

Neospirituality, Social Change, and the Culture of the Post-Fordist Workplace

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

This dissertation applies a religious studies perspective to the topic of neospirituality in the iconic post-Fordist workplaces of symbolic analysts. Despite a voluminous business literature on the importance of spirituality, this topic is underexplored by scholars of religion. Using secondary sources, I address this neglect by relating the themes of religious modernization and the changing structures of capitalism to this phenomenon. This dissertation outlines the important similarities between the basic beliefs and practices of the neospirituals and the culture, skill-set and worldview of symbolic analysts, dictated by work's team and networking forms. Like Weber—but for a different class and economy—I analyzed a social stratum that acts as a carrier of a “practical ethic” reflective of a specific religious orientation. To understand this process, I explored neospiritual holism, the corporation as a psytopia, and the dematerialization and second privatization of religion. In relation to post-Fordism, I explored macroeconomic changes, labour-force recomposition, workplace restructuring since the 1970s and the culture of work.

Anecdotal evidence and research suggest that neospirituality helps symbolic analysts reconcile themselves to the particular demands and concomitant lifestyle pressures of their creative labour. Five ways are proposed: Neospirituality's holism supports the transition of early interest in genuine worker empowerment into a neoliberal anti-government sentiment that unites workers and their managers; neospirituality imaginatively collapses the modernist self/other distinction into a unitary world, helping assimilate individual-corporate interests; expensive neospiritual well-being commodities insulate from community relations and direct personal service use, maintaining while denying symbolic analysts superior social status; neospiritual prosumption posits the factory of the self—applied to work, self-production makes workers “owners;” and neospiritual preference for energy over matter mirrors post-Fordism's privileging of immaterial over material products and its streamlining of all value to commodity value.

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Dedication

To Nick, with love and gratitude.

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Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Commonly, contemporary religion scholars look for reasons for the widespread adoption of spiritualities divorced from religion in a variety of broad trends in late modern societies, such as modernity, secularization, commodity culture and globalism. After having studied this phenomenon for some five decades, scholars continue to engage its nature and prospects. In this dissertation, I establish that contemporary workplaces are important sites for the promotion and shaping of this new spirituality ethos that has emerged so pervasively amongst late twentieth-century citizens of advanced capitalist societies.

Certainly, spirituality and its cognates are pervasive elements of the culture of new workplaces. The “spirituality” of employees and managers is a discursive motif and preoccupation there and is actively promoted by their superiors and human resources (HR) staff. This is particularly true of global corporations and pre-eminently of new-economy businesses (Cruz 2016). It is now normalized as an important concern for managers; its enhancement is a legitimate pursuit within corporations. Corporate research into spirituality’s effectiveness ever expands and intensifies (Biberman 2014). The issue is considered in business school curricula and is a major business conference theme. Indeed, a torrent of business journals and conferences are devoted to the topic. About this industry literature, Jeremy Carrette and Richard King (2005, 128-29) confirm that “in the late 1990s, there has been an explosion of literature on business and spirituality and a celebration of spirituality as enhancing work performance.” Marking its acceptance in the wider business culture, “renowned business magazines, such as ‘People Management’, ‘Industry Week’, and ‘Sloan Management Review’ published articles on the opportunities of spirituality for business life on a regular basis” (Aupers and Houtman 2010, 148).

Spirituality has had this presence in workplaces for decades. The 1990 prognostication, *Mega-Trends 2000* (1990, 273), by John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, revealed that of the 500 American companies surveyed, half had offered consciousness-raising techniques to their employees. These companies were estimated to have spent at least \$4 billion on New Age consultants annually, which was more than ten percent of the money devoted to company training courses each year. Now, “wellness” is a legitimate pursuit of new-industry workers, a pursuit often subsidized in the multinational companies where “technical and creative workers... receive wellness benefits” (Cruz 2016, 53).

“Mindfulness” training is currently one of the most common approaches to achieving it. Characteristically, trade books addressed to workers on the topic of mindfulness “cluster around two poles: highly stressful jobs, and jobs in the helping professions” (Wilson 2014, 126). In other words, mindfulness is touted to those

in stressful jobs as “a way to deal with the pressures of work,” and towards those in the service professions “as a way to deliver one’s services in a smoother, more compassionate and effective fashion—but both approaches tend to be mixed to some degree” (Wilson 2014, 126). Mindfulness tracts are also pitched to particular professions, such as lawyers, doctors and social workers, and very often to corporate managers (Wilson 2014, 125-6).

Within companies, this form of meditation is hoped to help employees temper the effects of overwork. Human resources departments are now concerned about “presenteeism,” the practice of employees coming in to work despite being physically or mentally ill. Mindfulness practice is understood “to allow workers to disengage long enough to recuperate” (Gregg 2011).¹

As mindfulness and other such programs intensify in worksites, other “secular” workplace cultural training becomes less distinctive from it (Stone 2004). To add to this, corporate leaders aspire to have their companies recognized as “spiritual” or “soulful” (Chappell 1993; Demerath and Hall 1998; and Siddiqui 2005). In their report on workplace spirituality, much-discussed by organizational scholars, *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America: A Hard Look at Spirituality, Religion, and Values in the Workplace*, Ian L. Mitroff and Elizabeth A. Denton (1999, 91) assert that “we need to integrate spirituality into management. No organization can survive for long without spirituality and soul.”

Over time, the labels for workplace spirituality exercises have fluctuated between the most provocative—“New Age”—through “spirituality” to, recently, the most innocuous—“personal potential” (Hornborg 2013). Programs have been reborn and renamed. For example, Werner Erhart’s 1970s program *est*, became *The Forum* (Melton 1992). By “the millenium-crazed 1990s, decision-making ha[d] gone decidedly New Age, with recent books by so-called ‘intuitive consultants telling [managers] to enroll in the Jedi Knight School of Management” (Goldschmidt-Salamon 2001, 155). Now, such florid manifestations have been largely eliminated from corporate discourse, in favour of allusions to a rationalized spiritual presence. As in society in general, the New Age nomenclature is suppressed; “spirituality” has been stripped of New Age esotericisms, such as crystal healing (unacceptable in hospitals) and Tarot cards (same, in workplaces). Terminology has been made more palatable to corporate clients. Where methods still retain a measure of exoticism, they are earnestly professed to be “non-religious” in nature.²

¹ Cited in Cruz 2016, 56

² Nonetheless, “many of these new [coaching] practices would be referred to as New Age, and especially a number of hybrid forms of East-West practices are popular and marketed as Ayurveda, Qi Gong, Mindfulness, Reiki, and so on.

The early New Age association with the counterculture and their common anti-capitalism has also been suppressed. As workplace spirituality became normalized in the 1990s, revived consultancies and pedagogies took a different political tone than had their predecessors. In contrast to their earlier anti-establishment stance, “today, we have New Age leaders praising capitalism and teaching that it is fine to work and succeed with the system..., and providing trainings to enhance managerial... efficacy” (Heelas 1996, 68). Now, corporations have retreated from the more marked, or esoteric, expressions of the New Age teachings. They use the simple (and undefined) terms of “the spiritual,” and “soul” in company programs and policies. New Age spirituality is no longer “the other,” no longer merely invited into corporations, but embraced or even—as per Carrette and King (2005)—*owned* by them.

Despite spirituality’s pervasive presence in workplaces, to which the volume of industry literature attests, spirituality in the *production* phase of the economic process is a theme neglected by scholars of *religion*. True, the corpus of religious studies now contains much about how new forms of commodification have affected changes in religion. However, an economy survives on more than just its commodification function. Self-evidently, *production* is a basic element too, and analysts of political-economic change—stellar examples of which are Karl Marx and Max Weber—regularly argue that work stamps an indelible face on culture. In this dissertation, then, I return discussion to the domain of Max Weber’s famous project (1983), which relates the early expansion of capitalism to “the Protestant ethic.” This sociologist was concerned “with production values, rather than religion and consumption” (Martikainen and Gauthier 2013, 8). Aupers and Houtman (2010, 148) acknowledge the “rarity of studies of spirituality in the workplace” by religion scholars. They ruefully add that “notwithstanding common claims to the contrary, it is difficult to deny that spirituality has in fact entered the public domain of work organizations.”

When the phenomenon is observed by other scholars, few doubt that the embrace of spirituality in workplaces relates to the changes in capitalism in the last half of the twentieth century (Rose, 1999). Scholars of religion note the tendency for New Age celebrants to be part of the new technical or knowledge worker category (Roof 2001; Aupers and Houtman 2010) as well as spirituality’s particular presence in the typically-insecure workplaces that engage these types of workers (A. Dawson 2007; Aupers and Houtman 2010; Heelas 2006).

These East-West hybrid practices are often classified as a technique, said to be detached from religious dogma and marketed as such” (Hornborg 2013, 191).

Indeed, the organization and contents of many jobs took on new forms as nation-based industrial economies evolved into a global system of production. The industrial factory still functions in Western economies, but is of lesser importance than before. The economy that emphasizes information, cultural products and services is different in many ways than that classic industrial economy. Equally so are workplaces. The new “immaterial” orientation, spurred by the globalization of capital and other factors, has led to new ways of managing labour and new skill-requirements for workers. It has generally eroded the security of workers and the balance of power between workers, and owners and managers; integrated consumption into production so that consumers trouble-shoot, improve, or add content to products; created a greater range of organizational forms than formerly, with more emphasis on networking and the vertical disintegration of corporations; accelerated the speed of circulation of products, many with shortened shelf-lives due to their fashion-inflected appeal; and introduced other changes. In the midst of these new conditions, a common (though not universal) way of organizing workers—as team-members on projects—has become iconic of all contemporary work.

A segment of the new workforce is particularly familiar with the new ways of organizing production. In fact, the old industrial and the new information economies are both supported by a variety of types of workers. However, the mix is different in each period, and some types of work have disappeared while new forms have arisen. I call those who do the indispensable work in the main growth sector of each economic epoch its “iconic workers.” In the post-WWII era, for a generation, these were industrial assembly-line labourers. In this era they are the technologically adept and creative producers of information and media products and services—the technical/knowledge/cultural workers. Following the authoritative labour force analysis of American economist, Robert Reich (1992), I label his “symbolic analyst” category the iconic worker class for post-Fordism. For reasons I will expand upon below, I focus on their experience, more than the other categories Reich identifies, such as “routine” or “in-person service” workers, when I perform a comparison of work culture and neospiritual values and skills throughout this dissertation. I argue that iconic worker culture and the new spiritual culture have qualitative affinities with each other.

The basic project is to establish the homological character of new workers’ skills and beliefs and those of practitioners of “spirituality.” I demonstrate a set of parallels between the work and spiritual cultures based on skills practiced and the structures of the worldviews both sets of participants hold, resulting in a number of point-for-point similarities. Once I show the homology of new-spiritual and new-work cultures, I then consider accounts for why it exists. This second segment is speculative. To confirm or disconfirm related theories of the evolution of this situation—i.e., the homological nature of these two cultures—empirical work must follow. However, I contend that by reviewing the structure of thought developed in this dissertation, considering the questions raised and the speculative answers provided, scholars exploring why

neospiritual values permeate contemporary culture will find a useful, internally-consistent and robust body of theory that can guide more empirically-oriented studies.

As part of this original synthesis of political-economic and social theory, of recent cultural history in North America, and of labour analysis, positioned in relation to scholarship on new forms of spirituality, I consider a number of questions that arise. By what processes did spirituality achieve its importance in workplaces? Are workplaces *primary* sites for the strengthening of neospiritual values, or only one type of setting, amongst others, which support this ethos? What characteristics of neospirituality make it attractive as a belief system to workers as they adapt to new workplace demands? What makes it attractive to employers, and by what means have they encouraged engagement? Did workers themselves facilitate neospirituality's transit from its early countercultural setting to their workplaces? What has changed for neospirituality in the process of its transition?

The Context

These questions and the main thrust of my dissertation should not be taken to suggest that no other factors besides workplace culture have had a hand in normalizing “the spiritual” as a social concern. By no means is interest in spiritual practices restricted to workplaces. For example, mindfulness meditation engages North Americans widely, in both institutional and non-institutional contexts (Wilson 2013). “Life coaches” help people to evoke their “personal potential” privately as well as at work (Hornborg 2013). In fact, citizens in advanced economies experienced many decades of broad cultural change preparing them for such interests—rather prior to the changes in capitalism discussed in this dissertation. Personal subjectivity since WWII has been molded by the three pursuits: towards greater authenticity in social relations (Taylor 1989), more personal autonomy in relation to authority structures (Woodhead 1995, with Heelas)³, and “subjectivization” (Hervieu-Leger 2000). Ultimate loyalty is no longer owed to the institution, tradition, or community but to the “self.” People need to seek authenticity. To do so they need complete freedom to “be themselves,” or to “be true to themselves.” Hence, the institution, tradition, or community is defined as a barrier to the search for authenticity and self-realization. Consequently, one’s attitude to institutions, traditions and community is instrumental: does it serve the program of the search for authenticity? If it does not, it is jettisoned. These developments underwrite general changes in religiosity amongst Western (and increasingly global) populations. As an example, Thomas Luckmann, who early on recognized a new

³ People now wish to be autonomous in their spiritual and religious choices; the opposite of autonomization, Woodhead argues, is paternalism (i.e., traditional hierarchy).

phenomenon he called “invisible religion” (1967), observed more recently that “the sacralization of subjectivity is celebrated in much of mass culture” (1996, 76).

Religious studies scholars have examined the waning church attendance since the 1960s in most industrialized nations. Initially, they accepted these attitudinal changes as the secularization expected in modernity (Andrew Dawson 2006, 180-82). However, in the midst of such study, the traditional faiths and their institutions began to display common transformations, either towards fundamentalism or liberalization (Beyer 1994). These new forms are increasingly accepted as part of the modern world. In the 21st century, these and a number of other developments⁴ have further underscored the inadequacy of secularization as an explanatory concept (Martikainen and Gauthier 2013).

Although the growth of fundamentalism has been unmistakable to the most casual observer, a more subtle yet pervasive development within many religious institutions is their liberalization. From this liberalization has emerged the category of Western believers who answer in surveys that they are “spiritual but not religious” (SBNR) (Davie 1994; Fuller 2001; Marler and Hadaway 2002; Forman 2004). In Sweden, they are called the “unchurched but spiritual” (Hornborg 2013, 191). In Britain early research called them “believers, not belongers” (Davie 1994). Two Canadian studies (Grenville 2000; Bibby 2004) suggest that half of all adult Canadians are spiritual but not religious.⁵

Formally, these terms mean that their professors “do not affiliate with a particular religious institution or movement but they still have some experience of the sacred” (King 2010, 323). However, many who still attend conventional religious services identify as more spiritual than religious.⁶ Talk of personal “spirituality” has been legitimized within the halls of worship of the classical faith traditions that survive in religiously-diverse, formally-secular and democratic societies. This is because the SBNR attitude is implicit in the liberalization of most religions, post-war, which in turn reflects the changing attitudes towards the self in society—authenticity, autonomy, and subjectivation—as noted above.

⁴ “Pressing issues in the study of religion today [include] changed relations between religion and state in a more globalized environment; the increasing devolution of regulative power to the judiciary; the rise of new forms of religion (be it fundamentalist currents, Pentacostals or new spiritualities); the increase in the public visibility of religion; the growing importance of issues of identity and recognition; the impact of electronic media on religion and so on” (Martikainen and Gauthier 2013, 3).

⁵ See Chandler 2012, 79.

Officials in churches, synagogues, temples and mosques indulge religious individualism and support the pursuit of personal religious experience. Church regulars as well as more marginal participants feel entitled to consult their feelings to guide the choice of personal beliefs and moral behaviours even if these do not exactly match formal institutional teachings. Canadian “independent believers [confess] that their personal beliefs about Christianity are more important than what the churches teach, but nevertheless tend to assent to basic Christian doctrine” (Grenville 1996, 219).⁷ Indeed, the elevation of personal spirituality is part and parcel of changes to organizations and practices that liberalism invokes—including decreasing pressure on followers to subscribe to orthodoxies (Bramadat and Seljak 2005).

Accordingly, a contemporary working definition of *Christian* spirituality offered by scholars is “following intuitions in the quest for fullness of life” (Hense 2014, 43), which can hardly be distinguished from a specifically “spiritual” attitude. Much earlier, New Age experimenters emerged to take these intuitions to heart. Concentrating the broader social trend towards individualism and posthierarchy attitudes, New Agers began to invent their own practices and beliefs. With their innovation, the celebration of personal spirituality achieved primacy amongst the range of personal, moral and social concerns that were mixed with it in formal religious institutions. New Age projects also often included experiments with Eastern religious beliefs and practices.

At about the same time, experimenters with personal computers and the nascent internet began to anticipate a new social order. Along with the broader counterculture, with which the New Age was entangled, they began to articulate a new cultural and political vision with these revolutionary technologies in a central position. These communities with esoteric values substantially coalesced in the early employment sites of new-economy labourers.

This contiguity and integration of cultures partly accounts for the chief point I make in this dissertation: that neospirituality culture mirrors and so complements the beliefs and practices of new economy workers. Post-Fordist workers are sympathetic to neospirituality partly because they inherited a culture established in its connection with esoteric religiosity even at its earliest stages. This could be called a passive reason for why, during the duration of the iconic post-Fordist form of work, neospirituality (or its seed, New Age culture) has had a presence in corporations.

⁷ Cited in Chandler 2012, 77-78

In this dissertation, I also provide an account of active adoption of neospirituality in workplaces through its promotion by corporate managers. That they promote neospiritual programs at worksites is not in dispute. Why they do so is considered. A synthesis of scholarship on this topic suggests that it provides an ideological framework that gives post-Fordist work practices subjective meaning, offering valued workers a form of respite from their intensive work lives so that they may continue to perform well, and helping employees align their interests with those of the corporation.

In any case, New Age beliefs, expressed in the movement's texts, can be mapped onto the worker's attitudes with a high degree of consistency. Iconic New Age organizational practices and skills and those of workers are similar. Perhaps uncannily, the early adopters of spirituality values, intermingling with computer hackers and the counterculture in key times and place (particularly the American West Coast), honed skills and values as they learned how to express their religiosity that they would need on the job for very different purposes.

In other words, what they developed or learned in order to follow New Age pursuits were not far off from the skills, beliefs and behaviours they would need in worksites. Practical skills included the ability to exploit contacts on ad hoc bases (to learn more about their personal spiritual-development possibilities), openness to new methods (for the same reason), greater reflective capacity about their own feelings (so they could chart their personal paths), a sense of obligation to pursue this self-development (because pursuing your true spirit benefits the world), and cooperative practices based on a principled denial of basic conflicts with others (since below individual pursuits was a common, perennial vision). With slight changes in language, these are descriptors of skill-sets of contemporary technology, information and media workers.

Naming the Subject: The Religious Culture

“Spiritualities” are now studied as a category, or rather a set of categories. Hense, Jespers and Nissen (2014, 6) argue “there is no such thing as ‘generic’ spirituality.” The term is invoked in popular culture as well as in “organizational, educational, health care and aesthetic contexts.” As this is partly an historical study, I must refer to manifestations of spirituality in earlier and later forms. To understand the germ of what became spirituality, I turn to the literature on New Age. Wouter Hanegraaff (1996) makes a distinction between New Ages *sensu stricto*, and *sensu lato*;⁸ the first indicates the prior, concentrated and millennialist

⁸ Hanegraaff (1996, 49 and 94) also articulates the time-frames of these stages. The New Age *sensu stricto*, surviving into the late 1970s and the 1980s, can be regarded as one of the components of the New Age *sensu lato* (97). The wider New Age movement emerged when increasing numbers of people, by the later 1970s, began to perceive a broad

culture, and the later, the diffused one. The first designates the more devoted, and much smaller populations in Western countries (usually only a few percent, depending on where and when⁹). Being an informal orthodoxy, even in its more concentrated form, as *stricto*, it exhibits varied beliefs and practices depending, again, on time and place. However, Hanegraaff defined the *stricto* ethos through analysing its key texts. The second, the *sensu lato* version, evolved from this concentrated group, and is much more widely represented. In numbers and focus they are more akin to the “spiritual but not religious” folks, which, as noted earlier, even include church-affiliated religious liberals (who identify with a particular orthodoxy, but practice on their own terms) as well as the unaffiliated.

Sutcliffe and Gilhus (2013) note that “the popular language of ‘spirituality’ emerged as a *lingua franca* around the time of the decline of the new age *sensu stricto*, but empirically, we know surprisingly little about the details of this evolution” (Sutcliffe and Gilhus 2013, 8). They do note, however, that “from the 1990s onwards ‘new age’ came to denote a loose, hybrid, popular culture of ‘spirituality,’ to use a term increasingly employed by practitioners in preference to ‘religion’” (Sutcliffe and Gilhus 2013, 5).

