus on: 1) Ryan’s use of ontological metaphors about the market; 2) A key moment in our interview which is suggestive of what our relationships to spirituality and money might have in common, existentially; 3) Ryan’s off the cusp use of specific metaphors of war and what they might suggest about how politics, religion, economics and personal histories can intertwine in our play with words; 4) The ways in which Ryan seems to take recourse in ontological metaphors as a way to cope with lived anxiety.

I. **General Use of Ontological Metaphors**

As I have already discussed, Ryan speaks, as many of us do, of markets that *contract*, *expand* and *concentrate*. Concerning what they call “ontological metaphors,” Lakoff and Johnson write the following:

Spatial orientations, like up-down, front-back, on-off, center-periphery, and near-far provide an extraordinarily rich basis for understanding concepts in orientational terms. But one can do only so much with orientation. Our experience of physical objects and substances provides a further basis for understanding—one that goes beyond mere orientation. Understanding our experiences in terms of objects and substances allows us to pick out parts of our experience and treat them as discrete entities or substances of a uniform kind. Once we can identify our experiences as entities or substances, we can

refer them, categorize them, group them, and quantify them--and by this means, reason about them.²⁵

Arguing that “human purposes typically require us to impose artificial boundaries,” Lakoff and Johnson’s approach is instructive precisely because ontological metaphors are often “elaborated in our culture” and help comprise our experiential gestalts.²⁶ Here, the “market” is treated like a substance that can either increase or decrease. Of course, anyone living in the twenty first century United States “knows” intuitively that market expansion is supposed to be a good thing. The Dow Jones index, when it goes up, is presented on television by the experts on the economy as a comforting sign of economic recovery even if the paid cynics warn that the so-called “real economy” and the “market” are not necessarily the same thing. Implied in the metaphorical concept that MARKET’S SHOULD EXPAND is an underlying orientational or spatial metaphor, the concept that MORE IS GOOD. When Ryan explained at the beginning of our interview how it is that he first “got into biking,” he said that he started out riding a “*bottom of the barrel*” mountain bike as a young teen. This metaphorical use of a “barrel” harkens back to the early days of commerce when fruits and vegetables at the bottom of a barrel being used to transport them to the marketplace would be worse for the wear and, as such, considered of lower quality and offered at a cheaper price. The good stuff, so to speak, would concentrate on top. Implicit in the metaphorical concept of the “bottom of the barrel” is not only our concrete experiences of trade but perhaps also the orientational metaphor that UP IS GOOD. In the West, of course, divinity, the greatest good, is often thought to embody the ether while the place of “concentrated” evil exists below the normal

²⁵ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 25.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

plane of human activity, the earth. Similarly, in a “knowledge economy,” “higher order” mental labor is valued over and against “lower order” manual labor.

How might we elaborate upon the potential implications of the seemingly innocuous use of metaphors of markets that expand and concentrate? Ever since Adam Smith’s concept of the hidden hand of the marketplace was popularized in Western thought, critical theorists and activists have brought attention to the ways in which belief in the market as a benevolent, ordered and mysterious substance that lays just beyond the full grasp of individuals allows discrete, unjust and politically invested economic politics to go unchallenged. In Ryan’s comments--comments I myself make all the time without thinking twice---we might glimpse the outline of a certain ontology and everyday metaphysics of economic life in a capitalist society. And if Sartre’s theory of practice might, at some level, ethically emphasize the more conscious choices we make to relate ourselves to experiences somehow beyond ourselves (however mundane), Lakoff and Johnson remind us that we often relate ourselves to the world, including our concepts of the world, in often unreflected and taken for granted ways. The Sartrean *practico-inert* makes us at least as much as we remake it. Of course, the “*bottom line*” of business is also an exceedingly common, everyday concept we employ that carries with it exceedingly powerful political and philosophical implications as it establishes the profit motive as foundational and unsurpassable. As such, I am politically interested in the ways in which ethnographic method can assist the scholar in his or her engagement with people who are making their own ends meet. Examining the lived deployment of metaphor is one way of grasping relationships between language, existence and economics.

II. The Significance of Money

An interesting moment in my 100-minute formal interview with Ryan occurred around the hour point. We had been discussing “spirituality” in a more or less isolated way, Ryan explaining that he thinks the world carries vestiges of the religious search for “meaning.” Ryan stated that he himself has “never seen any kind of sign or reason for humanity to exist, essentially.” I followed up, asking, “So you have not seen too many reasons for humanity...” Ryan interrupted, saying the following:

Well, essentially I don't need a reason. My reason is just...live. Like, I don't need to know if I am doing something after I die. I have goals personally but those are like I want to have kids, I want to bike a lot, I want to enjoy my job, I want to do something where...I won't make a lot of money...I know I won't...well, I could if I was the design director of a corporation but hypothetically on an average scale, I won't make a lot of money...I will be middle class...I am fine with that. As long as I have some toys and I get to travel...as long as I get to do the stuff I want to do, I don't need a purpose necessarily. I find that a lot of people dictate their life on this...obviously, everyone wants money. I want some but it's not what's driving my life necessarily. I'm very irresponsible with money, I'd say. And it's because I spend money on what I want. I obviously need to start saving for a house, for the future but at the same rate, right now it's like I don't really care. I'm not married, I don't have kids so...there is no greater meaning to my life, essentially. I don't have...well, a lot of people would say that you're not introspective enough or you haven't really thought about it enough but I think I've thought about it so much that I've passed the point where I need for there to be a reason...because the reason people think there is a reason is because they've been told there is a heaven and hell and that something happens to you after whereas I've never really ever been told that. I've never believed there is anything after so I've never had anything to really strive for.

We had not previously discussed, whether in the context of the interview to that point or during my time at Landry's the relationship between money and religion/spirituality.

Therefore, what I find interesting about Ryan's comments is the way in which his thoughts blend or conflate the question of meaning in the “religious sense” suggested by my formal question and issues having to do with money. Ryan begins by responding that he does not need an overarching meaning for life, stating that he prefers instead to “just live” life and

identify his own goals. He quickly shifts his attention to the question of money, explaining that while he does realize that he needs to make money, he, unlike the people who “dictate their life” upon the quest for money, remains so un-enamored that he is even “irresponsible” with money. He then returns to the more abstract concept of “meaning,” reiterating that he has no need for “greater meaning” and suggesting that some people might find him not “introspective enough.” Then, very interestingly, he advances the claim that “the reason people think there is a reason is because they’ve been told there is a heaven and hell...”

For students of religion, the resonances with Max Weber’s classic study, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* might be striking. Influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche, Weber, of course, argued that introspection, as a kind of ascetic ideal, was a necessary component of the spirit of capitalism.²⁷ In Weber’s text, an “inner loneliness,” occasioned by the implications of Reform theologies for Christians’ assurances with respect to salvation, prompts a theologically *unauthorized* quest for the assurance of salvation through everyday “signs” of wealth. Ryan repeats many of these motifs, most notably the idea that the question of cosmological salvation and the pursuit of wealth are related for many people and that money can become a “sign” of “greater meaning.” In my view, one can here suspend the question of whether or not and to what degree Weber “correctly” gets the historical development of capitalism in relationship to theological and institutional developments of Christianity and focus, instead, on the ways in which gestalts of and about economic materiality, like the theologies and practices of religions, can help provide a (never

²⁷ For Nietzsche, asceticism is self-imposed suffering in the hopes of escaping other forms of suffering. Nietzsche worries that science has internalized a ghostly form of Christian morality through its institutional practices although he also credits the ascetic ideal with inculcating an important depth of personality.

impenetrable in my view) narrative cohesion and can relate themselves recursively to questions of cosmological organization. Ryan's unreflected upon and in the moment turn to questions of money when discussing issues of religious "meaning" is perhaps indicative of the ways in which money and wealth, like religion, are *significant* in this society. If he is to eschew the need for "greater meaning" or a life of pretentious "significance," Ryan must resist prostrating himself in front of both God and Mammon. According to STW, Mammon and God still seep inside us, whether we like it or not.

III. Throwing Around Grenades, Throwing Around Numbers, Throwing Around Words, Throwing Around Money

As many Americans have during the current economic crisis, Ryan expressed some disbelief in the concrete reality of and a visceral incredulity about the exact identity of money. He explained:

I don't even understand where the concept of 18 trillion dollars comes from...that's not realistic to me. I don't think that actually exists. I mean [Ryan *chuckles*] that many trillion dollars couldn't possibly exist. It's all in a bank. It's all in a computer. It's not even. It's hypothetical money that's being *throwing around* left and right. From country to country...China to Russia to whatever...Because I can't fathom that amount of money. I mean, where do they get that figure from? Is there an accountant sitting there saying that's how much this *bullet* costs. I mean what happens when the children...soldiers are screwing around in their camp *throwing grenades*? Does that get accounted for from the *stocks of grenades* that they have there? It just seems like they are *throwing these numbers*...I don't know where it all comes from. I just can't think of it as a realistic amount of money. But that's obviously because I don't have to deal with that. I deal with thousands of dollars—that kind of thing. That's unfathomable to me, essentially.

I was immediately struck by related metaphors of unfathomable, unreal, "hypothetical money" "being thrown around left and right," from China to Russia, and the military metaphors of bullets and grenades being thrown around by soldiers "screwing around." In fact, Ryan connects the two by suggesting that people are just "throwing these numbers" around, incredulous that there can be underlying precision or meaningfulness behind

numbers like 18 trillion dollars. There can be no reasonable accounting for these numbers, numbers that somehow resemble for Ryan projectiles thrown around by soldiers for fun and sport from “stocks of grenades.”

Ryan’s thoughts on hypothetical money can be juxtaposed to his discussion of some of the more laid-back and interpersonal aspects of the cycling business world he enjoys. In particular, Ryan discussed the barter that can occur between those who work with and on bikes and “hard core” enthusiasts who are prone to tip in beer. Ryan explained that, “beer is like gold in cycling culture, it seems. Like I said, we get paid, we get tipped in beer. It’s always like a crazy microbrew.” The exchange of labor and know how about bikes for microbrew represents a tangibly social aspect of his work at Landry’s that he credits with keeping him content at work:

It’s the employees that I like, that make me like working there. And then those occasional customers that come in who are either really cool down to earth people or they are new to the sport and they’re very excited. That’s mainly why I like working there. So, the Natick store, I like all the staff that works there. It’s fun. It’s like where else do you work where you can have a beer after work and just hang around, whatever. Where else do you get paid to do work in beer? As a tip. I’m not an alcoholic but it’s still nice. It’s cool. So, I like that environment and actually a lot of design places are like that. I just interviewed at a design firm and they brew their own beer in the kitchen. I just kind of like that laid-back environment where still things are still getting done, you are still productive but you can still joke around, still be friends with your coworkers, and you still ride together and that kind of stuff.

For her part, Naomi Klein’s critiques the politics of a “Free Agent Nation” that she feel is perhaps too good at, in her view, finding ironic distances at work, turning work into play and *cooling* its places of employ without actually improving its structural position within a global economic market.²⁸ The concern is, in my view, structurally analogous to the criticisms

²⁸ Klein, *No Logo*, 231-259.

leveled at “workplace spirituality” With Sartre, I think that finding ways to keep matters of politics and existence on par is a critical enterprise.

For my direct purposes here, I want to draw attention to Ryan’s contention that at Landry’s one can joke around with co-workers and yet still remain productive. Interestingly, while his ambiguous and often very critical relationship to capitalist relationships of exchange has been apparent the whole time I have known Ryan, he stated at another moment in the interview that he ultimately believes that money is a necessity because barter is no longer possible. He explained:

Money was developed out of a need, obviously. In this economy you can't barter things, it's impossible. And when money was created, that's the reason, because bartering is no longer really a viable option, you need some kind of bigger currency.

It is almost directly following this articulation of the need for a “bigger currency” that Ryan makes his comments about hypothetical money being “thrown around” in the form of numbers being thrown around, which come to resemble “soldiers screwing around in their camp throwing grenades.” How might we relate his description of cooperative barter at Landry’s and his curious use of military metaphors and money/numbers/bullets/grenades being thrown around by a group of soldiers “screwing around”? Grenades, of course, can easily kill and have no other purpose then to explode, throwing and strewing hapless earth and charred flesh about. How do the *stock market*—with its seemingly unfathomable numbers and magical yet capricious power to bestow and take away—and the *stock of grenades* relate to one another? Provocatively, Marx argued that money which exists out of circulation can come to resemble burnt out ashes precisely because it loses its symbolic meaning within the commodity system. He writes,

If the hoard were not constantly in tension with circulation, it would now simply be a heap of useless metal, its monetary soul would have disappeared and nothing but burnt-out ashes of circulation.²⁹

Implied in Ryan's statements, however, is the idea that we are apt to use metaphors which suggest not that money is eviscerated when its isolation from the social makes it devoid of meaning but, instead, that it can eviscerate and burn *us* as we suffer the concrete effects of its frenzied circulation. Ryan's use of the "throwing around" of concepts and ideas is quite telling, I believe; its immediate context, however, is an exceedingly mundane description of how product design happens, from concept on through production.

At this point of our interview, Ryan suggested a certain connection between the economy of money and the economy of ideas:

Like the whole money thing...you need the *rich* people to buy bikes that nobody needs in order to fund making the other bikes that are cheaper for people who can't afford those who need it to get around. So it's like the same thing—you need those *idealists*, you need people who are way out there, concepts that are so far fetched that they would never actually work but then the *trickle down* of those concepts can turn into realistic ideas...*the basic principle that comes out of the idea*...you're really not supposed to throw anything out because there is something valid in everything no matter how ridiculous. *You can always break it down into the smallest part and use something from it.* In that thinking nothing is too big, necessarily, it just needs to be broken down appropriately.

In addition to reminding me of Lou's discussions at the STW roundtable about what occurs in the literally set off corporate spaces of Research & Design Units (R&D), I noted similarities with the management discourse I will look at in chapter 4. Management discourse and organizational philosophies have come to revel in the language of synergies, alchemy, creative transgression, pie in the sky genius and magic while simultaneously purporting to calculate, measure and productively control these energies. For the discrete purposes of the

²⁹ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, Co., 1904), 175.

present discussion what matters is that, here, Ryan speaks of throwing around ideas and concepts although, unlike the throwing around of money and of numbers, the process is controlled and socially contained. Later, when he was discussing his urban plan to increase levels of biking in Boston, Ryan also mentioned another socially productive way in which things get “thrown around.” He suggested that only private corporations would be able to finance his plan because they are “the only ones who have the money to *throw away*” and would be motivated by the “...advertising more people can see. And (that) it makes them also look more benevolent because now they are helping “the green situation”.”

Based on a program already in place in Holland, Ryan’s plan calls for a company like Clear Channel to purchase thousands of bicycles for pedestrians to ride in exchange for branded space in the form of parking lots and the bicycles themselves. The plan also necessarily causes him certain anxieties. Ryan is quick to point out that he is no fan of big corporations. Second, the relationship between “throwing away” money and “throwing away” words is already hinted out in his statement about a *Clear Channel’s* potential motivations for signing on to his plan. What’s hinted at there became clearer when we continued our conversation about the meaning and use of the word “Green” in contemporary advertising and product design. Picking up on his hesitations with the word, I pointedly asked Ryan whether or not “everything that gets coded or called “Green” is actually green”? He responded,

Um...that’s why I hate the nomenclature thing...cause it’s like what is actual “Green”? These things that they say are “green”...there are so many aspects of this thing that you can nit pick and say that, “well, oh, that’s not good because say Apple.” They’re claiming that new Mac Pros are the greenest notebooks out there because they don’t use poisonous materials but they are also using laser CT machines to cut every single computer. I mean how much power is that drawing? The power comes from a coal plant. It comes from burning something. So unless that plant is run on solar power, it is not a truly green thing...nothing is really Green. You can only help to improve some set

of the process but not in turn more negatively impacting....so like there are 20 repercussions for every decision we make, especially when designing a product.

In contrast to the word Green that gets brandied about in mystifying ways because we attribute healing properties onto the word, Ryan mentioned two somewhat more legitimate instances of Green. The first was a school project:

One little aspect of something being green makes it green? It's such an overused term that...it's badged on everything and it completely defaced the meaning of it. It doesn't mean anything. Like this trend we started three years ago when I was in school. We had to do a "green" design project. So what I did was a deodorant applicator so that instead of *throwing away* the whole applicator, you buy a refill pack with four refills and you refill it. And they're like, "well that's not green." I'm like "yes it is!"

The second is a company that Ryan admires in Somerville that uses World War II era machines because they are "infinitely rebuildable" in contrast to the "machines now that you *throw away* because they are broken and there are no replacement parts available." Ryan's pragmatic emphasis thus seems to be in tension with the popular discourses of Green, which often suggest that we, as consumers, purchase more specialized feel good "Green" products. It also places the ethical and political focus on making and using well-constructed things that last in direct contradistinction to the affixing of the magical label, "Green," onto less well produced commodities. His approach, however sane, might seem downright dour when compared to something like the new Prius commercial, which proclaims new cosmological harmonies between nature, production and consumption in singing Technicolor, all the while alluding to the harmonies which the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States is supposed to represent.

Towards the very end of our interview, Ryan tied our discussion of advertising back to "spirituality" although we had not been discussing the latter for quite some time. He said,

For me it ruins it because Green is such a *thrown around* term...it's like Design is...that pisses me off...anyone is a Designer that puts a drape up in a room. That doesn't make you a designer. I think there is much more to it so I think that by commercializing and spreading around this word across any industry, anything you can possibly think of it totally demeans it, essentially. To tie it back to the whole spirituality thing, like that's *thrown around* a lot and I think it demeans it a lot.

But then Ryan almost immediately recoiled and did an about face in his assessment of “spirituality,” suggesting that while he does not claim “spirituality” for himself, it might be socially preferable to “religion.” He put matters this way:

But at the same time that's fine because you don't have to...one of my issues with religion is that things have to be a certain way if you're a certain religion...so it's like why does everything have to mean something? In a way, *spirituality* can mean whatever you want it to just like I believe you should be able to practice...I think you should be able to believe in God however you want to...like my girlfriend believes that in order to believe in God she has to be Catholic because that's how she was raised. Or she has to be a certain religion. Like I know this is kind of a childish analogy but do you ever watch “the *Simpsons*”? The *Simpsons* is so anti-religious it's ridiculous but at the same rate they believe in God so Matt Groening believes in God. I read it in interviews and stuff. He did several episodes where it's like the Church of Homer. He's like “why can't I just worship God however I want to?” Why can't I just sit in my living room and still believe in God?...watch football and still believe in God? Why do you need this *structure* for everything that then constitutes why we get into *wars*? Molest kids?

When I returned to the interview file and listed to our conversation one more time for purposes of transcription, I noticed something key that I originally missed during our conversation and during my first review of the audio. Right after he used the metaphor of soldiers throwing around grenades as a way to approach the throwing around of unfathomable numbers, Ryan offered the following about his practice of religious tolerance: “I try to be of a mind of people can do what they want but by the same rate I can't support...I can't possibly look aside from some things that have happened in the name of religion.”

Ryan is twenty-three years old. Most of his adult life has been spent with his country at war, depleting its surplus and accruing unfathomable debt, often in the name of “religion.” The metaphor of soldiers throwing around grenades makes quite a bit of sense within this context. The metaphor is charged with both conscious existential imperatives and less conscious historical registers. Moreover, the recurring theme in Ryan’s speech of *throwing away* or *throwing around* grenades, bullets, words, concepts, ideas, numbers and money seems shot through with ambiguities and anxieties about “postmodern” life. Capitalism might well facilitate the deregulation of “idyllic relations” and the construction of new linguistic and conceptual combinations (what some sociologists and anthropologists speak of in terms of de-territorialization) but it might do so in ways that, for some, can exhaust meaning and often go hand in hand with concrete forms of political and economic violence.

IV. **Ontology and Anxiety**

George Lakoff and Robert Johnson argue that, “It is through our conceptual systems that we are able to make sense of everyday life, and our everyday metaphysics is embodied in those conceptual systems.”³⁰ Most of my discussion about my interactions and conversations with Ryan has been some variation on this theme. Very briefly, I want to rely on a small, seemingly uninteresting moment in my interview with Ryan to discuss the exceedingly mundane ways in which I believe, following Michael Jackson, that we deploy ontological metaphors in order to fend off existential anxiety.

Ryan: I don’t think anyone is inherently evil or good, it’s situational. That’s what it comes down to.

George: And what about money? Is money inherently good, bad or indifferent?

³⁰ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 10.

Ryan: Um, I'd say indifferent just because you need it. Money was developed out of a need, obviously. In this economy you can't barter things, it's impossible. And when money was created, that's the reason, because bartering is no longer really a viable option, you need some kind of bigger currency. So, it's necessary but obviously throughout history it's been one of the greatest sources of corruption and evil in people. Like this whole situation with the economy right now. That's, I would say, inherently evil men being greedy. They were making so much money that they didn't look to see how we are screwing these people who can't afford to make their payments. You're going to foreclose a sense of false hope, essentially. It didn't matter because they were making a big buck. I think that aspect of money is inherently evil and I think it's unavoidable because there are those people in the world who get money and that's all they want.

Why does Ryan, an exceedingly bright young man, so quickly move from the idea that nobody is inherently evil or good to the idea that "inherently evil men being greedy" are the cause of the economic collapse? In addition to engaging his essentializing of gender, ascribing agency or ill intentions to men (or both), how might we approach the apparent contradiction? My own inclination is to view Ryan's "illogic" as an effect of ontological insecurity in the face of a set of anxiety provoking conditions way beyond his (or my) individual grasp or control. It simply becomes easier to confront a situation if we can identify sure causes and neatly separate out the heroes and the villains. Although Ryan, like I, subscribes abstractly to a more pragmatic ethics, he, like I, resorts to ontology in small, almost imperceptible ways. "Why does it always rain when I want to play tennis?" I recently asked myself. That time I "caught" myself. "Does it really *always* rain when you want to play tennis, George?" Our imperceptible tendency to essentialize in the face of existential anxiety can be catastrophic when it is socially institutionalized. *The things done in the name of religion that Ryan alludes to have had and continue to take refuge in this binary kind of logic.*

Conclusion

By way of summary, I will first very briefly here highlight some of the most important ethnographic lessons I take away from the story of Lucas and his bike and from

my interactions with Ryan. I will reiterate what it is about my work and words with Lucas and Ryan, the two persons in this dissertation least likely to initiate any formal conversation about “religion” or “spirituality” (and in the case of Ryan, someone who claims no personal religion or spirituality), that added to my *comprehension* of the the kinds of questions I want to ask about these.

From my ethnographic relationship with Lucas, I was reminded that “spirituality” is not a *thing* to be grasped and measured and that the word (as with “religion”) cannot be empirically isolated from the blur of life as it is actually lived. “Spirituality” and “religion,” where they occur, are discursively and institutionally embedded within overdetermined narratives that are reproduced and personalized (and changed) at the level of micro-practices that necessarily intertwine with the politics of family, gender, race, class and geography. In my interview with Lucas, I did not get the sense that he had a strong working relationship with either term. They did not seem to be terms that were “at hand.” At one point in the interview, Lucas substitutes his definition of “religion” for his definition of “spirituality,” as if to remind in a very mundane, everyday kind of way that our analytical and conceptual categories tend to slip in practice. Lucas, we recall, did not, unlike Ryan, redirect the conversation back to those terms and did not elaborate upon the relationships between the two or between both and larger consumer society. So, when Lucas offers his formal thoughts about “spirituality” at my prompting--“Peace, ah, happiness, and um, friendship, share everything.”—I transitively relate this back to his previous description of his cooperative working relationship with Gabriel and their economy of favors. This is not to scientifically privilege a humanistic understanding of “spirituality” but, rather, to insist upon the mobile nature of the term while also noting that I personally find Lucas's *intersubjective* ideas about spirituality and work--its heightened focus on non-monetary logic and the inter-

relationships between bodies at work, bodies at leisure and the *things* people work with—important articulations that can speak back to the institutionalized definitions of “spirituality” in the management literature.³¹

If the term “spirituality” is motile, the ethnographer, like anyone else, has an ethical obligation to en-flesh this concept within the world of living and breathing people (as a practice of ethical storytelling), allowing the empirical world to put our theories to the test. Lucas’s relationship to his bicycle reminded me that, despite my admiration for critical theories that sometimes blunt our relationships to consumer things, commodities do not cease being *things* with which we have existentially complex relationships simply because they are products of the commodity system. As Ryan points out, we need to explore the social life of commodities. In relating our relationships with our things horizontally and intersubjectively, we implicitly throw into question some of our metaphysical assumptions, whether neo-liberal or Marxist, about private ownership. In Lucas’s case, to reduce his relationship with this bike to conspicuous consumption is to miss the ways in which the bike is, for him, a *transitional object*, allowing him to remake his past in order to live better in the present. Formal theologies of consumer society too often focus on the impurities of desire and iron out the complexities of our relationships with the ritual artifacts of our own life-world, recasting a play of presence/absence rather than focusing our attention on the structural conditions of production and the structural effects of consumption. As Ryan has

³¹ What’s the *actual* relationship between Lucas’s prior description of his cooperative friendship with Gabriel and his first definition of spirituality? That relationship, once engaged here, is necessarily mediated by the ethnographer. Rather than assume that this question can only be approached as an objective quest for a manageable causality, I believe that second order empirical analysis of speech and its contexts can force upon us some needed humility in our impulses to neatly order and control the world. A *politics of storytelling* might offer ethical resources for doing work in the world that rejects false dichotomies like instrumental/non-instrumental reason and freedom/control that become politically charged in the workplace spirituality literature, in “operationalized” institutional practices and in some critical responses to these phenomena.

pointed out, attractive, even cherished, objects can still get made under conditions that might make us recoil.