What are the contents of this new spirituality? A broad set of descriptors of it was articulated in Lorne L. Dawson’s synthesis (1998) of this culture, gleaned from three early “insightful yet largely forgotten essays” (Stone 1978, Westley 1978, and Campbell 1978) as he studied new religious movements. He elaborated on these later as “barometers of larger social transformations” (2006, 180). These barometers included:

... pronounced religious individualism; [an emphasis on] experience and faith rather than doctrine and belief[;] a more pragmatic attitude to questions of religious authority and practice[, involving] skill development and skill testing of a progressive nature[—particularly ritual skills;] relativism and toleran[ce] of other religious perspectives and systems[;] a holistic [or] monistic worldview[, rejecting] almost every kind of dualism[—]the traditional dualisms of God and humanity, the transcendent and the immanent, humanity and nature, the spiritual and the material, the mind and the body, the subjective and the objective, male and female, good and evil, even cause and effect[; and finally,] greater organizational openness[, exhibiting] less effort ... to address all aspects of followers lives [by any one religious institution or source of guidance]” (Dawson 2006, 183-84).

similarity between a wide variety of “alternative” ideas and pursuits, and started to think of these as parts of one “movement” (355-6).

⁹ For example, Heelas and Woodhead (2005) identified “stricto” adherents—celebrators of “subjective life” in their terms—as less than five percent of the population of the English town, Kendall, that they studied.

To this list, Dawson added compatibility with late modern institutions, receptivity to a scientific world view, a worldwide vision, an emphasis on healing, and an anti-institutional and decentralized character (Dawson 2006, 192–93).

I would characterize New Age culture, *sensu stricto* as a short-lived vector of particular values that are, themselves, now seen in diluted form as a new spirituality normalized in urban liberal culture, similar to what is described by Dawson (and in largely marginal pockets, as the original version). Siobhan Chandler (2011, 6) describes the New Age *sensu stricto* as a bridge that, as well as concentrating or “reinforcing a symbolically significant cultural premise, namely individualism and the value of personal autonomy, [also reasserted the latent] American metaphysical traditions that included Transcendentalism and the New Thought movement. It was this complex movement that flowered in the eighties and persists today (Lewis and Melton 1992, Hanegraaff 1996, 103).”¹⁰

According to these judgements, we can equate the New Age *sensu lato* with the term spirituality. It also follows that contemporary spirituality essentially manifests the belief structures and practices of the New Age *sensu stricto*, and that the latter can be consulted to understand the former, following Hanegraaff. Accordingly, I use the term “New Age,” when defining its classic beliefs and practices—in its *stricto* sense. However, this dissertation is primarily about a more diffused version that permeates popular and work culture, and I need to name that general, diffuse belief system.

For terms to use for the popular spiritual culture that emerged from the New Age, I have a number of choices, including “self-spirituality” (Heelas 1996), the “New Age *sensu lato*,” (Hanegraaff 1996), “new era religions” (Andrew Dawson 2007), “new metaphysical” religion (Bender 2010), “spiritual prosumption” (Andrew Dawson 2013), and “neospirituality” (Hornborg 2013), to name a few. “Spirituality,” “holism,” “mind, body and spirit” and “revived subcultural rubrics such as ‘occult’ or esoteric” can be added to these (Sutcliffe and Gilhus 2013, 4). Practitioners of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) also reveal similar beliefs.

Paul Heelas (1996, 368) offers the most basic definition as “the experience of the divine as immanent in life.” He has been an important figure throughout the study of this religiosity, which he generally refers to

¹⁰ “None of the six primary characteristics of the new religious consciousness... is unique or truly new. They are manifestations of trends that have been developing in American religion for centuries. But most observers would agree with Stone [1978, 127] that ‘their incidence never has been documented to be as strong or as widespread’ (Stone 1978, 127; see also Bednarowski, 1989)” (Lorne L. Dawson 2006, 186).

as self-spirituality. Taking Heelas's definition in general, Hornborg has renamed it "neospirituality." To an extent she has updated it to the more rationalized era, in which formally-organized coaches and trainers of the many versions of spiritual self-development abound (most notably in Sweden, which she writes about here). For example, she notes, half of the population of Sweden used CAM in 2001 (Hornborg 2013, 191). Coaches and trainers of this ilk are an expanding component of urban culture, and offer their services on the private market and to institutions, including governmental (Hornborg 2013, 189). Their teachings invite "individuals... to create new ways of self-presentation (self-branding)" (Hornborg 2013, 189).

Hornborg's description (2013, 190) resonates with L. Dawson's (2006) characterization: "The term 'neospiritual' refers in this context to a universal, spiritual essence, embedded in the deep self. The characteristic of this immanent power is usually defined by practitioners as opposing religion, the latter being depicted as ritualistic, dogmatic, and something which hinders humanity from transcending contextual borders." Additionally, the language of neospirituality is "science-like," (or "scientistic"), which means to lend authority by referencing scientific concepts, however casually. She also refers to the need of the late-modern self for "new, individual-centred practices, responding to the longing for intense experiences of personal transformation on the way to finding the authentic self" (Hornborg 2013, 193).

Recently, A. Dawson (2014) offered a more sophisticated term for the practitioner of spirituality, the "spiritual prosumer." A. Dawson's term reflects a unique aspect of the contemporary economy. His is a creative use of the technical term "prosumption"—a neologism of production and consumption—which delineates a unique dynamic of the contemporary economy. This term indicates that production and consumption are tightly integrated now as elements of the whole process of circulation of goods. With this adaptation, A. Dawson's concept of the *spiritual* prosumer affords us the opportunity to consider this belief system in strong relationship to an economy, and to apprehend its character more precisely the more we understand the economy's dynamics. It is theoretically the most apt term to use here, to refer to this new spirituality.

According to post-Fordist political-economic analysis, the idea behind "prosumption" is that consumers themselves effectively produce value (i.e., complete or enhance products) through their participation in buying and using goods and services. It points at the contemporary exaggeration of the relationship between production and consumption present in all modern economic systems (Smythe 1981). "The act of prosumption is an archetypical neoliberal process in that its fusion of consumption and production maximizes profit through minimization of corporate outlays and business overheads" (A. Dawson 2013, 137-38). Through prosumption, consumers extend the life or utility of, modify, and repair products as they buy or use them. They too must have at the ready skills and attitudes similar to those of formal producers,

and may therefore exhibit a similar mindset because of these particular demands. Prosumption predicts that people marginal to the culture of those who make the products, but consume them, would share values with these workers because they must adopt the others' work skills and mimic their work patterns, simply in order to fruitfully use the consumer goods. Additionally, because the workforce in some areas of the economy is actually recruited from sophisticated users—iconically, video- and computer-game players (Kline, Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter 2003; Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter 2009)—there is often only a fine line between producer and consumer. Including other implications, A. Dawson's analogy suggests that, since spiritual persons take responsibility for their own religious growth, they effectively act as spiritual advisors (to themselves) and recipients of spiritual advice at the same time. In addition to its highlighting the prosumptional process in the economy, A. Dawson's coined term also encapsulates aspects of the therapeutic ethos and the personal entrepreneurialism that is characteristic of the general culture of this era. These features will be discussed in more detail in other chapters.

The theoretical “package” A. Dawson's provides via the coinage of the “spiritual prosumer” concept, assimilating practitioners, practices, and parallels to new capitalism, means the term offers considerable value to the theory of this dissertation. In addition to its facility for advancing theoretical reflection, I contend that this concept also justifies an aspect of my method—consulting the literature on spirituality and consumption to shed light on the issue of spirituality and production, which follows in Chapter Three. However, I also consider the prosumption process relevant as I try to understand how a subset of new workers could possibly influence the attitudes towards spirituality of the general public, which is a secondary interest in this dissertation. On top of the direct influence key workers could have on others because of their social prominence, the culture of iconic work sites could be imagined to spread to the broader culture indirectly, through the operation of prosumption. Prosumption gestures towards the skill-set key workers share with non-workers or different workers, which might create common understanding. To the extent that what we do and how we do it influences our beliefs about the world, prosumption may argue for similar “work-related” values being spread past iconic workers to general populations in this global economy. Symbolic-analytical values and skills may—at least vaguely—shape the subjectivity not only of “iconic workers,” not only of all contemporary workers, but even possibly of non- and marginal workers. In fact, one of the major sources I consult about forms of work, the authors Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) argue precisely this, asserting that whole populations do “immaterial labour” in this economy. I discuss this idea and its limitations in a later chapter.

However, A. Dawson considers the prosumption process relevant because he understands the contemporary spiritual practitioner as both producing and consuming themselves during their spiritual pursuits. Thus, through reference to prosumption theory, the spiritual practitioner is further specified:

Reflecting... notions of the late modern individual as entrepreneur and virtuoso of the self, the alternative religionist is both master of the presumptive act and artisan of the technical processes involved. Although variously construed as enlightenment, healing, release, and transformation, the *benefits* inherent in spiritual prosumption always involve some form of direct (physical and emotional) or indirect (employment and living conditions) betterment to the spiritual prosumer. Whatever the benefit accrued, however, its acquisition is posited as a spiritual good obtained as the outcome (product) of a transitional process through which the individual has moved from point *a* to point *b*.... What makes this transformative process truly presumptive is the self's role in effecting (as producer) and experiencing (as consumer) the transition (as product) from *a* to *b*. (A. Dawson 2013, 138)

A. Dawson (2013, 138) is convinced that “the dynamic of ‘spiritual prosumption’ [is] central to the shared repertoire of beliefs and practices to which the entangled, late modern life experience of urban professional, non-mainstream religionists give rise. While by no means encompassing all that the alternative religious repertoire embodies, the notion of spiritual prosumption is nevertheless a useful means of explicating a range of characteristics, tendencies and dynamics which combine to manifest and reproduce much that is typical of late modernity as a whole.” I anticipate this use-value here.

Dawson further identifies his subject group as symbolic analysts. He attributes spiritual prosumption to globalized cosmopolitans from a number of nations doing particular types of work, They are “chiefly employed in administrative bureaucracy and management, communications and information technology, education, health and research, and sundry provision of cultural goods, capital services, and immaterial commodities” (134-5). The term also is meant to suggest the group of predominant interest in this dissertation, those who are spiritual but not religious, New Agers *sensu lato*, “neospirituals” etc. (A. Dawson 2013, 137). However, because of the awkwardness of his term, I would seek a shorter moniker to define this ethos. Based on rough equivalency of definition and its recent coinage, to reflect up-to-date characteristics of the spiritual orientation, I opt to use the term “neospirituals” generally.

Hence to recap my overall project with this new terminology, establishing the compatibility of neospirituality and work forms is the primary purpose of this dissertation. On the basis of synthesizing the various contributions of labour-force analysts, I model a worldview and practical culture of symbolic-analytical work that can be compared to the features of neospirituality, so as to show that, on the basis of their similar contents and structure, new workers exhibit an elective affinity with this value-system.

Beyond that, however, I wish to shed light on the question of whether this value system could have been promoted and refined by the changes in capitalism in the late-20th-century and beyond. Certainly, although the belief system is widely diffused in globalized urban cultures, and a much larger population than actually

works in iconic employment within this regime has adopted neo-spiritual convictions, I wonder whether new workers, who have neospirituality values reinforced by their work, are helping with this diffusion.

However, these other questions will remain at the level of hypothesis throughout, awaiting confirmation or otherwise through empirical studies, which must follow this one. Such follow-up research would be valuable because, were that hypothesis proven true, we could then expect a continued expansion and deepening of this ethos as long as the current political-economic trajectory persists.

Political-Economic Sources

To explore new labour conditions in depth, in addition to Reich's work I refer to a body of economic theory that foregrounds that transition to the new capitalist model (Aglietta 1979; Lipietz 1985 and 1987; Harvey 1990; Lazzarato 1996; Hardt and Negri 2000). This analysis draws a line between the early-to-mid last-century configuration of governments, economies and civil societies in Western nations on the one side, and those of the final third of the 20th century, and into the 21st, on the other. The former era they call "Fordism," and the contemporary one, "post-Fordism." Post-Fordism took shape in the 1970s and 80s, as Fordism waned. This transition instituted the new working conditions. My goal is to perform for the new spirituality what Fredric Jameson (1991) and David Harvey (1990) did for the postmodernity ethos. They showed it to be a factor in the "sea-change" in the organization and practices of advanced capital.¹¹

Post-Fordist theory provides a coherent, overarching framework for comparing culture and economics. It creates a picture of society's functional organization and culture on the one hand, and the larger economic patterns on the other—and their inter-relation. In examining the issue of spirituality the theory has the advantage of theoretically integrating culture (including religion) with society's structural features and showing how both partly emerge from the larger economic patterns. The larger patterns post-Fordist theorists call the *regime of accumulation*. Formally speaking, this is "the intermeshed ordering of wage relations, consumption norms, and state intervention that synchronize the overall social prerequisites for the extraction and realization of surplus-value" (Dyer-Witheford 1999, 55). Any viable economy must also have a complementary *mode of regulation*. This is "the institutional forms, procedures or habits that either

¹¹ "What has happened is that aesthetic production today has become integrated into commodity production generally: the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to airplanes), at ever greater rates of turnover, assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation. Such economic necessities then find recognition in the institutional support of all kinds available for the newer art, from foundations and grants to museums and other forms of patronage" (Jameson 1991, 55-56). Jameson (57) adds: "Post-modern culture is the superstructure for a new wage of American military and economic domination."

persuade or coerce private agents to conform to its schema” (Dyer-Witheford 1999, 55). My study will largely be an examination of a neglected aspect of the post-Fordist mode of regulation—that is, how neospirituality supports it.

Components of Argument

The synthesis of theory from disparate sources provided throughout this dissertation, paired with the historical accounts of the mutual shaping of neospirituality and the culture of post-Fordist work, are the key analytical contributions of this dissertation. The theoretical material adds to the historical accounts an internally-coherent range of hypotheses about the processes by which these homologies between the two cultures have been reached. There are a number of testable positions taken within this body of theory that provide points of departure for empirical work through which the overall speculative thesis can be evaluated in subsequent studies.

Establishing Homologies

In this dissertation, my goal is less ambitious. I establish the homologies between the two cultures and proceed to develop the hypothesis that contemporary iconic workers have an elective affinity for neospiritual values because of the way their subjectivity is shaped by their work. I show the homology between the work and neospiritual cultures based on skills practiced and the structures of the worldviews they both hold, resulting in a number of point-for-point similarities. These parallels are first presented in a tabular format in this chapter, explored in depth in subsequent chapters and re-presented in the conclusion. Creating this final version in the concluding chapter requires the assembly, scrutiny and interpretation of the data about the contemporary conditions of work, as well as analysis and condensation of scholarly understanding of New Age spirituality’s features. These acts of ‘conditioning’ what is known about these two domains of human activity so they can be correlated with each other, are key *analytical* elements of this study.

As I have noted, one part of this analysis is to *model the type of worker* most exposed to spiritual practices and discourse at work. I chose to name an “iconic worker” for this purpose. On the other side of the equation, as I have explained, for the purpose of understanding the neospirituality belief system conceptually, as well as its organizational model, I narrow the subject to the New Age *sensu stricto* form, as did Wouter Hanegraaff (1996), though he was interested in the New Age in general. The intellectual reduction of neospirituality to New Age *sensu stricto* for definitional purposes is parallel to characterizing post-Fordist work culture in terms of that of key workers. I assume, as does Hanegraaff, that the *sensu lato* form reflects the *stricto* form, though less precisely, due to its diffuse nature. Contemporary neospirituals tend not, for example, to practice channeling, or to consciously hold a belief in New Age reincarnation, even though their worldview is essentially similar in structure to the New Age worldview.

It might be argued that rather than the symbolic analyst, a simpler choice of model for this ideal worker is the entire class known to have neospiritual values, i.e., “Western” *middle-classes* (Sutcliffe and Gilhus 2013, 12). The values of this class could be identified and proposed as the bases for comparison. However, finding the old middle-class worker within this new economy is not a straight-forward proposition. Because the post-Fordist economic period is characterized by continual flux in the nature of its processes and structures—not least the composition of its work-force and the contents of the jobs held therein—the class status of many of these workers is not only ambiguous but continually changing.

For example, replacement of jobs by technology from the mid-twentieth-century onward went far beyond the automation of industrial work, to replacing mental labour as well. Even intellectual jobs inaugurated by the computer revolution were felled or attenuated by being fully or partially automated (such as, even, software programming itself). Alternatively, skills mostly formerly restricted to a professional cadre, such as photography, became so widespread because of the diffusion and cheapening of the production tools, that “the experts” are structurally under-employed. Together these developments either degraded the contents of the job or eliminated the ‘profession’ entirely. This process continues. Although it is also true that new types of “professional” workers have arisen, the set of all those whose work is putatively “middle class” is contained within a smaller subset of the overall population than in the past. Not only does this make defining the *work* of a ‘middle class’ hard to represent, but also (in making a ‘middle class’ difficult to define in this economy), challenges the confidence exhibited by religion scholars in the putative class-composition of New Agers.

As an alternative to focussing on a class of worker as “iconic” of work in general, the very scarcity and insecurity of work (Dyer-Witheyford 2015)—i.e., its “precarity”—might, logically, be considered the key distinction that defines the experience of new workers. Perhaps, moreover, symbolic analysts cannot be considered representative because they may experience precarity less than do other workers, such as routine or service workers. However, although symbolic analysts may not be exposed to the full brunt of the implications of insecure labour in this economy due to their valuable skills, insecurity of tenure is built into their work structure. The structure is a series of terminating projects which force them to move (either inside or outside their companies) to new such projects. What is more, precarity of working conditions is only one aspect of the work form, and symbolic analytical work concentrates it with other important features, as I will show.

Although resorting to calling it simply a “middle class” is an ambiguous act, nevertheless, the shape (along with the culture) of this new social segment made up of symbolic analysts is coming into view. Whereas, in this dissertation I define “symbolic analysts” in terms of work-patterns, many scholars have sought to de-

fine them socially. A. Dawson (2013) lists terms used to describe this new social segment. They include “the ‘new professions,’... ‘new petite bourgeoisie’... ‘new cultural intermediaries,’ ‘new class,’ ‘knowledge class,’ ‘emergent and service class,’ (new) new middle class,’ ‘transformed’ and ‘post-industrial middle class,’ and, most popularly and his preference, the ‘new middle class’” (A. Dawson 2013, 134). Whatever name is put on it, Dawson (2013, 133) concludes that this population reflects trends that predominantly impact culture in this era: globalization and commoditization. While respecting his emphasis, in this dissertation I add production to this short list. After all, A. Dawson's important term "spiritual prosumption" shifts the emphasis in that direction itself, however little he may have intended this.

First, however, post-Fordist workforce analysis must be performed. In fact, different scholars segment the contemporary workforce in different ways, stressing (and interpreting differently) some work conditions and requirements over others in their models of the current work environment. These differences no doubt reflect the fast rate of economic changes, as well as the immaturity of this study topic. It follows that the ideal worker's subjectivity is also debated. Gill and Pratt (2008, 2) explain that “while work is central to accounts [of contemporary capitalism,] the relationship between the transformations within working life and workers' subjectivities have been relatively underexplored.”

Mirroring the list of alternate labels for the new middle class provided by A. Dawson, above, Gill and Pratt (2008, 2) iterate “a number of terms [that] have been developed [to describe the work they do]. Notions include creative labour, network labour, cognitive labour, affective labour, and immaterial labour [which, together] are not reducible to each other.” Despite the differences, in the aggregate, there is strong common agreement about the new conditions of work and social roles that I have defined as “the iconic worker.” In general, these terms refer to the activity of the creative immaterial labourer, working in the information, cultural and hi-tech production sectors.

In this dissertation, I underscore the fact of spirituality in workplaces (often referred to as SaW) through a review of industry literature, written by and addressed to managers, human resources personnel and business scholars. This literature is the one site in which the connection of the New Age and work is made. Although scholars within this tradition aspire to be critical, in general they do essentially “normal research,” maintaining many of the assumptions of the managerial class that has introduced spirituality into workplaces. Managers have made room for spirituality, so the research does not delve much beyond its claimed presence and operation. Critical analysis that might demand radically rethinking a corporation's culture, or even purposes, are kept mostly tentative. It is true that many writers within this tradition express concern that spirituality in workplaces may be a form of propaganda that does not benefit the workers themselves. However, as I would argue, because of this integration of spiritual and corporate cultures, their

concern should be difficult to address from the limited vantage point of internal operations. Under such circumstances, proper appraisal of this issue would demand putting the wider economic context in front of their lens, such as I do in this dissertation.¹² It is important, therefore, to distinguish the managerial writing on spirituality and the workplace from my approach and line of analysis. Unlike the authors in this literature (with rare exceptions), I ask at a high level why there should be consonance between the life of capital and the spiritual life.

Explaining Homologies

Establishing *the fact of* spirituality in workplaces and the commonality of the work and neospiritual cultures provide only part of the contents of this dissertation. After acknowledging and elaborating on these parallels, speculatively accounting for them is another purpose of the study. I investigate the processes of the integration of the work and neospiritual cultures in several ways. Although the parallelism of new work structure and neospirituality implies that these two sets of values (the neospiritual and work cultures) are independent of each other, they are only compared in that way for heuristic reasons. Holding these two communities in isolation from each other is an abstract exercise that does not ring true on the basis of the histories of the New Age and new work communities that I provide in this dissertation. To account for the homologies seen in the tables, and their significance, I challenge the idea of their independence in the remainder of the dissertation.

This complementarity suggests a degree of interactivity between, and mutual influence across, each population. My argument is that both communities interacted historically, and that where, in popular work culture, neospirituality is not openly expressed, the worldview explicated there (represented in technological terms, because technology and its use help define these workers identities) is shaped according to the implicit structure of the New Age spiritual culture. As the accounts of the two cultures' interrelation pro-

¹² For example, highly-relevant to spirituality at work is the aspiration to be “empowered” by work. This concept must have different meanings whether one considers merely the worksite or the larger environment of employment. In the early post-Fordist era, the aspirations to empowered work that the neospirituality ethos supported, like middle-class identification itself, were found within a wide swath of the youthful population. Indeed, “empowered work” was introduced earliest to those on assembly-lines producing automobiles (as Toyotism). By contrast, empowerment (such as it is) in workers today is available only to the subset of reshaped workers, as segment of the progeny of the middle-class, much reduced in number. They work within a milieu of high structural unemployment, to which they themselves fall victim to varying degrees. Therefore, whatever forms of gratification they accrue from their work, its status as empowerment must be measured against their very limited control over the duration of their employment, and therefore access to the “empowering” environment. In this context, the concept of empowerment must be broadened beyond the specific conditions of the place where the worker is employed. This example illustrates that considering the relationship of the neospirituality value system to that of work must range outside the immediate confines of the workplace, to consider would-be and occasional workers. This nuanced representation is an element of my study.

ceed in this dissertation, the initial comparisons seen in the tables in this chapter will take on greater significance for the reader.

To provide context for these discussions, I document how conditions of work have changed since the period when, coincidentally, church attendance was high and religious officials were afforded much public stature. This phase of heavy industrial production—Fordism—waned in the 1970s. The altered economic dynamic also altered work's content, conditions and availability for the average person in these nations. Drawing on the writing of a number of authors, I present these new conditions, and the workplace and community cultural responses, after which I extend that scholarly work through arguments that are theoretical, historical, and sociological.

Although I concede that both the neospiritual and new worker groups were subjected to common influences that cannot be fully defined as economic, which include the broad changes to subjectivity mentioned earlier, I suggest that economic developments of the last fifty years and the neoliberal orientation that undergirds them are behind the refinement of both. In the case of work culture, the direct underwriting by business structures is obvious. Therefore, one focus of this dissertation is on discerning how neospirituality might be implicated in these new economic conditions and political values.

To explain the common production of these two cultures, I trace the direct and indirect threads of influence, intervention and connection between the populations, to speculate on the reasons for the generic nature of their cultures. Participants in the early New Age communities and consultants influenced by them had important roles in bringing neospirituality into workplaces. I argue that the behaviours and values pertinent to performing well under new working conditions were already developing in the culture as the new spiritual practices. The two cultures enjoyed cross-over and mutual enrichment both *bodily* and *ideologically*.

It was carried *bodily* into workplaces by new workers, managers and human resources consultants and personnel already participant in, or sympathetic to, countercultural and New Age religious participation. An account of an historical nature places incipient job-redesign activists and new technology workers together with New Age proponents in an original, common community that never entirely separated, and would lead to the translation of New Age *sensu lato* to worker values in as the new economy advanced. I suggest in this dissertation that the demographically and geographically key new workers, the symbolic analysts (particularly on the American West Coast), along with activist organizational developers, and technology “hackers” associated with these communities, originated in the same populations of counterculturalists and New Agers. Together constituting a vanguard of agitators for humanistic and “empowered” work, they argued for restructured workplaces—a challenge eagerly met by some managers, who recognized such a need in the changing economy.

Their worldview and ethos were carried into workplaces *ideologically* through the adaptation of New Age values to the high-tech, commercial worlds these new workers and consultants entered. The new worker ideology has features of New Age or neospiritual commitments, but converted to embrace the high-tech world and new working conditions. Various scholars have represented the worldview or ideology of the typical worker. In Chapter Eight, among a larger set of such representations, I discuss the *network cosmology* (Fisher 2010), the *hacker ethic* (Himanen 2010), and the *Californian ideology* (Barbrook and Cameron 1996). I show these value systems to be in a similar vein, their differences more attributable to the particular foci and degree of generality than to a difference of analysis. However, I also argue that they are, all, similar to the neospirituality in terms of several parameters, some of which are, again, introduced in the table below.

My account shows these two groups as having common origins, as maintaining connections, as being mutually influential and, in the end, as substantially integrated—particularly the incipient neospiritual believers into new workers. Where they have remained separate, I argue they are different representatives of the same broad cultural ethos. This account is certainly not an assessment of definitive causation, which, even if such an attempt were appropriate, has more facets than could be managed here. For example, there are issues of active and passive transmission of values and skills between each of these groups, not to mention influences from, or impacts upon, external actors, by both groups together.

To return to the “workplace transformation” account, despite these introductions and translations, the innovative spirit had a shelf-life. Some of the politically-democratizing energy and utopian desires of the New Age *sensu stricto* was lost in translation, or over time. As the new economic form evolved, some of the initiated changes were retained, and some not. Nevertheless, no doubt supported by the broader “empowerment” culture in which workplaces continued to function, employee expectations for “empowered” jobs did not diminish along with managerial interest in its realization. While, in the long run, this amalgam of interest groups had only qualified success, their agitation left a permanent mark on the culture of companies, especially those propelling the economic transformation, the producers of cultural products, information technologies, and services.

Within these workplaces, “empowerment” is expected, even if this expectation is more aspirational than real. In any case, managers must cater to it. The events and relationships I document, coupled with the critical analysis I consider, lead me to posit that corporations are evolving into what certain theorists of organization call “psytopiae”—spaces in which corporate managers arrogate employees’ personal spirituality to the corporations themselves, allowing the latter to be cast as alive and spiritual (Leinberger and Tucker 1991; Nadesan 1998). Moreover, there is evidence that innovative use of such spiritual exercises as

mindfulness meditation facilitates employees' reconstruction of the corporation's interests as their own (Cruz 2016) a process economist and philosopher F. Lordon (2014) calls "co-linearization."

Carrette and King (2005, 132) emphasize that "capitalism uses spirituality and religion to promote the corporate agenda of business." They state that "the adoption of religious language by the business world is a part of a set of power shifts away from what Barley and Kunda (2004) calls *faith* traditions towards what we can call the *faith in capital* tradition (i.e., the corporate religion)" (2005, 161). They argue, further, that "the second privatization"—the transfer of the benefits of New Age spirituality practice from the self to the corporation—was nascent in its first stage (i.e., the adoption of personal spirituality in lieu of formal religious affiliation, the SBNR attitude).

A specific point of focus in the work of these two authors relates to the historical confluence of the early New Age movement and new work forms (and the ideology that went with them). In particular, Carrette's (2007) work details the most elemental ideological association between neospirituality and new work, through Abraham Maslow's development of a secular definition of spirituality and associating the latter with the empowered or self-actualized person—another of his constructs. These developments advanced the therapeutic ethos, as defined by Illouz (2008), found in business, as elsewhere, and the human potential movement (Carrette 2007, 141). Maslow's principles were a major source of, and continue to be cited as, support for the as-yet unrealized democratic and autonomous worksite. In Chapter Three, I present these authors' account of the intellectual operation Maslow performed on traditionally religiosity to make it into the commodifiable "spirituality," as well as to ground the pursuit of self-actualization at work. Carrette's sole work (2007) is a more theoretical analysis of the links between neospirituality and capitalism. He argues that Maslow's work is a particular and key manifestation of a broader mutually-supportive relationship between the discipline of psychology, per se, and the economic model of human being and action.

Although the validity of these scholarly claims cannot be fully verified or refuted over the course of this dissertation, I review research from secondary sources that support them. This material suggests that workplace neospirituality practices and discourse soften contradictions and mitigate some of the hardships of the work; that is, they facilitate the required processes of contemporary labouring.

Drawing this introduction to a close, I must add that neither the Gauthier and Martikainen texts (2013a, 2013b), nor Carrette and King's (2005), consider the nature of post-Fordist work as a particular factor in the evolution and spread of neospirituality. In developing this theme, the contents of my dissertation will add to and expand on their material. It will also be enriched by the work of others. For, though workplaces have not been intensively explored by religious studies scholars, neither have they been entirely ignored.

With this dissertation, then, I turn attention from consumption to production—and hence labour—as a key determinant of social change. Yet I do this with an entirely new parameter, that is, the implementation of religious belief for this purpose. As the concept of “prosumption” suggests, this change in focus from consumption to production is not, however, an either-or decision. One of the advantages of the Regulation School perspective on Fordism and post-Fordism is precisely that it links a high level overview of changes in economic structures to new production methods and consumption habits—considering both as a complex with culture integrating them. The analysis of neospirituality’s connection to post-Fordist *labour* should not therefore be seen as superseding the analysis of its immersion in patterns of capitalist consumption. From one point of view, looking at production and work *completes* the analysis offered of consumption. However, in bringing to light this somewhat occluded aspect of the link between capital and spirituality, it also *corrects* it.

Stef Aupers and Dick Houtman (2010, 9) call on scholars to “document... how spirituality is socially constructed, transmitted and reinforced, and how, why, and with what consequences it enters the public domain.” Although essays in their text (2010) indeed touch on the topic of “spirituality at work,” they tend to focus on the technological modality both in the work context and elsewhere, investigating the relation of neospiritual thought to technology itself, rather minimizing the fact that technology is always embedded in social practices that give it its sense. This emphasis on technology while excluding the institutional structures that create and manage it is a deficiency of analysis I take to task within this dissertation.

Nevertheless, one of the authors in the collection broadens the discussion by asking: “Are we witnessing the emergence of a new work ethic today? Could New Age philosophy be of crucial importance for a modern work ethic, in the same sense as Weber considers the Protestant ethic as central to early capitalism as it developed in Western society?” (Bovbjerg 2010, 116) This scholar of religion would perhaps recognize the aptness of comparing my task to Weber’s. With this broadly-framed question, Bovbjerg inaugurates a discourse that my study engages. Furthermore, because it is an example of the kind of work that Aupers and Houtman encourage, I consider it an important contribution to religious studies scholarship.

Empirical study is more productive if based on theoretically-sophisticated modelling of the phenomenon under study. Therefore, my ultimate purpose is to suggest a theory about the nature, roles and significance of New Age spirituality in new workplaces that can provide the basis for further study of this relationship and its implications for workers, neospirituality, and society.

An underlying theme of this dissertation is the question of the relationship of cultural and material factors under conditions of social change. As this is one of the major debates in history and social science, I do not seek to resolve this issue in the context of this study. However, I discuss this issue at length in terms of

Weber's work, in Chapter Five, as "The Material/Ideal Quandary." Other issues important to our understanding of neospirituality are completely set aside, but deserve consideration in the wake of this dissertation. One is the degree of participation in and attitudes towards spirituality of the workers themselves. What do workers perceive to be the value of spirituality's infusion in workplace culture? To what degree do they support this?

More broadly, regardless of the nature and function of neospirituality in workplaces, should one definitively collapse *all* manifestations of neospirituality into the forms found in workplaces (or as commodities)? Is there a broader cultural *zeitgeist* that transcends these workplace forms—that construe them as secondary or residual (if powerful)? If so, what is the relationship between this workplace presence and "uncontained" version(s) of neospirituality?

As I have noted, my accounting for worker adoption and interpretation of the neospiritual worldview is not restricted to tracing histories and examining congruencies. I develop the work of theorists of religion and economics who argue that the neoliberal turn in late modern nations provides settings in which the neospirituality ethos can flourish. These scholars acknowledge and consider in some detail the complementarity of the ethos and the values required of publics to support neoliberal forms of governing and the integral capitalist forms of managing resources seen in late-twentieth-century nations. Their works provide substantial underpinning to the explorations of this dissertation.

As noted, key theoretical analysis of spirituality's relation to capitalism comes from *Selling Spirituality* by religion scholars, Jeremy Carrette and Richard King (2005). Other scholarly works I examine in depth which also present neospirituality as shaped by neoliberal ethos and post-Fordist economic form include Kimberly Lau (2000), Eva Illouz (2008), Majia Homer Nadesan (1999) and Karen Lisa Goldschmidt Salamon (2001), and selected essays from the Gauthier and Martikainen compilations (2013a, 2013b), including A. Dawson's. Together, these authors explore aspects of the match between the values and organizational practices of neospirituality and post-Fordism. In concert and debate with their arguments, this dissertation will assert that neospirituality is a product of developments in religion that began as far back as Protestantism and the Enlightenment, accelerated post-war, and is currently enjoying a form of social validation in contemporary post-Fordism in its workplaces. It appears to provide a functional ethos for new workers. My historical account of the processes of its post-war shaping and social institution, as well as my own reflection on the issues they discuss, add to the theoretical work of the above authors. This account, along with the synthesis of material from work and religion scholars I provide, are the key analytical contributions of this dissertation to scholarly understanding of neospirituality's popularity and dissemination.

The Project: Two Bodies of Literature Associated

By way of opening the discussion of my approach to task of this dissertation, this section provides a brief discussion of each of the two bodies of literature related in this dissertation, post-Fordist work and neospirituality. This is followed by a schematic representation of their parallel characteristics.

From Fordist to Post-Fordist Work

It is generally agreed that, over the last fifty years, the nature and conditions of work in advanced capitalist societies has undergone dramatic change. Western countries have seen the loss of many secure, benefit-supported, hierarchically-managed, and relatively well-paid industrial jobs. These have been (not fully) replaced to a degree by employment in the “information economy,” in jobs varying greatly from their predecessors in terms of the skills needed, remuneration, security, nature of integration with private life, and other factors. These clustered changes in economics, politics and work have been described in various terms. One of the most influential accounts is that supplied by economists of the Regulation School (Aglietta 1979; Lipietz 1985 and 1987) who describe a shift, commencing in the 1970s, from a *Fordist* regime of accumulation, based on the centrality of the industrial, assembly-line factory pioneered by automobile capitalist Henry Ford, with its associated institutions of mass consumption and the national welfare state, to a *post-Fordist* regime predicated on cybernetic technologies, new management techniques, transnational supply chains and neoliberal governance.

According to Harvey (1990, 2), post-Fordist conditions include the emergence of “entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets and, above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation.” Unlike in the past, “labour processes, labour markets, products, and patterns of consumption” are constantly changing. Harvey labels the new, post-Fordist capitalist regime as one of “flexible accumulation.” One of its requirements is a “flexible” workforce (Harvey 1990, 147), a concept we will fully explore in later chapters.

Recognizing that post-Fordist jobs embrace a variety of differing situations, scholars of new workplaces, such as Harvey, Robert Reich (1992), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000), Ursula Huws (2003) and Catherine McKercher and Vincent Mosco (2007) nonetheless concur that there are some common features across apparently very different post-Fordist employment situations, even though they often disagree as to the appropriate terms by which to describe them, and the salience to be given to particular features.

The list below presents the skill- and character-requirements of key, post-Fordist workers. They must be:

- Technically-skilled: Most workers need to be good users of technology.

- Cooperative and socially competent: More horizontal labour organization and the eliminations of job demarcation result in organization in teams. Team members, not managers, coordinate and appraise team-members' work.
- Respectful of personal experience (versus book-learning) and insight.
- Energetic, and skilled at time-management, because of continuous time-pressure: High circulation (fast-changing) economy creates intensive work-demands, so that work-life imposes on private life. High-circulation tools, software and apps change continuously. Mastery of these, and requirement to do multiple tasks on projects requires continuous learning, both on-the-job and in personal time. "High-circulation job" refers to short-term nature of work. To access one's next project, one must socialize with coworkers or leaders after hours.
- Outward-looking and opportunistic (with respect to new products): Pay is performance related, and workers are subjected to detailed bonus systems. The high-circulation economy (based on the fashion-sensitivity of products) and continuous improvement of practices, requires continuous attention both inwards and outward: inwards, to better productivity; outward, to environment for ideas, leads, to "keep up."
- Flexible and entrepreneurial (regarding one's next job): Vertical disintegration of corporations has led to business organization as networks, and short-term employment. Together with weaker labour laws and unions, these erode the security of workers and the balance of power between workers and managers. Workers must constantly negotiate where, when, under what conditions, and if, they work.
- Submissive to personal surveillance and the judgements of team leaders and co-workers (the latter during peer-reviews): Workplace surveillance is endemic. Workers are subjected either to metrics or to personal surveillance by co-workers and leaders, by non-opaque processes. Workers are increasingly unprotected by formalized authority structures, performance standards, or appraisals as basis of promotions. Personal success and work referrals depend more and more on others' goodwill.
- Global in outlook, with a desire to make synthetic connection with strangers.
- Open to change (personally and for the world); forward-looking or optimistic

Neospirituality (aka New Age Sensu Lato)

Beliefs

Definitions of what constitutes New Age beliefs have proliferated since L. Dawson's early characterization. However, emerging from an analysis of New Age texts, Wouter Hanegraaff's (1996, 355–56) codification of New Age beliefs (excerpted in the following four paragraphs) has been influential:

“*Holism* is pervasive in all forms of New Age thinking.” However, the holism is tempered by “*this-worldliness, particularly of the weak variety.*” The “belief in experiential reality” to which “this-worldliness” refers dictates that the holism is “seldom of a ‘transcendent absolute’ variety.” Instead, New Age holism “emphasizes the universal interrelatedness of all things, either or not based upon a common/creative source of Being.”

Second, Hanegraaff specifies, “*Evolutionism* is equally pervasive.... New Age believers do not regard evolution as random, but as teleological or creative. The idea of a universal process of evolution of consciousness... is central.”

Additionally, “the *psychologization of religion* and the *sacralization of psychology* [are] highly characteristic of New Age religion.... In the context of [evolutionism, this] implies that the evolution of consciousness leads to a perfect gnosis or illumination, in which Self-realization and God-realization are one and the same....”

Finally, there are “*expectations of a coming New Age*.... [which are] a direct expression of the movement's criticism of the worldviews dominant in Western culture generally, and modern Western culture particularly.”

Regarding this last point, scholars have recently noted changes in the nature of the millennialism now attributed to New Age beliefs, consistent with the rationalization associated with diffusion into the broader culture. Writes Sutcliffe, “New Age is now not so much a historical prophecy as a ‘realized eschatology for living in the here-and-now.’ [Now, as earlier,] a marvelous, even perfected future is on the horizon, but achieved through very different means than in the past: in the former case largely by otherworldly, superhuman agency and, in the second, by this-worldly, humanistic endeavor” (Sutcliffe 2008, 2).

The millennialism that *was* core becomes converted to a smaller kind of transformation, that of the individual. What is now essential to the New Age is the belief

... that human beings are essential gods in themselves[; that they] contain a ‘God-spark,’ a central infusion of divinity[;] that human beings undergo

successive reincarnations as part of an evolutionary process which returns them to full God-realization[;] that the human individual is responsible for creating his or her own reality[; and that] the entire evolutionary quest and desire [to emerge into the divine state takes place] in a single interconnected field. [Furthermore,] this holistic notion provides the New Age spiritual orientation with its guiding transcendent value (York 2001, 364).

Scholars stress different features of New Age and neospirituality beliefs and practices—in either lengthy tomes or, as with Heelas (1996, 368), with extreme brevity. Ellwood (1992, 60) ties many of Hanegraaff's features together as a function of *holism*; it means that the self is an integration of mind, body and spirit, all of which subtly interact, and that the self and the cosmos (the natural and celestial worlds) model each other, such that action or changes at one level can register at others. Albanese (1998, 348) stresses the *healing*—an integral aspect of holism—is *primary*. She claims that “healing of self and planet is the main practice of the New Age,” and that these are intertwined. The cosmology dictates that personal wellness has an effect on the wellness of the planet. Healing is articulated by some scholars as the use of particular techniques. For example, a series of meetings in contemporary Nottinghamshire UK, documented by Matthew Wood (2007, 10), explored meditation, healing, divination and spirit possessions (or *channeling*). Other healing techniques are ‘bioenergy therapy,’ radiesthesia or dowsing, yoga and acupuncture (Hall 2013, 147).

Based on his studies in Brazil, Andrew Dawson (2007, 104) boils down the belief structure to three principles: holism, individualism and pragmatism. *Holism* has been discussed. *Individualism* identifies the believers' sense that they themselves are responsible for finding the religious or spiritual convictions that move them. Heelas (1996) calls this the conviction of “self-responsibility.” York (2001, 364) restates this: “The human individual is responsible for creating his or her own reality.” This might involve a long-term quest with serial acceptance and rejection of different practices and beliefs, and/or constructing a compilation of them for one's *personal* religion. *Pragmatism* follows from *individualism* in that only a qualified embrace of any congregation, religious leader or guru, or belief system is felt to be necessary to test its appropriateness for one's devotion. The emphasis on feeling or *religious experience* also comes into play here, since the standard of acceptability of any of the above (regularly revisited) are, essentially, their capacity to produce a sense of transcendence of the mundane.

It should be remembered that all of the above representations can describe the beliefs of many of the “spiritual but not religious,” which means that the beliefs can be found within certain precincts of formal religious institutions whose traditional theologies do not support them.

Practices

Despite their casual mutual relations, in their explicit roles as religious seekers, New Agers have characteristic organizational and meeting patterns that express their primary roles as individualistic seekers. As religious practitioners they can certainly be distinguished from those following “traditional models of religious engagement, [which define] ‘congregants,’ ‘regulars,’ ‘converts,’ the ‘lapsed’” (Sutcliffe 2008, 8). Sutcliffe defines them as “virtuosi able and willing to select, synthesize, and exchange an increasing diversity of cultural practices and beliefs” (Sutcliffe 2008, 8). Indeed, with the advent of New Age practices, religious seeking was democratized. Whereas, historically speaking, seeking was the “prerogative of elite social groups—theologians, contemplatives, and privileged lay practitioners...., spirituality makes the role available to a mass audience.”