As Wendy Brown credits Marx for exposing with exquisite skill, it has often been the strategy of the Western ruling classes to carve out deep separations between minds, bodies and the social body of production.³² However, if a disembodied consciousness was the position of domination par excellence of modern Western elites, it is important to recognize that emerging discourses of “re-embodiment” can also re-structuralize separations in slightly different ways. As Ryan suggested, the body has been literally broken down into small individual units, each segment now a potential site of consumption. As cultural theorists, critical theorists of consumer society and some ritual theorists note, contemporary consumer society is distinguished in part by a heightened and more explicit attention to issues of bodily practice. In this new attention to the body, Jeremy Carrette and Richard King note, the quest for authenticity encases experience in historically particular and contingent ways. Ryan once protested: “they want us to sell “the whole experience” and that means selling people things they don’t need.” A totalizing metaphysics of presence and freedom, the holistic consumer “experience,” gives unitary meaning to the potentially jarring logic of instrumental calculation and the haunting specters of estranged relationships that Ryan has intimate knowledge of, working in sales and studying design and ways in which small transactions, each purchase, and every fitting is subsumed by the rhetoric of “experience” or made to fit into an authentic “lifestyle.”³³ The *social* body of production (and its *intersubjective* elements of

³² Wendy Brown, *Politics out of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 82.

³³ Famously, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer argued that “marked differentiations” and “mechanically differentiated products” partake of the standardization and rationalization of “culture” that renders modern enlightenment, in the end, a nightmare of mass deception.¹ In Ryan’s assessment of the situation one hears echoes of Adorno and Horkheimer’s contention that differences that are “extended and

economic exchange and consumption) is further obscured and concealed even as the spokespersons of the “new economy” rediscover the productive power of the individual consumer body and celebrate ecstatic moments of seamless *fusion* between mind-body-spirit.

As Lucas’s history of violence and struggles with money and Ryan’s off the cusp use of military metaphor remind us, no one ever stands in a position of complete harmony and integration with respect to their own personal human drama, let alone larger national and cosmic histories. This is the case in *particular* ways under contemporary capitalist conditions. And yet, in my view, as Sartre suggested, even if we take for granted a pervasive social and economic alienation in the limited Marxist sense we must not forget that the point of critique is to engage and encounter life in its irreducible complexities and existential drama.

He writes,

It is the individual, alienated, reified, mystified, as he has been made to be by the division of labor and by exploitation, but struggling against alienation with the help of distorting instruments and, despite everything, patiently gaining ground. The dialectical totalization must include acts, passions, work, need as well as economic categories; it must at once place the agent or the event back into the historical setting, define him in relation to the orientation of becoming, and determine exactly the meaning of the present as such.³⁴

Sartre's thoughts about engaging the social within the individual, the political within the personal and the structural within that which exceeds structure (and vice versa) proved helpful as I was considered the ways in which Lucas's bicycle became a window for exploring broader social relationships and Ryan's use of metaphor placed him within a certain historical context.

emphasized” by consumer society turn out to be illusory and unsubstantial, imposing a “ruthless unity” on society.

³⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York: Random House, 1963), 133.

In his published piece “Landry’s and the Three Fold Model,” Tom Henry argues that treating an organization like an inert thing carries with it the risk that the dead body will rebel and flay about without direction. In contrast to instrumental models of management, Tom argues that an organization is a “living, feeling, thinking being” that is capable of loving and being loved. Hence, he stresses creative relationship over top-down control. As we will see in the next chapter, this move has strong resonances with contemporary forms of organizational and management theory.

One laudable aspect of the Three Fold Model at STW, which I will turn to in the following chapter, is that it stresses the *tensions* that inhere in organizational life—tensions that often exist between deeply held commitments and the profit motive, for example. In Tom Henry’s formal statement of the use of the Three Fold Model, he relates stories in order to describe the ways in which the process of “Seeing Things Whole” can “shift consciousness” and allow managers and industry leaders to creatively explore different dimensions of work. Tom often speaks of the importance of cultivating an “esprit du corps” and a sense of purpose at work. Working with Lucas, I was reminded that the struggle for *transcendence* within structural limits is lived out in irreducible ways. As such, there can never be *one account* of the social body but only experiences that both are and are not shared, at once social and individual. What happens when we give voice to something like Lucas’ story is that we are reminded the social body as conceived by formal models can never stand in for the world, tout court. Similarly, Ryan’s critiques of sweatshops brings global labor back into view while his non-conscious and seemingly generational use of metaphor reminds of the ways in which any activity, including speech, is at once historical and conditioned and new.

Stories and the metaphors we use to narrate them have a tendency to foreground certain experiences and to occlude others. Ryan's practical insights about the distorting power of corporate narratives are prescient. However, Tom Henry's sincerity is not to be doubted, as we saw. What we must remember, is that *no* conceptual account of the world, whether in organizational theory or religious studies, can speak on behalf of life itself, something Tom is keenly aware of. It is time now to consider more closely the ways in which "spirituality" is constructed in the "workplace spirituality" literature and to examine the ways in which it does or does not respect this gap between words and world.

Chapter 4: The Shape-Shifting Metaphorical Body of Capital

The Machinery of Modern Western Industrial Capitalism

Jennifer Carol Cook argues in *Machine and Metaphor—The Ethics of Language in American Realism* that, “American literary realism flourished at a time of...tremendous technological innovation.”¹ While focusing her investigations on the relationship between late nineteenth and early twentieth century realist American fiction and the modernist notion of scientific and technological progress, Cook nevertheless notes that, of course, important non-fiction writers like Thomas Edison, John Dewey and the journalist cum newspaper editor William Allen White all seemed to subscribe to the view which the historian Alan Trachtenberg associates with the pervasive sense that, “factories, railroads, and telegraph wires seemed the very engines of a democratic future.”² “Darwinian vocabulary” was popularized and, Trachtenberg continues, “images of machinery filtered into the language, increasingly providing convenient and telling metaphors for societies and individuals.”³ According to Cook, the traditional view of literary historians has been to highlight the ways in which literary realism as a genre incorporated, digested and reproduced the modernist narrative of scientific and technological progress. She writes,

Realism was touted as the genre to pursue a truth undistorted by the excesses of emotion, a discipline which would, like science, employ disinterested rationality to represent life as it really was. We can see additional affinities between the disciplines in a number of significant ways: the methodology of science, which observes and records fruitful objectivity; the value of system of science, which privileges rationality over emotions; the language of science, which prefers an economy of expression; and the ultimate aims of

¹ Jennifer Carol Cook, *Machine and Metaphor—The Ethics of Language in American Realism* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 3.

science, which seek to find the objective truth and, in so doing, *to disabuse the populace of myth*.⁴

Cook's own view is that some modern American realist fiction, even at the height of frenzy and fervor of the "gospel of progress," contains within its pages the traces of a more ambiguous and vexed relationship with the forces of industrialization. Despite appealing to scientific method and machines in their writing--for example, through their deployment and adoption of "industrial metaphors"--Cook argues that writers like Mark Twain, Sherwood Anderson, Stephen Crane, Edith Wharton and Charles Chestnutt display, "a level of discomfort with and distrust of science and mechanization, precisely at the crucial intersection of ethics and language."⁵ In particular, Cook notes, "it is precisely the threats of the "indefinite multiplication of sound" and the "drenching" of language with mechanical and scientific tropes that most concerns these writers."⁶ More generally, on the societal level, she argues, "the unbounded forces of science and technology in *fin de siècle* America, then, exerted intense pressure on language and lingual usage, and, indeed, on what was to become the dominant voice in late-nineteenth literature: American realism."⁷

If the machine, mechanization and objectivity were compelling tropes of modern industrial American capitalism and one can trace the imaginative force of industrialization through the literary production of the time, it is important to note that scientific management, often associated with the work of Fredrick Winslaw Taylor and later, Fordism, held sway as the prevailing organizational philosophy in the late nineteenth and early

⁴ Cook, *Machine and Metaphor*, 3.

⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 3.

twentieth centuries. According to the management scholar, Mauro Guillén, scientific management philosophies tended to share in a fascination with “machinery, technology, factory aesthetic (and) mass production.”⁸ Under this paradigm and labor narrative, the worker’s body was conceived of as “a psycho-physiological mechanism”⁹, specialization and routinization became the hallmarks of the production line, there was a “simple managerial hierarchy”¹⁰ and important studies of labor queried “the effects of rest pauses and the conditions of the workplace upon fatigue, accidents and labor turnover.”¹¹ The worker’s body was conceived of as a living machine.

While it might be tempting to magnify the explanatory power of a historical analysis of metaphorical deployment by overstating the case, Cook herself cautions against this move. For example, as I mentioned earlier, she suggests that there is no easy partnership between science and technology, on the one hand, and American literary realism, on the other hand.¹² Moreover, for his part, a historian like T.J. Jackson Lears reminds us that a consumer society required anti-modern impulses to grow into what it has become. Even at the height of the industrial age, the metaphorical landscape of bourgeois America was rife

⁸ Mauro Guillén, *Models of Management—Work, Order and Authority in Comparative Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 306.

⁹ Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul—The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Free Association Books, 1989), 138.

¹⁰ Guillén, *Models of Management*, 306.

¹¹ Rose, *Governing the Soul*, 306.

¹² Even if some of this was expressed as an anxiety about the effects of technology and science on language, literary realism as a genre worked with and incorporated the tropes of science. Cook writes: “realism was touted as the genre to pursue a truth undistorted by the excesses of emotion, a discipline which would, like science, employ disinterested rationality to represent life as it really was. We can see additional affinities between the disciplines in a number of significant ways: the methodology of science, which observes and records with fruitful objectivity; the value system of science, which privileges rationality over emotion; the language of science, which prefers an economy of expression; and the ultimate aims of science, which seek to find the objective truth and in so doing, to disabuse the populace of myth.” Cook, *Machine and Metaphor*, 4.

with images and associations of medieval organicism, spiritualism, New Thought, American grain romanticism and the like.¹³ And, of course, it would be ridiculous to collapse the metaphors of the industrial machine and those that spin around the haunting legacy of slavery.¹⁴

Of more traditionally obvious interest to scholars of religion, in 1904-1905, the German sociologist Max Weber published a two-part article that would become *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Whereas Weber maintains throughout the breadth of his comparative sociological analysis of social patterns of thought and organization that religion provides the structure for “ultimate meaning,” he argues that the West is distinctive precisely because of the strict boundary that it has erected between “economic and non-economic calculus.” Regarding Weber’s view on Western legal rational thought and practice, David Little explains:

...Weber’s contention here is twofold: first, he suggests that the five characteristics of the spirit of rational capitalism come to typify the patterns of a complex, differentiated social order, one that allows for relatively autonomous and independent realms of authority and action. That is, Weber is not concerned exclusively with economic behavior, but rather with the development of a broad set of institutional patterns, of which economic actively represents one aspect.¹⁵

While Little is careful to foreground the ways in which Weber still maintains a role for *charisma* in charged moments of social change even within the confines of Western secular

¹³ Examples of the inchoate protestation against a disenchanted world can be seen in a strong interest in medieval crafts and unprecedented readership for medieval discipline (Edmund Gardner, ed., *The Cell of Self-Knowledge: Seven Early English Mystical Treatises* (1910), *Open Court Magazine* (1887-1906)); “the “Medieval” became therapy for late Victorians “hemmed in” by severe self-discipline.” See T.J. Jackson, *No Place of Grace—Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture* (1880-1920) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

¹⁴ A worthy project might look at differences in the metaphors used to construct white northern labor and chattel slavery.

¹⁵ David Little, *Religion, Order and Law—A Study in Pre-Revolutionary England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 13.

bureaucratic governance, he maintains that it is clear that for Weber the issue of institutional autonomy is a critical component of the overall secularization thesis. If a certain Reformed Protestant theology gave rise to a certain psychological “inner loneliness” which itself helped produce cultural conditions amenable to the accumulation of wealth and the development of legal rational thought and practice, according to Little, the public consequences of these developments can be observed most directly in the ways in which patterns of societal organization in the West, among other things, has radically devalued tradition, has foregrounded formal proceduralism within the legal-rational bureaucracy and inculcated rather strict separations between what become in both thought and practice separate spheres of life. Indeed, Weber himself famously concludes *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* with the idea that what had begun as a religiously motivated monastic ascetic impulse to work on the world has become an “iron cage,” an “irresistible force” and “an order that is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of *machine production* which today determine the lives of all the individuals born into this mechanism.”¹⁶ Weber is convinced that, developmentally, the United States represents the apex of legal rational organization, claiming that there, “the pursuit of wealth, stripped of its religious and ethical meaning, tends to become associated with purely mundane passions, which often actually give it the character of sport.”¹⁷ Requiring no extrinsic justification for economic action and needing only to follow the rules outlined by legal rational proceduralism, the Western *homo economicus*, alienated from an originary religious impulse, “...abandons the attempt to justify it at all.”¹⁸ Weber waxes poetic about the future. He writes:

¹⁶ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 123.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or, if neither, mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance.¹⁹

What must be accounted for is the fact that present and future developments might not occur within a metaphorical “iron cage” but, rather, as the public narratives of late capitalism change and its popular cosmologies settle into new institutional patterns of thought and practice, we need to consider new ways of tracking changes and permutations in the bodily shape of capital. What, then, exactly is shifting? Indeed, what happens to capitalism—*and to theology*—when the social Darwinism and scientific management of Western modernity eventually make the epistemic transition to the complexity and chaos of a supposedly “global” twenty-first century marketplace? In this chapter, I first explore the ways in which the formal theology of STW attempts to *reform* the metaphorical shape of capital and the ways in which the group incorporates and theologizes contemporary management theory in doing so. I suggest that the irreducibility of biography ultimately confounds the totalizing accounts of history that seem characteristic of contemporary forms of management theory and some academic and popular overviews of “workplace spirituality.”

Seeing Thing Whole’s Organizational History

Founded in 1993 though indebted to a rich intertwining of much older organizational and personal histories, *STW* is, according to its mission statement, a “community of business leaders and scholars dedicated to exploring the intersection of spirituality, values and organizational life and performance.” The group is, “drawn by a vision of a world in which the performance of organizations is measured no longer on the

¹⁹ Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, 124.

basis of a single bottom line, but rather on multiple bottom lines which together more fully reflect the health and impact of the organization on the world around it.”²⁰ According to the group’s published organizational history, one stream for the idea for a “theology of institutions” developed out of initiatives and collaborative research undertaken at the World Council of Churches (WCC), the American Baptist Church (ABC) and six Protestant denominations in the 1950s and 1960s.²¹ Under the leadership of Jitsuo Morikawa, there was an attempt to make good on the “powerful call to address the Reformation mandate to recover the ministry of the laity” that came out of the 1954 Evanston meeting of the WCC. In 1964, Morikawa invited Dick Broholm to join the staff of “Division of Evangelism” of the ABC. At the time, the division had been considering “the possibility of establishing an American model of the German Evangelical Academy—a center for theological dialogue between theologians and leaders in government, business, media, etc.”²² Harvey Cox, who was then on Morikawa's staff, urged the group to instead “consider the option of establishing an American mission within a major metropolitan city (which) rather than serving as a center for dialogue this mission would seek to engage in a mission to the city.”²³ According to Broholm and Specht, the idea would be to develop an urban mission that would “serve as a signpost to the denomination about what it might mean for Christian laity to take seriously their ministry in the workplace.”²⁴

²⁰ "Mission," Seeing (things) Whole, accessed October 1, 2010, <http://www.seeingthingswhole.org/1003/who-we-are/mission>.

²¹ "Trustees of the Universe," Seeing (things) Whole, accessed December 6, 2010, http://www.seeingthingswhole.com/PDF/STW_TrusteesoftheUniverse.pdf.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Metropolitan Associates of Philadelphia (MAP) grew out of the idea and, eventually, five denominations had joined ABC in signing on to the project: The Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, The Presbyterian Church USA, and the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church. MAP oversaw different but related ministries. It oversaw the work of eight “worker ministers,” “clergymen, who, like the worker-priests in Germany and France, found employment in a variety of “secular” occupations in the political, business, social service, and educational sectors of the city.”²⁵ In addition the these “worker ministers,” MAP also salaried six clergy to serve as “urban agents” who served as “roving reporter(s)--seeking to be present whenever significant events were occurring”²⁶ and designated one hundred and twenty five “lay associates” who “sought to think reflectively about what might constitute “ministry” in their workplace.”²⁷ The stated mission of MAP was to “engage in experimental missionary action for the sake of a common witness to and participation in Christ's work or renewal in the city.”²⁸ As an “action-research project for the church,” the aim was to “learn how decisions are made affecting the city's life and suggest how Christians can help institutions realize their God-given role in the society.”

In the end, MAP was active between 1964 and 1974. However, its commitment to the idea that, in Jitsuo Morikawa's words, “biblical faith finds change and revolution basic to the way God acts in the world and enables men and women to be free to enter into that

²⁵ “Trustees of the Universe,” *Seeing (things) Whole*, accessed December 6, 2010, http://www.seeingthingswhole.com/PDF/STW_TrusteesoftheUniverse.pdf.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

challenge,”²⁹ lived on through important publications like *A Strategy of Hope* and Dick Broholm's work at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary. In 1974, Dick Broholm returned to Andover, his alma mater, to help the seminary pursue similar work. There, he worked closely with the president of the seminary, George Peck, and with the theologian, Gabe Fackre. Broholm led a center that was eventually “institutionalized as the Center for the Ministry of the Laity” in the 1980s. The Center's efforts revolved around “an action research effort involving six local congregations.” The pastor and five members of each congregation would meet with faculty once a month for five years, working to identify forces that enabled and blocked the work of the laity within their particular institutions. Broholm and Specht write that it was at this time that it became crystal clear that what was missing in the work of the center was a “theology of institutions” that would assist the team in thinking theologically about businesses.³⁰ Dick Broholm, who in the 1980s collaborated closely with Robert Greenleaf, the father of servant leadership management theory, eventually rediscovered in Greenleaf's work resources for developing the group's theology, which was designed to provide the theoretical and ethical grounding for its interdisciplinary work.

Robert K. Greenleaf's Servant Leadership as Cosmological Rebinding

In his forward to the 25th Anniversary Edition to Greenleaf's now classic, *Servant Leadership—A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, Stephen Covey contextualizes servant leadership within a general trend in management towards “high-trust

²⁹ “Trustees of the Universe,” Seeing (things) Whole, accessed December 6, 2010, http://www.seeingthingswhole.com/PDF/STW_TrusteesoftheUniverse.pdf.

³⁰ “Toward a Theology of Institutions,” Seeing (things) Whole, accessed December 6, 2010, <http://www.seeingthingswhole.com/PDF/STW-toward-theology-of-institutions.pdf>.

cultures and empowerment.”³¹ According to Covey, “a low-trust culture” offers conditions where it is possible to “buy someone's hand and back, but not their heart, mind, and spirit.”³² In today's market, he continues, a mechanical conception of the worker is insufficient:

In the competitive reality of today's global marketplace, it will be only those organizations whose people not only willingly volunteer their tremendous creative talent, commitment, and loyalty, but whose organizations align their structures, systems, and management style to support the empowerment of their people that will survive and thrive as market leaders.³³

For Covey, one of the hallmarks of servant leadership is the idea that “the old rules of traditional, hierarchical, high-external-control, top-down management are being dismantled” and are being replaced by “a new form of “control” that the chaos theory components call the “strange attractor”--a sense of vision that people are drawn to, and united in, that enables them to be driven by a motivation *inside* them toward achieving a common purpose.”³⁴ Covey reiterates his idea that workers can self-legislate their own variations on a corporate theme when he writes that the specific role of the leader is to create “a shared vision, which inspires each person to stretch and reach deeper within himself or herself, and to use everyone's unique talents in whatever way is necessary to independently and interdependently achieve that shared vision.”³⁵

One running theme in Robert Greenleaf's published books and essays on servant leadership is precisely the question of what binds individuals to institutions in light of the

³¹ Stephen R Covey, forward to *Servant Leadership—A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness*, by Robert K. Greenleaf (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 2.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 3.

³⁵ Ibid.

emergence of an American society that is “dominated by large institutions--churches, businesses, governments, labor unions, universities (that) are not serving us well.”³⁶ For Greenleaf, the bodies of individual workers and managers and the body of the society as a whole must be linked anew through processes of servant leadership. In fact, he stresses the organic dimensions of servant led institutions by linking agency to power. Of the flow of power in society, Greenleaf writes:

Sometimes it will be a servant's power of persuasion and example. Sometimes it will be coercive power used to dominate and manipulate people. The difference is that, in the former, power is used to create opportunity and alternatives so that that individuals may choose and build autonomy. In the latter, individuals are coerced into a predetermined path. Even if it is “good” for them, if they experience nothing else, ultimately their autonomy will be diminished.³⁷

The trouble with coercive power is that it only strengthens resistance and is not organic: “only persuasion and the consequent voluntary acceptance are organic.”³⁸ According to Greenleaf, modern American society has traditionally been founded on low-trust institutions where strict subject-object separations and top-down relationships of dominance are assumed. When the worker is persuaded to follow a servant leader, the acceptance of power is experienced as inward joy and an exercise of value-inflected freedom. Acceptance also *centers* one's work beyond extremes of “bad” and “good”:

Joy is inward, it is generated inside. It is not found outside and brought in. It is for those who accept the world as it is, part good, part bad, and who identify with the good by adding a little island of serenity to it.³⁹

³⁶ Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership—A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 15.

³⁷ Ibid, 55.

³⁸ Ibid., 56.

³⁹ Ibid., 57.

If a personal island of serenity stands in stark narrative contrast to metaphors of industrial capitalism as an “iron cage” or as representing the apogee of mechanical reproduction, so too does the idea of a body that can organically self-correct. Greenleaf writes,

The healthy society, like the healthy body, is not the one that has taken the most medicine. It is the one in which the internal health-building forces are in the best shape. The real enemy is fuzzy thinking on the part of good, intelligent, vital people and their failure to lead and to follow servants as leaders. Too many settle for being critics and experts.⁴⁰

A body cannot afford to exist as a specialist, as such, but must, instead, be an able generalist in order to survive. Knowledge and skill sets must remain coordinated, a view of society and of institutional life that contrasts with the production line of scientific management, where the “whole” was considered precisely to not be an important concern (and, in fact, an unnecessary distraction) for most workers. However, it is important to note that Greenleaf is not simply concerned with alienated workers; he is also speaking directly at the bourgeois professions. Greenleaf bemoans the ways in which social critics, oftentimes trained in the academy, refuse to become “affirmative *builders*” within society but, instead, seek to “avoid the *center* of it by retreating to an idyllic existence that minimizes involvement with “the system” (with the “system” that makes such withdrawal possible).⁴¹ According to Greenleaf, too many critics are content with pointing out the futility of reform from afar (though they are actually deeply implicated in the central workings of power) and, putting it poetically, claims that such approaches fail to consider “the problem of where the new seed will come from or who the gardener to tend them will be. The concept of the servant-leader stands in sharp contrast to this kind of thinking.”⁴²

⁴⁰ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 58.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 25.

If Max Weber's view was that a set of theological concepts helped establish the division between rational procedure and religious value in the first place, Robert Greenleaf's conceptualizing of religion and of theology seeks a reversal of fortune in this regard. I will quote Greenleaf at length on religion. He writes:

As a student of organization rather than a theologian, I view the church as the institutionalization of humankind's religious concern. Conscious religious concern is a part of the gear of civilization—a means to heal humanity's alienation, which our “civilized” state has brought about. The word *religion*, at its root, means to “rebind,” to rebind humans to the cosmos. Primitive people may have suffered much from their environment, but they were not alienated. The Lascaux cave paintings attest to that. These ancient people were at home; they belonged. Their total society was bound to the cosmos, and a church, a separate institution specializing in rebinding was not needed. But we are estranged, particularly our young people, and we have been so for a long time. We need religion and a church to steward a society that is more just and more loving, and provides great creative opportunities for its people.⁴³

Returning explicitly to the issue of *metaphor*, I find it telling that Greenleaf discusses the potentially socially *reforming* role of the churches (and other religious institutions) in the language of architecture and “growing edges” that challenge the ossifying rigidity of the pyramid view of organizations. Due to theology's unique ability to narratively re-bind society and persons to the cosmos, as Greenleaf understands the matter, the seminaries become potential sites for the development of cutting edge developments in business theory and organizational practice. He writes,

...the central conceptual resource that stands behind these churches will become the *architect* of the more just, more loving, more serving society. The logical architect in the present structure of things is the seminaries. And I believe that one day the seminaries will become a powerful conceptual resource that stands behind the *growing edge churches*.⁴⁴

⁴³ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 93.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

According to Greenleaf and in keeping with his general focus on the dynamism of in-between space, a healthy organization, like an organic body, operates through a productive “tension between order and consistency, on the one hand, and initiative and creativity and team effort, on the other. The problem is to keep this tension at a healthy level that has an optimizing effect.”⁴⁵ In contrast to this idea of self-regulating creativity stands the vertically hierarchical “*pyramidal structure* (which) weakens informational links, dries up channels of honest reaction and feedback, and creates limiting chief-subordinate relationships that, at the top, can seriously penalize the whole organization.”⁴⁶ What needs to be covered, now, before engaging STW's uses of Greenleaf, are some of the ways in which “religion” and “spirituality” (and associated tropes) help Greenleaf perform a critique of rigid organizational structures and envision alternatives. The concept of a “growing edge” church, which implies emergent boundaries is an apt springboard.

Greenleaf, who was a Quaker, attributes the very idea of servant leadership to his reading of Herman Hesse's *Journey to the East*, a text he reads as a mythic quest in which servanthood and leadership are finally fused in the person and character of Leo.⁴⁷ As with Jesus, Greenleaf writes, in the case of Hesse's Leo, leadership is bestowed upon a person who was by nature a servant.⁴⁸ But this is not the only way in which Hesse influenced Greenleaf. In part influenced by Hesse, Greenleaf writes that he came to “embrace the theory of prophecy which holds that prophetic voices of great clarity, and with a quality of

⁴⁵ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 73.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

insight equal to that of any age, are speaking cogently all the time”⁴⁹ For a text that has had such a profound impact on standard contemporary organizational theory, Greenleaf’s collection of essays is, depending on our perspective, surprisingly rife with stories and morals drawn from diverse religious traditions, literature and philosophy. Among others, Greenleaf draws from the following for “wisdom” and guidance: Jesus, Shakespeare, Melville, Camus, Abraham Heschel, Confucius, lived religion in Israeli kibbutzim, Reinhold Niebuhr, the intentional community, Synanon, Ken Kesey, the story of Moses and the pyramid, Roman law, Buddhist ideas of right vocation/right livelihood, ideas in *I Ching* about the ways in which all phenomena have inner tendency of change, experimental Quakerism, Robert Frost, Sophocles, John Gardner, Nikos Kazantzakis and Harvey Cox!