For the seeker, there are both outer, geographic, and inner, spiritual, journeys (Sutcliffe 2008, 11). They follow three seeker tactics. *Singular* seekers (such as the Buddha) follow the traditional pathway towards a goal they define as “achieved,” and to which they are loyal during an extended period. *Serial* seekers move from one practice or truth to the next without loyalty concerns; the movement itself distinguishes them as unique and their search as authentic. Their actions most accurately illustrate the postmodern *bricolage* of cultural experimenters. Depending on the commentator, this is “creative exploitation,” or the behaviour of anxious and confused individuals (Sutcliffe 2008, 10). Multiple seeking is most typical of New Age seekers. There is a “multidirectional and synchronic activity,” through which the seeker assembles a tool-kit of ideas and practices uniquely suited to oneself (Sutcliffe 2008, 10). This practice is justified by holism and by *weak, this worldly mysticism*: the belief that the forms of the world are somewhat illusory and mainly different appearances of the same underlying reality (Hanegraaff 1996, 478). This position is seen in writer Louise Hays’ recommended affirmation to seekers: “In the infinity of life where I am, all is perfect, whole and complete, and yet life is ever changing. There is no beginning and no end, only a constant cycling and recycling of substance and experiences.”¹³ Multiple seekers are understood to enjoy the process of seeking itself, not a particular outcome; theirs is “diffuse and deregulated behaviour” (Sutcliffe 2008, 11). Their one rule of thumb is to resist restraint in their seeking.

The typical fora of these seekers (including, also, on-line settings) are

... lectures, workshops, small groups and societies, and calendrical and ad hoc gatherings; a few dedicated buildings, including the administrative

¹³ Cited in Sutcliffe 2008, 11.

centers of groups and societies, as well as libraries, [etc.]; and the open-ended networks of association—kinship, friendship, mailing lists, telephone trees, and e-mail lists and Web sites—that loosely articulate these relatively simple, but immensely flexible and resilient, cultural institutions. The resulting networks extend both synchronically and diachronically . . . constituting a cultural ‘web’ . . .that both spawns its own relatively discrete enclaves and infuses a wider quest culture” (Sutcliffe 2008, 12).

Compared: New Work and Neospirituality

Initial observations organized in tabular format below complete the introduction to this study. Over the course of the remaining chapters, I clarify and assess the contents of these tables, and consider why spirituality now has an accepted place, by name, in business corporations.

Table 1, *Fordist Religious and Business Organizational Forms Compared*, shows that the common (bureaucratic) organizational form of religious institutions of the past mirrored those of their contemporary corporations. Table 2, *Post-Fordist Religious (i.e., Neospiritual) and Business Organizational Forms Compared*, shows that this pattern is now reproduced for the post-Fordist era, wherein neospiritual organization mirrors the networked corporate world. Table 3, *Neospiritual vs. Post-Fordist Team-worker Beliefs and Skills*, indicates the parallel nature of the values and practices of iconic post-Fordist workers, compared to those of neospiritual practitioners.

Table 1: Fordist Religious and Business Organizational Forms Compared

Fordist Religious (Church) Organizational Forms	Fordist Business Organizational Forms
Fixed sites for worship—churches—directly owned	High capital investments: material ‘plant’ owned
Geographically-defined constituency	Workers hired locally
High membership and commitment rates	‘Employed’ status of workers highly bounded
Religious professional roles prescribed; Hiring/assignment processes routinized	Formal hiring and reporting structures for specific employment positions
Hierarchical, one-to many (mass) communications structure	Few ‘line’ managers to many workers ratio
Formal behavioural/ritual action protocols;	Business-like decorum; worker discipline
Engagement balanced with other life functions	Engagement balanced with other life functions
Sacred/ secular distinction maintained and marked	Public (work) activity and private distinction maintained

Table 2: Post-Fordist Religious (i.e., Neospiritual) and Business Organizational Forms Compared

Post-Fordist Religious (i.e., Neospiritual) Forms	Post-Fordist Business Organizational Forms
Meetings are in ad hoc and changing commercial, community and natural sites	Companies divest of capital costs, such as buildings. For individual workers, desks and cubicles shared; workplaces mobile and ‘borrowed;’ community (libraries) and commercial (coffee shops)
Global religious logic	Workers hired ‘globally’ and by on-line recruitment; loyalty is to company; stands in for global capitalism
Membership within any one group/practice fluid, and contingent; group boundaries weak	Due to part-time, temporary and piece-work (and telework), worker/ non-worker boundaries weak
Religious authority contingent on appeal to religious seeker (commercial model); religious <i>virtuosi</i> self-select; leadership contested/ informally negotiated; lay/professional distinction weak making group composition amorphous	Managers are ‘leaders’ or ‘coaches,’ pretending equality with workers. Teams manage collectively; appraise each other; amateurs learn on job; reward system informal; ‘Professional’ status degraded
Network model of interaction	Network model of interaction
Endless and reciprocal teaching/learning (seeking)	Team members multitask and teach each other
Hybridity of religious discourses and traditions	Professional/technical discourses intermingled
Formalistic mien of professionals rebuked: Instead, ability to induce religious experience/ enthusiasm/ energetic connection	‘Professional’ reserve ridiculed; intimate style valued; work is play; euphoria and engagement rewarded
Religious (spirituality) language infuses secular institutions; Breakdown of sacred/secular periodization; irregular schedule of religious activity	Intensive work regimes intrude upon private life; opportunistic work patterns; no secular workweek.

Table 3: Neospiritualist vs. Post-Fordist Iconic Worker Beliefs and Skills

Beliefs: New Age Practitioners	Values: Post-Fordist Team-Workers
God is not transcendent; more of a partner.	Manager is coach or team leader; equal to workers
Public self (persona) is false; the essential self (spirit) is real.	Formal roles in (Fordist) bureaucracies degrade creativity and effectiveness.

Beliefs: New Age Practitioners	Values: Post-Fordist Team-Workers
Universe ‘knows’ (i.e., acts on) your intentions. Causation is unrecognizable in explicit terms. The universe changes via subtle connections, of which one must remain essentially ignorant.	Authority is enacted covertly, via surveillance. Public and explicit discourse in company culture only partly determines one’s standing and prospects. Subtle power dynamics and systematic monitoring do also.
Bodies are not only biological but foci of energy. Matter is energy.	Effective company processes are “frictionless.” Workers’ needs as situated material beings must be suppressed. Instead they must focus and transmit team energy.
Religious variety/ personalized paths are good, but should be contained within the person.	Workers’ “habits”—constructed by ethnic, racial, gender, geographical and personal loyalties and locales—are impediments to team-action. They are of interest only as inputs to commodities.
Spiritual growth is one’s own responsibility.	Success is one’s own responsibility; no career path/job ladder planned by Human Resources.
Networking—one-to-one connecting—provides new views about/directions for seeking the self.	Networking for new contracts and job-related information is essential, within and across projects.
Affective energy, transmitted to others, facilitates religious experience.	Other team members’ energy is source of vitality and creativity. Service workers trade in affect.
Healing one’s self heals the world.	Personal empowerment is good for all.
Discovering your true self makes a better world.	Expressing your true self creates good products.
Levels of <i>well-being</i> are unlimited, up to the state of personal <i>divinity</i> .	Empowered people can be heroes; gifted amateurs (with vision) can put professionals to shame.
Conventional science is oppressive.	Tacit, non-codified knowledge and experience rival <i>book learning</i> and traditional expertise; knowledge can always be accessed.

Outline of Remaining Chapters

Chapter 2 New Age Spirituality

This chapter begins this dissertation with an overview of neospiritual beliefs and practices.

Chapter 3 Capitalism and Religion

Here I consider important critical analyses of the relationship between religion and capitalism. Amongst other critiques, I look at Carrette and King’s (2005) and Carrette’s (2007) theoretically sophisticated work on the common roots of psychology and spirituality in the individualizing ideologies of advanced capital-

ism. Their work provides a context for considering New Age spirituality in relation to both consumption and production. I relate this material to A. Dawson's (2013) concept of spiritual prosumption, the theories of the therapeutic self (Illouz 2008), and psytopia (Leinberger and Tucker 1991). The discussions in this chapter play an important role in organizing the contents of subsequent chapters and, ultimately, in specifying the logic of neospirituality's embrace in contemporary workplaces.

Chapter 4 Spirituality at Work

This chapter discusses the management-oriented literature on the incorporation of New Age spirituality (or, more properly *spirituality*) practices into the workplace. This includes an overview of what is occurring in companies under this rubric. I also cite a selection of industry texts that present and discuss key critical questions asked within that literature about these practices. In this chapter I argue that while there are critical voices within the industry literature that disclose important aspects of the political-economic context of neospirituality, they lack an over-arching critical theory of the connection between changes in the workplace and the ready support of neospirituality therein.

Chapter 5 Post-Fordism and Work Culture

To address this lack, this chapter summarizes the political economic analysis on the transformation of capitalism from its mid twentieth-century Fordist phase to an end-of-millennium post-Fordism. Beginning with a review of the key concepts of the Regulation School economists, in whose work this analysis originates, it provides an overview of the chronology of this metamorphosis and its economic, social and political dimensions, with particular attention to changes in the workplace. The chapter features discussion of the work of theorists such as David Harvey (1990), who discuss the cultural dimensions of the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism without mentioning religious institutions or spiritual practices.

Chapter 6 Types of Work and the Iconic Worker

Here, I draw on the typology of post-Fordist work-forms of American scholar Robert Reich (1992) and support and cross-examine his model with the contributions of other important scholars, including autonomous Marxist scholars Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) and Maurizio Lazzarato (1992). I scrutinize contemporary work from the point of view of these work-types, assessing the skills required. I also introduce Hardt and Negri's assertion of the hegemony of the immaterial labouring form (i.e., that even non-workers have learned to use technology like, and for similar purposes to, workers and so think and act like them), and suggest that this is a way to understand the dissemination of workplace culture beyond its boundaries (relevant, since workplaces embrace spirituality). The skills distributed through this hegemonic process are networking, cognitive and affective.

I identify symbolic analysts (SAs) as the workers who do the most characteristic post-Fordist work, and so are its iconic workers (and the main focus for considerations of neospiritual adoption). However, I add to the concept of the hegemony of immaterial labour forms (above) by examining the more mundane ways in which SAs are socially influential and can therefore actively contribute towards valorizing and disseminating their own worldview.

As a supplement to this chapter, I scrutinize in detail the types of affective skills that are demanded of contemporary workers, concluding that the term ‘affective labour’ is a highly-ambiguous concept, except for several specific and well-acknowledged forms. However, of particular interest is a purportedly novel kind of affective labour, claimed to be operating in post-Fordist productive settings, the production of enlivening energy. Although, its actual reality and function as a work-skill is currently unverified, it is of particular interest in a study of spirituality in workplaces. New work may demand the activation of enlivening energy. If so, it would seem to create a welcoming environment for the neospiritual ethos, which bases its theology around its operation.

Chapter 7 Post-hierarchical Paradigms and Practices

This chapter provides a history of efforts to create posthierarchical workplaces, to make them both more responsive to the changing market conditions and more enabling of workers. The activist consultants and managers who tried to implement these changes emerged from the same milieu as did neospirituality, and professed similar humanist concerns. Responsive companies understood that producing and selling immaterial products required autonomous, entrepreneurial and creative employees, who differed substantially from the white-collar “organization men” found in the Fordist- era bureaucracies.

The model that guided many consultants, often called Toyotism, pointed to work in semi-autonomous teams, with members continuously monitoring quality and authorized to intervene when it falters. The original model was accompanied by promises of stable employment. Yet the post-hierarchical work form is ultimately made effective through its easy ability to acquire and shed workers—guaranteeing precarious working conditions for Toyotist workers. Therefore, the promise of stability was abrogated over time, leaving workers responsible for many management functions as well as their traditional responsibilities. In other ways as well, empowering work structures were partially dismantled by the 1990s, leaving a compromised model, or hybrid system, in place. This was a white-collar Taylorism, guided by the human resources philosophy of humouring rather than enabling workers, and decisions based on accountancy retained at the top. However, despite compromises to posthierarchy, the idea continues to hold the attention of managers and workers alike, particularly focussed around vigorous repudiation of the bureaucratic struc-

tures of Fordism (with disdain for governments in close attendance). Its valorization, without validation, suggests that posthierarchy is the basic ideology of post-Fordist workplaces.

Chapter 8 Net Age

This chapter pursues themes broached in the preceding one with particular emphasis on the common (counter-) culture of the American west coast, the New Age that emerged there, and the new-technology hackers that partook of both, yet emerged as the pre-eminent workers of post-Fordism—the Silicon Valley SAs, or technical workers. I suggest that the cosmology these workers defined for themselves, explicitly the hacker ethic, the network cosmology, and the Californian ideology were efforts to resolve the basic contradiction of their lives. This stemmed from their gestation in the countercultural milieu that opposed capitalism, instrumentalism and anti-collectivity (which they saw as hierarchy), yet their maturation in the highly-individualistic milieu in which they found themselves working and becoming wealthy. The worldviews they adopted as a response, defined somewhat differently but similar in form, embrace a form of holism substantially similar to neospiritual holism, too. All hypothesize that individual action resolves through the operation of a unifying process (for neospirituals, through divine intention; for the workers, through network processes) into a world of enriched life and plenty for all.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

In this chapter I return to the tabular comparison of the culture of neospirituality and new work with a synthesized version, integrating what has been reviewed in the dissertation. I also discuss three themes developed over the course of the dissertation, posthierarchy, holism and dematerialization, showing how these values influence business and workplace practices and beliefs as well as those of neospirituality. Further synthesis of the chapter material renders five hypotheses as to why neospirituality is present in workplaces. I conclude the dissertation by outlining its limitations and value to scholarship.

Chapter Two: New Age Beliefs and Practices

Introduction

In Chapter One, I discussed scholars' difficulty in studying the social distribution of New Age spirituality along with its features. These difficulties continue to mount over time, with this spirituality showing greater levels of diffusion, renaming, and hybridity (Clarke 2006, 25). More complex syntheses of traditional religious elements appear. "Hybrid forms ... have emerged, which [disseminate] key themes and practices into new cultural streams, especially under conditions of globalization" (Sutcliffe and Gilhus 2013, 4–5). It was argued in Chapter One that these difficulties are better met by studying spirituality's implication in broad social processes than by seeking to corral it as if it were a religion. However, there is a great variety of social trends that neospirituality is said to mark off, and of social sites in which it is deemed to play a part. Neospirituality (with its cognates and fellow-travelers¹⁴) has been considered in relation to globalism (Rothstein 2001), as a fundamental characterization of the individualized society (Inglehart 1997), as a by-product of secularization, and the cultic form of liberal religiosity (Bruce 2002), as liberal religion (Schmidt 2005), as an American form of 'gnosticism' (Bloom 1992),¹⁵ as indicative of the *easternization* of Western culture (Campbell 2007), as a new ethos for social service institutions (Bender 2010), as a broad form of opposition to contemporary power structures (Lynch 2007), as a version of the American civil religion strongly influenced by the Transcendentalist tradition (Albanese 2007), and other themes.

All told, given the differing directions that "New Age *sensu lato*" research takes, it should not surprise us that opposing judgements about its importance are made: either it is insubstantial enough to be insignificant, or so pervasively inflects the values of different social and cultural institutions that it should be looked at as an overriding motif. Yet, the diffuse, but persistent, character of the belief system (and indeed, its 'cultic' character) might suggest that it is a major contributor to the culture of the West. Perhaps, the new

¹⁴ These include Neopagans, Eastern and traditional Western esoteric religious practices, 'alternate' health and wellness technologies, ecofeminism, and 'progressive' spirituality, to name most.

¹⁵ Campbell (2007, 349) explains Bloom's position: "For [Harold Bloom] has argued that, despite all appearances to the contrary, the religion of the American people is not really Christianity, but Gnosticism.... What Bloom considers to be the key belief in this religion is that one's innermost being is 'a magic or occult self, spark. Or *pneuma* as the Gnostics called it' (Campbell (2007, 50-51), and that this is clearly a shamanistic one, constituting as it does the belief that 'what is best and oldest in you was not made by God, but is God Campbell (2007, 54). Finally Bloom makes it clear that he considers both the neo-Pentecostal and charismatic movements together with the New Age movement all to be aspects of this American Religion. As he says, 'The God of the American Religion is an experiential God, so radically within our own being as to become a virtual identity with what is most authentic (oldest and best) in the self.'"

spirituality plays an important role in social or political-economic processes and has been selected and shaped to become *a* (perhaps *the*) popular ethos for Western societies. Its “similarity” to the culture may be a result of broad cultural change that has either assimilated it or been structured by it. Although there is common skepticism as to the very existence of a New Age movement (Hanegraaff 1996, 525; Wood 2007; York 1995, 26; Spangler and Thompson 1991, 64), and practitioners often repudiate the New Age term itself (Sutcliffe 2008, 3–4), this does not mean that its “essence” is not now distilled within (at least a segment of) culture in general.

If its very existence represents and is determinatively implicated in broad change processes, ever-greater refinements of its history, definition, correlation, and conditions of incidence (as the Sutcliffe and Gilhus text provides), construing the “new age” as a relatively bounded phenomenon, may not render fundamentally greater understanding of the new spirituality ethos. Studying new age spirituality as a phenomenon *within* society—as attempted by Sutcliffe and Gilhus (2013) and writers in their collection—may be at the wrong level of generality. These concentrated studies may amount to a more elaborate shrouding of neospirituality’s possible ‘structural’ role within contemporary society, if it has one.

Therefore, in validating new age studies and perhaps reifying a phenomenon, Sutcliffe and Gilhus (2013) and their writers may be forestalling a more urgent examination, that of the role(s) taken by neospirituality (and other cognates) in sustaining or advancing a particular social order. This is a premise of the following study. This dissertation responds to Sutcliffe and Gilhus’s (2013) idea of reframing the terrain as a starting point of research (in their case inverting what is called “normal” and “marginal” religion), but with a different reframing. Rather than seeing neospirituality as part of the contents of culture, I consider it the shaper of it. I suggest that, in its adoption by capital as a way to condition workers, it plays a key role in the new social order of late modernity.

Sutcliffe and Gilhus outline three overlapping historical approaches to new age study. During the first approach, ‘macro-theoretical’ studies saw new age in terms of ‘new religious movements.’ The second saw scholars developing “rich, micro-level ethnographies and histories [revealed through] fine-grained empirical data ... unpack[ed] within specific contexts” (Sutcliffe and Gilhus 2013, 6–7). Examples are Courtney Bender’s aforementioned study (2007) of New Age integration in institutions around Cambridge, USA; Judith Macpherson (2008) on Reiki healing in Scotland; and Ingrid Gilhus (2012) on the reception of angels in Norway. Sutcliffe and Gilhus note that this second wave “has also fostered mid-range or meso-level analyses of local and regional dynamics: for example, Adam Possamai (2005) on the circuits of detraditionalized spiritual seekers in Melbourne, Australia; Matthew Wood (2007) on the social class dynamics of small groups in the English East Midlands experimenting with practical adaptations of occult and esoteric

knowledge; and Peter Mulholland (2011) on the psychologically ‘compensatory’ function of new age beliefs in the uncertain economy of the post-‘Celtic Tiger’ economy” (Sutcliffe and Gilhus 2013, 6–7). The third wave of study noted is a return to macro-level theories without the New Age being considered only in relation to NRMs, but to religion in general.

Predictably, given the New Age belief structure’s amenability to commodification, Sutcliffe and Gilhus (2013) also mention that the New Age has gained the attention of scholars from outside of the religious studies discipline, such as from cultural and consumer studies. As a result of these studies, they note that “we now know more about the interaction between particular ‘new age’ beliefs and practices and the dominant culture in specific locations and circumstances” (Sutcliffe and Gilhus 2013, 7).

Sutcliffe and Gilhus (2013) wish to see more study of the class or “cultural capital” relations that inspire the adoption of these practices and beliefs. “In particular, the economic and political commitments of particular new age and holistic formations require to be teased out; for example, the analyses of ‘new age capitalism, and ‘capitalist spirituality’ by Kimberly Lau (2000) and Jeremy Carette and Richard King (2005), respectively, raise germane issues about the cultural impact of neo-liberal economics, but suffer from rather polarized and polemicized arguments on their precise effects” (Sutcliffe and Gilhus 2013, 8). I consider these arguments in the next few chapters. This last, recommended, research direction is more suggested than actual. However, I situate my study here, extending and deepening the type of analysis added by Lau and Carette and King, and taking it in some new directions.

New Age Beliefs

As I introduced in the preceding chapter, elements of New Age culture include: a holistic cosmology, scientific language, a personal healing ethos, the depersonalization of the divine, engagement in planetary health, striving for a re-enchanted world, a prosperity consciousness, re-incarnation, postmillennialism-evolutionism, and the psychologization of religion and sacralization of psychology.

Holism

The preeminent value identified with New Age spirituality is “holism.” It is a key and organizing principle of New Age beliefs. Many of the other elements of the neospiritual worldview emerge from it. As I noted in the previous chapter, Hanegraaff (1996, 119), confirms this point: “*Holism* is pervasive in all forms of New Age thinking.” Confirming his authority on this issue, Hall (2013, 151) explains that Hanegraaff’s assessment that the New Age is “‘a retreat from Christian dualism to holism,’ [is one] which no subsequent researcher has much questioned.” Broadly speaking, holism implies a strong connection between oneself and one’s environment. The idea is that everyone is related to the larger cosmos through invisible lines of energy. For example, the New Age practice of astrology “is based on the idea that there is a correlation

between celestial movements and terrestrial events” (Hanegraaff 1996, 107). The logic is that “there cannot really be any such thing as chance or randomness, since the presence of the life-force means that there is an order and hence also a meaning to all events, no matter how trivial they may appear” (108). Rowena Kryder (1992, 103)¹⁶ commented on the New Age tool, the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes* with the statement that “implicit in the use of the divination system is that within its imagery or forms lies the eternal, underlying structure of the universe.” The subtle lines of connection are not available to rational awareness. The New Age makes a reference to Eastern epistemology in teaching that, to apprehend these subtle relationships, one must “turn inward, and rely on intuition, insight and mystical experience” (Hanegraaff 1996, 110).

The term “holism” is also used in a more restricted way that relates to health and healing. At the core of this movement is the conviction that “every human being is a unique, wholistic, independent relationship of body, mind, emotions and spirit.” Although it does not logically follow from that ontological assessment, New Age practitioners seek to further establish that wholeness—to *render* individuals “whole—physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually” (Hanegraaff 1996, 54). All of these bodily systems can be considered together because they closely interact; physical problems can have mental causes and consequently changing psychological states can cure physical illness (Hanegraaff 1996, 99-101). This second sense of “holism” is considered later in this chapter.

This section concentrates on the first—the association of the microcosm (the person) with the macrocosm (the universe). Although passed through 19th-century “harmonialism,” and Mesmerism, seen in English and American spiritualism, this form of association between the self (the microcosm) and the larger environment originated in an 18th-century source, the work of the philosopher and mystic, Emanuel Swedenborg (2011). *His* original source is the worldview of the European Renaissance, the “doctrine of correspondences..., a doctrine of harmony, for earthly and heavenly spheres resonated with each other as did a host of more specific signs and symbols” (Albanese 1992, 71). The idea of correspondences evokes “the unchanging ‘Platonic world of forms reflecting reality’” (Albanese 1992, 73), wherein the spiritual and material worlds mirror each other (Albanese 1992, 70).

However, New Age holism is not the Renaissance worldview. Swedenborg substantially adapted this vision by integrating it with Darwin’s evolutionary theory, which had dramatically captured European attention at the time. Swedenborg’s innovation modernized the Renaissance worldview by changing the world—as viewed—from timeless to evolving. He incorporated the forward drive of history in the model. This creates

¹⁶ See Hanegraaff 1996, 107.

a *spiral* model of historical progression. (The spiral is generally considered a model of *positive* development or growth in the New Age world [Washburn 2003], i.e., evolution spirals *upwards* not downwards.)

New Age evolutionism also differs from what Charles Darwin's defined in *The Origin of the Species* (1759), in that the latter presupposes random elements as influential of the direction of change. His vision was one of progressive concentration of valuable characteristics within segments of population until they came to characterize the populations themselves over successive generations (because "the fittest" produce more offspring). Darwin saw no intentionality in this process (as when a divine knower might direct these developments), but rather an impersonal incorporation of randomly-occurring characteristics through statistical processes and certain principles of survival. As any scientist should, Darwin had a great respect for chance, or contingent events. By contrast, the New Age view of evolution inherited from Swedenborg holds that there is a degree of *direction* of the changes that occurs over time. To some degree, the universe is being propelled towards an outcome by some internal principle, intention, or mind.

It is true that New Agers differ in the extent to which they credit a thinking deity as the source of this direction (as opposed to an impersonal spirit). This is because they vary in the nature of the whole they believe in. Throughout his study of the New Age worldview, Hanegraaff debates its cohesiveness. He explains that "holism" is more of a general orientation than a belief structure (1996, 119). Various worldviews are represented in New Age holism, but coalesce into two major forms. The first "reduces all manifestations to one ultimate source." The other posits the "universal relatedness of everything" (Hanegraaff 1996, 120-122), without a centre or "source." *Seth*, a voice channeled by Jane Roberts and published as "A Course in Miracles" (1972), uniquely "reduces all manifestations to one ultimate source" (Hanegraaff 1996, 120-122). His metaphysic, claims Hanegraaff, reflects a duality between this-worldliness and otherworldliness—between God as immanent and God as transcendent.¹⁷ However, Hanegraaff contends that Seth's dualism is resolved in historicism, as we discussed above—over time, all manifestations *become* one (the spiral). He concludes that in the end "Ultimate Source" thinking—as with other teleologies—imagines a hierarchical cosmos (Hanegraaff 1996, 123). This is contrasted with 'Universal Interrelatedness,' because the latter lacks a "Source or other ontologically privileged Center." As a result, it "is of an unambiguously monistic character" (Hanegraaff 1996, 128).

¹⁷ A traditional religious parallel to it is "the image of God conceived as a sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere, [which turns up in] ecological and social theories, too. [In secular terms,] the appropriate picture is one of a network in which every point is connected to every other point but in which no point has privileged status" (Hanegraaff 1996, 128).

Seth's role as a major (in fact, the sole) contributor to the New Age cosmology as a hierarchy, in contrast to the more common monistic expressions, leads Hanegraaff to claim there is "a fundamental rift in New Age thinking between two contradictory views of reality," a hierarchical and a monistic one (Hanegraaff 1996, 132). On the other hand, he acknowledges challenges to this position from such New Age visionary and spokesperson as Chris Giscombe¹⁸ who does not see a fundamental division. Rather than an expression of an extreme, Giscombe views Seth's ultimate source holism as an integration of apparent differences. Commenting on here positions, Hanegraaff (1996, 151) concedes: "Indeed, it may be argued that Seth has managed to accomplish a convergence of both types: although everything springs from an ultimate creative Source, it is equally true that every single consciousness is actually the creative source responsible for its own realities" (Hanegraaff).¹⁹

As Hanegraaff explains it, Giscombe's position is that Seth's model not only integrates disparate New Age positions on the relation of the individual to the whole, but does so in a way that eliminates the difference between individual and collective realities. If Giscombe's position is valid, it follows that for New Age practitioners a compromise between collective and individual reality as a basic human dilemma becomes moot. This, as I argue, is indeed a crucial resolution for the worker worldview I describe in this dissertation, as it allows workers to resolve a fundamentally contradictory demand placed upon them within their workplaces: they must present their passion for the goals of the corporation as their own passion. This is said to be so because, to cut costs, corporations now hire only those they are confident will propel *themselves* to high performances minus the traditional blandishments of either carrot or stick. This is certainly true. However, the theory of the corporation as a psytopia, discussed later, implies higher stakes for this collapse.

¹⁸ Giscombe is a New Age public figure and symbolic ecological activist whose headquarters is "The Light Institute" in Galisteo, New Mexico. Her ecological efforts are consistent with holistic "psychic" approaches to world betterment. She writes in *Human Nature Alliance: ECO SOS* (2014-2016) that with her initiative: "Human Potential and Global Responsibility, the idea was to use our wonderful intuition and compassion to shift local and global situations... The concept of manifesting and de-manifesting came from "calling the rain" which the Hopis have done for hundreds of years. Passing energy into and out of manifestation utilizes the same principle. I have now begun the Human-Nature Alliance/ECO SOS. Through our interconnection, we can send energy to any situation across the globe that needs uplifting help." She documents her worldwide lectures and publishes texts on her belief system. See (thelight@lightinstitute.com).

¹⁹ Hanegraaff (1996, 151) clarifies that Giscombe's holism goes beyond Seth as, after "taking Seth's vision to its logical conclusion..., Seth's Source is discarded and 'only radical holographic interconnectedness remains... making each individual mind the center of the universe.'"

I discuss this psychic conflation of individual and collective interests in workplaces, later, with the different terminologies of several scholars of this process: as co-linearization, as the second privatization of religion, and as the formulation of the corporation as a psytopia. Additionally, the imaginative conflation of individual and collective interests also occurs within the larger society as the neoliberal worldview that frames post-Fordism. In this case, the collective is characterized as “the economy,” through which individual actors, as consumers, “find themselves.” As per the relation of the worksite to the analogous broader public value-system, I see the former as the ritual centre of this collapse of the individual to the economic whole, as the shrines where the proper relationship is demonstrated and from which the proper understanding emanates. I will also show later that these workers have sponsored a meso-level discourse on this relationship, sitting in scale between the micro (workers’) and macro (neoliberal citizens’) worldviews. An important characterization of this discourse is as a “network cosmology,” posited explicitly and implicitly by worker and industry spokespeople and theorists who attempt to articulate the nature and correctness of a conflation, if not collapse, of individual and collective interests.

The interpretation that Giscombe describes here, with Hanegraaff’s qualified support, asserts a fundamental parallel between post-Fordist workplace, and the New Age (i.e., neospiritual), cosmologies. However, the ambivalence that Hanegraaff demonstrates about the validity of these integrations—both the integration of New Age views in general, and the integration of the individual and collective that Seth’s worldview supposedly accomplishes—suggests that the neospiritual (i.e., New Age) worldview might figure in workplaces in other than accommodationist ways. This is a topic to be explored at a later date.

Regardless of these differences, “New Age believers do not regard evolution as random, but as teleological or creative. The idea of a universal process of evolution of consciousness... is central” to New Age beliefs, claims Hanegraaff (1996, 158). Swedenborg’s transformation of the timeless Renaissance worldview into a historicist process makes it a teleological worldview.²⁰ When he produced this non-Darwinian evolutionary model, Swedenborg was trying to overcome the relativism of science and modern history (based on science and history’s gradual accumulation of knowledge that over time refutes former truths). These (rejected) manifestations of relativism are referred to as “historist” (vs. “historicist,” above) models of societal change. Swedenborg complicated the Renaissance model of correspondences partly as an effort to “refute Enlightenment rationalism (i.e., *knowing* exclusively through mental activity), but not because he rejected the idea of unchanging universal laws, an essential feature of the Enlightenment worldview. To the con-

²⁰ A teleology is “a doctrine explaining phenomena by final causes; a doctrine . . . that ends are immanent in nature” Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Inc., 1990, New York.

trary, he believed the same, but felt they were only accessible via art and intuition. His adjustments forced him into a teleological worldview that, in Hanegraaff's view, is an "unstable mixture" of elements that now characterizes the New Age vision. Swedenborg's model of broad-level societal processes "is therefore intermediate between Enlightenment and the more radical types of Counter-Enlightenment. Both occultism and New Age *are* highly interested in large-scale theories of the evolution of humanity and of consciousness, of the general type exemplified by German idealistic philosophers such as Herder, Schelling and Hegel" (1996, 415).

Hanegraaff considers Swedenborg's construction to have taken up the worst of both of the worlds it straddled. He argues that it undermines the potential for creativity amongst believers because it denies a random character to events, and chance motivates people to be creative. On the other hand, Swedenborg's worldview equally discourages a serious investment in understanding the regularities of the world through rational inquiry, because these regularities are judged as unavailable to rational consciousness. This latter is therefore regarded by New Age thinkers as, essentially, *verboden*, and a fruitless form of action. Supposedly, the principles that change history, although inexorable, are intrinsically hidden from understanding. Through his new model, Swedenborg "killed nature [because] his plan re-introduced an element of dualism which posits the superiority of spirit over matter—nature acted on by spirit... In other words: the constellation of a higher spiritual world of life is mirrored by a lower material world, which is dead" (Hanegraaff 1996, 426).

To have "killed nature" is surely a great indictment of any system of ideas supposed to have a connection with New Age spirituality, or indeed any religious ethos that emerged from the counterculture. However, Hanegraaff insists on this point: "It should be noted that Cartesian dualism is combined in Swedenborg's mind with traditional Christian emphasis on renouncing the things of this world for the sake of heaven. [However, in Swedenborg's world,] not matter as such is responsible for evil... but the mental orientation of state of consciousness of human beings" (Hanegraaff 1996, 428).

Hanegraaff's analysis refutes the neospiritual and popular understanding that feeling is the source of creativity, and shows the reality to be more complex. He attributes this misunderstanding—which he says is much more prevalent in English, as opposed to European philosophy—to an extreme rationalist-irrationalist dualism. New Agers reproduce and complicate this error in Hanegraaff's judgement. They claim to valorize feeling over thought, but the teleological character of the New Age worldview shows it to have a strong rationalist undercurrent. Following Swedenborg, they are unresponsive to if not intolerant of incongruity and randomness (which responsiveness sparks the imagination, and which intolerance hobbles scientific inquiry). This implies that the New Age's scientific credentials are questionable as the

worldview is also creatively closed. This anti-empiricism is a feature of the tendency of the New Age to conflate individual and collective interests, and possibly makes its product, neospirituality, susceptible to the rationalization of voices that we will see is product of post-Fordist capitalism as well. I will discuss this issue in many contexts of the dissertation, for example, in the next chapter as mathesization.

The direction of history implied by New Age holism is towards some ideal condition. The transformation to a better world in the future is an original New Age belief. However, since its early expression by Alice Bailey, strict New Age millenarianism has lost saliency in favour of the celebration of personal, individual change. Nevertheless, the discussions of reincarnation and scientism below reveal that the prospects for the world in its entirety are still a concern. The later New Age vision admits that, as the individual changes, so in parallel may the world. Reincarnation helps, since the span of more than one existence allows reaching into the past and future. In the end, when I change for the better, so does the world. Further discussion of holism is intertwined with the related topics below.

Reincarnation

That people *reincarnate* is an integral element of this evolutionary model. However, reincarnation is conceived differently from its Eastern forms in that New Agers regard it positively—an opportunity *to perfect oneself* while living. (Among other communications, New Age channellers help people make contact with their past selves, to acquire insight and advice from them that may guide action now or in the future). In Buddhism and Hinduism, the necessity to reincarnate if one has not met certain requirements in one's life is abhorred and considered a curse. In Buddhism, the only way to free oneself from this process, over a series of lifetimes, is to become detached from desire, while holding onto one's duty, or dharma; in Hinduism, views on reincarnation are in the same vein. Thus, New Age reincarnation loses much of the profundity of Buddhism and Hinduism because it fails to make a sharp distinction between life in materiality and the escape from it.

New Age reincarnation clearly has an optimistic thrust to it, in keeping with the larger American ethos of progress. New Age's "weak this-worldiness," an orientation discussed in detail below, expresses ambivalence about material (as opposed to spiritual) existence. Since the "reality for the New Age [is] a new version of 'progressivism'" (Campbell 2007, 326), reincarnation is partly valued as an opportunity to improve one's life *in* the material world. In fact, Hanegraaff (1992, 262) contends that most New Agers (as true of Westerners in general) do not actually believe in reincarnation as such, but rather, "progressive spiritual development." Campbell (2007, 326-331) argues historical narratives are not now credible, and that the history that fascinates the West—"their version of reincarnation"—is a mythical meaning system. This is a move "from materialistic dualism to metaphysical monism."

The New Age's version of reincarnation suggests a reduced willingness to recognize elements of the world (i.e., past events) as "other," but real; yet connections to past and future are sought through alternate means. Reincarnation is an accessible form of "progressive spiritualism." It provides a framework for an individual to construct a personal narrative and invest it with cosmic significance. Self-development over numerous existences is believed to contribute to the progress of all creation (Campbell 2007, 335-338).

Scientism

With discredited historical narratives, the "collapse of epistemological realism in science" follows, according to Campbell (2007, 331). Along with the wider Western public, the New Age challenged the value of science. An outcome was first demonstrated within religious studies by Bellah et al's (1985) interview subject "Shiela," who famously attended to her "own small voice" when in doubt about the truth.

In *After Heaven* (1998, 149), Robert Wuthnow reported the same of his spirituality-seeking subjects, Avery and Coleman. He explained these responses:

For many people, the deeper spiritual context in which such exploration were being carried out consisted of a growing uneasiness about objective knowledge itself. When there is assurance that an objective reality exists, either in nature or in the supernatural realm, then attention can be devoted to understanding this external reality. But when doubt arises as to the objectivity of this reality, attention shifts inward toward the subjective realm of perceptions and experiences.

Commonly, New Agers use the language of science without attending to its spirit. Although early assessment (see L. Dawson 1998a) suggested that the NAS is open to science. However, commonly, scientific concepts are used figuratively to validate New Age metaphysical claims. These are interpretations of science transposed to different, and arguably inappropriate domains of discourse, a practice Hammer (2004, 205–08) calls "scientism." An iconic example of scientific New Age literature is Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics* (1975).

The processes of the mind, little understood or accessible, are commonly described by analogy to more understandable operations in the intelligible world. For example, Freud's early theory of repression has been called a "hydraulic" model, after engineering principles well-understood in Freud's time (Brennan, 2000). The antecedent traditions to New Age spirituality—occultism, Mesmerism and New Thought—commonly practiced scientism. Their spokespeople selected an emerging new science to explain their claims as to how the spirit operated. Famously, Anton Mesmer, founder of mesmerism, relied on the language of 19th century physics and its new discovery of electricity to explain how "animal magnetism" worked to eliminate the physical and emotional ailments of his clients (Jenkins 2000).

The New Age's scientific imagery has been updated from Mesmer's time, consistent with its more recent founding. In 1895, physicist Max Planck built on James Clerk Maxwell's 1870 hypothesis that light is an electromagnetic, vibratory phenomenon, which travels in waves (appearing variously, as either matter or energy). He confirmed Maxwell's research: "Matter dissolved into energy and then reconfigured itself as matter, as later research with mass accelerators showed" (Albanese 1992, 71). Accordingly, referencing this element of quantum theory helps structure New Age theology. Additionally, the New Age worldview engages esoteric models of the world based on the holographic paradigm of David Bohm and Karl Pribram, the paradigm of self-organization associated with Ilya Prigogine, the theory of formative causation of Rupert Sheldrake, and the Gaia-hypothesis of James Lovelock (Hanegraaff 1996, 62-76 and 113-181).

As they are interpreted by New Age practitioners, the scientific paradigms listed above are similar in their holism. For example, in a holographic image, each element contains and can reveal the whole image. Therefore, expanding this theory to a worldview suggests that each part of the universe not only connects to, but represents, the whole. Since, according to New Age theology, the whole universe is infused with spirit, it is therefore construed that every act and idea of a spiritual nature relates to the same divinity (Hanegraaff 1996).

However, of the scientific paradigms listed above, Lovelock's interest may have offered the most utility for satisfying collective needs, both imaginative and practical, at this time. Twentieth-century discoveries in organic chemistry and biological science have guided development of artificial intelligence, as shown by the discussion of scientist Jay Forrester's work below. New understanding of brain processes served as models of network relations (as the network cosmology) as I will discuss in a later chapter. Additionally, the systemic processes identified in organic chemistry strongly influenced New Age thinking about the relationship of the individual to the whole, the collective, and even to the divine. Commonly, New Agers criticized what they saw as "traditional" science's "reductionism," its supposed tendency to conceptualize "living" wholes as constituted by parts whose independent actions make the whole function—mechanically, as it were (Hanegraaff 1996, 119). This has its obvious parallel to the assembly-line organization of work, which presented a dreadful prospect for those working, or about to work, in such a form of organization.

New Agers also charged "science" with theoretically separating "the spirit" from the matter of the living and assuming the spirit to be an epiphenomenon of material processes (Hanegraaff 1996, 120). In common with many New Age practitioners, ecofeminist Carolyn Merchant (1972, 46) lamented that "during the 17th century, the organic framework, in which the Mother-Earth image was a moral restraint against the exploitation of nature, was replaced by a new experimental science and worldview that saw nature not as an

organism but as a machine—dead, inert, and insensitive to human action.” By contrast, “before the scientific revolution, most ordinary people assumed that the earth was in the center of the cosmos, that the earth was a nurturing mother, and that the cosmos was alive, not dead” (Merchant 1972, 48). Merchant expresses New Age flight from the alienation of the industrial mindset, the norm of social roles and modern power relations. She hopes for a world where expression is “true” and personal. In the end, she wants it restored to its past form, when the “relationship between most peoples and the earth was an “I-thou” ethic of propitiation to be made, before damming a brook, cutting a tree, or sinking a mine-shaft” (Merchant 1972, 41). As New Agers more commonly express, we should treat sentient beings not as means (towards our instrumental goals), but as ends in themselves.

In contrast, political theorist Janet Biehl (1991) rejects the idea that science *per se* is dominating. With such an idea, she argues ecofeminists are practicing another form of scientism. Ecofeminists and New Agers should target a more particular reality than science to truly realize their aspirations. This is “the much more insidious process of the instrumentalization of society, and the social forces that have benefitted so greatly from their use of instrumental techniques” (Biehl 1991, 112). Vilifying (or romanticizing) a lived social process by applying an abstract label—“science” in this case—is Biehl’s definition of ‘scientism.’

Later in this dissertation, in Chapter Seven, I recap Biehl’s argument and focus on the scientism—or more properly, the technologism—of posthierarchy, as an abstraction that obscures complex and fluid human dynamics.