In Greenleaf’s texts, “religion,” philosophy and the arts are deployed as resources for inspiring and supporting servant leadership. Specifically, as we saw, the idea is to ground work that is done at the very *center* of society without pretense to clean hands, full autonomy or critical transcendence. What is most important for the purposes of this paper and given the context of my ethnographic work with STW is the fact that a goal of servant leadership involves a retraining of the imagination to arrive at a workable and purchasable *intuition*, the importance of which is precisely that it is responsive to some of the deficiencies of rational administration. Greenleaf writes the following of action in the workplace:

As a practical matter, on the most important decisions there is an information gap. There usually is an information gap between the solid information in hand and what is needed. The art of leadership rests, in part, on the ability to bridge the gap by intuition, that is, a judgment from the unconscious process.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 232.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

“Religion” and encompassing narratives can support intuitive and practical activity by *centering* individuals within society but anchoring their lives within an expansive sense of both time and the larger stakes of work. Centering implies the ability to live in a kind of blur state where the momentary and the mundane partake of the historical and the cosmic. Greenleaf writes of the time of servant leadership:

There are moments that contain eternity. Try to see the moment “now” not as an instantaneous fraction of clock time but as a focus of intensity in which the bright intense *center* is this instant of clock time but which, as the intensity of the light recedes from the *center*, extends back into historic events and forward into the indefinite future—a sort of moving average, as statisticians see it.⁵¹

Intuition is a centering of possibilities in the form of processing “at the unconscious level” that has “a *feel* for *patterns*, the ability to generalize based on what has happened previously. Wise leaders know when to bet on these intuitive leads, but they always know that they are betting on percentages.”⁵² What is key to highlight is the fact that *unconscious feeling* is now valued over and against strictly conscious rationalist decision-making and that patterns rather than discrete entities and bounded events are the object of intuitive processing. Greenleaf, like many organizational theorists, turns to the physical sciences to connect organizational enterprise with the penumbral spaces of “religious” experience. He suggests this:

Until quite recently many would attribute these qualities of knowing the unknowable and foreseeing the unforeseeable to *mystical* or supernatural gifts—and some still do. Now it is possible at least to speculate about them within a framework of natural law. The electrical body-field theory suggests the possibility of an interconnection between fields and could explain telepathy.⁵³

⁵¹ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 313.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 35.

This tendency to draw connections between “corporate spirituality” and “new science” is reproduced by STW in their “theology of institutions,” to which I now turn.

Towards a “Theology of Institutions” for Seeing Things Whole

For STW, a theology of institutions suggests a re-description of relationships between persons and institutions and the nature of institutions, more generally. For STW, these re-descriptions were to be developed according to the “twin criteria of being tangibly grounded in organizational life and clearly informed by theological perspective.”⁵⁴ More concretely, the group sought to explore the “interface of theological tradition and organizational life” not within the safety of the classroom but within “the messy world of organizational life and its dilemmas.” Conversation partners, especially theologians, with “insight and knowledge of the theological tradition and the capacity to make it accessible” were sought out to help “identify relevant concepts or premises within our particular theological tradition capable of *reshaping* our understanding of organizational life and its purposes.”⁵⁵ The ritual to be developed was to function as “a process for enabling men and women to gather around an organization and its leaders for the purpose of holding the organization in trust around a difficult challenge facing it.”⁵⁶ Inspired by Greenleaf, at least in part, *reshaping understanding* implies the development of strategic practices that reshape the relationships of self, capital, religiosity and society. The ritual roundtables, where experiences of “dissipating structures” are related to such things as Aboriginal Dreamtime and chaos theory are devices for the reformation of souls in a late capitalist context.

⁵⁴ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 35.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

As we have seen, the group's most iconic piece of published writing is the “Three Fold Model of Organizational Life,” a booklet passed out at every meeting of its ritual roundtables. The “Three Fold Model” is represented by the image of a pyramid intersected by three concentric circles that represent three key dimensions of organizational life: *identity* (the organization’s gathered life; can sometimes include families of employees), *stewardship* (the organization’s fiduciary responsibility towards management and owners) and *purpose* (the organization’s engagement with the world including suppliers, competitors and customers). As a tripartite structure also alluding to the three-fold office of Christ, these circles represent creative tensions within business life that, synergistically working together, can **reform** the traditional pyramid of a single bottom line business and to bridge the divide between economic and non-economic forms of calculus. As we have already seen, the roundtable ritual is, in fact, a re-weaving of cosmologies or an attempt to rewrite the relationships between business and religious life, linking organizational time to cosmic and explicitly theologized time. In fact, as we will now consider, the formal theological goal is to re-present society, including its institutions, as the social body of Christ.

In one of STW's most central writings, “Toward a Theology of Institutions,” Dick Broholm and David Specht, whose formal title is Director of Research and Organizational Support, affirm the need for a “theology of institutions” within a context they describe as a “general dispiritedness and lack of confidence with respect to institutions unmatched since Vietnam.”⁵⁷ Written before the crash of the housing market and the current economic crisis it has precipitated, Broholm and Specht cite the World Com and Enron scandals, the child abuse scandals in the Catholic Church, 9/11 and the subsequent “mishandling” of war as

⁵⁷ “Toward a Theology of Institutions,” Seeing (things) Whole, accessed December 6, 2010, <http://www.seeingthingswhole.com/PDF/STW-toward-theology-of-institutions.pdf>.

factors affecting contemporary distrust in large institutions. Just as the social unrest of the 1960s and 1970s proved to be fertile ground for Robert Greenleaf's own initial explorations into "servant leadership," Broholm and Specht write that contemporary society offers pressing opportunities to "explore the lively intersection of human spirit, sacred traditions, leadership and organizational life."⁵⁸ For ethnographers and cultural theorists interested in the reproduction of new social paradigms or for historians of the present, the pair's discussion of an idea's traveling convergence across social coordinates is telling. They write,

An idea whose time has come frequently emerges simultaneously from more than a single source, as its essential truth is recognized from a variety of vantage points. This was certainly the case in the emergence of the call for the development of a theology of institutions, which, at least as we experienced it, arrived from two voices.⁵⁹

The essay is, in part, a remembering of the ways in which influences internal to American Christianity and Greenleaf's "servant leadership" came together in the development of a "theology of institutions." What follows are the five premises the group identifies as the central fruits of their theological thinking about organizations and organizational thinking about theology. Especially pertinent to the present discussion, then, is the fact that these central tenets of their theological vision reflect the group's attempt to bridge biblical, theological and management worlds:

Premise #1: *Institutions Are Part of God's Order*

Broholm and Specht explain that the biblical theologian, Walter Wink, was influential in their process of thinking organizational theory and biblical faith together. They write:

"Walter Wink, a biblical scholar whose writings on the powers and principalities have

⁵⁸ "Toward a Theology of Institutions," Seeing (things) Whole, accessed December 6, 2010, <http://www.seeingthingswhole.com/PDF/STW-toward-theology-of-institutions.pdf>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

powerfully shaped our theological understanding, writes of institutions: “These powers are the necessary social structures of human life and it is not a matter of indifference to God that they exist.”⁶⁰ According to Walter Wink, “God made them.” There are several key questions to flag. Is the main point that the need for institutions is a phenomenological fact of human society? If so, how do we account for the role of divine agency in historical shifts in the role and nature of institutions over time and in different human contexts? How do we develop a genealogical and comparative sense about institutions?

Premise #2: *God Loves Institutions*

If it is the case that “as part of God’s world, institutions are the object of God’s love,” then it is the case that, just as God loves creation as such and individuals in their all of their uniqueness, so too does the theology of biblical faith compel us to “declare not only that God loves institutions in general, but that God loves each institution in all of its messy particularity.”⁶¹ According to Broholm and Specht, this means that while God loves AARP, the Red Cross and the NAACP, it also means that God loved World Com and Enron. While the last realization leaves the authors feeling admittedly a “little *edgy*,” they write that “rooting ourselves in this conviction offers an important basis for the kind of compassionate regard for organizations that is capable of enabling us to hold them in trust as critical lovers.” Defamiliarity and yet finding ways to remain centered in a place of balanced critique and love are related concepts that go hand in hand, here, as they do in Greenleaf’s essays and in much contemporary organizational theory that concerns itself with the relationship of “spirituality” to the unknown.

⁶⁰ “Toward a Theology of Institutions,” Seeing (things) Whole, accessed December 6, 2010, <http://www.seeingthingswhole.com/PDF/STW-toward-theology-of-institutions.pdf>.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Premise #3: Institutions are Living Systems

Using the complexity, chaos and quantum inspired organizational theories of Margaret Wheatley and Peter Senge to supplement their social research in this area, the group reads Walter Wink's "cultural" understanding of biblical spirituality in light of ideas about corporate culture that Marcus and others have treated. They write,

The affirmation that institutions are living systems links two important assertions, both fundamental to seeing institutions whole. The first is that *institutions are alive*. To say this is to recognize that the "being-ness" of institutions is comprised not only of its more tangible outward and physical reality (e.g. its facilities, people, formal organizational and information systems, technology and equipment), but along with this is a less-tangible interiority or animating spirit whose energy is reflected through a combination of historical memory, shared convictions and dreams, proud successes and bitter disappointments...the other assertion of this premise is that *institutions are systems*. As such they are wholly interdependent with the entire evolving world around them, both impacting and affected by everything that takes place throughout the constantly emerging reality of the existing order.⁶²

I will return to these kinds of moves shortly. At this point, it is important to note that according to Broholm and Specht, "the three-fold model organizational life developed by STW...is a theological recognition of the systemic nature of organizations. It is around this awareness of organizations as systems (and as existing within systems) that we find particularly relevant...Greenleaf's reminder that the root meaning of the word religion (religio)."⁶³ Religion is thus constructed along the dual stands of biblical theology and contemporary management theory.

Premise #4: Institutions are called and gifted, they are fallen, and they are capable of being redeemed

⁶² "Toward a Theology of Institutions," Seeing (things) Whole, accessed December 6, 2010, <http://www.seeingthingswhole.com/PDF/STW-toward-theology-of-institutions.pdf>.

⁶³ Ibid.

The “theology of institutions” holds that “institutions are called and gifted” and that they are “expressions of God’s dynamic and unfolding order, institutions are here for a reason. They are intended to be instruments of God’s healing and reconciling purposes, and are both gifted and called to serve to the common good in particular ways.”⁶⁴ Following Walter Wink, institutions, like the powers, principalities and nations in the bible, are fallen but worthy of our love and care and God's redemption. It should be noted, of course, that these moves seem to secure an *a-priori* divine justification for capitalist institutions, a quandary I have discussed with Dick Broholm during ethnographic interviews and which I will treat later.⁶⁵

Premise #5: Faithfulness in institutional life is predicated upon the recognition and management of multiple bottom lines

Tension is built into the successful management of an institution committed to “STW.” There are multiple rather than a single bottom line. The leader with the servant heart is accountable to various constituencies and is able to lead in a place of tension, often mediating between competing imperatives.

The “three-fold model” is, in the end, an attempt to draw up a practical theology, grounded in the above five core principles, capable of offering “a theological model of organizational life that could then be translated into secular language for use within organizations as a framework for STW.”⁶⁶ It appeals to ancient contours in the Christian imagining of society: “The threefold office of Christ, attributed to theologian John Calvin.”

⁶⁴ “Toward a Theology of Institutions,” Seeing (things) Whole, accessed December 6, 2010, <http://www.seeingthingswhole.com/PDF/STW-toward-theology-of-institutions.pdf>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Calvin identifies Christ's roles of *Prophet, Priest* and *King* "as three essential dimensions of the life and ministry of Jesus." In practical terms, the three-fold office, which is a Trinitarian representation and a legislated body of Christ, here provides a model for rebinding persons to institutions and both to the cosmos, just as Robert Greenleaf called for. It is a model built on the assumption of tension and complex interplays and, as I described earlier, translates the offices of Christ into organizational concerns for *identity, purpose* and *stewardship*. As the words' most homely meanings suggest, **reform** and **reshaping** society imply playing with metaphorical shapes and patterns. Weber's "iron cage," something he argues was, in part, the result of theological imagination, is perhaps the most famous case of the possible secular implications of theological **reformation**. What we observe in the theology and ritual of STW is a careful attention to the importance of metaphorical reform in the reshaping of capital.⁶⁷ The "three-fold model," with its focus on feedback processes and relationalities, productive tensions and "spirituality" as "the invisible in metaphorical space" metaphorically **reforms** the bodily shape of society. On the level of formal theology, as we have seen, the particular reformation sought by STW is made possible by certain convergences within the group's privileged biblical scholarship and management theory wherein the group finds warrant for re-describing spirituality as the metaphorical "withinness" that animates the "less tangible" interiority of organizations.

New Management and Mysticism

In her book, *Edgewalkers: People and Organizations That Take Risks, Build Bridges, and Break New Ground*, the organizational theorist and my first contact in the field, Judi Neal, writes:

⁶⁷ In this same vein, Thomas Friedman's popular argument that the "world is flat" is, at base, also a cosmological pronouncement.

We live in a time when in a time when business is building a pragmatic bridge between science and mysticism. Complexity theory helps us understand that there is an underlying order in chaos and that the role of the successful business leader is to sense those underlying patterns. Creativity emerges at the edge of chaos, and we learn not only to tolerate ambiguity but also to embrace chaos as the birthplace of what is needed in the world. Quantum physics teaches us that the world is full of potentiality and that what we focus on becomes manifest. In other words, we create our own reality by what we pay attention to.⁶⁸

Today, the idea that organizations are like complex systems that are simultaneously dynamic and orderly, bounded and spontaneous, is increasingly assumed by managers and marketers alike. This paradigm is underwritten by the idea that we personalize corporate stories. In some ways, the idea that society and markets act more like vital organisms endowed with the ability to creatively “self-organize” is more prevalent these days than the idea that society should operate mechanistically like a bulky nineteenth century machine or a rigid twentieth century production line. Whereas the latter model is still sold abroad to managers of global sweatshops and to the most devalued sectors of the American economy, segments of the American workforce, in theory, crave and are given the opportunity to labor in accordance with their personal values and to consume according to their individualized, internalized and most deeply felt desires. If one reads journalistic accounts and the fictions of today for patterns of metaphor, I doubt that one would find the nineteenth century machine as the prevailing image. Certainly, digital and Internet metaphors now abound. For their part, complexity and chaos are better captured by the metaphor of a worm or amoeba, rather than an iron cage, squiggling and moving about to account for the internal but still yet fully bound creativity, contradictions, inequalities and possibilities for freedom captured within it.⁶⁹ As

⁶⁸ Judith Neal, *Edgewalkers—People and Organizations That Take Risks, Build Bridges, And Break New Ground* (London: Praeger, 2006), 35.

⁶⁹ I am deeply grateful to my friends, Shil Sengupta, Chris Ashley and Ned Boyajian, for conversations about the new form of capital that were as instructive as any academic treatise. Indeed, the insert to Peter

we have seen, treatments of the “new economy” of the 1990s describe the discourse in terms of its interest in such things as “deep values,” “holism,” “magic,” “genius,” “passion” and the ways in which theorists as diverse as the Danish ethnographer, Karin Goldschmidt-Salamon, Stephen Covey and the neo-conservative philosopher, Francis Fukuyama, claim that one characteristic of contemporary organizations is that they seek to foster the alignment of subjective and corporate forms of identification. What I will discuss now ways in which certain constructions of “spirituality” and “mysticism” can be used in the rhetorical reformation of capitalism but have the added danger of discursively closing the gap between the ideal and the real, thereby ending history.

Judi Neal is by no means alone in advancing a connection between science and spirituality. Margaret Wheatley, whose work STW use in their published theology, was one of the first and most influential management theorists to incorporate ideas from complexity theory, chaos theory and quantum physics into organizational philosophy. In her now classic management text, *Leadership and the New Science—Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, Wheatley argues that:

Scientists in many different disciplines are questioning whether we can adequately explain how the world works by using *machine imagery* emphasized in the seventeenth century by such great geniuses as Sir Isaac Newton and René Descartes. This machine imagery leads to the belief that studying the parts is key to understanding the whole. Things are taken apart, dissected literally or figuratively (as we have done with business functions, academic disciplines, areas of specialization, human body parts) and then put back together without any significant loss. The assumption is that the more we know more about the workings of each piece, the more we will learn about the whole.⁷⁰

Senge's *The Fifth Discipline—The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*, introducing the book, is a pictorial representation of five coiled snakes within the embrace of a larger snake that wraps around the others.

⁷⁰ Margaret Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science—Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc, 2006), 10.

Arguing that, in the end, “all of science is metaphor,”⁷¹ Wheatley makes the point time and again that the machine metaphor for organizations, what Jennifer Cook argues was once privileged, must be replaced with more “complex” images of spirals, double helixes, three-winged birds, fractals, solar systems and clouds and should be discussed in the language of probability, not prediction, a fuzzier and mistier idea about what can be known by science and one better conveyed in the language of a reasoned poetry, managed spirituality and trust inducing art rather than Newtonian and Cartesian reason. What we need, she writes, are more “scientists who write about natural phenomena with poetry.”⁷²

According to Wheatley, a few things follow from the Newtonian focus on separable parts. First, it fuels a scientific search for “the basic ‘building blocks’ of matter, the physical forms from which everything originates.”⁷³ She writes that there is an implicit “materialism” in this view: “Newtonian science is also materialistic—it seeks to comprehend the world on what can be known through our physical senses. Anything *real* has visible and tangible physical form.”⁷⁴ Referring to “an ancient Sufi teaching” about the importance of understanding the “*and*” which links “one” and “two,” Wheatley explains that, “one of the first differences between new science and Newtonianism is a focus on holism rather than parts. Systems are understood as whole systems, and attention is given to *relationships* within those networks.”⁷⁵ Knowledge and representation must shift, she argues, from a static focus on “simple cause and effect...explained by studying the parts as isolated contributors” and

⁷¹ Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, xlv.

⁷² *Ibid.* xxxiv.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

move into “an entirely new landscape of connections” in which “it becomes critical to sense the constant workings of dynamic processes and to notice how these processes materialize as visible behaviors and forms.”⁷⁶

One focus in Wheatley's work and that of other complexity and chaos inspired management theory is the sustained attempt to make penumbral spaces and shadowlands less threatening for a science that struggles to learn how to manage the world in the tone of pattern, the language of poetry and spirit and the mathematics of probability. There is an exhortation to *trust*. All persons, especially workers, are exhorted not to “opt out” of the system. Wheatley writes that, “participation, seriously done, is a way out from the uncertainties and *ghostly* qualities of this nonobjective world we live in.”⁷⁷ Once we learn to live amidst dissolving boundaries in the conviction that there is order in chaos, we will be less devastated by the old paradigm's failures to provide predictive and mechanical control: “We *banish the ghosts* of this ghostly universe by engaging in a different pattern of behavior.”⁷⁸ For Wheatley, being “spiritual” and “poetic” become ways for establishing new standards for reasonableness in business. Poetry speaks to relationality and while “life uses networks, we use boxes.”⁷⁹ Poetry and spirituality fend off what Wheatley calls the “Newtonian despair” that mechanical reason engenders due to its need for clear rather than fluid boundaries: “the illusory quality of these boundaries will continue to drive crazy as long as we focus on trying

⁷⁶ Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 11.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

to specify in more detail, or to decipher clear lines of cause and effect between concepts we treat as separate, but which aren't.”⁸⁰

If true control over turbulence underfoot can be regained by moving away from a mechanical view of the world towards a poetics of life that is managed by “new science,” Wheatley turns to the “dark night of the soul” to center labor in a sense of trust amidst experiences of suffering and turbulence. Since according to Wheatley's metaphysics, networks self-organize and what is experienced as chaos is actually, in the end, exquisitely ordered, “fearful realms of disintegration” can then present opportunities for the virtuous suffering of workers. She writes,

Most of us have experienced this ride of chaos in our own lives. At the personal level, chaos has gone by many names including "dark night of the soul" or "depression." Always, the experience is a profound loss of meaning—nothing makes sense in the way it did before; nothing seems to hold the same value as it once did. These dark nights have been well-documented in many spiritual traditions and cultures. They are part of the human experience, how we participate in the spiral dance of form, formlessness, and new form. As we reflect on the times when we personally have descended into chaos, we can notice that as it ends, we emerge changed, stronger in some ways, new. We have held in us the dance of creation and learned that growth always requires passage through the fearful realms of disintegration.⁸¹

If mysticism is what Max Weber thought to be precisely anathema to capitalist organization, here mystical experience, thought through the psychoanalytic category of depression, reintegrates the self after a crisis of meaning that is experienced as a “spiral dance” and which leads from form to formlessness to new form and implies a descent from order into chaos as well as ascent into new order.

⁸⁰ Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 43.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 170.

New Management and The Reformation of the Taylorist Factory

In *Trust—Social Values and the Creation of Wealth*, Francis Fukuyama makes much of the need to replace a mechanical view of work with one that takes seriously the importance of values of existential recognition in engendering and supporting worker motivation and trust. If Margaret Wheatley sees even in the dark night of the soul a reason to trust, it is ultimately given her quantum faith in the symbiotic relationship of every part to a greater, ordered whole. Having described the contours of the “new science,” Wheatley uses the idea of “information,” what can be understood as public narrative, to make the case that organizational science reveals the same fractal order as natural science, implying order within (chaotic) diversity in the subjective exercise of a constrained freedom. Wheatley writes:

Those who have used music metaphors to describe working together, especially *Jazz metaphors*, are sensing the nature of this quantum world. This world demands that we be present together, and be willing to improvise. We agree on the melody, tempo, and key, and then we play. We listen carefully, we communicate constantly, and suddenly, there is music, possibilities beyond anything we imagined. The music comes from somewhere else, from a unified whole we have accessed among ourselves, a relationship that transcends our false sense of separateness. When the music appears, we can't help but be amazed and grateful.⁸²

If one is looking for a prima facie critique of absolute individualism, Wheatley provides it. As we discover the “strange” quantum world with its “vast networks of interference patterns” and the “continuous dance of energy,” it becomes clear that, “the era of *rugged individualism* has been replaced by the era of the team player.”⁸³ This is because, for Wheatley, the quantum critique of the concept of separate entities and linear causes extends to the

⁸² Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 45.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 39.

“concept of unconnected individuals.”⁸⁴ Indeed, subjectivity is conceived of the highly kinetic metaphor of dancing. Wheatley writes:

All life lives off-balance in a world that is open to change. And all of life is self-organizing. We do not have to fear disequilibrium, nor do we have to approach change so fearfully. Instead, we can realize that, like all life, we know how to grow and evolve in the midst of constant flux. There is a path through change that leads to greater interdependence and resiliency. We *dance* along the path by maintaining a coherent identity and by honoring everybody’s need for self-determination.⁸⁵

Throughout the text as a whole, Wheatley uses the metaphor of dance to mark the natural and social play of co-creativity, discovery, growth, the basic structure of life and the relationship between order and chaos.

Given this notion of dynamic movement within a field of constraint, it makes sense that Wheatley, like Fukuyama and Greenleaf, opposes “control and command leadership and hierarchical structures” in organizational management as an anxiety inducing and unhelpful remnant of our machine industrial past. Contrary to the persistent misrecognition of many antimodern critiques of capital, someone like Wheatley, who is as influential as they come in organizational management, argues for a mode of worker agency that respects self-legislation, “love” and the “strong emotions of being human.”⁸⁶ The industrial factory workers Marx discussed are not who Wheatley has in mind (even if these workers exist, rendered further invisible by her text). Wheatley writes:

As we let go of the machine model of organizations, and workers as replaceable cogs in the machinery of production, we begin to see ourselves in much richer dimensions, to appreciate our wholeness, and hopefully, to

⁸⁴ Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 32.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

design organizations that honor and make use of the great gift of who we humans are.⁸⁷

To facilitate the vital inculcation and free performance of corporate values, the new manager is more monastic or cult leader than slave master. Wheatley argues that, “in this chaotic world, we need leaders. But we don’t need bosses.”⁸⁸ As opposed to segmenting and compartmentalizing bosses, leaders can facilitate the co-creative participation, the dance, of others and helps them answer the “call of meaning.”⁸⁹ Of the scholarship on leadership, Wheatley observes:

Many writers have offered new images of effective leaders. Each of them is trying to create imagery for the new relationships that are required, the new sensitivities needed to honor and elicit worker contributions. Here is a very partial list of the new metaphors to describe leaders: gardeners, midwives, stewards, servants, missionaries, facilitators, conveners.⁹⁰

As I mentioned in the introduction, monastic and mystical metaphors also litter the titles of many popular self-help books on spirituality at work.

New Management and Globalism

According to Margaret Wheatley, “knowledge grows inside relationships, from *ongoing circles of exchange* where information is not just accumulated by individuals, but is willingly shared.”⁹¹ Quoting a leadership institute, Wheatley believes in a “world not of hierarchies but of encircling partnerships.”⁹² Ultimately, Wheatley’s understanding of global realities grounds her project, politically: “the worldview of the sciences described here is no

⁸⁷ Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 14.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 109.

longer hidden books. It blares from news reports and blazes across our screens in the terrifying images of these times—wars, terrorism, migrations of displaced peoples, hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis.”⁹³ The basic problem, she argues, is that we try to respond to these problems and threats as individuals, institutions and societies, time and again “our actions fail us.”⁹⁴

Considering herself a cartographer for a “brave new world,” Wheatley proposes that “new science,” the triumvirate of quantum theory, chaos theory and complexity theory, can provide the tools for affecting a “paradigm shift” which offers the opportunity to “give us the capacity to understand what’s going on.”⁹⁵ Most basically, she believes, we need to understand the whole of life, in its natural, social, “spiritual” and existential dimensions, to exist as one complex “living system” that is characterized by a the repeating structure of creative order within seeming chaos. On the political level, the fact of iteration—the freedom of expression within a shared structure of ordered creativity in chaos is likened to “democratic principles.”⁹⁶ However, control of this world of infinite concentric circles is dangerously contested. According to Wheatley, even the United States Army has been employing some of the techniques of the “new leadership,”⁹⁷ something which is much needed, she argues, in an age of terrorist networks that grow not because of top-down control or according to clean Euclidean geometry, like the shapes we give nation states, but, instead, according to more amorphous phenomena of “leaderless” groups that are “well-fed

⁹³ Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, x.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, x.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

by their passion, rage, and conviction.”⁹⁸ Dynamic and fluid meaning drives groups like Al-Qaeda, argues Wheatley. A group like that, she writes, is comprised of, “people who are deeply connected to a cause (and) don’t need directives, rewards or leaders to tell them what to do. Inflamed, passionate, and working with like-minded others, they create increasingly extreme means to support their cause.”⁹⁹

As we saw, Wheatley believes that “the whole” or “the system” can only be approached from afar, in necessarily fuzzy ways. It requires “poetry,” “intuition” and “spirit.” It is not surprising, then, that she offers up rituals of *dramatization* as one method for cultivating new ways of perceiving reality.