Personal Healing Ethos

In the New Age view, the interchangeability of matter and energy suggests not only that material objects interrelate energetically, but that mind and body deeply interact, an interaction that allows and legitimizes healing by other methods than surgery and drugs. Moreover, the idea of simultaneous *healing* of both self and environment follows from the *holism* of the New Age. Mesmerism, and quantum and cybernetic theories, have encouraged the belief that “the boundaries between matter and spirit [are] regularly transgressed and, moreover, conflated. Matter became spiritual; spirit, it was discovered, possessed a refined material form” (Albanese 1992, 69). Accordingly, a common term used now to describe New Age beliefs and practice is the mind/body/spirit movement. (See for example: <http://www.mindbodyspirit.co.uk/>.)

As per the analysis of one of the first to identify the New Age as a movement, Marilyn Ferguson (1980, 56), holistic medicine “seeks to correct the underlying disharmony causing the problem[, by recognizing the body as a] field of energy within other fields[, by acknowledging the mind as] primary or [a] coequal factor in *all* illness.” Another “organic intellectual,” Shakti Gawain claims that “‘dis-ease’ in the body... is always a reflection of conflict, tension, anxiety or disharmony on other levels of being as well” (Lewis and Melton

1992, 81). Accordingly, the New Age has embraced such “healers” as the “theosophically-inclined physician, Richard Gerber (2001) [who] believes we are ‘beings of light.’ [Since] matter is composed of highly complex, infinitely orchestrated energy fields, an ‘Einsteinian’ paradigm of healing should replace a Newtonian one. [Enter, therefore,] ‘vibrational medicine,’ [which entails] the manipulation of energy fields, ‘instead of manipulating the cells and organs through drugs and surgery” (Albanese 1992, 75–76). Alternatively, American holistic physician and New Age celebrity Deepak Chopra believes it is not the *harmonial*, but “the *shamanic* law reigns supreme.” In his view, “healing means journeying into the realm of non-matter in which the subtle forces transmute into material substance” (Albanese 1992, 77).

Depersonalization of the Divine

As discussed above, within the range of New Age beliefs there is not always a divine figure maintaining the coherence of “the whole.” The “universal interrelatedness of all things [is] *either or not* based upon a common/creative source of Being.” Nevertheless, consistent with the emphasis on *energy*, *if* there is a “common source” of universal interrelatedness, this is an *abstracted* divine force. The New Age divine image is not one drawn from Christian theistic religiosity.” The most common image of God is the notion of cosmic energy as a life force in which all partake (Stone 1976, 102). “In summary, individuals have a healing life-force, continuous with an omnipresent, immanent life-force that is the dominant power in the universe, and which can heal, inform, inspire, create, and bring harmony” (Campbell 2007, 110).

Engagement in Planetary Health

Assimilating these two forms of identification we find in holism (of mind, body and spirit as well as of self and cosmos), New Agers believe that, in healing themselves, they can heal the planet. Indeed, Catherine Albanese asserts that “‘healing of self and planet’ is the main practice of the New Age” (Albanese 1998, 348). Techniques for healing include “dietary regimes, detoxification, living on wholly pure and perfectly balanced diets, such as macrobiotics and the use of ‘natural’ products” (Campbell 1987, 85). Healing is, however, different from curing. Healing requires acknowledging one’s interconnection with, or accessing the energy of, the larger spirit or whole of which one is a part. Acknowledging/establishing connection is the *process*, and possibly the *precondition* for, *healing*. Healing “is a work of reconciliation.”²¹

²¹ The way that Falun Gong functions for believers in China, according to Ming Xiao in *The Cultural Economy of Falun Gong in China* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), is a sophisticated interpretation of this process. (The process she describes occurs in the context of a more coherent group—i.e., a “new religious movement”—than in the New Age milieu and under different social conditions than in North America, which is the

Albanese (1992, 77-78) suggests there is an “ambiguity of the healing that New Agers desire. It is surely personal and deeply intimate... but it is also a plea for the healing of the planet and a charter to work in ways that are seen to help the process.”²² Scholars relate this identity of self and planet to the emergence of global communications structures, economy and governance (Robertson and Garret 1991; Hanegraaff 2001). Both the shamanic and harmonial visions express the imagined interconnection of personal and planetary healing.

Albanese observes that when the scientific orientation is combined with the holistic vision, as in the New Age worldview, description is commonly collapsed into prescription. Really, this logic reflects a confusion of *is* and *ought*. Attributing a collective character to the world as a scientific fact (such as when the organic or holographic processes are identified with the entire human-natural cosmos) implies that one could not escape interconnection if one tried. Nevertheless, despite the logic that the supposedly “true” form of the universe (i.e., as an integral whole) demands rather than invites cooperation, one’s willingness to cooperate is deemed a virtue. This is a morality by fiat. The *fact* of the claimed connection somewhat oddly ignites the exhortation to New Age believers to strengthen it. This seems to be parallel to the contradiction with regard

prime setting for the contents of this dissertation. The differences cannot be incidental, since the existence of the collective is key. However, Xiao’s explanation seems to apply.) Xiao sees the rhetorical reappropriation of the Chinese cultural heritage by Falun Gong’s leader, Li, as recasting the *privatized* suffering of many Chinese citizens (currently sustaining the shocks of radical social transformation) as *common* suffering, shared with other members of the cult community. As is well-known, China’s embrace of global capitalism over only a few decades has destroyed stable and familiar forms of sustenance, such as entire home-towns through expropriation and family supports via social and employment mobility. This dislocation has been somatised, creating illness without biological cause. Li’s rhetoric and the Falun Gong community help transform the illness into wellness. Xiao claims that *healing* occurs when members begin to trust and gain emotional support from each other (Xiao 2011, 53-61).

Xiao’s position that the *trauma* of radical social change is the main *reason* for Falun Gong participation hints at why this ‘healing’ is needed in other places, such as in North America, undergoing less radical but significant transformations too. Scholar of New Age religions in Brazil, Andrew Dawson, *also* holds that much New Age activity in Brazil emerges from the dislocation of the ‘middle class’ since Brazil became democratic and neoliberal. (As we will discuss further, the term ‘middle class’ in this context refers to a more insecure state than the term historically would suggest.)

²² This association of personal healing with that of “the planet” suggests the realization that environmental effects and personal illness are related. Epidemiologists know that a more stable social environment (i.e., of ‘the whole’) reduces the severity and incidence of somatic illness. However, the New Age view seems to confuse the direction of influence, thinking that *individuals* are making the planet sick, and not vice versa. Of course, they also overestimate the possible impact of high levels of personal “empowerment,” believing that self-healing will heal the planet. Such mistakes of analysis, and the level of grandiosity required to make them, need not be pursued further here, except to make several points. One is that the sense that one can and must individually try to change the world would seem to invite a cauldron of feelings of guilt and inadequacy for its ills, at the same time as it shields people from grasping systemic causes of suffering—theirs, or the planet’s—which must, by definition, be addressed systematically.

to workplaces alluded to above and to be discussed further in the next chapter as the formulation of corporate psytopiae: if the corporation is indeed the embodiment of the (divine?) whole, actions to strengthen this status (through workers fealty to the corporation) would seem unnecessary and redundant. Nevertheless, in workplaces as in general for the New Age, the existence of the micro/macro connection *demand*s a personal active engagement in the hoped-for planetary health. Despite the great power of the cosmos (or earthly plane) to stabilize itself—its vaunted homeostasis—human beings are nevertheless obliged to provide further stabilization.

Although reinforcing a supposed fact is a questionable idea, so is the virtue of trying to do so. However, as Albanese explains, New Agers rarely question whether their self-healing, assumed to radiate out to the world in its entirety, will have positive consequences for planetary health. They do not debate whether their capacity to change the planet automatically implies their right to try. Their scientific mindset (i.e., following the model), morally justifies attempting mental control of the environment. Albanese shrewdly judges that, with another of the sciences the New Age embraces, quantum theory (derived from Plank's, Maxwell's, and Einstein's work):

[T]he stage was set for a latter-day synthesis, [wherein] the blurring of matter and energy at the subatomic level would be linked in principle to the occult romanticism of the mesmeric-Swedenborgian habit of mind. The manipulative potential of minds that could control self and others would be joined to a matter that followed laws of harmony. Thus, *acts of harmony would become, simultaneously, acts of power and control*. And the world in which these things would happen by the late twentieth century would belong to the New Age [my italics] (Albanese 1992, 73).

Re-enchanted World

According to Hanegraaff New Age holism is tempered by *this-worldliness*, particularly of the weak variety. He contrasts this with *a holism of a transcendent absolute variety*, which he defines as *strong this-worldliness*. Echoing the earlier discussion of reincarnation, holism and scientism, he notes that weak this-worldliness is not so much “a focus on the world of experience as such [but on] a better ‘this-world’ to come which is modeled on the present world, but better.... [T]he better ‘this-world’ may be envisaged either as located on this earth (which amounts to some form of millenarianism) or in another reality beyond death” (Hanegraaff 1996, 114).

Hanegraaff attributes *strong this-worldliness* to Neo-pagans, whereas *other-worldliness* is rarely seen in the New Age (he makes an exception in the tradition that follows *A Course in Miracles*). Thus, when New Agers borrow from Hinduism, and refer to the *maya* of existence, they do *not* mean that the material world is an illusion, faith in the reality of which offers the believer nothing but violence, sorrow and pain—as the

Sanskrit term is meant to convey. On the contrary, if one is not cut off from the sources of revivifying energy, life is imagined to be intrinsically exciting (Hanegraaff 1996, 115). New Agers want to bring the divine energy into the world, not to escape from materiality. As the discussion of post-millenarianism implies, and as alluded to in Chapter One, New Agers (like Pentecostals and Charismatic Catholics²³) “believe in the reality of a spiritual realm that is distinct yet parallel to the physical world of our senses, one that is capable of breaking through into the latter” (Campbell 2007, 345).

A this-worldly attitude often finds expressions in ecological terms—and the promotion of “the re-enchantment of the world.” Lovelock’s vision of the earth as Gaia represents the planet as alive; “homeostasis is maintained by active feedback processes operated automatically and unconsciously by the biota” (Lovelock 1988, 19). However, Earth’s “energy” (or perhaps its balance) is recognized as having been damped, and New Agers are, as noted, obliged to help restore it. Harsh industrial processes (with Fordist assembly-lines in mind) are seen as a source of energetic degradation, as is environmental pollution. However, the energy of strife—quintessentially, violence and war—also degrades or masks the earth’s revivifying energy. To reduce violence on a personal level is presumably one of the means by which personal healing impacts the planet positively.

Analytical thought also masks the earth’s energy. Analysis is supposedly the thought process only of Newtonian scientists, who study a particular sphere of the earth’s operation that works primarily mechanically, necessitating certain kinds of study methods. I believe they stand in for the “traditional scientists” who are considered deficient in the New Age culture. By contrast, the sciences that New Agers cele-

²³ Many scholars have noted a similarity between the New Age ethos and what is pursued in the neo-Pentecostal and charismatic renewal movements. Campbell (1987, 345) summarizes these positions: “Pentecostalism stresses the disciples’ experience of being ‘filled with the Holy Spirit’ on the day of Pentecost. The charismatics and Pentecostals believe they have similar experiences. They believe they interact with God on a daily basis. Primarily, this belief that they have received “the charismatic ‘gifts’ that were granted to the disciples on the day of Pentecost, traditionally identified as the powers of prophecy, tongues, healing, miracles, wisdom, [etc., suggests of] this form of Christianity... that it bears a considerable resemblance to the New Age movement. Several commentators have remarked on this similarity, listing the many parallels (Neitz 1987; Lucas 1992; L. Dawson 1998).

“[Additionally,] just like New Agers, Pentecostals see personal renewal as the answer to social problems, [where that] growth is also seen as essentially spiritual in nature. What is more, this is to be achieved by precisely the same means in both cases, which is by getting in touch with God or a higher consciousness or a different reality, a process that is identified with accepting oneself, being oneself, or being fully alive. As Lorne Dawson (1998, 146) observes, ‘both stress a discovery of the experience of sacred power in the daily lives of ordinary people.... Both movements associate these experiences with the continuous presence of spiritual energy, whether prana, mana, orgone energy, or the Holy Spirit in human affairs.’”

brate—which study quantum dynamics, holography, complexity and cybernetic systems, for some examples—presumably do not demand analysis as part of their processes (Hanegraaff 1996).

The moral and legal status of animals has emerged as a concern as a part of this outlook. Animals' representation as mere chattel is opposed. Awareness of the intelligence and sensibilities of many animals, from pets to whales, has led to campaigns not only for good care, but for a level of right to live according to their own "species-being" (Clarke 2004). Ethical vegetarianism is another manifestation of concern for animals' welfare.

Eco-feminism and the sacred ecology movement also express these beliefs, but these movements generally repudiate a New Age affiliation. Nevertheless, they all have in common what they reject. This includes the many dualisms that L. Dawson (2005) listed. In the words of movement ecologist Lynn White, these movements, including also Neo-pagans, express their 'this-worldliness'—weak or strong—by rejecting the supposed Christian practice of "taking the divine out of all that is earthly and lodging it in some distant and comprehensively male Godhead" (cited in Campbell 1987, 86). The inability to "sense" the intelligence, not only of other human beings, but also all other earthly beings, is claimed to be the outcome of Christianity's transcendentalism. Based on the above concerns, Campbell (1987, 88) feels the New Age and these other movements add a "vague, mostly depoliticized, spiritual dimension to the environmental movement."

Prosperity Consciousness

The intermingling of the spiritual and material realms is also responsible for the ease with which New Age teachings have been translated into programs for self-advancement in a material sense. For those with prosperity consciousness, there is no limit to what "right mind" can accomplish in the material world. Covering the gamut, Michael York (2010, 59) notes that "psychic powers become helpful tools for military efficiency, business acumen, and political and economic management." This *human potential* orientation of the New Age belief structure stems from its New Thought antecedents. Perhaps inspired by growing awareness of the capacity of the human mind, New Thought emerged with a number of other American religious movements from the 1870s onward which, in common, attributed potentially-divine powers to human beings. New Thought itself became a specific designation in the 1890s, whereas derivations from it, such as Christian Science, also marked out a particular manifestation of this conviction (Melton 1992, 23–26). Many Christian authorities declaimed these movements as heretical, since they attributed to human beings the powers that only God could have. Worst was the denial of the reality of original sin, which made Jesus's sacrifice unnecessary (Jenkins 2000).

However, rather than usurping God's dominion, this movement posits an alliance. In Christian Science, for example, filling one's mind with thoughts of God leaves no room for illness, or evil, in one's body.

However, in some versions of this belief, the application of divine power through the human vehicle ranges beyond the confines of the body, to influence the environment. In these visions, not only one's physical, but also one's material, health could improve. Gordon Melton (1992, 26) connects these for us: "From the beginning within New Thought, the idea that God is the source of all good led to the understanding that if just attunement with God could overcome disease it could in like measure overcome poverty."

Matter and energy intertwine for the New Age. The world can manifest the mind's contents because both are of the same "stuff." This instrumental aspect of mental power is one reason why Mary Baker Eddy coined the name Christian Science for her movement; students of New Thought are scientists, studying and harnessing the power of God. That desire, or will (from whatever source), can dictate "natural" processes is another illustration of the teleology of the New Age worldview. The universe is propelled on a trajectory. The intentions and growing knowledge of enlightened human beings provides part of the propulsion system.²⁴

More recent formulations of this principle spread widely in American popular culture. The publication in 1952, of *The Power of Positive Thinking*, by Methodist minister, Norman Vincent Peale (1963), supported by a half-century of lecturing, radio and television programming, was hugely influential. The attitude he encouraged, along with others such as Robert Schuller (1967), came to be called 'prosperity consciousness' (popularly, "the power of mind over matter"). Concurrently, humanistic psychologists, particularly Abraham Maslow, (whose contribution we consider in a following chapter) founded and developed the human potential movement (which branched into transpersonal psychology).

Eva Illouz (2008) shows how, from the late 20th century onwards, prosperity consciousness evolved into a therapeutic attitude to life's challenges.²⁵ The therapeutic attitude is inculcated through a set of procedures

²⁴The evolutionism of the New Age does not restrict progress to biological entities. What evolves is *beyond* or in addition to bodies and their functionality and greater capacities of brains, if the thinking of Catholic theologian and mystic, Teilhard de Chardin, (*Let me Explain*. New York: Harper and Row, 1970) is considered. Apparently influenced by the impending *information age*, de Chardin saw the bank of knowledge to which humanity has access—which he called the *noosphere*—growing enormously, and becoming universally accessible through some kind of advanced human apprehensive or mystical capability. Again, however, he used the biological (i.e., holistic) metaphor of "a difference that makes a difference," (the expression of communications theorist, Gregory Bateson), to represent his idea that beyond a certain volume of such knowledge, a threshold is reached at which the nature of being human changes.

²⁵ This theme has been well-explored by scholars of religion, particularly as an offshoot of the "commodification of religion" critique. Chandler (2010, 111-2) highlights important themes: "In the memorable phrase of Christopher Lasch, a 'culture of narcissism' [underwrites] the consumptive ethic of late capitalism[. This] substitutes attachments to commodities for attachment to real people, thereby disrupting the development of a coherent identity and the ability

involving self-revelation, a process in which many have sought and received education during the post-Fordist era. Illouz shows us that the route to one's better and more successful self always involves learning an "articulation regime," carried out orally or in writing, of one's personally-cherished or resisted qualities. Besides the group, counsellor or therapist, the presumed audience for this new form of soul-searching is not God, angels, or "ascended masters," but oneself.

Illouz presents the therapeutic identity as a learned behaviour that mediates between a Fordist-type acceptance of one's life-circumstances and the new world of the commodified self. Superficially following the psychoanalytic model established (for elites) by Freud and his followers, these therapeutic practices expanded and diversified in the late twentieth-century, under the direct or indirect supervision of psychological coaches (the latter, through "self-help" vehicles). As it became general, skill with self-talk gained value. Daniel Goleman (1995) successfully defined this as *emotional intelligence* (EI).

The pursuit of EI may have become widespread in response to people trying to save family and social relationships as their stable forms degraded since the 1970s. This was a result of many factors, including lowered standards of living for North American middle classes. As the pursuit of restored "intimacy" with others, a vaunted outcome of the therapeutic process, became normalized, psychologists and counsellors of all descriptions set themselves up to facilitate this for clients. It is perhaps because of the widespread professional promotion of self-revelation that, as Illouz notes, very few commentators have classified this behavior as making a fetish of communications. She suspects, however, that it does.

The ideal... of communication[, which] has never been questioned by sociologists, may well be... 'a language ideology,' [which] resides in a number of beliefs: That self-knowledge is gained by introspection; that introspection can in turn help us understand, control, and come to terms with our social and emotional environment; and that verbal disclosure is a key to social relations (Illouz 2008, 244).

to relate to others in a genuine way outside the nexus of the family.... Given these challenges, individuals (mostly the affluent) have gravitated towards therapy, and this 'therapeutic ethic' has replaced religion as the new ideology of American culture." Chandler (2010, 187) further explains that the therapeutic ethic "links the social-psychological narcissism in American culture more generally to the specific activities of what [Lasch] describes as the 'new consciousness movement.' [In] *Habits of the Heart* (1985)[,] Bellah *et al* argue that the therapeutic discourse that has arisen since the sixties is socially untenable because it frames moral concerns as a matter of personal preference, and is, therefore, not able to give any substantive definition to the public good" However, clarifies Chandler (2010, 121-139), unlike for Lasch, their concern is not its substance but the extent to which it replaces "enduring" human commitments.

This assumption of the intrinsic value of self-revelatory activity is an element of the fixing of the self that we consider later—a complement to post-Fordism’s transformation of the self into a commodity and a “spiritual worker.”

Transformations, Large and Small

The evolutionary idea is an ingredient of New Age millenarianism, which itself is of a particular type—*post*-millenarianism. Post-millenarianists believe that the world must be prepared (improved) before the final divine initiative of world-transformation can occur. This contrasts with pre-millenarianism, which has believers wait for the arrival of the avatar, or divine entity, who initiates or autonomously brings about world transformation (Clarke 2006, 365). The post-millenarianism of the New Age requires its believers to participate in the coming of the New Age, as partners of the divine principle, before the avatar arrives or the divine principle appears. This partnership is only possible because of the permeability of the boundaries between material and spiritual worlds, in which New Agers also believe.

As suggested above, the “expectations of a coming New Age,” which Hanegraaff’s considered a key New Age belief, has come to be nuanced by scholars of religion (Melton 1992). As New Age spirituality became “neospirituality,” the expectations and even hopes for a collective *global* transformation have, these scholars argue, fallen away from this worldview.

For example, Michael York’s assessment of the New Age in the 1990s (1995, 49) emphasized *millenarian* hopes. Then, he claimed that “amidst mutually contradictory opinions and beliefs[...] what unites all New Agers, however, is a vision of radical mystical transformation on both the personal and collective levels...; the awakening... is the New Age springboard for a quantum leap of collective consciousness which is to bring about and constitute the New Age itself.” However, later (York 2003) he restricted this transformation to what occurs to individuals. As the postmillenarian ideal was dropped, what *was* core became converted to a smaller kind of transformation— that of the individual. Heelas also makes this distinction.²⁶ At the same time, the oppositional tone of the New Age was muted.