Wheatley writes,

There are many processes for developing awareness of a whole system—a time line of some slice of the system’s history—a mind-map, a collage of images, a *dramatization*. Any process works that encourages nonlinear thinking and intuition, and uses alternative forms of expression such as drama, art, stories, and pictures. The critical task is to evoke our senses, not just the gray matter. We learn to dwell in multilevel phenomena simultaneously and let our senses lead us to new ways of comprehending.¹⁰⁰

As Frederic Jameson argues, the self-reflexive practice of “narrative” and embodied late-capitalist rituals for moving “narrativity” across space and time has itself become an object of storytelling.¹⁰¹ It is within this context that one might place Wheatley’s promotion of rituals of dramatic, poetic and imaginative inculcation in ways anticipated by Karin

⁹⁸ Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 180.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁰¹ Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 300.

Goldschmidt-Salamon's groundbreaking work on the inculcation of global cosmologies through management rituals.

Religious Metaphor and the End of History

If we are still seduced into thinking that Max Weber's "iron cage" remains the dominant metaphor of capitalist organization, we, as cultural theorists and ethnographers, should risk our attachment to the banner images of secularization thesis by examining the facts on the ground. For her part, Margaret Wheatley, argues that computers are able to process non-linear equations so well that they can provide, on the computer screen (like the shroud of Turin?) the very bodily form of the ultimate reality, the Strange Attractor. This is not, she explains, a material "thing" but, rather, a mathematical modeling of the very pattern of all patterns. In fact, the Strange Attractor is also a telling reproduction within Margaret Wheatley's management theory of a key rhetorical move identified by the philosopher, Jacques Derrida, in his critique of Francis Fukuyama.

In *Specters of Marx—The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, Derrida accuses Fukuyama of a slight of hand by which, "for the announcement of the *de facto* "good news," for its effective, phenomenal, historical, and empirically observable event, he substitutes the announcement of the ideal good news, the teleo-eschatological good news, which is inadequate to any empiricity."¹⁰² What this means is that Fukuyama *makes present conditions stand in for ideal conditions in the name of ideal conditions*. According to Derrida, Fukuyama and others have recourse to religious metaphor and the conjuring of "religious ghosts" in their neo-liberal proselytizing that seeks to erode the "frontier between the public

¹⁰² Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx—The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (London: Routledge Press, 1994), 80.

and the private.”¹⁰³ This battle to control and deploy religious metaphor, what Derrida calls the “appropriation of Jerusalem,” like Wheatley’s appropriations of Gaia and the mystic’s “dark night of the soul” can enlist cosmic time to serve as an alibi for present time:

As for the sleight-of-hand trick between history and nature, between historical empiricity and teleological transcendentality, between the supposed empirical of the event and the absolute ideality of the liberal *telos*, it can only be undone on the basis of a new thinking or a new experience of the event, and of another logic of its relation to the phantomatic...the logic of novelty is not necessarily opposed to the most ancient ancientness.¹⁰⁴

If, as Derrida writes, “the war for “the appropriation of Jerusalem” is today the world war. It is happening everywhere, it is the world,”¹⁰⁵ he cautions against a response to neo-liberal spiritualities that would entail new disavowals or reductions of “religion.” With the one hand pointing out the spectral dimensions of contemporary capitalism, Derrida accuses many Marxists of “ghost hunting” in the name of a fully managed and rationally pristine politics. Many now, like Marx, wish to rid their analysis and the world of “religion” in the name of efficacious, even revolutionary, politics. For the ethnographer of religion, Derrida’s note of caution that we not fall back on Marxist denigrations of “religion” and “magic” as being somehow antithetical to the fullness of human life or effective material struggle is of the most pressing sort. How can we avoid simply accepting the rosy accounts of “spirituality” peddled by powerful elites and think-tanks, on the one hand, and how can we attend to what Bethany Moreton calls the “soul of neoliberalism” and come to better understand how popular religion and economic ideology recursively interact and connect on the ground, on the other hand? My particular way of doing this is what is sometimes called existential and

¹⁰³ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 63.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 73.

phenomenological ethnographic method, a pragmatic approach that I tested and revised in light of the ethnographic work I did for this dissertation, as I will discuss in the conclusion.

Navigating my way through the Scylla and Caribides of neither wanting to celebrate nor denigrate spirituality at work, my ethnographic relationships with Dick Broholm and Tom Henry proved to be as instructive as any. In his *God at Work—The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement*, David Miller writes Dick Broholm¹⁰⁶ into a trans-historical socio-theological history in which various attempts to bridge “faith” and “work,” spanning the course of a century, are collapsed into one unifying “faith at work” movement identified by the scholar, Miller.¹⁰⁷ Miller’s text is silent on the relationship of this “faith at work” movement to management history, preferring, instead, to weave together a history of religious desire working itself out over time. What connects this movement over space and time (into its new global dimensions), argues Miller, is “the deep desire to connect faith and work, while hoping for both personal and societal transformation.”¹⁰⁸ The move is reminiscent of Derrida’s discussion of Francis Fukuyama’s “trans-historical” criteria wherein “the ideal is at once infinite and finite.” For their part, Jeremy Carrette and Richard King as well as Barbara Ehrenreich, whose recent book, *Bright-Sided—How Positive Thinking is Undermining America* has a chapter on workplace spirituality, take a dim view and discuss

¹⁰⁶ David Miller, *God at Work—The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 54-56. In my interviews with Dick Broholm, he explained to me that Miller is the protégé of his good friend, George Bauer, an IBM executive who has been a decisive figure in Broholm’s career building bridges between work and faith.

¹⁰⁷ Miller’s explains that the main goal is to “recognize the Faith at Work movement as a movement.” Spanning a century and developing global dimensions in recent decades, Miller’s understanding of a social movement flies in the face of any idea of common movement that most of the persons whom he places under his banner could possibly recognize. As I have discussed with Bethany Moreton, Miller’s constructions of movement are grounded upon problematic constructions of work and the workplace. Not surprising, work means the kind of work done in corner offices not other kinds of work—service work, sex work, “illegal” work, etc.

¹⁰⁸ David Miller, *God at Work*, 61.

matters in terms of the desire by managers to exercise “mind control” and dupe workers. While I find their hard-nosed hermeneutics of suspicion to be necessary, it does not, as Moreton’s *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* does, tell us much about how and why neo-liberal spirituality can make sense for people as they negotiate their daily lives. I met nobody who was bent on “mind control” or in the business of duping workers during my work with STW. I met persons, like me, who worried about capitalism’s excess and interested in fostering and promoting conditions of greater justice.

Existential Deconstruction and the Importance of Ethnographic Method

What I want to argue now is that prior to making any ethical assessment of “workplace spirituality,” even pragmatic assessments about its concrete effects in the lives of persons and in the world, the empirical world of work “deconstructs” the pretensions any formal narrative (theological, management, anthropological or historical) might have to speak on behalf of the messy irreducibility of praxis or the idiosyncratic lives of workers. Deployments of lived metaphor remind us that public stories are never simply mirrored back by individuals but are always endowed with variegated imperatives and biographical resonances that escape the *a-priori*, theoretical “knowledge” of any conceptual account of the world. As an existential anthropologist, Michael Jackson, phenomenological description and radical empiricism imply a, “shift from an emphasis on explanatory models to lived metaphors.”¹⁰⁹

As we saw in the preceding chapters, metaphors realize unities. They mediate connections within experience; they do not simply describe one thing in terms of another. We often have recourse to collectively diffuse images of different kinds of bodies, such as

¹⁰⁹ Michael Jackson, introduction to *Things As They Are—New Directions in Phenomenological Anthropology* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1996), 9.

liberal philosophy's social body or the Yaka people's connecting of the life cycle of the individual to "seasonal and lunar rhythms." Our mundane and everyday use of metaphor is one way in which correspondences between social, bodily and cosmic threads are made and remade.¹¹⁰ As Jackson suggests, metaphor is, therefore, not simply the provenance of romantic poets figuratively denying dualities but, instead, bridges modalities of experience, often in non-conscious ways. The convenient and telling machine metaphors that Alan Tractenberg writes about can therefore be approached precisely as "patterns of intersubjective experience." Likewise, "spiritual capitalism" seems to imply shifting "patterns of intersubjective experience" wherein holistic, cybernetic and organic metaphors are increasingly dominant.¹¹¹ In considering lived metaphor, we literally find common ground, what some might speak of in terms of a shared epistemic context. I have come to understand STW's doing of what they call a "theology of institutions" as an attempt to metaphorically re-describe the social body not simply as a political and economic body but as the very body of Christ. They do ritual and textual work that intends to re-script our conventional metaphors for church, society and cosmos. And, as I have suggested, *some reformations can be shapely affairs wherein we literally play with and alter figurative bodies. And the metaphors we use, such as the privileged cybernetic metaphors of STW*

As we have seen, leading and central figures in organizational theory and management all seek to *re-form* the machine view of society. Inspired by Robert Greenleaf and drawing on longstanding impluses within the American churches, STW participates in

¹¹⁰ Jackson, introduction, 10.

¹¹¹ Recently, I have caught myself using the increasingly common idiom "having the bandwidth to" as in the question "do you have the bandwidth to take care of this right now?" I do not intend to cite a subject position when I use this Internet metaphor but, despite myself, such a statement contextualizes my life within the digital age and in important other ways as well.

this trend by using contemporary management theory to theologically re-narrate and ritually re-imagine society as an imprint of the person and mission of Jesus, the Christ. Margaret Wheatley's rhetoric is uniquely evocative if one comes to think of “workplace spirituality” as a rattling and tearing down of Weber's “iron cage.” She writes,

A world based on machine images is a world described by boundaries. In a machine, every piece knows its place. Likewise, in Newtonian organizations, we've drawn boundaries everywhere. We've created roles and accountabilities, specifying lines of authority and limits to responsibilities. We have drawn boundaries around the flow of experience, fragmenting whole networks of interaction into discrete steps. In a world of things, there are well-defined edges; it is possible to tell where one stops and another begins, to stand outside something and observe it without interfering....A vast and complex machine metaphor has been entrusted to our care.¹¹²

As we saw, Wheatley believes that tropes from complexity and chaos theory and quantum science offer “poetic,” “mystical” and “spiritual” solutions to the deadening anxieties of machine life. However, there is an exceedingly dangerous move Wheatley makes that is endemic to much conceptual thought: mistaking an account of the world for the world itself. When Wheatley writes that machine images of the world drew “boundaries around the flow of experience” and consequently fragmented interaction, this is actually the case for all conceptual thought. As Michael Jackson, following Theodor Adorno, suggests, the line between words and worlds cannot ultimately be elided.¹¹³ All theories about “reality,” even those that stress “creativity” and “flexibility” or somehow attempt to reckon conceptually (or statistically) with chaos and disorder still fail to thereby become repositories of the final truth about the world. “Mystical” “deregulations” of the industrial machine do not, as it were, finally reveal things as they really are. If Jennifer Cook describes the ways in which

¹¹² Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 20.

¹¹³ Jackson, introduction, 3.

machine metaphors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries played off of an ideology that sought to “disabuse the populace of myth,” then it is certainly of *genealogical* interest that Margaret Wheatley, one of the more popular management theorists, argues that Gaia and Chaos are our partners in capitalist reform.¹¹⁴ However, as a *phenomenological* matter, all going narratives have a tendency to claim reality for themselves and all must be held accountable to the gap between words and worlds. *When Wheatley writes that with the advent of “new management,” we can now “understand life as life, moving away from machine imagery,”*¹¹⁵ *I must vehemently disagree.* We cannot stand back from the empirical world and capture the essential truths about life *in theory*. Rather, one must live life, with others, and it is this work that I was able to do, ethnographically with the membership and leadership of STW, that has taught me much about an ethics that emerges not in theory but by way of human relationship on the ground. My relationships with Tom Henry, the co-owner of *Landry's Bicycles* and Dick Broholm, the founder of STW, have been particularly illuminating.

As I described in the last chapter, Tom has worked with Dick Broholm for over twenty years and, as a core member of STW, the influence of the “theology of institutions” and the ritual roundtable meetings in his life is clear. However, just as interesting as these moments of formal recitation might be, theologies, like any narrative or cosmology that is ritually inculcated, are reproduced consciously *and* non-consciously, formally and off-hand. If, as I have been describing, the metaphors of capital, the outlines of its imaginative shape, have changed, these larger genealogical shifts in the public narratives of capital are fueled by

¹¹⁴ Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 129.

¹¹⁵ Negative dialectics is the technical term for Adorno's non-identity mode of writing theory. According to Adorno, all thought fails to grasp reality. Capitalism structures even the analyst's thoughts—hence the theorist should engage in a play of language (including the use of difficult allusion and refusals to define terms) as a strategy for coping with pressures towards reification.

the re-deployments of patterns of metaphor by living, breathing persons, in their everyday practices. For example, during the course of my ethnographic work, I came to realize that although Tom, an agnostic more interested in the “spirituality” of art than traditional Christian theology, likes to speak of *cycles* of divine presence and absence, he does so, in part, speaking as a former professional actor deeply influenced by the creative philosophy of another mentor, Herbert Blau.¹¹⁶ It is true that *Landry's* “core values” logo features a circle encapsulating a pyramid to signal the wholeness sought and that STW uses the figure of three concentric circles to represent the creative tensions between multiple bottom-lines. And while it is also the case that faint pink spirals form the wallpaper for the group's website, circles and semi-circles are prominently featured in the *feedback loops* of the management theory STW draws from and, as Karin Goldschmidt-Salamon argues, globalism is becoming a socially diffuse cosmology that is ritually inculcated, Tom Henry's personal penchant for using circle metaphors also has a powerful biographical context. For example, in our interviews I learned that wheels represent the water wheels of the factory where his father once worked but was summarily dismissed by “new management” peddling new management theory. Tom was also working on a bicycle wheel when he had an epiphany that led him to seminary. The bicycle wheel, Tom will tell you, is also an example of the simple elegance of a healthy feedback loop. Whereas the cost for our attachment to automobiles is addiction to fossil fuels and the concomitant political messes engendered by this addiction, a bicycle runs on bananas and apples. Cycling is good for the environment, physical well-being and politics. Cycling is, for Tom, a virtue and he speaks of saving the

¹¹⁶ Herbert Blau, an experimental theater director was Tom's professor at Oberlin College. After college, Tom joined Blau's new theater group, KRAKEN. Blau, who conceives of the relationship of actor and audience as a play of absence and presence, claims Jacques Derrida as a theoretical influence.

world through biking with rhetorical relish and flair. My conversations with Dick Broholm were similarly instructive on this issue of the relationship between personal history and shifting tides in the public narratives of capital.

Dick spoke of “complex forces” that exist within people and ground societies, described STW’s “dynamic” approach as one that recognizes that “neatness doesn’t work” and told me about how Walter Wink’s biblical theology helped him preserve “mystery” within institutional life.¹¹⁷ He also explained to me that the idea that “God Loves Landry’s” is based on the theological reality that “God is a lover” and that God is engaged with “all of the environment,” including institutions. Institutions, he told me, were not just comprised of the staff and have a “life beyond paper, bricks and mortar”¹¹⁸ They are, he explained, the function of “a lot of caring people, powers and mystery.”¹¹⁹ In this context, it is easy to understand why Tom Henry can break into tears and cry when he talks about the pain he feels when he is reproached for suggesting that the relationship between he and Landry’s is akin to that of a lover and the beloved. The relationship has a sacred “quality of life” that reminds us that “we do not live in a mechanical universe,”¹²⁰ Dick suggests.

If Dick’s ideas about institutions, especially their “spiritual’ dimensions, resonate with trends in contemporary management theory, there are key dimensions of the life history he narrates that cannot be predicted or assumed by Margaret Wheatley’s core ontology of fractal iteration. How irreducible do we understand lives to be? Unique to Dick’s narrative among those I interviewed was the role that the history of race relations played in the

¹¹⁷ Broholm, Dick. Interview by author. Audio digital recording. Boston, MA., 26 January, 2009.

¹¹⁸ Broholm, Dick. Interview by author. Audio digital recording. Boston, MA., 30 September, 2010.

¹¹⁹ Broholm, Dick. Interview by author. Audio digital recording. Boston, MA., 2 July, 2009.

¹²⁰ Broholm, Dick. Interview by author. Audio digital recording. Boston, MA., 2 July, 2009.

development of his vocation and interest in institutional life. In the 1950s, Dick met Clarence Jordan, a scholar and farmer who founded Koinonia Farm in Americus, GA. An interracial farm organized according to the precepts and tenets of New Testament economics, Jordan, whose farm would ultimately give rise to Habitat for Humanity, became an important mentor for Dick on issues of social justice and biblical faith lived out in the world. During this formative time and well into the 1970s, Dick states that pressing questions of “institutional racism” motivated his quest most of all. Unsurprisingly, racial history is left out of Margaret Wheatley's understanding of the whole and is scantily mentioned in David Miller's trans-history.¹²¹

I am often asked for my political stance on “workplace spirituality.” Am I on board or do I think of it as commodification? “Isn't corporate mysticism a fascistic ideology of deregulation?” Or, “don't you agree that “spirituality” and “values” will improve the ethics of business?” These are fair questions. Even as an ethnographer, I make no pretensions to objectivity or take comfort in the thought that I engage in mere description. I concur with Michael Jackson, who argues that ethnography can be “allied to the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed” precisely because it testifies to the ways in which the line between worlds and words can never be elided.¹²² Taking patterns of metaphor seriously reminds us that analytical conceptual thought cannot be divorced from embodied and practical activity. And it reminds us that while we inhabit shared worlds, moments and persons are irreducible. By paying close attention to the personalized ways in which shared metaphors are deployed, I resist reducing life to discourse, on the one hand, and an idealism of *sui generis* autonomy and

¹²¹ The religiously inspired consumer boycotts of the civil rights movement are overlooked by David Miller's history of faith and the American workplace.

¹²² Michael Jackson, *Minima Ethnographica* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 21.

singular genius, on the other hand. I am able to track what Jackson calls the, “subtle movement to and fro between particular and totalized subjectivities.”¹²³ Existential energies and individual biographies are shaped by and fuel sociological change but cannot, as such, be thereby reduced to such change. Yes, one must contextualize the “workplace spirituality” world within a larger discourse of globalism and circles can elicit unhappy reminders of Adorno's view that “the whole is false.”¹²⁴ We also do well to again recall Adorno's suggestion, though he did not live to see these times, that, again, ideology is increasingly diffuse and that, “it is, as it were, equally near the *center* in all of its pieces”¹²⁵ Among other things, such a view might imply the internalization and ritual reproduction of ambulant capital in the form of walking bodies. However the idea of capitalized souls¹²⁶ might make us shudder, I also think about some of the local successes of the group on behalf of justice, like Tom Henry's concrete work on biking activism.¹²⁷ We also do well to remember that theology and economic life have always intertwined. To either celebrate or denigrate “workplace spirituality” without considering what it accomplishes and for whom, religiously and materially, is to fail to do the phenomena justice. Such *a-priori* extremes also seem to stall

¹²³ Michael Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002), 140.

¹²⁴ Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (New York: Verso Books, 2005).

¹²⁵ Theodor Adorno, “Cultural Criticism and Society” in *Prisms*, ed. Thomas McCarthy et al. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), 31.

¹²⁶ Marc Shell argues that the logic of money was and is internalized and reproduced by Western thought and art irrespective of whether it takes money as a trope. His argument is persuasively sobering for, as this is the case, “romantic,” “philosophical,” “aesthetic” and “religious” pretensions to standing above the material fray are highly questionable. Marc Shell, *Money, Language and Thought* (Berkeley: University of Berkeley Press, 1982).

¹²⁷ Again, among Henry's successes is work he did as the President of the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition, which successfully lobbied for expansion of hours during which bikes can be brought onto the Boston subway and helped lobby for the creation of new safe bicycle routes for students. He also spoke out against an industry attempt to make cheaper and less safe bicycles the norm. Margaret Benefiel, *The Soul of a Leader* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2008), 45.

opportunities for developing social theory capable of better comprehending how late capitalism is actually reproduced on the ground. If some critical theory is content to make pronouncements and cast judgments from afar about commodification and “mind control,”¹²⁸ taking matters of existence seriously makes for, I want to suggest, an even better critical politics. This is the case because careful and sustained attention to the lives of persons reminds us that discourses do not have the final word about who we are. Before we sit down to write theological responses, articulate ethical principles or to draft conversations between “religion” and “business,” we do well, always, to “mind the gap.” Jean-Paul Sartre writes that the ethnographic encounter is always a moment of history because he is deeply committed to the irreducibility of biography and of practice. *The discourse shapes us but it is not us.*¹²⁹ I am no more a fractal or a worm than I might have once been a machine. We might consider some of the images Peter Senge and Margaret Wheatley offer for fractal, circular life and ask, do I see myself and my life reflected in the mirror?

¹²⁸ In her recent title, Barbara Ehrenreich places “workplace spirituality” within larger trends towards positive thinking in American culture that breed complacency and a-political satisfaction at work. While Ehrenreich’s hard nosed suspicions get at some of the more pressing political questions, her argument is unable to admit of many of the existential dimensions of the phenomena, in my view. Barbara Ehrenreich, *Bright Sided—How Positive Thinking is Undermining America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009).

¹²⁹ I am partial to David Lamberth’s view that critical scholarship must find ways to simultaneously account for the historicity of agents, the forms of discursive power that shape agents, and the consciousness of subjects, what people see themselves as doing. David Lamberth, “Intimations of the Finite—Thinking Pragmatically at the End of Modernity,” *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (Apr., 1997), 205-223; I am suggesting that paying close attention to deployments of lived metaphor is one approach capable of holding history and subjectivity in productive tension. In a forthcoming article, I discuss the close parallels that exist between my own methodological orientation and the post-structuralist critical theory of Mark Poster, an updated existential Marxism, as it is poised to make interventions illumined, for me, by Bethany Moreton’s groundbreaking work in American religion and the “soul of neoliberalism.”

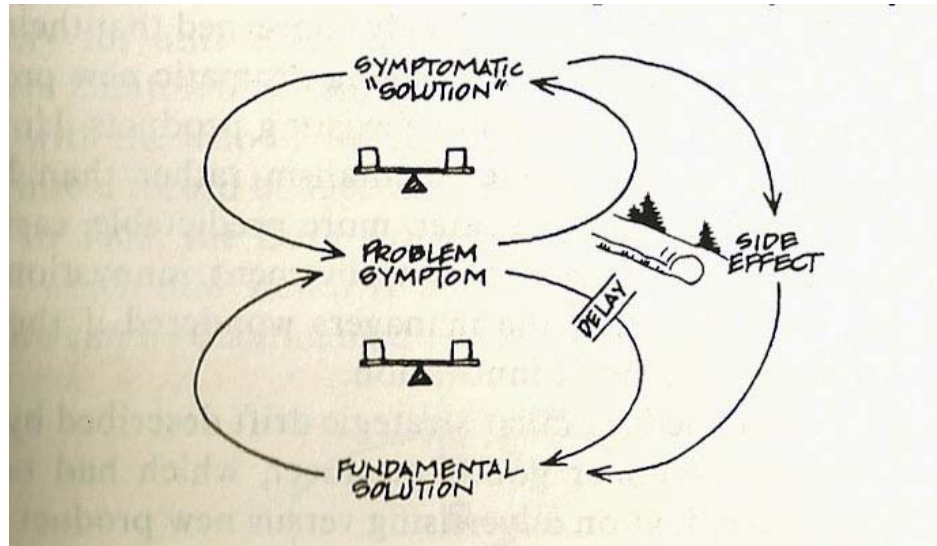


Figure 1: Peter Senge: Circle Economy - Understanding and Using the Structure.¹³⁰



Figure 2: Margaret Wheatley: “fractal qualities of nature.”¹³¹

¹³⁰ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline—The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Currency Books, 1990), 96.

¹³¹ “In this scene of the Grand Canyon, other smaller canyons are evident as foreground. Photographers often capture the fractal qualities of nature, where repetitive patterns are easily evident at different levels of scale.” Margaret Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science—Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc, 2006), 224.



Figure 3: Margaret Wheatley: “Because of a natural fern’s fractal nature, it is possible to create rich artificial ferns on computers.”¹³²



Figure 4: Margaret Wheatley: “Spiral patterns, found in all nature and human art, display the dance of order and chaos.”¹³³

¹³² Margaret Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science—Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc, 2006), 265.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 227.

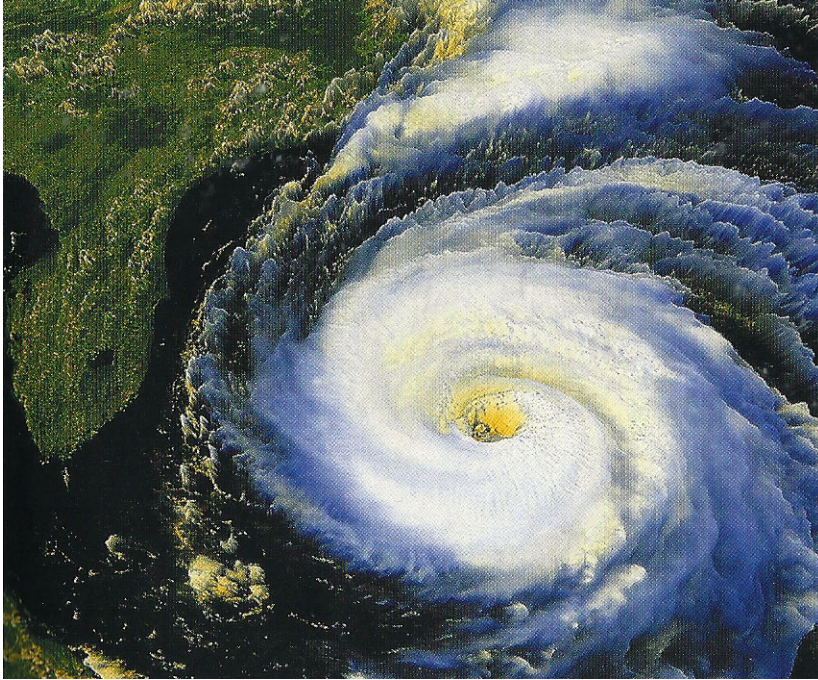


Figure 5: Margaret Wheatley: “A massive energy system self-organizes into a complex spiral. Many galaxies exhibit the same form.”¹³⁴



Figure 6: Margaret Wheatley: Copper Double Spiral Ornament, Prehistoric.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Margaret Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science—Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc, 2006), 227.

¹³⁵ “The spiral appears in human art all over the world, beginning with the Paleolithic period. Carl Jung believes the spiral is an archetype in the human psyche of the dance of creation and destruction.” Margaret Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 227.

Conclusion: Historicity, Agency and the Shared Quandaries of “Spiritual” Struggle

I have traversed much terrain and it is time for me to take stock, as it were, of where I have been and to begin to prospect for the future. In his or her predicament, a scholar embarking on research has recourse to analytical tools to help gauge his or her activity and to guide his or her movements. What must be made clear from the onset, however, is this: the fact that we all maintain pragmatic relationships with privileged concepts stored away in our intellectual tool kits does not imply unencumbered choice over the matter. As I will suggest later on, paying close attention to questions of subject formation and language tends to deconstruct the tool metaphor, something which helps me analogically comprehend what some of the stakes might be for STW in their conviction that the workplace and work are sites of *spiritual struggle*. We do not always experience our actions, thoughts, ideas, desires and motivations as resulting from rational or even cleanly pragmatic deliberation. Sometimes we feel they are not our own. Or we feel them to haunt us; we conceive of them as curses or blessings conjured by the spirits whose shadows we glance but whose spectral bodies escape us. Sometimes we feel grounded in our work. Sometimes we feel that we have lost our footing and that we are slipping and sliding or moving in quicksand. My friends at STW have taught me that work can be a ghostly affair and their truth, I found, resonates with certain quandaries and lively issues in my own discipline. Notably, the vexed and fraught relationship between agency and historicity presents knotty questions that are strikingly similar in the management world and the study of religion. Any honest critique I might want to make of management theory must wrestle with this blurring of subject and object in social analysis.

In my case, I belong to a certain intellectual lifeworld, religious studies, have been trained at a specific institution, Harvard Divinity School, and have necessarily been shaped

by “conversations” native to each. Furthermore, issues of accent and points of emphasis in my current thought and work were no doubt forged through sustained relational encounter with my primary intellectual conversation partners, both at the faculty and student level. Add to this present situation I find myself in the fact that before even coming to Harvard I was a student apprentice in other disciplines and under the tutelage of other people and it almost goes without saying that intellectual life is relational and that subjective change and transformation is one key aspect of intellectual life. In many ways, the ethnographic work I did with STW, the conversations I have had with faculty mentors, the texts I have grappled with, supplications I have made to cherished intellectual ancestors and the sleepless nights I have spent trying to do all of this justice in writing all share and partake of *intersubjective* struggle.

One of those with whom I struggle, with whom I have spent many hours learning from and quarreling with is the philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre. As I mentioned at the outset of the dissertation, the method for social analysis that Sartre outlines in *Search for a Method* has served as a blueprint for my ethnographic engagements and theoretical reflections. It did not make sense to foreground the philosophical issues at the beginning of the thesis, as one might expect, because Sartre's method calls for a certain materially grounded *epoché*, the calling card of any phenomenological method. That said, as a specific intellectual, my own historicity, I want to suggest, places limits on my abilities to see, touch, sense and hear the world. Openness and constraint do not imply objectivity. My vision of the world at any given moment does not exhaust the possible horizons but I maintain that it is of critical importance for the scholar to signal his or her limitations and that one way to do is to engage in existential reflection with readers. I will return to these issues because they are at the heart of what I found both helpful and deficient in Sartre's materialist dialectic once I

tested its merits with the case at hand. How well did Sartre's method and his set of going assumptions help me engage rituals that were built around metaphors of dissipating structures and what this all implies about the current state of neo-liberal ideology? How did it help me bridge questions of existence and macro levels of analysis such as the march of globalism as a discourse? How does Sartre help me make sense of the role of theology in the work of a group like STW and of the ways in which readings of social science, biblical studies and theology coalesce in a certain construction of “spirituality”? Did Sartre's method help me better comprehend what the men and women at STW experience as “spirituality”? Finally, how does he help me account for the place of workers like Lucas and Ryan in the world, persons who resist allegiances with their bosses’ forms of spiritual practice? In all of these things, Sartre's philosophical anthropology proved rather helpful but I will conclude this philosophical excursus with suggestions for updating his critical theory very much along the lines outlined by the post-structuralist Marxist critical theorist, Mark Poster. Before moving in this direction, however, it is time to try to do Sartre's method philosophical justice. My understanding of social and critical theory dictates that I try to do equal justice to the ethnographic and discursive levels proper to my analysis.

In this all too brief outline of what Mark Poster calls Jean-Paul Sartre’s existential Marxism, I will ground myself in the key concepts of *practico-inert*, *progressive-regressive* method and theory of action, setting the stage for my renewed methodological commitment to certain general features of his method and the promised revisions. I urge the reader to recall that behind this present reflection on features of Sartre's formal philosophy are the exigencies that arose from ethnographic encounter. Among other things, I mean STW's talk of inner haunting and the angelic/demonic vitality of the “invisible world.”

The Progressive-Regressive Method of Jean-Paul Sartre

Sartre's *progressive-regressive* method represents an effort, quite familiar to Marxian analyses, to *synthesize* subjective and objective conditions even if Sartre's method simultaneously renders full and final descriptive or explanatory totalization impossible because it is inexorably linked to the logic of *praxis*, or *projection*, which is, in the end, inexhaustible.¹ In its most basic articulation by Sartre, the *progressive-regressive* method is an attempt to dialectically relate human freedom to the world that limits movement and individual choice, rendering suspect any attempt to neatly separate out the world of subjects from the world of objects. Michael Jackson puts it this way:

As Sartre argued, the conscious projects and intentions that carry us forward into the future are grounded in unconscious dispositions, accumulated habits, and invisible histories that, taken together, define our past. Accordingly, any essay in human understanding requires a progressive-regressive method that both discloses the preconditions that constrain what we may say and do, while recognizing that no human action simply and blindly conserves the past; it goes beyond it.²

My deployment of Lakoff and Johnson's method for analyzing our conscious and non-conscious use of metaphor is to be contextualized within this general view of human freedom and constraints on freedom. What might have seemed like an *ad hoc* decision to supplement Sartre's method with a practical theory of language will be discussed philosophically when I turn to Poster's work. Its deficiencies aside, however, there is no doubting the potential appeal of Sartre's method for an existentially and phenomenologically inclined ethnographer of social systems.

Michael Jackson nicely summarizes the purchase Sartre's method offers. He writes,

¹ In theory, the existentialist's *situation* is interminably irreducible though Sartre attempts to mediate between and thus dialectically unify the "diverse fields of the practical field" in his mature Marxist work. Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 301.

² Michael Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling—Violence, Transgression, and Intersubjectivity* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002), 293.

According to Sartre's progressive-regressive method, one should aim to describe *both* the preexisting social and historical factors that constitute any human situation (the *practico-inerte*) *and* the ways in which projective, imaginative, and purposeful human action (*praxis*) both conserves and goes beyond prior conditions.³

In the preceding chapters, I described human situations in which I was involved as an ethnographer. Following Sartre's suggestions, I attempted to highlight the irreducible nature of human *praxis* by paying close attention to specific examples of language by individuals and small everyday moments of practice. However, as Sartre suggests, human freedom is constrained. Therefore, among other things, ethnographic discussions of members' family worlds and childhoods or digressions about group members' outside interests should be considered important avowals of personal historicity. Similarly, the management context and the management theory I introduced in the preceding chapter represent the kinds of condensations Sartre considers pertinent to his concept of the *practico-inerte*, the inherited field of horizons that can be dialectically contrasted to what human beings make of such constraint and possibility.

According to Sartre, the *progressive-regressive* moment is representative of the most exacting kind of analysis. Sartre himself makes the point this way:

When one is studying man, what can be more exact or more rigorous than to *recognize human properties in him*? The simple inspection of the social field ought to have led to the discovery that the relation of ends is a permanent structure of human enterprises and that it is *on the basis of this relation* that real men evaluate actions, institutions, or economic constructions.⁴

For Sartre, then, the dialectic of *praxis*, wherein individuals struggle for momentary *transcendence* within a world that constrains *praxis*, the negative force Sartre calls the *practico-*

³ Michael Jackson, *Minima Ethnographica—Intersubjectivity and the Anthropological Project* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 27.

⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 157.

inert, is an existential structure. Sartre's characterization of the human being moving beyond a situation implies a futurity in the present. This future, as possibility, "is at the very heart of the particular action" and reveals "that which is lacking and that which, by its very absence, reveals reality."⁵ The movement of futurity is by definition interminable since it is the case that "always on the other side of the present, it is fundamentally only the present itself from its other side."⁶ The subjective movement to surpass objective conditions is also a negation of *need*, which itself creates new objective conditions and new existential needs for the present as lived on the other side to overcome. Transcendence is always, as such, caught between moments of intersubjective praxis. What is therefore required is a contextual understanding of the *transcendence, futurity* and limitations of any human act. Dialectically, Sartre's method is therefore "at once both regressive and progressive;" it is heuristic and, when applied on the ground to lived situations, teaches us something necessarily new about how life at capitalist border situations, for example, can be lived.

What is the "Economic"?

It has become fairly commonplace in the liberal academy to dismiss much of what passes for Marxist philosophies for their abstracting conception of the teleological progress of History, their inordinate emphasis on economic categories and their reductive descriptions of the Proletariat class as the ultimate subject of History. Traditional Marxist philosophy's lack of an account of the subject combined with its limited theory of language (though there are still somewhat untapped resources within Marx himself for relating discourse, consciousness and structural economic conditions) is seen as a fatal flaw. I agree

⁵ Sartre, *Search for a Method*, 94.

⁶ *Ibid.*

with Mark Poster that needed critiques of Marxist theory need to be distinguished from “red baiting” and failures to take material critique seriously.

In his own day, Sartre himself battled the reductive tendencies in the French Marxism on phenomenological grounds. Philosophical disputations aside---a point that I narratively approached through my retelling of my working relationship with Sheila-- economic structures are critically important facts of daily existence and that we do violence to the experiences of others and to our very own when we disavow these important conditions of discursive and practical life. Social theories that dematerialize conditions in the economic sense therefore bear the full burden of ethical proof as they engage in otherwise important critical work. Sartre’s method, which in many ways works well as an articulation of sufficiently self-reflexive ethnographic method, sharpens our focus on particular aspects of material economic experience in important ways.

Sartre writes that, “the abstract relations of things which each other, or merchandise and money, etc. (that) mask and condition the direct relations of men with one another.”⁷ This is a fairly straightforward reassertion of the continued descriptive validity of the concept of *exchange-value*. According to Jean Joseph Goux, exchange value, the structure of monetarism identified by Marx, operates according to the logic of “general equivalence” that effaces particularities and differences. In its struggle against abstraction and reduction, Goux affirms the central importance of Marxist philosophy to Western critical thought, generally. He writes,

The accession of the father to the rank of privileged subject, controlling the conflict of identification; the elevation of the phallus to the place of centralized standard of objects of drive in Freudian and Lacanian doctrine; the privileged position of language as a phonic signifier potentially equivalent

⁷ Sartre, *Search for a Method*, 133.

to all other signifiers through the operation of verbal expression—all these appear to be promotions of a general equivalent.⁸

In the case of *commodification*, the products of labor come to take on an a-historical presence that obscures the conditions of their production, the particular lives of their makers and the existential and affective investments of their consumers.⁹

As I was reminded of in a powerful way by Sheila, the structure of exchange value, a historical rather than an ontological limit condition, is one important dimension of economic life that is readily present, on the ground, in praxis since it pervades social activity in a profound and inescapable way, especially in late capitalist consumer societies. Of course, there are many discursive lenses through which citizens and scholars, from a variety of types and fields of work, come to think of or approach “*the economic*,” which is never reducible to money or exchange: “the market,” “the American dream,” “consumer society,” “the information age,” “Globalization,” “post-industrial capitalism,” “the experience economy” and so forth. It is here too that Sartre is very helpful since it is the case, I believe, that systems do not *act as persons do*—even if I have been persuaded by my work with STW that we must find better ways than Sartre has to talk about the ways in we can experience systems as living, often capricious, beings. As I will turn to Poster to help explain, my Sartrian idea of subjective consciousness initially proved to be a stumbling block of sorts in my initial attempts to analogically bridge my own experiences of the world with those of the membership of STW, a group of people who tend to speak precisely about the selfsame

⁸ Jean-Joseph Goux, *Symbolic Economies After Marx and Freud* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 4.

⁹ Consider this scenario: two digital music players are on the rack in the department store. One happened to be built by sweatshop labor because the multinational corporation whose logo is affixed to the device outsourced aspects of production to a factory that technically fails to meet its own labor standards. Another is built at a factory that meets regulatory guidelines. They come to the consumer as if from nowhere and the material conditions of their genesis are obscured by the identical price tag on each. This is the kind of erasure of difference and distortion of human interrelationships that, according to Goux and others, the specifically monetarized logic of general equivalency promotes.

relationship between “spirituality” and the “deep structures” of organizational and social life. One needed step in improving our analysis in religious studies of contemporary economic life is to gain our bearings sociologically about what we mean by “institutions” and how we understand the “economic.” Avoiding clumsy dialectics when they are unhelpful is vital to the success of this enterprise.

The progressive and Buddhist leaning economist Joel Magnuson writes that, “capitalism is a system that relies almost exclusively on the institutions of property, money, and the market system.”¹⁰ Elaborating upon this, he writes that: “The amounts and prices of the goods are distributed among the population are all determined within this immense social configuration—the economic system.”¹¹ Social and environmental issues are therefore structurally linked to the economic system in the sense that many social and political ills, Magnuson argues, require a “systems approach” since it is the case that, he writes, “when we take a systems approach, we see that an economic event that occurs has an impact on the overall system and, at the same time, these events are shaped by the system.”¹² Accordingly, Magnuson, writes:

If one part changes, everything in the economic system begins to change. A rise in oil prices, for example, will cause fuel and chemical prices to rise, which will directly affect all transportation, agriculture, and manufacturing industries. Price inflation will soon follow which, in turn, will cause banks to raise interest rates and this will affect bond prices, consumer credit, and so on. Every part of the economy is connected to every other part.¹³

¹⁰ Joel Magnuson, *Mindful Economics: How the U.S. Economy Works, Why it Matters, and How it Could be Different* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 20.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

Magnuson's point is similar to that of Gordon Bigelow, whom I mentioned in the Introduction. For both, economic life, even at the systemic level, is defined and characterized by human interventions. After I have given some more definitional precision to what ethnographers of capital intend by the word "economy" and the degree to which I contextualize my own analysis within the "economic," I will look at how Sartre relates human action within the structural economy to the impossibility for any human actor to *see* the majority of the effects her actions might have within that economy. The theology of STW and the work of their most influential theoretical partners are implicitly critical of a method such as Sartre's, which has little intuition or poetic taste for the ghostly haunting that can be occasioned by the myriad fragilities of instrumental reason and our consciousness of limited agency. It is on these accounts that I propose that Mark Poster's readings of Michel Foucault's work on discourse/practice and knowledge/power can better do justice to the experiences of STW and serve as the inspiration for revised social theory on issues of contemporary capital and subjection formation.

As a heuristic, I find Magnuson's matter of fact definition of social *institutions* helpful for building bridges between the philosophical anthropology of Jean Paul Sartre and the theology of STW, even if it is also true that it is in the nuancing of the stakes and in the comparisons that I began to approach the particular question of what to make of talk of spirits and demons in markets as an ethnographer of religion, analogically, from my own experiences reading and writing about action, language and power. He writes that, "social institutions have both structural and functional significance."¹⁴ As a "social structure" institutions directly influence "the nature of certain social relationships." On the other hand, "as a social function, an institution directs human social behavior to achieve a specific

¹⁴ Magnuson, *Mindful Economics*, 31.

purpose.”¹⁵ On the first account, we have occasion to speak of the ways in which, as the ethnographers Melissa Fisher and Greg Downey write: “economic facts such as “value” are a social achievement.”¹⁶ In the discussion to follow and in the conclusion, I will turn to resources internal to my discipline in order to strike a middle position between Sartre’s committed existential Marxism, which seems ill fitted for viscerally engaging the linguistic and experiential leitmotifs of Tom Henry’s “ghosts in the rafters,” and the confident metaphysics of the important and influential management theorist, Margaret Wheatley, whom I introduced in the last chapter.

On Magnuson’s second account, we are called as scholars to remember that we, like all persons, do not control nor have apprehension of all the ways in which the effects of our actions reverberate in ways unknown and unseen, extending to relationships we have no phenomenological experience of and, just as important, to recognize that capitalism directs action towards historically specific ends and purposes. Fisher and Downey’s definition of the “form of the market” as “its rules, norms, and accepted behaviors, as well as a style of arguing for those standards”¹⁷ suggests that, for the sociologically thoughtful ethnographer, it is important to attend both to the ways in which economic forms are reproduced through practice, implying discursive logics and ritualizing strategies, and in order to mark the fact that, as “accepted behaviors,” both human agency and preexisting conditions and institutional effects existing beyond the choice or intentionality of any subject or group of subjects are always simultaneously implied by the “economic.” It is an interesting fact that a reader of Michel Foucault and Robert Greenleaf might both agree, in some very basic way,

¹⁵ Magnuson, *Mindful Economics*, 32.

¹⁶ Melissa Fisher and Greg Downey, eds., “Introduction” in *Frontiers of Capital—Ethnographic Reflections of the New Economy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 8.

¹⁷ Fisher and Downey, “Introduction,” 12.

with his contention that “the choices we make and how we make them are largely determined by the institutions that surround us and they guide our social behavior.”¹⁸

Looking carefully at what these two readers might both share and not share is precisely the kind of comparative reading of discourse that I consider both methodologically and politically productive.

In any event, Sartre’s progressive-regressive approach, as we saw, fits well with the specific tasks Downey and Fisher consider to be at the very heart of ethnographic method according to this understanding of the “economic.” Of single site analysis that approaches “systems” in a way that neither disavows nor reads away the embeddedness of the ethnographic project within capitalist structures that dwarf it and yet is also able to avoid the temptation to forsake the empirical for the analytical, they write:

[We are] engaged in ethnographic theorizing, substituting the intensive study of a single site for the comparative approach used by...other theorists. The resulting portrait, although idiosyncratic and bound to the particular setting, often reveals a more complex web of causal connections, multivalent effects and, incomplete transformations. The contrast, then, is not between producing theory and working with empirical data; rather, an ethnological approach tries to perceive broader patterns across multiple sites, whereas an ethnographic perspective ideally yields a more complex, holistic portrait of potential interrelations among realms of human action at a single site.¹⁹

In a pivotal way for my analysis, Sartre falls upon a very un-Sartre like metaphor, “mystical ends,” when attempting to think through the ways in which agency, intention, narrative and structural effect within “systems” are ambiguously related, to the point of apparent analytical contradiction, within any discrete moment of practice. In the context of “workplace spirituality” qua discourse, the metaphor Sartre uses might haunt the work and consciousness of the ethnographer no less than his or her ethnographic subjects and, hints at

¹⁸ Magnuson, *Mindful Economics*, 31.

¹⁹ Fisher and Downey, “Introduction,” 23.

some of the rehabilitations of Sartre's method that I find are clearly demanded, in light of my own ethnographic experiences with the world of STW. I learned about the "spectrality" of practice from those with whom I worked and came to an empirically and discursively informed comprehension of the ways in which one of the main stakes of the work I was doing and the worlds I was exploring had to do precisely with the question of how one relates oneself to "the unknown"—penumbral and limit situations that humble the pretensions of instrumental reason and, more broadly, the ambitions of consciousness. "Spirituality" in the workplace for activists like Dick Broholm, Tom Henry and David Specht has everything to do with the limits of agency and the force of power within history.

While he writes that "much of the daily lives of most people consists of institutionalized behavior even though many of us are not aware of it," suggesting the importance of micro analyses of institutions, Joel Magnuson's critique is, in the end synecdochic: "systemic change involves redefining the character of the economic system by restructuring its essential components and building it in such a way that those components can function together and move toward a new purpose."²⁰ How one goes about determining what is at play and what is "risky" when one defines social change in this fashion become key questions for any existential sociology of contemporary capitalism, whether Marxist or not. How does one place persons and not systems at the center of systematic analysis?

Sartre's Theory of Action

Having made himself famous by writing about humankind's subjective freedom and persons' responsibilities to act as if they are subjects in the world, Jean-Paul Sartre refocused and retooled his analysis later in his career, when his attempt to bridge existential philosophy and Marxism made him reconsider the ways in which we are simultaneously subjects and

²⁰ Magnuson, *Mindful Economics*, 30.

objects in the world. Put another way, Sartre's original existentialist dichotomy of being-for-itself and being-in-itself is complicated by his developing comprehension of the ways in which being for itself is also always, at the same time, beings-for-others and the ways in which the inert world of being-in-itself pressures and, in turn, limits our existential choices and the freedom of our movements.²¹ I briefly mentioned in the introduction that for Sartre this dialectic is most basically captured by his idea of praxis, the carrying out of human ends, from the everyday and exceedingly mundane to the extraordinary and ambitious, in the midst of material limitations and existential possibilities for transcendence, which is Sartre's way of noting that while we are limited by the conditions we inherit, we are also never absolutely determined by these "objective" factors either, as Sheila's struggle over the years reminds me in such a powerful way. In this chapter, I will take a step back from direct narration of the empirical work in order to theoretically place myself and the work of this dissertation within a phenomenologically shared, historical field of practice and, having analytically established

Sartre's theory of action serves as a metaphor for radically reconsidering and revisiting and revising Marxist conceptions of economic base and so-called superstructural, even, according to its most vulgar articulations, epiphenomenal "culture." In attempting to recover what he considers to be the original sophistication and nuance of Marx's claim in the "Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte" that, "men make their own history, but not spontaneously under conditions they have chosen for themselves"²², Sartre resorts to a theatre metaphor, the lead actor engaged in a performance of Hamlet in front of an audience. He sets the stage as follows,

²¹ If being-for-others, the root of bad faith in Sartre's early work becomes understood in his Marxist work through the concept of the practico-inert, that which is given and constrains any human action.

²² Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" in *The Portable Karl Marx*, Ed. Eugene Kamenka (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 287.

If we push the Marxist metaphor to its limit, in fact, we arrive at a new idea of human action. Imagine an actor who is playing Hamlet and who is caught up in his role. He crosses his mother's room to kill Polonius hidden behind the arras. But that is not what *he is actually doing*. He crosses a stage before an audience and passes from "court side" to "garden side" in order to earn his living, to win fame, and this real activity defines his position in society. But one cannot deny that these *real* results are present in some way in his imaginary act. One cannot deny that the movement of the imaginary prince expresses in a certain indirect and refracted manner the actor's real movement, nor that the very way in which he *takes himself* for Hamlet is his own way of *knowing himself* an actor.²³

It is telling that Sartre makes his point by detailing the movements of an actor.

Fundamentally for Sartre, storytelling and the objective conditions of action are inseparable.

The actor is "caught up in his role" and, presumably, the audience is similarly caught up in the story of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark. Importantly, then, the actor comes into being as an actor through another, the role Shakespeare has written for him. Though Sartre does not specify this, one might even wonder if the actor's own Oedipal fantasies are worked through via his adoption of the dramatic role and his idiosyncratic play, through intonation, costume and gestures, within the objective limits and boundaries set for him by the author of the play and the vision and style the director brings to the production. As Jorge Luis Borges reminds us, it is in the retelling and our personalization of narratives that stories come to life in new ways. Put another way, without subjective force, the objective world is inert, dead to human life. This doublet calls into question whether or not we can phenomenologically even speak of one without the other. There is no real apart from the imaginary but it is just as true that the imaginary is objectively conditioned though never, as such, determined. This subjectivity within objectivity (and vice versa) is existentially structural for Sartre.

For Hamlet to come to life, as it were, the actor needs to follow stage directions that were he too obvious about it, would render his performance stilted and mechanical. There

²³ Sartre, *Search for a Method*, 46.

are no bright lines, of course, and minute changes in the actor's steps every time are not only possible but inevitable. Yet, part of what it means to embody a role is precisely the fact that our performance is in some substantial measure rendered *to us*. What Michel Foucault calls techniques of self care, the agency of self-cultivation and change brought about through self-directed, micro-practices of the body, are deployed and embedded within a social context. Unlike rationalist idealisms like Lockean liberalism, Sartre does not hold that reason can ever set us apart from context and magically "return" to the self the power to restage the whole affair, as if human living were even possible within an inert *tabula rasa*. Sartre's choice of the actor as his paradigm for making a larger philosophical point about agency is well taken: if life could be fully managed—if we were never lost, in some measure, to ourselves and the world (including the "objective facts" of our social conditions), we would be lifeless. The "base," the stage, needs the play in order to take to life and a specifically human play cannot be staged in the clouds. But, what does a play require?

The boundaries between fantasy and reality are constantly and dynamically blurred and redrawn with the example of the thespian performing the life of another in the following ways. First, to mistake the play, with its lighting, stage design, set, paid actors, for some platonic or idealized Art that exists for its own sake through its own transcendent truth is to dematerialize from the world of practice and to lose oneself completely in another world. Plays do not happen without costumes made by someone, stages designed by someone and, in this society, investors and the persons hired to cut the checks. Second, to mechanize the world of practice turns actors into marionettes and exchanges the stage, the so-called base, and technical directions for the play. Even if *exchange-value* is a *base* reality of everyday life in capitalist societies, it does not determine how it will be lived, worked through and embodied by living, breathing people. For Sartre, fully realized objectivity, an example of which is the

idea that the objective contradictions at the level of economic base determine the progress of History, is possible only in an inert world since it is the case that subjective intention moves things along beyond objectivity towards a new objectivity. In a humanistic sense, the objective is always being brought elsewhere by existential action. The result is a kind of *motion blur*, to use a photography metaphor.