The broader diffusion changed the New Age vision. Indeed, from its predecessors, through the *stricto*, to the *lato* versions, the agents religiously appealed to to facilitate change become more mundane (i.e., the godhead is progressively downgraded). To illustrate, New Age *stricto* founder, Alice Bailey (whose vision built on Theosophy) expected named “ascended masters,” and lower-level god-figures to intervene in

²⁶ See Hanegraaff 1996, 115-116.

earthly affairs, for a global transformation. Over time, “angels” (with or without pedigree) and esoteric channels were more commonly appealed to.²⁷ Eventually the intervenor becomes “energy” *per se*, and the only point of intervention, the individual (Campbell 2007, 346–47). At the extreme, as noted by Campbell (below), even ritualistic practices whose original role is to call the deities, become the putative sources of transformative power.

As these sources become more mundane and impersonal, so are the anticipated impacts reduced in scope (Sutcliffe and Gilhus 2013, 4). This is clarified by Campbell (2007, 120).

[T]he new age *sensu lato* signifies a more this-worldly cluster of beliefs and practices with the ‘spiritual growth’ of human beings at its centre—closely related to cultural consumption after the 1960s—New Age *sensu lato* is strongly immanentistic and focused on life in the ‘here and now,’ and retains only weak traces of the original millennialistic goal, in the form of transformative expectation attached by users to the many available beliefs *and practices*. (My italics.)

Given this diminution in power of the intervenor and scope of the intervention, will not the referent to which holism refers—i.e., the whole that is to be impacted by personal transformation—be also reduced? If we refer above to the idea of an enchanted world as a New Age belief, yet consider it against this diminution of the agents and sites of action, it is not reasonable to wonder whether “the earth” is now (or will become soon) too large a unit for the imagination to reach towards? In fact, in the next chapter, I explore the claim that “the whole” has now been reduced—at least for workplace practitioners of neospirituality—to the corporation.

There are exceptions to these trends. Catherine Albanese believes that millenarianism has always been weaker in the North American, as opposed to the European New Age, due to the former’s gestation within the Californian counterculture and its domination by the metaphysical and New Thought traditions (Albanese 1992, 97). Andrew Dawson (2007) found that millenarianism had *not* diminished in the Brazilian New Age when he studied it in the early 21st century.²⁸ These last few points indicate that the millenarianism of the New Age is not a retired scholarly debate.

²⁷ *Stricto* refers to a period when the term had “a fairly restricted and unambiguous meaning relating, as the term would suggest, to an apocalyptic or millenarian tendency, that is, an expectation that a ‘new,’ that is to say more spiritual, age was imminent” (Campbell 2007, 120).

²⁸ Its continued existence presented him with a major conundrum, because, as he noted, millenarianism (especially as ‘pre-millenarianism’), has always been associated with an underclass whereas in Brazil it is found in *new era*

Sacralization of the Self

Another of its core features, the *sacralization of the self*, is an outcome of the perceived permeability of the boundaries of the material and spiritual worlds, the holistic vision, the way of seeing the self as perfectible (which undergirds the therapeutic mentality), and the understanding that individuals have a role to play in ushering in the new millennium. If trying to create a divine world depends partly on perfecting oneself, then the divine must reside in the self. York (2001, 364) explains that “what is now essential to the New Age [is the belief] that human beings are essentially gods in themselves; [they] contain a ‘God-spark,’ a central infusion of divinity[—] that human beings undergo successive reincarnations as part of an evolutionary process which returns them to full God-realization.”

In a holistic model, when the transformation expected is grand, human beings can have a very powerful role to play in world events. However, the belief in one’s capacity to overcome (one’s own) poverty and other material restrictions, as per prosperity consciousness, is yet again a diminution of the power and scale of New Age aspiration. In referring to the New Age in Brazil, where millenarianism has persisted, sacralisation of the self means “the ennoblement of the individual.” A. Dawson (2007, 162) calls this

... the *raison d’etre* of the *new era* repertoires. [Within them, the individual] is endowed with a significance and operational reach of truly universal proportions.... [N]ew era millenarianism valorizes the individual and his new era worldview by asserting both that *the practical knowledge you live by is the very same practical knowledge by which the world will be transformed and upon which a new civilization will be founded and the fact that you live by this practical knowledge places you among the vanguard of this renewed and enlightened civilization.* (Italics in original.)

In other words, just by living (thoughtfully, mindfully, consciously) in the world, you can have a major impact on it at a deep level. However, this view of agency works both ways. In this worldview, there must be a whole that can powerfully register one’s actions, thus amplifying them. Identifying the larger whole is essential to perceiving personal power. Hence, this whole must be available to the creative imagination, and Brazilians seem to have (maintained) such access. But a loss of the ability to imagine such an agent entails a corresponding deflation of one’s own mystical power. If we credit Hanegraaph’s claim that New Age beliefs diminish imagination, we can expect a spiralling down towards increasing more restricted terms

followers who are solidly middle and even professional class, according to his analysis. He sought a number of explanations for this situation. (A Dawson 2007, 159-162)

within the belief structure, which is what has been documented, as per the discussion in the preceding section.

Psychologization

Hanegraaff declared the psychologization of religion as a basic feature of New Age belief. Psychologization is a feature of privatized religion. It has had a long history, as religions losing social importance and saliency as a result of secularization (Casanova 1994) opt to stress the advantages individuals can gain from a religious attitude and experience rather than their obligations and personal transcendence based on membership. Religious participation becomes defined as a personal religious attitude, one's "spirituality." In *The Invisible Religion: The Problem of Religion in Modern Society* (1967), Thomas Luckmann radicalized the thesis of secularization, by taking the process of privatization into consideration (Casanova 1994, 19). He showed, claims José Casanova (1994, 36) that

... modern differentiation leads to a sharp segmentation of the various institutional domains whereby each domain becomes an autonomous sphere governed by its own 'functionally rational' internal norms.... Since the individual's social existence becomes a series of unrelated performances of anonymous specialized social roles, institutional segmentation reproduces itself as segmentation within the individual's consciousness.

Rather than a religious commitment colouring all aspects of life, religion in the modern world is kept in its own domain, as a part of an individual's consciousness, with selected spiritual behaviours performed only with others of similar conviction, and as an element, but not the entirety, of life. Thus, religious privatization requires its psychologization.

As I explained in Chapter One, contemporary liberal congregations of all stripes accommodate neospiritual beliefs. They also respond to privatization and psychologization. Through hiring practices, for example, they subject their choices of religious leaders to standards of effectiveness, that is, ability to appeal to individuals (Bramadat and Seljak 2009). This relegation to the private domain of life also forces contemporary religions to self-present to both their committed and prospective adherents as providers of "well-being commodities." They appeal to people ensconced in a consumerist world as purveyors of personal "goods" (Miller 2005).

New Agers followed these tendencies to the point of rejecting the idea of religious authority altogether. These practitioners argue that if spirituality is personal, there is no logic to maintaining even qualified loyalty to a church that may promote a theology that conflicts at least partly with one's personal beliefs, and whose attempts to orchestrate the conditions and qualities of personal religious experiences may well be

misguided. As in the consumerist model, any potential guru or guide is sized up and subjected to the practitioner's choice based on an individual's judgement of their personal value to him or her.

This is arguably a necessary response to the breakup of the one meaning system of traditional cultures into the many that pertain to the functional subsystems of modern technocratic existence. As religious authorities could not dictate overall social direction or meaning, the myth-making and social-organization functions of religions had to be dropped: "The more the performance of nonreligious roles becomes determined by autonomous 'secular' norms, the less plausible become the traditional global claims of religious norms" (Casanova 1994, 36).

Psychological language is a substitute for the mythologizing capacity that is the traditional mode of religious language. "The changing climate of modern capitalist societies has led many traditions, including modern Western ones such as Christianity, to de-mythologize, by moving away from the older cosmological and disciplinary language of the past and replacing this with the interiorized and psychologically-inflected language of spirituality" (Carrette and King 2005, 170). Thus, the cognitive function that religion had offered is replaced by the subjective meaning the individual creates for herself. Religion becomes relegated to the private sphere—in other words, it is a personal experience.

As discussed, some Christian communities, such as the Pentecostals and Charismatic Catholics (Neitz 1987), exhibit high levels of psychologization—to a degree that rivals New Age spirituality. They have in common their tendency to present God's presence as *energy*, which one can feel tangibly. These traditions are a new version of the English Pietist tradition, as well as of a litany of American and Canadian traditions over the shared continent's history (Albanese 2000, L. Dawson 2006, Jenkins 2007). Hence, although it is most evident in New Age practices, *psychologization* is a feature of modern religion in the West in general.

Contrary to the popular ethos that neospirituals, too, have absorbed, religions other than Christianity in the West have also psychologized. Most importantly in this context, this includes the Asian religions that contribute significantly to the New Age ethos, under the understanding that they reject dualism and societal obligations. For example, the Indian sage, Vivekananda's representation of Hinduism (which was modernizing in his homeland) at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, the first major introduction of Eastern religion to Westerners, illustrates the psychologization process well.

Carrette and King (119-120) provide this account. As is well-known, Vivekananda had a particular strategy in trying to gain Western acceptance for Eastern values. His major argument was that Westerners understand the material aspects of life, but Easterners, the spiritual. There was more craft than this, though, to his presentation. Vivekananda downplayed the institutional aspects of Hinduism by ignoring Raja Yoga, which

emphasizes highly-structured social behaviour and virtues, while emphasizing Jnana Yoga—the way to enlightenment *through knowledge*. From the beginning Vivekananda sought to “mentalize” Eastern religions. He also presented them as immanent or esoteric, rather than transcendental. Ironically, this seems to have created a dualism between the mind and the body. Noting the fact that Hatha (exercise) yoga is never practiced with meditation, Carrette and King (2005, 118) assert that “Yoga in the West emphasizes either the mind or the body,” but never both. This reveals, in their view, a “Cartesian trap” in New Age thinking.

After the decades of similar presentations to Western audiences that followed Vivekananda’s appearance at the Parliament, the form of Hinduism and Buddhism that Western counterculturalists and New Agers adopted was the “mystical, experiential, and individual” version. “The early psychologization of yoga in the West remains a key approach among the bourgeois world of alternate spirituality that first emerged among the educated middle classes in the late 1960s.” Now, the countercultural cachet of yoga is one of its key selling points, except that the “metaphysical, institutional and societal dimension has been lost” (Carrette and King 2005, 118)

This is the same method, now, for creating a “spiritual” product. The practice is a formula for corporations wishing to create a business ideology: “Take an ancient religious idea and mythologize it!” (Carrette and King 2005, 140-141). However, there is another important stage in the process of psychologization—which I discuss in the next chapter—that fully brings spirituality into the period studied in this dissertation, the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism. This is the redefinition of religious experience as secular, pioneered by humanist psychologist Abraham Maslow. With this process, as Carrette and King argue, psychologized religion could be directly harnessed to the therapeutic discourse which, they insist, finalized its status as a commodity.

New Age Practices: A Networking Religion

As New Agers have always opposed the “hierarchical” social structures, they explored emerging networking patterns. Although its network structure has long been recognized by scholars, they began to look at New Age as a networked religion in a more concentrated way only recently. Decades ago, spokespeople for the early New Age spirituality described organizational structures using a sociological concept growing in importance at the time, that of the SPIN (“Segmented Polycentric Integrated Networks”). Sociologist Luther L. Gerlach (1999, 289-290) explains the acronym that he and his colleague Virginia H. Hine (Gerlach and Hine 1970) had developed:

Segmentary: composed of many diverse groups, which grow and die, divide and fuse, proliferate and contract; Polycentric: having multiple, often temporary, and sometimes competing leaders or centers of influence; Networked: forming a loose, reticulate, integrated network with multiple

linkages through travelers, overlapping membership, joint activities, common reading material and shared ideals and opponents.

Marilyn Ferguson (1980) most notably used this term while proposing that New Agers interacted through networks, as she analyzed the “universal connectedness” being established by the “Aquarian Conspiracy” at the time. Her usage of term powerfully identified the networking activities of activists for change observed during the intermediate period between the countercultural engagement of the 1960s/early 1970s and the New Age Movement as it took shape in the 1980s. Hanegraaff (1996, 356-357) tells us that “Ferguson described the emerging new movement in terms of ... SPINs. Her description of a SPIN shows the concern... for a non-hierarchical holistic structure which does not threaten individual freedom.”

Ferguson (1980, 236) contended that seeing the community as one such net did not describe the situation fully; rather, she saw a “SPIN of SPINs.” She assessed that “the Aquarian Conspiracy is indeed loose, segmented, evolutionary, redundant. Its centre is everywhere.” Starhawk (1988, 132) also reiterated the idea of religious seekers following a network model. She described “circular structures of immanence,” organized by many and varied clusterings of actors. “In the social and personal change associations described by Starhawk, affinity groups form clusters—sending ‘spokes’ to cluster meetings. [These could be called the] networks of circles... acephalous..., [although] ‘centers’ serve as points for the collection and distribution of information to all circles or members of a group.”

Consistent with the perennial interpretation of network dynamics, when early New Agers adopted network organizational patterns, along with their countercultural and politically-activist comrades, they imagined that this structure drew out the true convictions of everyday participants. American Actress Shirley MacLaine, another spokesperson for the New Age, commented on the emergent, or “grass-roots” nature of New Age interest. In *Out on a Limb*, (1987, 7) she wrote: “...everywhere I went, I continually encountered a deep need for spirituality and expanded consciousness, a need for people to come together to share their energies in *something* that worked.”

Hanegraaff (1996, 357) refined an elemental (but contestable) theme of the New Age community when he *contrasted* SPINs and networks, and bureaucracies, in order to claim that networks circumvent structures of power, and so are intrinsically democratic. He explained (1996, 351) that “whereas the conventional organizational chart would show neatly linked boxes, the organization chart of a SPIN would look like a ‘badly-knotted fishnet with a multitude of nodes of varying sizes, each linked to all the others, directly or indirectly.’” Along this line, anticipating Taves and Kinsella (2013), York (1995, 324) asserted that New Age activity did not lack organization, but had “a different kind of organization than that known through the bureaucratic and hierarchical structures of the traditional establishment.” Furthermore, the SPIN concept

described the contemporary *horizontal* growth of NRMs more accurately than a typology (such as of churches and sects) that implies the “traditional hierarchical development of religious organizations” (1995, 329). Starhawk (1988, 132) defended networking in efficiency terms, against bureaucratic structures, by claiming that such organizational practices have no more “wastage, theft and minor sabotage’ [than] occurs daily in the lower levels of hierarchy.” Networking practices continue to be valued by neospirituals based on similar beliefs. Taves and Kinsella (2013, 84-85) assert that these practitioners have a basic, “in-built resistance to organization.” This resistance is “at least to vertical [hierarchical] organization, as opposed to lateral, networked organization” (Sutcliffe 2003, 224-25).

These commentaries show that rejection of “hierarchy” is intrinsic to the New Age identity. For Paul Heelas, the decreasing acceptance of authorities is an aspect of the New Age’s moral individualism. He associates both with a profound yearning for freedom: “The rejection... of external voices of authority, together with the importance attached to Self-responsibility, expressivity and above all, authority, goes together with fact that one of the absolutely cardinal New Age values is freedom. [The goals are l]iberation from the past, the traditional, and those internalized traditions, the egos; and to live a life expressing all that is to be truly human” (Heelas 1996, 26).

The hostility towards authority structures also emerges from the conviction that one’s essential inner nature is inevitably suppressed by society, which leads to sickness. Aversion to the social also implies the neospiritual conviction that the real self—the spirit—lurks beneath the social self and must be uncovered. Maslow’s (1976) work reinforced this vision. The self-actualization he fostered was felt to be able to free this “delicate and subtle” inner nature that could be “overcome by habit, cultural pressure, and wrong attitudes,” it was also possible to “reveal,” “foster,” and “fulfill” its actualization through “peak” experiences (Maslow 1976, 7). The view is that “we malfunction because we have been indoctrinated... by mainstream society and culture” (Heelas 1996, 18). Individualism manifests as a political agenda of realizing a “posthierarchical” world.

Recently, Gerlach (1999, 289) reviewed the work that he and Hine had done in the late 1960s, analyzing SPINs in social movements. They had that “found that the most common type of organization was neither centralized and bureaucratic nor amorphous, but one that was a segmentary, polycentric, and integrated network (acronym SPIN).” Looking back, Gerlach (1999, 290) argues that this organizational form was “more adapted to the task of challenging and changing society and culture than was centralized organization... Since then a consensus has emerged that SPINs have many benefits, and not just for social movements.” For one reason, “competing leadership” often strengthened these movements, by introducing redundancy (York 1995, 325). Manuel Castells (1997), an expert on network organization, adds that this form

enhances the strength of the diffuse movement through greater innovation and adaptability. Equally important, such a group organization is appropriate for people seeking to transgress the rules of an established order. Castells (2004, 6) add that a network is “flexible [and] able to reconfigure itself according to changing environments while keeping its goals intact. Although individual nodes may blink in or out of existence, values and/or aims are dispersed through multiple nodes any of which can reproduce its messages. The inclusion or exclusion of a particular node does not disrupt the overall orientation of the entire network, giving it stability and durability.”

It follows that overcoming the disciplines and power of traditional authorities is a reason for organizing in networks. York (1995, 330) notes that Gerlach and Hine “developed their concept of the SPIN through investigations of ‘change-oriented movements’ in general—including communism, Mau Mau, Black power, the new left, women’s liberation, the counterculture, the Vietcong, Palestinian liberation movements, and the ‘participatory ecology movement’ as well as both early Islam and the Pentecostal movement.”

Despite the secular and politically-activist orientation of many SPIN participants, York (1995, 325-6) considers the SPIN to be “perhaps the most accurate sociological construct applicable to the New Age, Neo-pagan and similar non-institutional, boundary-determinate movements.” After reviewing the long history of the church-sect-cult-denominational typologies scholars explored as a way of situating the New Age, he concluded that “If the . . . SPINs concept is combined with . . . analy[sis] [of] formations and changes among the NRMs, and cells or segments that constitute the reticulate polycephalous structure comprising the holistic movement, we have a viable sociological tool that is applicable to contemporary late twentieth-century developments and study” (York 1995, 330-331).

Writing more recently, Chandler (2010) agrees that network structures are appropriate for describing New Age spirituality. However, she is interested in defending New Age spirituality’s supposed “institutionally-decentralized” nature and discusses the network organizational form in this context. She does this by arguing that practicing networking still leaves plenty of opportunities for group cohesiveness amongst participants. In pursuing this point, she introduces nuance to the idea that networks intrinsically democratize (i.e., by dissolving all group—i.e., power—structures into individuals freely interacting). She offers Tindall and Wellman’s (2001, 266) clarification on this point. They argue that, depending on the patterns of relationship generated, networked relations “both facilitate and constrain opportunities, behaviours and

cognitions.”²⁹ Chandler (2010, 82) contends that “Network theory avoids the oversimplified opposition between group membership and social isolation. All groups—even dyads—are seen as networks; variance is merely a function of group density and interconnectivity.”

Chandler (2010, 81-82) reiterates a now-common theme about networks and groups that for earlier scholars was not so obvious: “The advent of the Internet... has radically altered the networking power of the cultic milieu. From Castells’ perspective at least, networks such as those inherent in life spirituality have unique adaptive advantage that make them structurally stable.” Finally, she concedes that “social networks analysis is a promising but as yet largely unexplored approach to reconceptualizing the social viability of life spirituality.”

The emphasis on networking as a mode of organization, especially as it embodies a rejection of social hierarchy, establishes a strong parallel between neospiritual organization and post-Fordist work forms, and the values placed on certain kinds of participants therein, as we will see in later chapters. This organizational form also suggests that neospirituals will easily adopt the values of new workers that are based on their networking patterns, the network cosmology.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed different genres of scholarly literature about New Age spirituality, from discussions about its religious antecedents and influences, considerations of the larger social processes in which its development is implicated, and analyses of the trends and complications of its study. Following this review, I provided an overview of New Age beliefs and practices.

I explained that New Agers hold a vision of the universe as “whole” whose elements, large and small, continuously reference and reshape in accordance with each other. They believe in a depersonalized divinity and a re-enchanted world. They believe they can “heal themselves” through spiritual practices and attitudinal changes, and that the pursuit of personal healing is mandatory since this could change planet-level social and natural dynamics for the better. Furthermore, “illness” is not merely somatic dysfunction but also faulty attitudes.

They believe a change of mind, or consciousness, can engender personal prosperity. Fundamentally, they construe change positively, and expect that transformations at both small and large scales interact. They use

²⁹ Cited in Chandler 2010, 81

scientific language in unscientific ways because their worldview is essentially teleological. They attribute a power to mental activity that extends beyond the locale of the thinker, because thought is a form of energy. Despite their holism, the locus of action, of initiations and registrations of transformations, is confined strictly to the individual self. For them, psychology is the social science that embodies all relevant knowledge of the human.

Since they are required to bring about change as a moral duty, they must perform sustained work researching, discovering and experimenting with techniques or methods that can effectively transform. They acquire the skills necessary to use these techniques indiscriminately, without concern for their possible mutually-incongruous origins, because the standard of value for a method is outcome in use.

New Agers minimize personal obligations to a group, yet recognize that group behaviour helps reinforce values and provides access to different methods or skills leading to personal healing and planetary health. Physical gatherings can also enhance energetic experiences emanating from individual minds/bodies, which can be stronger based on that concentration of individuals or in relation to particular planetary geographies or structures. Their characteristic group action consequently follows a loose “network” pattern. This means that groups form on temporary and contingent bases, and repetitions might consist of different compositions of individuals.