A business title aptly called *The Experience Economy--Work is Theatre and Every Business is a Stage* argues that the “new economy” emerging at the dawn of the twenty first century will surpass the industrial production of the twentieth century with its focus on the narrative performances of consumers. Under this model, companies seek to “script processes” for customers’ performances of self, selling personalizable narratives and “staging experiences.” However, Sartre’s metaphor of the self as an actor playing the role Shakespeare scripted reminds us that our ritual fields and identity props are not just our own and that one person’s violence is another person’s freedom. Exchange, ethically, is never “fully squared”; accounts are never completely settled even if commodity logic lulls us into performing such fictions. Even in the midst of experiences that bring us elsewhere and otherwise, everyday life in capitalist societies—its movements, projects, speech, texts and gestures—occurs within objective although not necessarily inevitable economic conditions. However, it would be mistaken to reduce the politics of existence to economic conditions. Sartre writes,

It is true that this industrialist on vacation throws himself frantically into hunting, into underwater fishing, in order to forget his professional and economic activities; it is also that this passionate waiting for fish or for game has in his case a meaning which only psychoanalysis can let us know. But the fact still remains that the material conditions of the act constitute it objectively as “expressing capital” and that, in addition, this act itself by its economic repercussions is integrated in the capitalist process. Thus it makes history statistically at the level of relations of production because it contributes to maintaining the existing social structures.²⁴

²⁴ Sartre, *Search for a Method*, 102.

And yet, Sartre is careful not to reduce the phenomenological realities of human practice in a capitalist economy to the expression of capital: "...one can understand that capitalism is expressed through the mouth of the bourgeois but that the bourgeois does not thereby stop speaking of anything else." Existentially, we must learn to speak of transcendence even in the most commoditized settings. Economically, we must remember to speak of capital in even in our most ecstatic experiences.

Sartre's Discussion of the "Mystical Ends" of Revolutionary Consciousness

In addition to the metaphor of the actor, Sartre discusses the constant interplay between the subjective and the objective on the social stage, reminding us that politics is poetical and ever fantastical. Discussing the vexed relationship between the intentions and political effects of the Girondists during the French Revolution and their narrative beckoning back to Roman virtue over and against a more collective revolutionary force, Sartre makes this curious argument I shall quote at length:

It is one and the same thing to declare oneself Roman and to want to stop the Revolution. Or rather, the better one can pose as Brutus or Cato, the better one will be able to stop the Revolution. This thought, obscure even to itself, sets up *mystical ends* which enclose the confused awareness of its objective ends. Thus we may speak simultaneously of a subjective drama (the simple play of appearances which hides nothing, which contains no "unconscious element") and of an objective, intentional organization of real means with a view of achieving real ends—without any organization of all this by a consciousness or premeditated will. Very simply, the truth of the imaginary praxis is the real praxis and the real, to the extent it takes itself as merely imaginary, includes implicit references to the imaginary praxis as to its interpretation.²⁵

The Girondists, we recall, differed from the Montagnards in their approach to revolution, favoring what Sartre refers to as a "proud individualism" and rhetoric to armed revolt.²⁶ It is

²⁵ Sartre, *Search for a Method*, 46

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

in becoming a new kind of Roman, a subjective playing with the past, that the Girondist comes into his own as a political actor. Sartre observes in the French Revolution evidence of the fact that role-playing, storytelling and politics are always intertwined. Although the Montagnards came to eclipse their public influence during the Reign of Terror, what is important, for Sartre, is that Girondists were able to establish their individualism “upon a competitive economy” and denied History, “by substituting virtue for politics.”²⁷ So Sartre, the Girondist did not play the Roman in order to impede the rising consciousness of the Proletariat but, in playing the Roman, proved to be an impediment to Proletariat social and political organization, nevertheless. There is an intentional organization of real ends—economic individualism in a structural sense---that is given subjective life by playing the Roman but it would be a fallacy to assume that this implies that the taking on of the role by the individual was itself only a cover for economic goals or in some way merely epiphenomenal. Sartre’s point is that the vulgar Marxists become mad butchers in their own right by diminishing the phenomenological world of human ends, assigning intentionality to inhuman forces (“the base”) and reducing history, in the sense of human existential action in the moment, to a prematurely instantiated History, the subjective, lazy and totalitarian contrivance of a Marxist bureaucracy. It is one thing to distinguish between subjective intention and structural effect and to make the claim that our subjective actions have unintended consequences and quite another thing to argue that social structure is what *determines* the course of existential life.

It is simultaneously the case, says Sartre, that something like an economic *structure* can take on a social force beyond the individual’s knowledge, comprehension, immediate

²⁷ Sartre, *Search for a Method*, 44.

awareness or ability to change it and that this force is not, as it were, itself *acting*. He writes that in this case, "...one can no longer speak of *doing*. It is men who *do*, not avalanches."²⁸

The "life of its own" quality of something like an economic system is related to the mundane fact of all social life that, "...the consequences of our acts always end up by escaping us, since every concerted enterprise, as soon as it is realized, enters into relation with the entire universe."²⁹ It is our lack of control and limitations that mystify us for Sartre:

...man makes History; this mean that he objectifies himself in it and is alienated in it. In this sense History, which is the proper work of *all* activity and of *all* me, appears to men as a foreign force exactly insofar as they do not recognize the meaning of their enterprise (even when locally successful) in the total, objective result.³⁰

Sartre summarizes, "...if History escapes me, this is not because I do not make it; it is because the other is making it as well."³¹ To scale the point back to the concrete, individual level, let's take the simple example of someone who purchases a cup of coffee at Starbucks, believing it to be a progressive and ethical corporation. She, he or I probably do so largely ignorant of the many corporate and political decisions made along the way by others, from production to distribution, that have political and social effects in other lifeworlds and upon our shared environment. As the marketing professor Douglas Holt argues, it might be the case that what we experience as innocuous or even "virtuous" consumption can have destructive structural effects on others that are beyond the consumer's field of vision.³² I make history at the level of production by contributing to the logic of capital when I make a

²⁸ Sartre, *Search for a Method*, 48.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 89.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

³² Douglas Holt, "Brand Hypocrisy at Starbucks," accessed March 24, 2011, http://nazret.com/blog/index.php/2007/01/30/ethiopia_brand_hypocrisy_at_starbucks.

consumer purchase even if my experience of this act is hardly concerned with the workings and doings of money. There are stage directions I implicitly accept, whether it is that of *exchange value* or the general features of the brand narrative. Be the case this might be, Sartre's existentialist criticism of reductive Marxist sociologies is nevertheless critical to my method: to reduce the life activity of persons living their own ends to epiphenomenal status simply because their activity escapes them or because it is mediated through capitalist exchange is, in the end, *inhuman*.

As instructive as I found Sartre and have come to consider many fashionable critiques of his work facile for their tendencies to reduce the totality of his work to vulgarized caricatures of *Nausea* or *Being and Nothingness*, it must be admitted that even his admirable Marxist work fails precisely where many of his competitors succeed: in providing the tools for considering permutations in contemporary capital wherein questions of self-stylization, knowledge, power and discourse are pre-eminent. In the face of the lack of a persuasive account of power and knowledge, Sartre's dialectics seem flat. Even if I consider ethnographic method to be necessarily dialectical, this does not mean that dialectics is always the best descriptive rubric for doing justice to important dimensions of the whole of lived experience. Sartre himself seems at a loss to narrate irreducibility. Even if he provides compelling ways for making sense of the some of the sociological and political ambiguities of revolutionary and reformist narratives, I do not think he is the best companion with which to approach contemporary experiences of "spirituality" or "mysticism" in the American workplace. Holding onto Sartre for help and guidance with key hermeneutical impasses (e.g. the progressive-regressive method) and important philosophical language for phenomenological realities (e.g., praxis and consciousness), I now turn to Mark Poster's updated critical theory for ideas about how to do justice to the fact that, if nothing else, my

ethnographic subjects consistently insisted that they experienced aspects of work as intersubjective encounters with vital, even spiritual, agencies?

Making Critical Room for Spirits at Work: Mark Poster's Critique of Sartrean Atomism

The critical theorist Mark Poster has written important intellectual histories of what he termed existential Marxism, a mid twentieth century, mostly French, intellectual current exemplified by the work of the existential work of Jean-Paul Sartre and the phenomenological work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.³³ According to Poster, existential Marxism, which shared many tendencies with the critical theory developed by the Frankfurt school in Germany, was important for the significant headway it made bridging questions of consciousness and existence with structural concerns. As I discussed above, one of the key innovations of Sartre's Marxist social theory is that it attempts to account for the ways in which we are always equally beings for others and beings for ourselves. According to Poster, however, while Sartre's reconsideration of his previously excessive focus on the subjective freedom of consciousness represents a vast improvement, it still retains traces of his inordinate and atomistic privileging of individual consciousness. I find that Poster's critiques of Sartre here offer a very good platform for reflecting philosophically on some of the existential, sociological and political stakes that arose from my ethnographic encounters.

Let us recall some key ideas from my ethnographic narrations. As we saw more fully in the last chapter, Dick Broholm was influenced, simultaneously, he will say, by Robert Greenleaf's call for a theory of society that takes into account the growing reach and power of large, complex institutions in everyday life and the American churches' decision in the last half of the past century to find ways to support the life and work of the laity in secular

³³ Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France—From Sartre to Althusser* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

institutions. In partnership with others, most recently David Specht and the leadership of STW, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Dick turned to the biblical theology of Walter Wink and the chaos and creativity inflected management theory of Margaret Wheatley and Peter Senge in an attempt to weave and stitch foundational theology and practical worlds back together. In this affirmation of the theological impulse to reform the world and in the spirit of Greenleaf's call to tie work back to the cosmos, "spirituality" gets formally constructed along the lines of a new natural law of quantum relationships. Upon this understanding, what often matters most in reality is not matter that can be seen and touched but dynamic and interpenetrative relationships Broholm and others members of the group, like David and Tom, associate with the spirit of capitalism and of particular institutions and with a theology of sin and virtue. Upon their understanding, the spirit of an institution, its cultural DNA or "metaphorical withinness," guides action and shapes our soul. As we saw, the management theory the group turns to, like most mainstream management, conceives of recursive relationships between "culture" and people, often in terms of feedback loops and individual iterations of a shared narrative whole. For his part, Tom Henry's favorite way of introducing new people to the work of STW is to tell them the story of how his work at STW roundtables gave him the courage to stand up to the momentum of an unchecked critical mass of sin at a key moment in the recent history of the bicycle industry, when plans were being made to profit at the expense of persons' safety.³⁴ Does Tom's courage reflect the ethical fruits of ritualization within a local theology? In part, I believe that it very much does. However, Mark Poster's work would suggest that the best impulses in the work of both Sartre and Michel Foucault complicate the terrain under which we might make such a claim.

³⁴ Tom has written about this event. Tom Henry, "Landry's Bicycles and the Three-Fold Model," accessed March 24, 2011, http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/publications/seeingthingswhole/STW05_Landry.pdf.

What I want to do shortly is consider the ways in which and the reasons why Mark Poster turns to Foucault to retool critical theory.

As my outline of Sartre's method demonstrates, Sartre is committed to a non-reductive synthesis between subjective and objective analysis. According to Poster, both Sartre and Foucault share in their strident critiques of positivism and scientificism. However, important differences follow. Although Sartre was careful to attend to the ways in which he had earlier "erased the specificity and historicity of freedom,"³⁵ Poster is not certain that Sartre ever successfully rehabilitated the cogito from the militancies of his earlier positions.

Of ideals of *intersubjectivity* reflected in works like *Being and Nothingness*, Poster writes,

Here, the cogito was operant again, limiting the existential description of the situation to a pullulation of atoms, to a peg-board where the pegs were real but the relations of each peg to another were not. Reality was drawn back into each individual peg as the society of peg relations, full intersubjectivity was refused.³⁶

Sartre absolutely refused the "we-subject" as an ontological reality yet admitted it as a possible psychological reality.³⁷ As I have insisted, part of my motivation in spending careful time with Sartre's philosophical subtleties in *Search for a Method* is out of respect for the ways in which he later struggled to articulate a more persuasive model of intersubjectivity—one which still offers important strengths to contemporary theory. I also do not want to implicitly periodize theory by turning to Posterian readings of Foucault as a means to suggest that Foucault is a postmodern improvement upon that outdated modernist, Sartre. Rather I find that Foucault and Sartre complement one another if the goal of theory is taken to be critical work in the present. Sartre's existential Marxism remains wholly relevant if also

³⁵ Poster, *Existential Marxism*, 82.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

insufficient. While I will return to the present tense virtues of Sartre's mature work, I will now consider its main limitation for an exploration of the worlds I considered in this thesis.

In addition to needed revision in the gendering of the language, does the dialectical principle announced in *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* that relations in society are mediated by the fact that “man is ‘mediated’ by things to the extent that things are ‘mediated’ by men” do justice to the experiences of spirit at work my friends at STW taught me about, where invisible spirits and relationships are more to the point than our conventional understandings of “things”? As Poster suggests, even in the *Critique*, “the group is still based on individual actions; any other basis would legitimate a super-human realm of being and diminish human freedom.”³⁸ Is the field of history *inert*, as Sartre’s name for it suggests, or must we, on descriptive grounds, find ways to do better ethnographic justice to the contemporary vitalities of late capitalism? On the other hand, how can Sartre still help us avoid the trap of fully confusing descriptive strategies and critical strategies such that sociology and ethnography end up simply taking capitalism’s word for it, so to speak?

Poster summarizes his assessment of late Sartrian *intersubjectivity* this way:

Sartre qualified the process of self-creation with categories of the situation, being-for-others, being-with-others, and so forth, in an effort to avoid solipsism. Yet the radical freedom of the self to make itself mitigated the force of these alterities. In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* Sartre moved closer to a balanced relation of self and world, but the self remained centered in evanescent consciousness.³⁹

It is precisely this relationship between self and world that was troubled by my ethnographic work with the leadership and membership of STW, where persons insisted, time and again, that the spirits of organizations possessed them, causing them to live well or to sin. As I

³⁸ Poster, *Existential Marxism*, 289.

³⁹ Mark Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism—In Search of a Context* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 65.

mentioned in the introduction and throughout the dissertation, a central quandary for me as an ethnographer has been how I might respond to the assertion by subjects that there were spirits haunting and blessing their lives. If I was in the field working with a tribal society, the obvious impulse would be to check any rationalist tendencies to associate such talk with primitivism and irrationalism. And the force of colonial history would breathe down my back as I did this. In my own social world, where the sociological and historical case is such that it is becoming clear that late capitalist institutions have an explicit and increased interest in the uses of “spirits” and “spirituality,” my reaction was complicated. When Bethany Moreton suggests that the critics of neo-liberalism must attend at all times and everywhere to “the soul of neoliberalism,” she is specifically not suggesting that we disavow talk of soul or fall back on facile Marxist suspicions of religion, impulses we would certainly check in other contexts. One danger of ethnographic method is that one’s capacities for creative human co-existence might lead one to meld into the other or fully adopt the other’s world view despite oneself. I maintain the Sartrian suspicion of a full dissolution of self into other. I do not have to prostrate myself in front of capitalist spirits at management temples. Full acceptance is not a road I can go down. The road I chose instead was one of critical empathy. Were there experiences, quandaries and struggles we shared? Were there problems that had strong analogical resonances with issues in my life world? I found that incorporating ideas of language, discourse and discipline into my analytical orientation helped me bridge worlds without having to sign-on to metaphysical commitments I want to avoid. Mark Poster’s work also reminded me of the ways in which we do well to conserve at least some of Sartre’s critical sociology as our contemporary social, economic and linguistic contexts shift underfoot. In a Western academic world that has effortlessly seen the rise of whole Sartre

and Foucault industries, among others, we do well to consider the fact that, in our own ways, we all potentially risk the fate of the Girondists.

Making Critical Room for Spirits at Work: Discourse, Practice and Power

Mark Poster argues that in an information age, the standard tool metaphor wherein the laborer creates objects or the laborer is dominated by the objects of its work is deconstructed. He writes:

In the media unconscious, the tool of the information machine insinuates itself within the processes of culture, reconfiguring what had been the subject and the object into a new construct that I call the humachine.⁴⁰

This “symbiosis of human and machine that destabilizes the figures of subject and object” is fruitfully engaged, Poster wants to argue, by turning our attention to questions of power, discourse/practice and language. For its part, my ethnographic work with STW and my research into the discourse of contemporary management provided strong empirical evidence for the idea that 'network' theory, with its feedback loops and interpenetrating forces is influencing today's organizational paradigms. According to Poster, there is no better theorist for exploring “relays in a network” than Michel Foucault. To reiterate a point that I feel requires further consideration: given the superficial similarities between power and network theory, do Foucauldian readings of organizational theory not present themselves as obvious candidates for new critical interventions into the complexes of contemporary business? Clearly, I think they do.

When individuals become nodes in a network, resistance is “contained within the subject position, not outside of it”⁴¹, a situation that is highly reminiscent of Foucault's “concept of power.” According to Foucault:

⁴⁰ Mark Poster, *Information Please—Culture and Politics in the Age of Digital Machines* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 36.

Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power. They are never the inert or consenting targets of power; they are its relays... power passes through individuals. It is not applied to them.⁴²

Returning, again, as we must, to the ethnographic quandaries, we recall that members of the roundtable spoke of organizational spirits that flowed through them and we saw in a concrete way how management narratives, such as the metaphorical tropes of dissipating structures, got personalized, passing, as it were, through persons. In my view, ethnography becomes an increasingly important tool for critical theory precisely because it is uniquely attentive to the effects of power on the ground. Poster suggests the following:

To avoid obsolescence critical theory must account for the line of new languages that stretches from body signals, grunts, spoken language, and writing to print, the telegraph, radio, film, television, computers and other new linguistic technologies.⁴³

If, as Poster argues, “Marx omitted a theory of language when he analyzed the change from feudalism to capitalism, such an absence is no longer tolerable.”⁴⁴ However, as Poster makes clear, we must consider the embodied dimensions of language, wherein digital text and human bodies meet. What needs some clarification is how Poster finds some important resources for these revisions to critical theory within the thought and work of Michel Foucault.

According to Poster, for Foucault the subjectivity implies a “process of interiorization”⁴⁵ in which the subject takes shape through historically mediated

⁴¹ Poster, *Information Please*, 37.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism*, 110.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 95.

discourses/practices.⁴⁶ On Poster's reading, Foucault deploys the genealogical method he leans from Nietzsche to shift “the focus of intelligibility from subject to structure,” explicitly critiquing Sartre's focus on subjective consciousness. In his work on ethics, Poster argues, Foucault focuses on the the “activity of self-constitution in discursive practices.”⁴⁷ Self-constitution becomes “relative position(s) against the dominance of scientific discourse/practices that claim to ground selves in truth.”⁴⁸ Connecting discourse to practice are “technologies of power—power that is everywhere in society, not merely confined to the state.”⁴⁹ Poster puts the major difference between Sartre and Foucault on the question of self creation the following way:

If Sartre understood self-constitution as the inner experience of consciousness, Foucault tries to grasp it as part of the play of social codes, normative discourses, systems of discourse. One can only applaud Foucault's courage in facing such a difficult task, what he called “a hermeneutics of the self.”⁵⁰

STW, in its talk about the cultural DNA of institutions and in its play with metaphor at the ritualized roundtable meetings, provided me with powerful ethnographic grounds for agreeing with Poster that questions of self-constitution imply questions of language. Poster writes:

Foucault in the theme of self-constitution gives greater prominence to language and in a more heuristic manner than other social theorists...The individual wrestles with self-constitution through the manipulation of

⁴⁶ Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism*, 95.

⁴⁷ Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism*, 54; According to Poster, in the 1960s Foucault's archeological method focused on a critique of the self as rational via a strategy of reversal. In the 1970s, Foucault, argues Poster, turned to a genealogical method in which the focus was on decentering the consciousness of the agent as the site of historical processes. His work on self-constitution as ethics in the 1980s was, claims Poster, a hermeneutics of the self.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

symbols, through carefully elaborated and systematized rules of formation, enunciative statements, and so forth.⁵¹

Discipline, as a practice saturated with the effects of power, differs in its emphasis from Sartre's dialectics in that the latter preserves differences that the former confounds. In contradistinction to the idea that discursively situated power produces subjects, Poster argues that Sartre's method is still intent on preserving the ideal of non-alienated relations between persons and things wherein human beings “recognize and realize their freedom in the ongoing totalization of history.”⁵²

Poster compares the dialectical and Nietzschean perspectives:

Sartre and Foucault differ...sharply on the question of the object of theory and again there are strong arguments on both sides. For Sartre, the social-historical field consists of a dialectical interplay of men and things. While Sartre pays some attention to the transformation of the world of things (mode of production), his major concern is the world of human subjects (series, groups-in-fusion) and the introduction of otherness into subjectivity (alienation) by the mediation of things...the object of theory for Foucault, while at first glance completely divergent from Sartre's, could be read as the opposite side of the coin of critical theory....(Foucault) tries to make intelligible modes of domination or 'technologies of power' that escaped the attention of classical Marxism. Technologies of power, such as the Panopticon or disciplinary system are composed of conglomerations of discourses and practices, minutely arranged for the control of the body and the mind.⁵³

For Foucault, something other than consciousness becomes the field of analysis in the 1970s and for Sartre, the ambiguous battle of consciousness to transcend otherness is the privileged site of dialectical analysis. Refreshingly, for Poster, the perspectives are not mutually exclusive but, rather, both can help keep the other approach honest.

⁵¹ Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism*, 68.

⁵² Mark Poster, *Foucault, Marxism, and History: Mode of Production Versus of Mode of Information* (New York: Polity Press, 1984), 25.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 26.

The Spirituality of Doing Critical History Ethnographically

As we saw, in his Marxist work, Sartre is increasingly concerned with situating the struggle for freedom within the larger structures of society without ascribing agency to those structures. Sartre is concerned that structuralists and traditional Marxists surreptitiously diminish human power by overdetermining the grounds of history, discursively and sociologically. Poster shares this concern. However, on descriptive grounds, he is not as concerned with preserving as strong a division between persons and things as even the later Sartre is, despite the admirable adjustments to the bourgeois idealism of his earlier work. Here, on empirical grounds, I follow Poster. The ethnographic work I did introduced me to persons whose own ideas about subjectivity, historicity and agency within the institutions of contemporary capitalism—ideas which resonate with trends in broader management theory and practice—include elements of transcendence that are not reducible to the overcoming of praxis but, rather, are described in terms of spirits that surround the historical horizon and insinuate themselves into our thoughts and actions. As I argued, there is clear analogy one can draw between the focus on language and self-constitution within the management world and within post-structuralist thought as presented by Mark Poster. While this is a key point for further analysis and cannot be pursued here, it should be asked: what is the relationship between the contours of a service and knowledge economy and this profound interest in language by the stewards of contemporary so-called global capitalism?

For my purposes now, what matters most is that the management world I explored suggests that there is a *discourse* of management wherein existential issues, language, self-constitution and “spirituality” are foregrounded. As Foucault would anticipate, applications of social science are directly implicated in the instruments of this power. To an important degree, the work of STW is, therefore, indeed, an institutionalized and discursive

achievement. This is also the case for this present work as the critical scholar is also trained and formed within the discourse/practices of lifeworlds. However, this point is where matters between Sartre and Foucault traditionally get complicated, as we saw. What provides the most critical leverage: a comprehension of consciousness or an understanding of local systems of power? With Michael Jackson, I strive to keep matters of existence and politics on equal footing. As such, I very much agree with Mark Poster that we do not need to ideologically choose between the best impulses of both thinkers. We must, instead, make *ad hoc* and pragmatic decisions on the ground and remain attentive to *context*.

The Sartrian dialectic seems indispensable *to me* as a basic structure for grounding ethnographic work. *For me*, critical ethnography is a rigorous study of subjectivity that hopes, along with critical theory, to further the “theoretical effort of the critique of domination begun by the Enlightenment and continued by Karl Marx.”⁵⁴ Although some derisive caricatures of Sartre suggest that his *cogito* remains mired in a privileged account of reason, I agree with Mark Poster that Sartre's concern with consciousness can be read for its primary fidelity to Nietzsche, not Kant, Descartes or even Marx. In admitting that one modality of existence is precisely to make meaning through consciousness and to “totalize” historical horizons through conscious activity, existentialism provides lived texture to the “Nietzschean logic of difference.”⁵⁵ This is also why Michael Jackson can speak of “existential deconstruction.”⁵⁶ According to Poster, Foucault's desire to engage in a “hermeneutics of the self” and to de-emphasize his own agency sometimes actually works against this intended humility by masking the scholar's own context within a form of

⁵⁴ Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism*, 1.

⁵⁵ Poster, *Foucault, Marxism, and History*, 65.

⁵⁶ Michael Jackson, *Minema Ethnographica* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 3.

genealogical objectivity. As the preceding ethnographic narrations demonstrate, my method is to self-reflexively do critical work and analysis, dialectically considering data in terms of the present purposes of writing. In refusing to tone down my voice, I mark a dialectics—inspired by both Adorno's negative dialectics and Sartre's regressive-progressive method—between my own conscious account of matters and the world that escapes the grasp of my own abilities to know and speak of that world. The reader is invited to engage in the same archeological and existential excavations of my own narrations that I do as an ethnographer. My words, like prayers, are not things I can clearly see and grasp once inspiration leaves me speechless; like “knowledge” working through power, its effects are both productive of consciousness and escape consciousness.

Where I find Sartre lacking for the purposes of critical theory today is that he overstates the role and place of his particular account of dialectics. Sometimes we all stand back and account for the past or the given as we forge ahead into the future. As Sartre suggests, this might even describe much of our mundane life, like opening a can of tuna. Sometimes, however, we reflect on the ways in which consciousness is overrun and invaded. This is a particular concern of STW and one for which Sartre's off-hand remark about the “mystical ends” of the difference between intent and consciousness cannot do justice. I think Sartre's odd wording in that case reflects an attempted evasion of phenomena Foucault referred to as power but which Sartre's system, lacking an account of the relationship of language to discursive self-constitution, was ill suited to engage. Similarly, Max Weber's account of bureaucracy was insufficient to the task of telling us anything concrete about why and how rationality supposedly became a straight jacket. Language, in the end, provides the best analogy for bridging my own intellectual lifeworld and the talk of spirits in the machine because language flows, shapes and slips through bodies. I cannot name *all* of the agencies

that create me but try to name them I do. Is this to speak with spirits? And, is not this what is concretely meant by the idea that consciousness cannot but try to totalize experience? Quandaries of language vivify the overwrought and porous nature of subject-object relations in ways that the pregressive-regressive dialectic cannot describe, or better put, mark its failures to describe.

Michael Jackson turns to the poetry of Wallace Stevens, also one of Tom Henry's favorites, to give poetic textures to that which escapes *conceptualization* and *praxis* in ways that Sartre's philosophical dialectics cannot satisfactorily approach. In his last book, *The Palm at the End of the Mind—Relatedness, Religiosity and the Real*, Jackson writes:

To speak of the penumbral is, therefore, to invoke this hazy and indeterminate region between a world where we experience ourselves as actors where we experience ourselves as acted upon. While any social system requires a dutiful conformity to ancestral protocols, social life would become empty of meaning unless each person realized in himself or herself the capacity to bring the social world into being. But this capacity draws not only on what is tried and true but on hazardous encounters with extrasocial sources of power—bush spirits, wild places, limit experiences—that lie beyond the pale of what we comprehend and can control.⁵⁷

In my view, with respect to our day to day living, Jackson's way of describing transcendence does much better justice to concrete experience than Sartre's dialectic. Jackson's view also preserves important insights from thinkers like Foucault, who give specificity to the local protocols that shape lives. In my case, I listened carefully to the ways in which metaphors are personalized to foreground issues of socialization, the individual realizations of the social and the basic fact that the relationship between the personal and the social escapes us as much as it grounds us.

⁵⁷ Michael Jackson, *The Palm at the End of the Mind—Relatedness, Religiosity, and the Real* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 39.

All this said, making linguistic turns in the context of the contemporary late capitalist world is never innocent and not *per se* or *as such* resistant to patterns of domination. Poster himself refers to the changing grounds of digitally (rather than thing) mediated capitalism as the “mode of information.”⁵⁸ His broadest claim is that digital information systems are transforming and altering linguistic experience. In my own research, I am more specifically interested in analyzing contemporary interests within management (and marketing) discourse in modes of self-constitution through linguistic practices. If it is not Kant, Descartes or Newton who is the best representative of the forms of contemporary power but, rather, as I suggest, a discourse like servant leadership or popularized accounts of “new science” that are most sorely in need of genealogical and deconstructive attention, we might, as Antonio Gramsci suggested, actually aid and abet new forms of power by perseverating on the forms of past or passing power.⁵⁹ For example, we cannot be understood to be suggesting that attending to issues of language and existence in the face of a now reified account of mechanical reproduction will necessarily improve the quality of our ethics. As Bethany Moreton argues, neo-liberalism respects the emotional content of economics and this is an exceedingly important fact because it means that we must do away with any lingering anti-modern impulses in our ideas about how scholarship can critique the present form of capital. Attention to the ritualized, affective and linguistic dimensions of economic life will improve our *descriptions* of the contemporary scene wherein capitalism is defined less by an “iron cage” and more by an assortment of network metaphors but it will not guarantee a cosmopolitan ethics. Poster's main criticism of much post-structuralist thought is that it tends to evade the

⁵⁸ Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism*, 127.

⁵⁹ Cornel West, “Black Theology and Marxist Thought” in *African American Religious Thought—An Anthology*, eds. Eddie Glaude and Cornel West (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2003), 881.

social context for its own productions, preferring, instead, to generate difference by contrasting itself to the past.⁶⁰ Upon Poster's reading, Foucault is worked upon by discourse and the best way to avoid a dissimulation of this fact is to keep his biographical context in view.

Respecting penumbral experience does justice to the experiences of the members of STW while looking carefully at discourse/practice and power does justice to the basic disposition of contemporary labor management. But if the ameliorative goals of critical and pragmatic impulses are to be preserved, we must do more. We must, as Sartre reminded us, attempt to do justice to matters of existence within sociology and institutional interrelationships. We must locate practice within exchange value, financial values and the logic of structured economic effects. Greg Downey and Melissa Fisher do a good job, in my view, keeping us grounded in the institutional context of the social and, of course, this is a lesson I was taught time and again by STW. In other words, exchange-value, labor, production/consumption and commodity fetish are still useful heuristics even if we must resist ontologizing any of these concepts.

As such, fully linguistifying the stakes of contemporary experience is to be avoided. Binary oppositions between spirit/matter cannot be replaced with binary oppositions between language and economics or between ethics and sociology. Nor can the deconstruction of binaries be removed from the kind of sociological context Sartre wants us to attend to.⁶¹ There are still material stages on which we move and act, after all.⁶² The tool

⁶⁰ Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism*, 108-110.

⁶¹ I agree with Poster when he writes that, "consciousness totalizes its field as surely as totalization inhabits the freedom of the totalizer. The act of formulating a problem implies the decision that other problems will not be addressed. In that sense there has occurred a totalization of the field of possible problems to theorize. Contrary to the positions of the post-structuralists there is no antidote to totalization, no simple theoretical step that can completely eliminate its force and effects." Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism*, 108.

that supposedly deconstructs binaries between human and non-human and becomes the fetish of cyborg tactics was made by someone or some persons within a structured economy that also produces environmental and economic effects. As a moment in history, as Sartre suggests, the ethnographic encounter is dizzied by its complicity in and responsibilities towards issues of economics, sociology, ethics, existence, language, politics and genealogy, to name but a few of what Michael Jackson's suggests are "shop worn" terms unless they they are re-inscribed by encounters with life as it is lived. My decision to spend time in the previous chapter on the relationship between the history of a discourse and the history of a person prefigured my intentions here.

In its current fascination with issues of subject formation and its quandaries about the limits of agency, religious studies is well positioned to explore the grounds and hauntings of "spiritual" capital. With Michael Jackson, we might turn to ethnographic method "to write history allegorically as a kind of multiple biography, and to explore culture contact at the specific level of intersubjectivity."⁶³ In my understanding of this approach, religious studies must stretch to locate what it shares with the discourses of capital as much as it might want to stretch to lodge complaints and critiques. To fail to do this would be a breach of the ethics of intersubjectivity and bad politics. In my view, the pretensions of the humanities to deny its kinship with the professions with which it necessarily shares an epistemic context reproduces the dangerous Western tendency to remove and privilege "cultural" concerns over material economic concerns. To actually relate ourselves analogically to worlds like

⁶² Language is worked through the limits of exchange-value in capitalist societies. Ritualization, discipline and projects of self care must be similarly contextualized. Self-constitution and the citationality of bodies are inescapably tied to consumer markets. Naomi Klein's insights about the pervasiveness of branded logic are critical.

⁶³ Jackson, *Minema Ethnographica*, 97.

management, finance and marketing, is to materialize our own discourse and to ready ourselves for pragmatic interventions, including the articulation of critical theologies of the present. We chasten our desires to revel in the cleverness of our own escape tactics and resume a position of *intersubjective* engagement that might serve as the basis for genuine interdisciplinary discussion with the world of money. To speak openly about our struggles, dips in confidence and fears in the dark would also be to perhaps to admit to ourselves and to others that *spiritual struggle* might finally link us all, if we only pay less attention to the differences in the terms we use and pay closer attention to the over-determined and highly ambiguous experiences they try to speak to according to the irreducible logic and time of relationality and relatedness. I want to suggest, along with Michael Jackson's work on the politics of storytelling, that our own subjective experiences, even of the penumbral, are always related to larger stories of cosmos and society that help shape these experiences. If we pay heed to Mark Poster's recommendation that we contextualize our own intellectual work, we take note of the fact that in an increasingly quantum world irrelationality and the Jazzy poetics of intransitivity are cultural dominants. Just as Derrida distinguishes between his own deconstruction and that of "complacent deconstructionists," I find Michael Jackson's insistence upon the local just what the doctor ordered for a critical sociology. We need ways of distinguishing between discursive ideologies of intransitive fluidity, deregulations of the welfare state, on the one hand, and existential deconstructions of all conceptual accounts of the world, on the other hand. We do better, nowadays, to consider the important, even subtle, differences in theories and narratives of boundary blurring than to have the Baby Boomer celebration of anti-structure repeat on continuous loop. At stake is whether or not we might repeat the misstep of the Girondists, whose championing of revolution aided and abetted the development of new *forms* of hierarchical power. There are a myriad of reasons

why some of our fashionable anti-modern techniques have gained ascendancy in the academy and why various and sundry de-regulations of modernism have achieved the currency they have. Even if they do not, by design, provide a blueprint for revolutionary action, by reminding us of the gap (even in our conceptualizing of gaps) between conceptual map and lived experience, Jackson's cautionary tales prove exceedingly radical, in the end.

Conclusion: The Penumbra and a Critical Theory of Contemporary Capitalism

In *States of Injury—Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*, Wendy Brown writes:

...like the so-called new man, the late modern state also represents itself as pervasively hamstrung, quasi-impotent, unable to come through on many of its commitments, because it is decentralizing (decentering) itself, because “it is no longer the solution to social problems,” because it is “but one player on a chessboard,” or because it has forgone much of its power in order to become “kinder, gentler.” The central paradox of late modern masculinity: its power and privilege operate increasingly through disavowal of potency, repudiation of responsibility, and diffusion of sites and operations of control.⁶⁴

As Bethany Moreton explains, a pervasive feminization of labor has accompanied and has propelled the rapid growth of a service economy.⁶⁵ What Brown writes about the “decentering” “new man” resonates with what we saw in Margaret Wheatley's management metaphysics, where labor is extolled to virtuously suffer through its dark night of the soul and is advised to forego Newtonian hopes for prediction, clarity and mechanical control and, instead, is instructed to assume a quantum confidence in dispersed forms of management and control. The ghostly qualities of life and the states of depression they induce, Wheatley argues, can be combated through managed poetry and new ideas about “mystical” control.

⁶⁴ Wendy Brown, *States of Injury—Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). 194.

⁶⁵ Moreton's argument is powerful. She argues that the management theory, servant leadership, of a service economy pairs well with a theology of “soft patriarchy” that is capable of explaining, “why a loss of formal masculine prerogatives and the indignities of postindustrial work actually *elevated* men's authority,” thus containing the potential dangers of service work to “manliness.” Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart—The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 100-124.

Ethnographically, I am reminded here of my experiences with Sheila at SoL, who expressed a desire to be “opened up” and took a negative view of her perceived “rigidity” at an STW roundtable meeting. The decentering of self, if we understand this as a particular kind of disavowal of self-secured potency and agency, is, as Karin Lisa Goldschmidt-Salamon would predict, inculcated ritually.

The synecdochic relationship Brown establishes between the human bodies of late modernity and the decentering form of society reminds me of something I read in a more popular book on contemporary economic life. William Brittain-Catlin, the BBC reporter, writes that the tensions of contemporary capitalism can be understood as a dance between identity and non-identity:

...very ideal of the Elysian Fields that Menelaus is guaranteed once Proteus is mastered...In order to maintain itself, the state must employ deceptions and tricks against its more flexible, mobile opponent—nature--as a means to securing higher authority and rule. The conflict between shape-shifting capital and the stable state can be abstracted further to a conflict between non-identity and identity, and various economic and scientific concepts can be into these categories. Nature and capital as non-identity: changing and flowing, liquid and chaotic, volatile and spontaneous. The state as identity: order and control, constant and rooted, permanent and singular.⁶⁶

If we remember that pretensions to full control and disavowals of vulnerability and the permeability of the self have traditionally been associated with the ideologies of men, the well-heeled and powerful, we might come to consider the paradox of late modern masculinity that Brown points out, with its dispersals and disavowals, as the trickery identity uses to try to control non-identity, a ghost hunting expedition that Wheatley, for her part, supplies with management techniques borrowed from “new science.” In other words, marshaling Gaia, mysticism, poetry and psychoanalysis---or spirituality—to reaffirm control

⁶⁶ William Brittain-Catlin, *Offshore—The Dark Side of the Global Economy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 121.

and management over liquid life might speak to new conceptualizations in the relationship between structure and anti-structure in economic narratives or, put differently, they might point to new orientations and spatializations in the cosmology of capital. For these questions, I find the work on David Carrasco on cosmovision especially suggestive and hope that further iterations of this project will go in precisely this direction.⁶⁷

Bill Clinton, one of the longest standing and most influential American champions of so-called “Globalization,” stated in a recent *Newsweek* interview that, “the only way to celebrate and make the most of our differences is to get rich out of our differences, create vibrant markets out of our differences.”⁶⁸ In “Immense Wars of the Spirit,” the last chapter of Francis Fukuyama's alternatively famous or infamous, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Fukuyama turns to the metaphor of homesteader wagons coming into a single town to make a point very similar to Clinton's. Waxing poetic, Fukuyama explains that while it is the case that some wagons will not make it, “attacked by Indians” along the way, wagons that are “painted different colors and constructed of varied materials” will come together in the town center, their commonalities refracted by their differences.⁶⁹ For their part, brand executives, consumer society's ritual experts, spend a lot of time and money thinking about how they might foster consumer personalizations of a shared brand story.⁷⁰ Respecting what Bethany Moreton, again, calls the “emotional content of economics,” these elite spokespersons and

⁶⁷ Carrasco considers cosmovision to be a “worldview that integrates the structure of space and rhythms of time into a unified whole.” David Carrasco, *Religions of Mesoamerica—Cosmovision and Ceremonial Centers* (Long Grove, Illinois, Waveland Press, Inc., 1990), 166.

I consider the narratives of global capitalism to be attempt at this kind of cosmology. Ethnography deconstructs and unmasks its pretensions.

⁶⁸ Jon Meacham, “Planetary Problem Solver,” *Newsweek*, 21 December, 2010.

⁶⁹ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 338-339.

⁷⁰ Douglas Holt and Juliet Schor, Eds., “Introduction: Do Americans Consume Too Much?” in *The Consumer Society Reader*, eds. (New York: The New Press, 2000). Also see Douglas Holt, *How Brands Become Icons—The Principles of Cultural Branding* (Cambridge: Harvard Business Press, 2004).

practitioners of neo-liberalism are open to the role “culture” can play in fostering a network of sameness expressed through difference. And, as I mentioned, Francis Fukuyama devotes a great deal of attention specifically to questions of “religion” in his follow-up book on trust and the creation of social values.⁷¹

Intersubjectivity is expressed by Clinton, Fukuyama, Thomas Friedman and global branders according to a network logic in which parts express the whole. By mediating differences, the global market hopes to secure, in advance, the very truth of a whole. In the preceding ethnography, there are telling moments that we might wish to recall at this point. For example, I think of Lou's seemingly throw away comment that the STW roundtable makes him see the unity expressed in diversity. I also think of SoL's desire to be a “network of networks” and the design of Ken H's product, which he hopes will enable the emergence of a global language by way of intersecting reading publics that creatively work with texts. Vertical hierarchies and barriers break down. One can easily understand how a systems perspective can so easily express a globalist form of society. Peter Senge, the leading management theorist STW works with, writes that, “In many ways, the greatest promise of the systems perspective is the unification of knowledge across all fields—for these same archetypes recur in biology, psychology, and family therapy; in economics, political science and ecology; as well as management.”⁷² In other words, internal differences and dynamism are accepted but they are managed by an overarching sameness.

⁷¹ Fukuyama is interested in patterns of social organization and the reproduction of a particular subset of social capital, trust. He writes of religion: “religion can be an obstacle to economic growth, as when clerics rather than markets establish a “just” price for goods or declare a certain interest rate to be “usurious.” But certain forms of religious life can also be extremely helpful in a market setting, because the religion provides a means of *internalizing* the rules of proper market behavior.” Francis Fukuyama, *Trust—The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 154-155.

⁷² Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline—The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990), 93.

Of “continental ideologies of “desire,” one of the leading American Marxists, Frederic Jameson, writes that, “it is not hard to show that the force of desire alleged to undermine the rigidities of capitalism is, in fact, very precisely what keeps the consumer system going in the first place.”⁷³ Similarly, we miss the point if we assume that contemporary capitalism is necessarily averse to some of the other oft-alleged antidotes to the (supposed) rigidities of capital we have seen: spirituality, religion, poetry and narrative. Ideas about difference, fluidity, desire, spirit and language are mediated through economic structures as Sartre's existential Marxism would understand it. And, as we saw, Sartre's theory attempts to account for the structured effects of dimensions of life that are, on the face of it, seemingly uninterested in the doings of money: the vacationer's leisure activities, for example. In my view, what Sartre has to say about the economics of leisure must be applied to “spirituality” as well. The danger of whitewashing “spiritualities” is expressed well by Tom Beaudoin, who revised the originally more optimistic account of capitalist spirituality he provides in his book, *Consuming Faith*. In *Witness to Dispossession—The Vocation of a Post-modern Theologian*, Beaudoin writes,

...we can see how spiritualities are tempted to forget their affiliations with violence. Once spirituality as a form of experience does not understand itself caught up in, and in some measure responsible for, relations of power, and therefore of violence, we are all in a more deeply dangerous situation, especially the vulnerable among us and around the globe who do not have the luxury of a non-political, non-economic spirituality.⁷⁴

How might this kind of understanding of spirituality come to inform my work with STW? If Adorno and Horkheimer worry that certain terms can be wielded as talismans given the

⁷³ Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 202.

⁷⁴ Tom Beaudoin, *Witness to Dispossession—the Vocation of a Post-modern Theologian* (New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 39.

associations they carry,⁷⁵ how can we account for this fact without, as it were, wanting to manically rid ourselves of the very fact of talismans? Derrida, as we saw, provides helpful insights. So does, I believe, Michael Jackson's latest work.

When Tom Henry cried in front of the gathered group, pained by memories of being made to feel somehow wrong for wanting to talk about his love for Landry's in sacramental terms, I needed no other reason than that to return to Sartre's ideas about institutions and economic life in the hopes of reconsidering what therein needed revising so that they might better respond to Tom's insistence that economic life was not inert but, rather, presented him with a series of *relationships*, some of which were extra-social in nature. Even if we might well worry about some of the potential implications of companies and corporations taking on the role of entities in a divine economy given American legal constructions of corporate personhood, we must distinguish these concerns from all too human strivings for wholeness in the therapeutic sense: the desire for a feeling of integration in one's life--of non-alienated experiences of work. As we saw in my discussion of Jackson's work on metaphor, we should not be surprised that metaphors of "spirituality" can be used to negotiate the knotty situations in which we find ourselves, when, as is the case with STW, we feel divided and not fully in control and hope to regain a sense of existential control. Beaudoin's advice to us is that we not conflate the cultivation of "spirituality" with ideas about clean-hands or the search for some perfect antidote to the deadening wounds of capitalism. Instead, we might consider spiritualities to be the generative products of the various disciplines that shape our contemporary forms of power. This is one reason that I agree with Mark Poster that the

⁷⁵ As we saw in chapter 3, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, "terms themselves become impenetrable; they obtain a striking force, a power of adhesion and repulsion which makes them like their extreme opposite, incantations." Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" in Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, trans. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, *Dialectic of Enlightenment : Philosophical Fragments*. Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

work of Michel Foucault can be helpful to any critical theory of late capitalism. Empirical work that engages the ways in which we sometimes deploy “spirituality” as an ontological metaphor to ward off anxiety within disciplinary regimes would complement this kind of theoretical work.

The eliding of the line between a form of spirituality that sees itself implicated in the doings of power and one that sees itself as providing an escape from power, can be mitigated, I believe, by revising the existentialist's fundamental insight for our post-structuralist, post-Taylorite moment. “Totalization,” for Sartre, implies a recognition that consciousness has a tendency to take its experience of the world, according to its own limited horizon, for the world as such. On this point, I agree with Sartre on empirical grounds. However, I acknowledge that there are also associated dangers with this kind of view. There are dimensions of experience that get occluded by Sartre's still too self-contained ideas about the self, as we saw. Though an advancement over Husserl's idea that consciousness is consciousness of an other, Sartre's description of the practico-inert still fails to do justice to the experience of consciousness as *possession* by another that Tom Henry and STW consider to be central to life within today's organizations.⁷⁶ STW neither assumes that the subject generates all meaning, as vulgar existentialists might, nor do they assume that discourse has the last word about consciousness, as vulgar poststructuralisms might. They understand knowledge to be both committed and, in part, shaped by the world. For theological and political reasons, they ask: can consciousness be trained and disciplined to respect, even revere, that which exceeds it? On phenomenological grounds, how can we do

⁷⁶ Mark Poster argues that Edmund Husserl clearly preserved a “transcendental ego, (a) concept of the ego as the absolute foundation of experience and truth, which indeed has a Cartesian resonance.” Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France*, 323.

If Husserl argues that consciousness intends something outside or beside itself, what is striking about STW about institutional life are the ways in which our intentions are possessed by the demons and angels of “culture.”

better justice to the moments in life when consciousness gets spooked by its own permeability and vulnerability, even as it attempts to totalize? Can we do justice to the important insights psychoanalysis provides regarding the spectral dimensions internal to consciousness itself?

Certainly, I agree with Sartre that we must contextualize contemporary life within the economic structures and carefully consider the ways in which economic pressures, in turn, exert existential and political pressures, influencing behavior. In fact, I believe that STW expresses better faith when it comes to its relationship to capital than does much of the academic world, which, as I have argued, would do well to engage in more comparative analysis across society. I remember often wishing that my own discipline was as self-reflexive about the influence of money on behavior as STW was. As a materializing and contextualizing practice, the kind of comparative approach I have in mind would examine the ways in which the study of religion (or theology) shares and does not share in the commitments and practices of other influential social institutions, such as finance, medicine and advertising, in addition to management. This approach to the study of religion would thus seek to examine the discipline's role in the ongoing construction of "religion" and related ideas. Ethnography is well suited to this kind of work because of the ways in which local events and particular imperatives can come to speak to larger cross-social phenomena. The discipline might find itself in positions it might find uncomfortable but such work can teach it much about its own participation in the history of the present, a history that also, necessarily, vastly overwhelms it.

Michael Jackson understands the penumbral to be the shadowy, liquid world we experience whenever we move "outside the settled area of the self," where we see things as

if “through a glass darkly”⁷⁷. Although the penumbral can sometimes coincide with the limit situations often privileged by religious calendars and rituals, for Jackson, our encounters with the penumbral can also occur in mundane, everyday moments where we are brought face to face with the limits of the language we have for relating ourselves to the world or whenever we experience the limits of our agency as actors. One might say that the penumbral reclaims extra-social textures within the everyday moments of Sartrean transcendence. Whereas Sartre struggles to find language he is comfortable with to describe the non-identity between consciousness and world, awkwardly falling back on the language of the “mystical ends” of consciousness, Jackson, turning to Wallace Stevens, elegantly respects the border between himself and the truths beyond Truth or, put otherwise, the dizzying effects of spectrality.

I came into the dissertation with certain biases that, while instructive, were barriers, at least at first. First, I expected “spirituality” to be something that pointed to experiences beyond the mundane and everyday, despite my analytical understanding of the deficiencies inherent in this kind of position. Second, I came in with a strong Marxist suspicion of religion in the economic sphere. What Jackson's ideas about the penumbral help me do is recognize that, like it or not, economic life is indeed often experienced as extra-social and, oftentimes, animated by the specters that haunt the borders of other kinds of limit situations. With respect to the experiences of STW, the penumbral does better justice than does the “other-than-man” Sartre writes about to describe the negativity of praxis because, as a concept, it respects the liquid dynamism of these spaces and honors the ways in which they can be experienced more like power rather than something to be overcome (even if interminably so) through dialectics. While negativity is, no doubt, sometimes experienced as a dialectic to be overcome, as an existential gulf between the present and the possible, I am

⁷⁷ Michael Jackson, *The Palm at the End of the Mind*, 117.

not sure this dimension of life exhausts all the concerns about the institutional shaping of moral subjects, from the inside out, that STW worry about. STW's experiences of "being for another" are more embodied and visceral than the concept of the practico-inert can convey. STW's experiences with a "spirituality" that flows through bodies and shapes subjectivity are, I believe, analogous to the attention we give in the study of religion to questions of historicity, agency and power. They also resonate strongly with broader paradigms in labor management, as we saw. As such, I consider these kinds of questions to be cultural dominants or, put another, expressive of contemporary epistemic conditions.

Dick Broholm's insistence that the ideal and the real must not be collapsed also resonates very strongly. I said a prayer for Sheila, as you recall. I have also said prayers for Dick and for STW. My hope for them is that they will continue to find the interlocutors in the academy that they seek, persons who, no doubt, have as much to learn from STW about contemporary forms of power and spirituality as STW might have to learn from them about untapped theoretical and theological resources for respecting the spirit of labor while also taking to heart Dick's urgent reminder that while it is the case that our histories participate in God's history (for Jackson, this means individual participation in process of life itself), these histories cannot be said to amount to, in the end, the very same thing.⁷⁸ In these deliberations, I pray that STW continue to learn and grow from the insights of its own membership. What of Tom Henry's ideas about certain kinds of art that disrupts attempts to

⁷⁸ An obvious candidate for building bridges between systematic theology and the "theology of institutions" of STW is Kathryn Tanner's *Theories of Culture—A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997). Tanner implores theologians to seriously engage the on the ground practices of Christians and to check traditional prejudices against popular culture. The argument she advances in *Theories of Culture* would consider the work of STW to be yet another example of the ways in which theological creativity is culturally conditioned but, at the same time, is radically opened by "the recognition of God's free and uncontrollable Word, which respect for Christian diversity spreads, desocializes Christians, so to speak; it breaks the habit of the normal, and thereby frees them for renewed attention to the Word." Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 175.

organize all of reality under a singular point of view? What of his thinking about gaping and the “architecture,” the form, that denotes immanence and transcendence?

Bibliography and Works Cited

- “About SoL.” Society for Organizational Learning. Accessed October 2, 2010.
<http://www.solonline.org>.
- Abu-Nasr, D. "Corporate Chaplaincy Give Aid to Employees: 2/9/97." Accessed February 25, 2008. <http://archive.southcoasttoday.com/daily/02-97/02-09-97/f01bu332.htm>.
- Aburdene, Patricia. *Megatrends 2010: The Rise of Conscious Capitalism*. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Pub. Co., 2005.
- Adams, Helen Colwell. “Ministry bridges gap between the Almighty, quest for the Almighty dollar.” Accessed 2/25/2008.
http://www.avodahinstitute.com/resources/articles/lancasternews_11_14_99.shtml.
- Adorno, Theodor. “Cultural Criticism and Society” in *Prisms*, ed. Thomas McCarthy et al. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983).
- . “Late Capitalism or Industrial Society?” Accessed December 26, 2010.
<http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/AdornoSozAddr.PDF>.
- Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry—Enlightenment as Mass Deception.” In *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- Adorno, Theodor W. and Rolf Tiedemann. *History and Freedom: Lectures 1964-1965* [Zur Lehre von der Geschichte und von der Freiheit (1964/65)]. Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2006.
- Adorno, Theodor W. *The Jargon of Authenticity* [Jargon der Eigentlichkeit] Routledge Classics. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Adorno, Theodor. *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*. London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1968.
- Akst, Daniel. "The Culture of Money: When Business Gets Religion." *The New York Times*, October 4, 1998,
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B01E3D91238F937A35753C1A96E958260>, sec. 2008 (accessed 2/25/2008).
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. 1st ed. New York, NY: Schocken Books, 2004.
- Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Cultural Memory in the Present. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Badal, Jaclyne. "Can a Company be Run as a Democracy?" *Wall Street Journal Abstracts*, April 23, 2007, sec. B.

- Banks, R. J. *Faith Goes to Work*. Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1993.
- Barrett, Richard. *Building a Values-Driven Organization: A Whole System Approach to Cultural Transformation*. Burlington, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2006.
- . *Liberating the Corporate Soul: Building a Visionary Organization*. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998.
- Beckert, Sven. *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Beaudoin, Tom. *Witness to Depossession—the Vocation of a Post-modern Theologian*. New York, NY: Orbis Books, 2008.
- Beckett, John D. Loving. *Monday: Succeeding in Business without Selling Your Soul*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Bell, Catherine M. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- . *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Bell, Daniel. *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1996.
- Bender, Courtney. *The New Metaphysicals—Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press. 2010.
- . *Heaven's Kitchen—Living Religion at God's Love We Deliver*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Benefiel, Margaret. *Soul at Work: Spiritual Leadership in Organizations*. New York, NY: Seabury, 2005.
- . *The Soul of a Leader: Finding Your Path to Success and Fulfillment*. New York, NY: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 2008.
- Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1990.
- Berman, Russell. *Modern Culture and Critical Theory—Art, Politics and the Legacy of the Frankfurt School*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.
- Bewes, Timothy and Jeremy Gilbert. *Cultural Capitalism: Politics After New Labour*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2000.

- Biberman, Jerry and Yochanan Altman. "Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion: An International Refereed Journal." 2004.
- Bigelow, Gordon. "Let There be Markets: the Evangelical Roots of Economics." *Harper's Magazine*. 1 May 2005.
- Blanchard, Kenneth H., Bill Hybels, and Phil Hodges. *Leadership by the Book: Tools to Transform Your Workplace*. 1st ed. Colorado Springs, CO; New York, NY: WaterBrook Press; William Morrow, 1999.
- Bolman, Lee G. and Terrence E. Deal. *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*. 3rd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- Bouchikhi, Hamid and John R. Kimberly. *The Soul of the Corporation: How to Manage the Identity of Your Company*. Indianapolis, IN: Wharton School Pub., 2007.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Logic of Practice* [Sens pratique]. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Braverman, Harry. *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*. 25th anniversary ed. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1998.
- Briskin, Alan. *The Stirring of Soul in the Workplace*. Pbk. ed. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1998.
- Brittain-Catlin, William. *Offshore—The Dark Side of the Global Economy*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
- Broholm, Dick and Specht, David. "Toward a Theology of Institutions."
<http://www.seeingthingswhole.org/PDF/STW-toward-theology-of-institutions.pdf>
- Brown, Wendy. *States of Injury—Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- . *Politics Out of History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Campbell, Joseph and David Kudler. *Myths of Light: Eastern Metaphors of the Eternal*. Collected Works of Joseph Campbell. Novato, CA: New World Library, 2003.
- Carrasco, David. *City of Sacrifice: Violence From the Aztec Empire to the Modern Americas*. New York, NY: Beacon Press, 2000.
- Carrette, Jeremy R. and Richard King. *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2005.
- Carayol, Rene. *Corporate Voodoo: Business Principles for Mavericks and Magicians*. Mankato, MN: Capstone, 2001.

- Carnegie, Andrew and David Nasaw. *The "Gospel of Wealth" Essays and Other Writings*. Penguin Classics. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2006.
- Chappell, Tom. *Managing Upside Down: The Seven Intentions of Values-Centered Leadership*. 1st ed. New York, NY: W. Morrow, 1999.
- Christino, Karen. *Foreseeing the Future—Evangeline Adams and Astrology in America*. Amherst, MA: One Reed Publications, 2002.
- Conlin, Michelle. "Religion in the Workplace." *BusinessWeek*, November 1, 1999. http://www.businessweek.com/1999/99_44/b3653001.html.
- Cook, Jennifer Carol. *Machine and Metaphor—The Ethics of Language in American Realism*. New York, NY: Routledge, Press, 2006.
- Coombs, Anne. *The Living Workplace: Soul, Spirit, and Success in the 21st Century*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Press, 2001.
- Covey, Stephen R. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic*. 1st Fireside ed. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1990.
- Cox, Allan J. and Julie Liesse. *Redefining Corporate Soul: Linking Purpose & People*. Chicago, IL: Irwin Professional Pub., 1996.
- Cox, Harvey. *Turning East: The Promise and Peril of the New Orientalism*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1977.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihalyi. *Flow—The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1990.
- Dale, Eric Steven. *Bringing Heaven Down to Earth: A Practical Spirituality of Work*. American University Studies. Vol. 83. New York, NY: P. Lang, 1991.
- Deal, Terrence E. and Allan A. Kennedy. *The New Corporate Cultures: Revitalizing the Workplace After Downsizing, Mergers, and Reengineering*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1999.
- Deal, Terrence E. and M. K. Key. *Corporate Celebration: Play, Purpose, and Profit at Work*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1998.
- Deal, Terrence E. and William A. Jenkins. *Managing the Hidden Organization*. New York, NY: Warner Books, 1994.
- de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life [Arts de faire]*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984.
- de Certeau, Michel and Tom Conley. *The Writing of History. European Perspectives [Ecriture de l'histoire]*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1988.

- Delueze, Gilles and Guatteri, Felix. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. New York, NY: Continuum Books, 2004.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx—The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. London: Routledge Press, 2006.
- Devereux, George. *From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioral Sciences*. New Babylon; Studies in the Behavioral Sciences. Vol. 3. The Hague: Mouton, 1968.
- Dewey, John. *Art as Experience*. New York, NY: Perigee Books, 1980.
- Dubuisson, Daniel. *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge, and Ideology* [Occident et la religion]. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- Durkheim, Émile, Carol Cosman, and Mark Sydney Cladis. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Oxford World's Classics [Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse]. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Edwards, David Lawrence. *Priests and Workers: an Anglo-French Discussion*. The Living Church Books. London: SCM Press, 1961.
- Fairholm, G. W. *Capturing the Heart of Leadership: Spirituality and Community in the New American Workplace*. Praeger/Greenwood, 1997.
- Feinman, Barbara. "Think Bank," The Washington Post, July 3, 1993.
- Feuerbach, Ludwig. *The Essence of Christianity* [Wesen des Christentums]. Great Books in Philosophy. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1989.
- Fink, Leon. *Workmen's Democracy*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1985.
- Fitzgerald, Timothy. *The Ideology of Religious Studies*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Fogel, Robert William. *The Fourth Great Awakening & the Future of Egalitarianism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- "Food Safety and Enhancement." Xenon Corp.
http://www.xenoncorp.com/food_enhancement.html
- Fort, T. L. "Religious Belief, Corporate Leadership and Business Ethics." *American Business Law Journal*. 33:3 (1996): 451-472.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Care of the Self. The History of Sexuality* [Souci de soi]. Vol. 3. London: Penguin Books, 1990.
- . *The Order of Things*. New York, NY: Random House, 1994.

- Foucault, Michel and Colin Gordon. *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1980.
- Foucault, Michel and Duccio Trombadori. *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*. Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series [Colloqui con Foucault]. New York, NY: Semiotexte, 1991.
- Foucault, Michel and Jeremy R. Carrette. *Religion and Culture*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1999.
- Foucault, Michel and Paul Rabinow. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984*. Vol. 1. New York, NY: New Press, 1997.
- Feuerbach, Ludwig. *The Essence of Christianity* [Wesen des Christentums]. Great Books in Philosophy. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1989.
- Frank, Thomas. *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism, and the End of Economic Democracy*. 1st Anchor Books ed. New York, NY: Anchor Books, Random House, 2000.
- Fukuyama, Francis. *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. New York, NY: Free Press, 1995.
- . *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York, NY: Free Press, 1992.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. London: Fontana Press, 1993.
- Giddens, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991.
- Goldschmidt-Salamon, Karin Lisa. "Prophets of a Cultural Capitalism: An Ethnography of Romantic Spiritualism in Business Management." *FOLK* 44, (2003): 89-115.
- . "Going Global From the Inside Out: Spiritual Globalism in the Workplace." In *New Age Religion and Globalization*, edited by Mikael Rothstein. Denmark: Aarhus University Press.
- . "Possessed by Enterprise: Values and Value Creation in Mandrake Management." In *Magic, Culture and the New Economy*, edited by Ovrar Löfgren and Robert Willim. Oxford: Berg, 2005.
- . "No Borders in Business: The Managerial Discourse of Organisational Holism." In *Cultural Capitalism: Politics After New Labour*, edited by T. Bewes and J. Gilbert. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2000.
- Glaude, Eddie S. *In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

- "God Decentralized." *New York Times*. Accessed February 25, 2008.
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9802E0D6163DF934A35751C1A961958260>.
- "God's Work in Our Hands: Employment, Community, and Christian Vocation (Policy Statement Approved by the 207th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)."
- Goodchild, Philip. *Capitalism and Religion: The Price of Piety*. London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2002.
- Goux, Jean-Joseph. *Symbolic Economies After Marx and Freud*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Graves, Robert. *The Fourth Frontier: Exploring the New World of Work*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000.
- Greenleaf, Robert K. *Servant Leadership—A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2002.
- Guilloroy, William. *The Living Organization: Spirituality in the Workplace*. Salt Lake City, UT: Innovations International, 1997.
- Guillén, Mauro. *Models of Management: Work, Authority and Organization in a Comparative Perspective*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Gunther, M. "God and Business: The Surprising Quest for Spiritual Renewal in the American Workplace." *Fortune* 144, no. 1 (2001): 59-80.
- Gura, Philip F. *American Transcendentalism: A History*. 1st ed. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2007.
- Gutman, Herbert George, Donald H. Bell, and Smith College. *The New England Working Class and the New Labor History*. The Working Class in American History. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987.
- Gutman, Herbert George and Ira Berlin. *Power & Culture: Essays on the American Working Class*. 1st ed. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1987.
- Hadot, Pierre and Arnold Ira Davidson. *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* [Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique]. Oxford; New York, NY: Blackwell, 1995.
- Hankin, Harriet. *The New Workforce: Five Sweeping Trends that Will Shape Your Company's Future*. New York, NY: AMACOM, American Management Association, 2004.
- Haraway, Donna. *The Cyborg Manifesto*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1991.

- Harman, Willis W. and Elisabet Sahtouris. *Biology Revisioned*. Berkeley, CA; Emeryville, CA: North Atlantic Books; Distributed to the book trade by Publishers Group West, 1998.
- Harman, Willis W. and Howard Rheingold. *Higher Creativity: Liberating the Unconscious for Breakthrough Insights*. 1st ed. Los Angeles; Boston: J.P. Tarcher; Distributed by Houghton Mifflin, 1984.
- Harman, Willis W. and Jane Clark. *The New Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*. Sausalito, CA: Institute of Noetic Sciences, 1994.
- Harman, Willis W. and Maya Porter. *The New Business of Business: Sharing Responsibility for a Positive Global Future*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1997.
- Harman, Willis W. *Global Mind Change: The Promise of the 21st Century*. 2nd , rev. & expand ed. Sausalito, CA; San Francisco: Institute of Noetic Sciences; Berret-Koehler Publishers, 1998.
- Hasse, Ken. "Missions." Accessed October 1, 2010. <http://www.beingmeta.com>.
- Heelas, Paul. *The New Age Movement: The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity*. Oxford; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996.
- Hendricks, Guy. *The Corporate Mystic: A Guidebook for Visionaries with their Feet on the Ground*. New York, NY: Bantam, 1997.
- Henry, Tom. "Landry's Bicycles and the Three-Fold Model", accessed March 24, 2011, http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/publications/seeingthingswhole/STW05_Landry.pdf
- Herzfeld, Michael. *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2005.
- Hicks, Douglas. *Religion and the Workplace: Pluralism, Spirituality, Leadership*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Holt, Douglas and Schor, Juliet, eds. "Introduction: Do Americans Consume Too Much?" In *The Consumer Society Reader*. New York, NY: The New Press, 2000.
- Holt, Douglas. *How Brands Become Icons—The Principles of Cultural Branding*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2004.
- Hollywood, Amy. "Performativity, Citationality, Ritualization." *History of Religions*. 42, no. 2 (2002): 93-115.
- . *Sensible Ecstasy—Mysticism, Sexual Difference and the Demands of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

- Honneth, Axel, Judith Butler, Raymond Geuss, Jonathan Lear, and Martin Jay. *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea*. Berkeley Tanner Lectures. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Horkheimer, Max, Theodor W. Adorno, and Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* [Philosophische Fragmente]. Cultural Memory in the Present. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- Hughes, John. *The End of Work: Theological Critiques of Capitalism*. Illuminations--Theory and Religion. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2007.
- "Human Performance Institute." Accessed February 4, 2008.
<http://www.energyforperformance.com>.
- Inden, Ronald. *Imagining India*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1990.
- Jackson, Michael, ed. *Things As They Are*. Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1996.
- . *Existential Anthropology—Events, Exigencies and Effects*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2005.
- . *Paths Towards a Clearing—Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1989.
- . *The Politics of Storytelling—Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002.
- . *The Palm at the End of the Mind—Relatedness, Religiosity and the Real*. Raleigh Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.
- . *Minima Ethnographica—Intersubjectivity and the Anthropological Project*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Jacoby, Sanford M. *Employing Bureaucracy: Managers, Unions, and the Transformation of Work in the 20th Century*. LEA's Organization and Management Series. Rev. ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004.
- James, William. *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996
- James, William and Giles B. Gunn. *Pragmatism and Other Writings*. Penguin Classics. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2000.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.
- Jay, Martin. *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

- Johnson, Alex. "Walking the Walk on the Assembly Line," Faith in America on MSNBC.com, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7231900/>
- Johnson, Paul E. *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*. 1st rev. ed. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2004.
- Josephson, Matthew. *The Robber Barons*. San Diego: Harcourt, 1995.
- Kamenka, Eugene and Martin Krygier. *Bureaucracy: The Career of a Concept*. Ideas and Ideologies. London: E. Arnold, 1979.
- Klein, Eric and John B. Izzo. *Awakening Corporate Soul: Four Paths to Unleash the Power of People at Work*. Edmonton: Fairwinds Press, 1997.
- Klein, Naomi. *No Logo—No Space, No Choice, No Jobs*. New York, NY: Picador Press, 2002.
- Kunde, Jesper. *Corporate Religion: Building a Strong Company through Personality and Corporate Soul*. London: Financial Times, 2000.
- Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. 2nd ed. London; New York, NY: Verso, 2001.
- Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- . *Philosophy in the Flesh –The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999.
- Lamberth, David C. "Intimations of the Finite: Thinking Pragmatically at the End of Modernity." *The Harvard Theological Review* 90, no. 2 (1997): 205-223.
- Lamont, Georgeanne. *The Spirited Business: Success Stories of Soul-Friendly Companies*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2002.
- Lau, Kimberly. *New Age Capitalism--Making Money East of Eden*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2000.
- Leach, Edmund Ronald. *Culture & Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected: An Introduction to the use of Structuralist Analysis in Social Anthropology*. Themes in the Social Sciences. Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Lears, T.J. Jackson, *No Place of Grace—Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture (1880-1920)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Lee, Raymond M. "The Re-Enchantment of the Self: Western Spirituality, Asian Materialism." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 18, no. 3 (2003): 351-367.

- Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique of Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Verso, 2008.
- James, William. *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.
- “[K-State Proud] Students Helping Students.” YouTube video. 4:54. Spring 2010 Class of Digital Ethnography. Posted by “mwesch” on February 8, 2010.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npqbMKzHl8>.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Structural Anthropology* [Anthropologie structurale]. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1963.
- Lindquist, Galina. *Conjuring Hope—Magic and Healing in Contemporary Russia*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2006.
- Little, David. *Religion, Order and Law—A Study in Pre-Revolutionary England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.
- Loehr, James E. *The Power of Story: Rewrite Your Destiny in Business and in Life*. 1st Free Press hardcover ed. New York, NY: Free Press, 2007.
- Lundén, Rolf. *Business and Religion in the American 1920s*. Contributions in American Studies. Vol. 91. New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1988.
- Lyotard, Jean François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* [Condition postmoderne]. Theory and History of Literature. Vol. 10. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair C. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. 3rd ed. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.
- Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Magic, Science, and Religion, and Other Essays*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1992.
- Mantle, John. *Britain's First Worker-Priests: Radical Ministry in a Post-War Setting*. London: SCM Press, 2000.
- Marcus, George E. and Michael M. J. Fischer. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Marcus, George. *Corporate Futures: The Diffusion of the Culturally Sensitive Corporate Form*. Late Editions. Vol. 5. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

- Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 1991.
- . “The Affirmative Character of Culture.” In *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, London: Penguin Books, 1968.
- Marx, Karl. “From Discussion of the Executive Power, Hegel's 287ff.” In *The Portable Karl Marx*. Translated by E. Kamenka, edited by E. Kamenka. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1983.
- . “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction.” In *The Portable Karl Marx*, edited by Eugene Kamenka. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1983.
- . “The Communist Manifesto.” In *The Portable Karl Marx*, edited by Eugene Kamenka. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1983.
- Masuzawa, Tomoko. *The Invention of World Religions—Or How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- McCraw, Thomas K. *Creating Modern Capitalism: How Entrepreneurs, Companies, and Countries Triumphed in Three Industrial Revolutions*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Meacham, Jon. “Planetary Problem Solver.” *Newsweek* 21, December, 2010.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, Ted Toadvine, and Leonard Lawlor. *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*. Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007.
- “Microsoft People Ready Commercial QuickSilver.” YouTube video, :30. Posted by “SampleUpload” on January 11, 2009.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nH6IMF61ln0&feature=player_embedded
- Miller, David. *God at Work—The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Mills, C. Wright. *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*. 50th anniversary ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Mission”, Seeing Things Whole, accessed October 1, 2010,
<http://www.seeingthingswhole.org/who-we-are.html>
- "Mobius Conference--Main Feature--Spirituality in Business - does Spirituality Drive Success? - HBS Working Knowledge." Accessed February 4, 2008.
<http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/2899.html>

- Moore, R. Laurence. *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Moreton, Bethany. *To Serve God and Wal-Mart—The Making of Christian Free Enterprise*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Neal, Judith. *Edgewalkers: People and Organizations that Take Risks*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006.
- Naisbitt, John and Patricia Aburdene. *Re-Inventing the Corporation: Transforming Your Job and Your Company for the New Information Society*. New York, NY: Warner Books, 1985.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm and Horace Barnett Samuel. *The Genealogy of Morals* [Zur Genealogie der Moral]. Dover Thrift Editions. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003.
- Orsi, Robert. *Between Heaven and Earth—The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Owen, Alex. *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Pietz, William. "Fetishism and Materialism: The Limits of Theory in Marx." In *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, 393. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Pine, B. Joseph and James H. Gilmore. *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre and Every Business is a Stage*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1999.
- Pirsig, Robert M. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values*. 1st Perennial Classics [25th anniversary ed.]. New York, NY: Perennial Classics, 2000.
- Pope, Liston. *Millbands & Preachers; a Study of Gastonia*. Yale Studies in Religious Education. Vol. 15. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958.
- Poster, Mark. *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism—In Search of Context*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989.
- . *Existential Marxism in Postwar France*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.
- . *Foucault, Marxism, and History: Mode of Production Versus Mode of Information*. New York, NY: Polity Press, 1985.
- Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2000.
- Rabbin, R. *Igniting the Soul at Work: A Mandate for Mystics*. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads, 2002.

- Rose, Gillian. *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno*. London: Macmillan, 1978.
- Rose, Nikolas S. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*. London; New York, NY: Routledge, 1990.
- Rothschild, Emma. *Economic Sentiments--Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques and G. D. H. Cole. *The Social Contract; and, the Discourses*. Everyman's Library [Selections]. Vol. 162. New York, NY: A.A. Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1993.
- Rowe, John. *Priests and Workers: A Rejoinder*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1965.
- Sartre, Jean Paul. *Search for a Method* [Question de méthode]. Vintage Book. Vol. V-464. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1968.
- Sartre, Jean Paul and Bernard Frechtman. *The Emotions, Outline of a Theory* [Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions]. New York, NY: Philosophical Library, 1948.
- Sartre, Jean Paul and Hazel Estella Barnes. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* [Etre et le néant]. London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2003.
- “Sbooks: Reinventing the Software of the Book.” May 7, 2009. beingmeta. Accessed September 1, 2010. <http://www.beingmeta.com/news/sBooks7May2009.html>
- Schor, Juliet. *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*. New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1993.
- Sennett, Richard and Jonathan Cobb. *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. New York, NY: Norton, 1993.
- Senge, Peter. *The Fifth Discipline—The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York, NY: Currency Doubleday, 1990.
- Serres, Michel. *The Natural Contract* [Contrat nature]. Studies in Literature and Science. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995.
- Shaw, Michael. *Finding the Rainbow: Organisational Culture, the Key to Corporate Performance*. Johannesburg, SA: Ravan Press, 1997.
- Shell, Marc. *Money, Language and Thought – Literary and Philosophical Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich and John Oman. *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* [Über die Religion]. 1st Westminster/John Knox Press ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.

- Schmidt, Leigh Eric. *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality*. 1st ed. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.
- . *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Shuldiner, David P. *Of Moses and Marx: Folk Ideology in the Jewish Labor Movement of the United States*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey 1999.
- Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Dover Philosophical Classics. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006.
- Speigel, Gabrielle. *Practicing History—New Directions in Historical Writing After the Linguistic Turn*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2005.
- Stout, Jeffrey. *Democracy & Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Strauss, Gary. "Corporate Athletes' Hit the Mat LGE Performance Applies Sports-Style Training Principles to Business." *USA Today*, March 6, 2001.
- Tambiah, Stanley. *Magic, Science and the Scope of Rationality*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1990.
- Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Taylor, Frederick Winslow. *The Principles of Scientific Management*. Norcross, GA: Engineering & Management Press, 1998.
- Tanner, Kathryn. *Theories of Culture—A New Agenda for Theology*. Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1997.
- The Journal of Management Spirituality and Religion. <http://www.jmsr.com/index.html>.
- The Secret*. Drew Heriot and Rhonda Byrne. 2006. Chicago, IL: Alliance Entertainment.
- "The Three-Fold Model of Individual Life." Seeing Things Whole. Accessed October 2, 2010. http://www.seeingthingswhole.org/PDF/STW_ThreeFoldModel_Individual.pdf.
- Thoreau, Henry David. *Reading [in, Walden, Or, Life in the Woods]*. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1999.
- Thrift, Nigel. "Making Sense: An Afterward." In *Magic, Culture and the New Economy*, edited by Ovrar Löfgren and Robert Willim. Oxford: Berg, 2005.

- Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. The Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures. Vol. 1966. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1969.
- Turner, Victor and Richard Schechner. *The Anthropology of Performance*. Performance Studies Series. Vol. 4th v. New York; Baltimore: PAJ Publications; Distributed by the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.
- Underhill, Evelyn. *Practical Mysticism*. 1st Ariel Press ed. Columbus, Ohio: Ariel Press, 1986.
- Veblen, Thorstein. *Theory of the Leisure Class—An Economic Study of Institutions*. Delhi: Aakar Books. 2005.
- Volf, Miroslav. *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Waldrop, Mitchell. *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Chaos*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster Press, 1992.
- Wallace, Mark. [Draft] "Salvation Capitalism: Management as Sacred Mission in a Time of Crisis." Paper presented at the Theology of Institutions Seminar, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 10-11, 2009. Accessed Sept 29, 2010.
<http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/leaderdevel/TOI/TOIpdf2/Wallacepaperreformat.pdf>.
- Ward, Lester Frank. *Psychologic Basis of Social Economics*; Address, Aug. 1892. Salem, MA: 1892.
- Way, Peter. *Common Labor: Workers and the Digging of North American Canals, 1780-1860*. Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- West, Cornel. *The Cornel West Reader*. 1st ed. New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books, 1999.
- . *Prophesy Deliverance!: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity*. Anniversary / with a new preface by the author ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Wheatley, Margaret. *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2006.
- Whetstone Thomas J. "How Virtue Fits within Business Ethics." *Journal of Business Ethics* 33, no. 2 (2001): 101-114.
- Whyte, David. *The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America*. 1st Currency paperback ed. New York, NY: Currency Doubleday, 1996.
- Williams, Oliver F. *Business, Religion, & Spirituality: A New Synthesis*. The John W. Houck Notre Dame Series in Business Ethics. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.

- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* [Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus]. Routledge Classics. London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2001.
- . *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* [Konfuzianismus und Taoismus]. New York, NY: Macmillan, 1964.
- . *The Religion of India; the Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism* [Hinduismus und Buddhismus]. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958.
- . *General Economic History, Translated from the German*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1923.
- Wink, Walter. *Naming the Powers—The Language of Power in the New Testament*. New York, NY: Fortress Press, 1988.
- Winnicott, D. W. *Playing and Reality*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group., 2002