In the next chapter, I consider important scholarly theories of the ways in which New Age beliefs and practices, to become neospirituality, are now shaped by and implicated in contemporary economic processes—specifically, in production and consumption.

Chapter Three: Theories of Capitalism and Religion

Introduction

While the main focus of this dissertation is the relation of neospirituality to contemporary labour conditions, such conditions are indivisible from the nature of the commodities this economy produces. In post-Fordism, the two “moments” of capitalist circulation--production and consumption--are strongly integrated. The precise nature of this tight coupling, stronger than in the earlier Fordist era, will be made clearer in future chapters. Suffice it to say here that production now puts more emphasis on “soft” or cultural products, and that their marketing is tied, and largely prior, to production. Because of this strong integration, we must consider the commodification issue in this dissertation. Fortunately, there is a considerable body of scholarship on neospirituality and consumption. The scholarship on the commodification of religion takes neospirituality’s subordination to this era’s capitalism as a key theme. I begin by reviewing several important contributions by scholars of religion on the topic of religious commodification, which features neospirituality as its embodiment. I then provide religious scholarship that looks beyond neospirituality’s role in commodification to that of production. (This excludes the industry literature on “spirituality in the workplace” reviewed in the next chapter.)

The primary source of discourse on religion and capitalism in general is Jeremy Carrette and Richard King’s (2005) text *Selling Spirituality*. Carrette and King argue that a “second privatization of religion” locates a spirituality that centres on the corporation itself, both within but also outside worksites. It is “the whole” to which employees’ holistic religious attentions are dedicated. However, I consider two other texts as important supplements to the Carrette and King work. One of these is Carrette’s (2007) title, *Religion and Critical Psychology: The Ethics of Non-Knowing in the Knowledge Economy*, a philosophical work arguing that psychology’s emergence is implicated in this process of refocusing on the corporation itself as the beneficiary of spirituality. Secondly, Tucker and Leinberger argue in *The New Individualists: The Generation after the Organization Man* (1991) that, by channelling employees’ personal energy and “power,” corporate workplaces now create “psychotopias” within their confines, whose signal features is that the corporation itself is the only entity characterized as an agent. Employees are dedicated to “enlivening” the corporation.

These scholars are on one side of a contemporary debate in religious studies. As Aupers and Houtman 2010, 73) point out, Carrette and King have argued “that privatized religions perpetuate the idea of the ‘closed self,’” that is, a self that is personally and not socially created (2005, 85). They think that New Age’s psychological model of the human being is “pernicious and dangerous because it overstates the notion of an

independent self at the expense of social interdependence” (Aupers and Houtman 2010, 57). Chandler (2010, 69-87), summarizes the themes by which scholars of religion such as Carrette and King belittle the importance of neospirituality (or “life spirituality,” as she calls it) as a religious ethos: that it is institutionally decentralized and that it is commodified. Her summary is succinct and apt, “While the absence of institutional coordinates motivates scholars to dismiss life spirituality’s inclusion in civil society on what might be called structural grounds, its economic activities are frequently condemned on moral grounds” (Chandler 2010, 82).

Along with Chandler, Aupers and Houtman challenge these condemnations. However, though they might be able to make persuasive arguments about this while looking at neospirituality in other domains than workplaces, as we shall see, neospirituality as it manifests in worksites seems to validate Carrette and King’s claims. If a convincing argument is made that neospirituality has been shaped by capitalism and is currently its tool, the onus on dissenting scholars is to show that a balance of forces pulls the ethos away from this role or that, despite its ideological role in workplaces, it has a fundamentally different nature that manifests elsewhere.

Following on these reflections, and before I proceed to consider theories of neospirituality’s relation to consumption and production, I preface it with a discussion of problems that scholars encounter in studying neospirituality in general in the contemporary world, and explain how understanding the new political-economic climate appears to resolve them. The account provided highlights general reasons why strong associations are found between neospirituality and capitalist institutions.

Studying Neospirituality and Capitalism

Despite earlier discussions of the terminology for the new spirituality, some scholars of religion are satisfied with “new age,” or “New Age.” However, this seems to be as part of a project to recuperate the integrity of the movement—to distinguish it as a form of religiosity rather than an inflection of culture (which I lean towards). These scholars express difficulty defining the New Age phenomenon and its practitioners. Making the comparison to traditional religious institutions, they illustrate why its stronger and weaker forms should have found a strong institutional base in work sites—it lacks the social place that the religious institutions offer. This is the fundamental reason the ethos evades sociological characterization, and why its status as religion has commonly been denied (Bruce 2002, 2013). Catherine Albanese (1992, 73) expressed the dilemma: it “has no central church or organization [and] possesses no authoritative denomination officialdom, no creedal platform, no sectarian tests for inclusion or exclusion.” More recently, Steven Sutcliffe (2008, 5) quoted Simmons’ (1990) similar objection: the New Age “lacks most of the requisite socio-structural features that would viably differentiate it from other, looser types of collective behaviour.”

According to Sutcliffe (2008, 4), other scholarly syntheses reveal “a number of common features in which New Age is deficient. These include coordinating or umbrella organizations; a certain normative strength—and reflexive documentation—of historical tradition; a viable level of internal stability and continuity; suitable evidence of boundaries and criteria of belonging by members’; a realistic level of critical debates, social mobilization, and proselytization; and, crucially, a confident and communicable identity and goals” Nevertheless, Sutcliffe (2008, 5; again citing Simmons [1990]), insists: “If there is, in Popperian terms, no ‘falsifiable’ movement, there is clearly ‘something going on,’” which must be explored. Sutcliffe and other scholars pursue this “something.” Their basic problem is that New Age practitioners are from “a larger population of Western seekers who formed alternative networks of beliefs and practices before the New Age trope or emblem rose to prominence (in the ‘largely post-war’ period), and will persist after it falls into obscurity” (Sutcliffe 2008, 1). Accordingly, an important purpose of their studies is to firm up boundaries around a phenomenon constantly in danger of absorption into the general culture. However, if the New Age has been a vanguard movement whose essential function was to (re)inject a strong dose of esotericism into the global urban psyche, anticipating the new economic structures that benefit by them (as I will argue) such a pursuit would seem to be misguided. If New Age values, in weak form, have normalized into the wider culture, the studies of Sutcliffe *et al* would amount to fruitlessly picking out trees while ignoring the forest of which they are a part.

As I showed in the preceding chapter, it is not that New Age characteristics cannot be isolated and identified (both in their concentrated form and more diffuse, as outlined earlier). For beliefs, New Agers expect(ed) “an immense cultural shift analogous to the Renaissance which will dramatically augment human power and responsibility on a transnational, global scale” (an expectation rehearsed since the 1930s), which gives form to the range of practices (Sutcliffe 2008, 1). More concisely, New Agers pursue “seeking or composing a religious package that is meaningful, awareness of and discourse on ‘energy,’ consultation with others, periodic meetings with mutually-interested practitioners, and the seeking of euphoria” (Sutcliffe 2013, 28). A short list of New Age practices includes “meditation, healing, channeling, and prophecy, as well as pilgrimages to geographical ‘power spots’ ... organic and vegetarian dietary practices, and post-1970s—a vast range of ‘human potential’ and ‘personal growth’ psychotherapies” (Sutcliffe 2008, 2).

The generally-positive position these researchers take with regard to the New Age’s organizational affiliations reflects their agenda to reverse its association with consumerism as weakening its religious character (a position articulated by Daniel Bell 1976 and Daneille Hervieu-Leger 2000, among others). The ethos has also been denigrated as either individualistic and antisocial (e.g., Berger 2010; Bellah 1985) or marginal, the residue of dying religious interests (e.g., Steve Bruce, 2002, 2013). Some scholars now oppose these dismissive interpretations of the New Age or new spirituality (Chandler 2010). Taking up the new position,

David Martin (2013, 310) asserts, “self-spirituality is a well-defined doctrine with a strong potential for socialization [whose cohesive body of practices and beliefs suggests that] the entire milieu constitutes a shared culture in the public arena possessing a ‘unifying moral imperative’ and a well-documented pedigree in the esoteric milieu of the nineteenth century.”

Also sympathetic to this position, Aupers and Houtman (2010) examine how New Age and spiritual practices are integrated into supposedly-secular institutions, including technology-oriented companies and the internet. Examining the pursuits of the “the new metaphysicals,” in relation to privatized artistic, health and educational institutions (“fields of production”) around Cambridge, MA, Courtney Bender (2010) articulates the thesis clearly: practitioners “institutionalize” by forming a critical mass of believers around secular social thematics and institutions. The three “institutional fields” produce spirituality in different ways (Bender 2010, 40–44), as they also reflect and shape the wider culture in which they operate. The argument offered in the light of these affiliations is that, indeed, New Age spirituality does have a more robust institutional structure than imagined, but it gets it from the institutions it infiltrates rather than the institutions it creates for itself.

But, why would “mainstream” institutions be adopting or absorbing this supposedly “alternative” ethos that must challenge the basic principles that have guided modern institutions? Generally, are they turning away from technocratic governance that has maintained them in the past? Is the New Age or neospiritual ethos being absorbed by secular modern institutions, or are they changing to accommodate it? Are common social institutions now reaching towards the esotericism that has always lurked below the surface of rational, scientific (and Christian) values through which the West gained its hegemony? These transitions certainly raise questions about the current state of these institutions and society in general.

Gauthier and Martikainen offer answers to these questions. Their two-volume collection (2013a, 2013b) addresses understanding New Age and neospiritual practices and beliefs in terms of “the changed economic order and related ideologies.” Gauthier, Martikainen and Woodhead (2013, 18) define these changes as promoting “neoliberalism, consumerism, marketization, management and ‘governance.’” Neoliberalism can be contrasted with the liberalism that prevailed during Fordism and, indeed, since Adam Smith articulated its principles. This difference is the significance afforded market relations. “If classical liberalism found in the workings of the market and its ‘spontaneous harmonization of interests’ is the model for op-

timal social regulation, neoliberalism goes a step further by defining the social sphere as a form of economic field” (Gauthier, Martikainen and Woodhead 2013, 31).

For its impact on religion, these authors point particularly to the new form of governance of neoliberalism, as defined by Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose (2008)³⁰ (but first articulated by Michel Foucault). “Governance has been defined as a production technique for norms, rules and procedures, and as a way to answer a variety of conflicting interests” (Gauthier, Martikainen and Woodhead 2013, 17). There are different forms of governance, depending on the regime of accumulation. Under the neoliberal (or post-Fordist) governance mandate, a government’s new purpose is to make citizens responsible for selecting and procuring social goods that would otherwise be provided through social relations based an affiliation with groups, or by the governments themselves. “The role of the state is to promote autonomy and self-care in the form of entrepreneurship of the self” (Gray 2013, 73).

Both reliable social connections and government services have attenuated since the abandonment in the late 20th century of the economic arrangement called Fordism. In the United States, this has led many governments to rely on RNGOs (religious non-governmental organizations) (somewhat at odds with the American separation of church and state) secular civil society institutions, and a welter of new spiritual, wellness and prosperity teachers, to fulfill this role (Ashley and Sandefer 2013, 126). “Civil society organizations are tasked with rendering individual subjects ‘responsible’ for their own integration through ‘self-care,’ and ‘making the right choices’” (Gray 2013, 74).

This social agenda strengthens the economic position of the purveyors of spirituality programs and products, from informal New Age and spiritual practices, through to formal and perhaps elaborate spiritual, prosperity and wellness services. In addition to contracts they fulfill for corporations and social service agencies, many of these purveyors offer their services to the general public as well, directly through the market. However, whether supported institutionally or made available to private individuals, they are needed to train people to adapt to a world of risk, and potential material and psychic insufficiency.

I would accept this analysis as far as its goes. However, in the many essays in these texts, these scholars do not appear to privilege market-based, for-profit institutions—corporations—as the preeminent site in which these adoptions are propagated. Nor do those who cite Bender’s work. The implication is that all institutions, and especially those that cluster around social concerns, are equally responsive to the neospiritual

³⁰ Cited in Gray 2013, 76

ethos. However, I would argue that because of neoliberalization, social services such as education that were formerly publicly-provided have been privatized or semi-privatized and so function similarly to the corporations on which they are modelled.

In the Fordist period, during the post-war hegemony of Keynesian economic theory (where deficiencies in the market's ability to distribute wealth equitably were compensated for by governments) services were generally supplied by public institutions that operated differently from private. Now, most social services are expected to operate with concern for market principles. Moreover, privatized "public" services (often called "not-for-profit" services and agencies) have many of their functions performed on contract by market-based companies (Barlow and Robertson 1996). This would be true also of the groups that Bender studies. These developments reduce the difference between how "not-for-profit" services and agencies on the one hand, and commercial companies on the other, function. Therefore, I would argue that fully commercial corporations provide the structural model for the social services in many cases, making them the paradigmatic organizational form. Hence, though all institutions, whether "private" or "public," may appear to be adopting neospiritual services at comparable rates, an examination of the inner workings of corporations rather than of these services will generate greater understanding of why and how this adoption occurs.

Another impact of neoliberal governance that contributes to the rise of neospirituality over traditional religiosity is its principled suppression of public discourse and decision-making on the basis of principles. (Previous eras expressed commitment to such discourse, regarded as a fundamental feature of democracy, even if it were not realized in fact.) Indeed, proponents of neoliberalism would hold that translating the delivery of social goods to market processes is an advantage for society because it undercuts the need for such "inefficient" discussions. Later, I call this reduction of principled discourse one form of the dematerialization or streamlining of society that is a mark of neoliberalism. The state's withdrawal from its role as a shaper of society means that the state also relinquishes pursuing substantive goals—"so-called value-ridden, arbitrary, political regulation" (Gauthier, Martikainen and Woodhead 2013, 17). The state has not the capacity to "produce" and "use" valuable concepts such as peace, justice, freedom, etc. in order to maintain its legitimacy. Whether substantive outcomes such as a measure of material justice or equality amongst citizens are achieved, is considered (at least in private) beyond the state's responsibility. Instead, it settles for administering procedures for citizen participation in decision-making—by default through the market or via formalized consultations such as elections, commissions of inquiry and referenda. "With the extension of 'the liberal tradition' [into neoliberalism], in its preference for juridical and technical conceptions of regulation" (17), "governance" replaces "government." The state must merely ensure that everyone can participate in the decisions made, according to processes that are procedurally "fair." These

processes, amounting to competitions for influence, can be periodic, such as by polling, consultations and “focus-groups,” or on-going, such as by administrative procedures. In any case, this form of governance helps to “naturalize the market” (Gauthier, Martikainen and Woodhead 2013, 17).

In short, the move to governance principles forces states to restrict pursuit of substantive outcomes within political collectivities. As a result, “organized capitalism distanced administrative mechanisms from the system of legitimacy. This meant [there could be] no expectation of any administrative production of meaning.” They add that the state’s inability to generate substantive discourse is paralleled in religions, so that “religion then lacks discursively redeemable norms based in relatively autonomous religious communities, [which provokes] a retreat into subjective beliefs” (Ashley and Sandefer 2013, 126). This brief statement speaks volumes about the relationship between economic and religious change constituted by the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism.

Neoliberals have abandoned society, not only the principles understood to guide it, but even the idea of society. Edwin Ng (2016, 140) explains that

... Dilts [2011] paints an arresting portrait of the neoliberal view of homo economicus. ‘The neo-liberal analysts look out at the world and do not see discrete and identifiable forms, producers, households, consumers, fathers, mothers, criminals, immigrants, natives, adults, children, or any other ‘fixed’ category of human subjectivity. They see heterogeneous human capital, distinct in their specific attributes, abilities, natural endowments, skills. They see entrepreneurs of the self. They see homini oeconomici, responsive agents to the reality of costs and benefits attached to activities, each of which are productive of satisfaction.

Although Gauthier, Martikainen and Woodhead (2013, 5-6) criticize Carrette and King’s work (2005), as being “pessimistic and nostalgic” in terms of the latter’s lament that “consumerist forms of spirituality... lack the moral depth and social cohesiveness of more traditional religion,” Carrette and King would concur with these authors’ analysis of the relationship between neoliberal governance and neospirituality’s growth. In fact there are strong correlations between the ideas in these two compilations and Carrette and King’s text, as we will see later. Carrette & King (2005) would assert that the embrace of neospirituality is due to the systematic restructuring of capitalism, as it adapts to globality and the neoliberal order, including by commodifying cultural resources.

As stated above, the relation of neospirituality’s emergence to the changing nature of contemporary capitalism is not a new concern for scholars of religion (A. Dawson 2007, 2013; Aupers and Houtman 2010; Wuthnow 1998; Heelas 1996). However, as also noted, when scholars first studied its relation to capitalism, they concentrated on the issues of individualism, choice, consumption and consumerism (e.g., Berger 1967;

Lasch 1979, Bellah et al. 1985, Lau 2000; Bibby 2004a; Bowen 2004). Because of neoliberal encroachment of market relations into the social world, this entanglement of religion in commodification processes should not surprise us. As replete with cultural content as commerce now is, we should not expect religion to be left out of this grip. Equally important to recognizing religion's commodification, however, is asking whether certain *religious* cultural content is, indeed *particularly* amenable to commodification. To put the question another way, is spirituality a particular shaping of religion for the market? Carrette and King (2005) would answer yes to both of these questions. They go beyond exploring the commodification of religious contents as the unfortunate "collateral damage" done by the market machine as it sweeps through cultures, to seeing religion as the prime target for this massaging—creating 'spiritualities' out of it that are specifically shaped for that machine.

Indeed, as Carrette and King's see it, neospirituality's integration in market relations is an unavoidable outcome of its "first privatization." According to their analysis, discussed in detail below, the transition from privatization to commodification is not haphazard. Privatization is a prior condition of commodification and leads directly to it because all privatized goods can be sold on the market. In other words, embedding religion's "ownership" in and conferring its benefit to the individual implies its commodification. Roof (2001) and Miller (2005) take this position when they explain how monopolistic media producers overrode the two crafts of traditional religious publishing and maintaining a religiously-engaged community, respectively. The result in both cases is a generic spirituality. The thrust of their arguments is that neospirituality was made to be a marketable commodity.

Effectively, these scholars document traditional religious material as key inputs of post-Fordist production. Furthermore, the relationship has changed religion in general:

Indeed, the religion of the market is now increasingly acting as the dominant theology through which representations of the various 'religions' are filtered; and 'religious' ideas are being professionally produced by a new information proletariat, largely unaware of its collusion with the privatization and corporatisation of the market. (Carrette and King 2005, 167)

These authors even claim that "the corporatization of the world's cultural and religious traditions commoditizes human cultural heritage and subordinates its concerns to the economic theology of neoliberalism" (178).

Carrette and King's (2005) and Carrette's (2007) writings about capitalism and the new spirituality form a strong and broad-level theoretical matrix for considering the issues framed by this dissertation. They highlight the movement of neospirituality as a consumer good to its role in production, now as equally in service to corporate culture as to positive corporate imaging. That transition of neospirituality's site of engagement

from consumption to production correlates with the two stages of privatization Carrette and King (2005) write about. Its first stage, religious liberalization “placed religion in the private space of individual choice” (Carrette and King 2005, 133). However, they claim that neoliberalism established “the second mode of privatizing religion [by] re-placing religion (already disentangled from its institutional and cultural origins and repackaged as ‘spirituality’) into the corporate realm of business. We are essentially witnessing a corporate takeover of the religions” (Carrette and King 2005, 133). Their core idea is that “this merging of ‘spirituality and business’... builds upon the modern refashioning of the term spirituality as an exclusively private reality, but reorients the term in such a way that it now reflects corporate, not individual interests” (Carrette and King 2005, 129). I will consider the validity of this claim, later in terms of the concept of psytopia. I discuss important theories of these two moments, below.

First Privatization: Religion for Consumption

Commodities are now more integral to production than in past forms of capitalism, but also to life itself. Furthermore, many scholars of religion assert that neospirituality is strongly tied up in the distinctive commodification of this era. This point of view persists because, as the post-Fordist economy advances, so does the prominence of the products that characterize it. These are *immaterial* (i.e., information or cultural) products, as well as services, to which the commodification of religion well lends itself.

New Age practitioners procure the revolving and multivariate contents of their religious attentions by continually redeploying materials from the extant cultural (including religious) record (Suttcliffe 2003). This process constitutes the continual discursive innovation for which New Age practice is known. Exhibiting little concern for substantial or formal coherence amongst the elements they have composed as a personal religion, practitioners readily introduce new material. As their interests advance, “narrative pegs can be easily changed” (Illouz 2008, 174).

There is a formal parallel between these operations on extant religious contents and post-Fordist producers’ continuous invention and provision of innovative personal services, information and cultural products. These latter are the drivers of this fast-paced economy, and a high rate of turnover of such products is necessary. Elements of the religious heritages of the world provides material culture, symbols and myths that can be incorporated into or inspire new motifs for products and services. Continual “sourcing” of material from the historical cultural stock guards against these becoming thematically banal or repetitive over time.

However, more than parallels, the two processes by different social actors appear to be substantially of a piece. Generally, scholars have found that versions of traditional religious rituals, beliefs and practices make excellent *immaterial commodities*. Religious paraphernalia are also reproduced and resituated for

sale, too, as cultural products. In many applications (products, ideas or services), religious material integrates with the economy. As Carrette (2007, 16) sees it,

... the very marketing of intense, short-lived experiences was a joy for the capitalist world. 'Religion' and 'spirituality' were psychological products and in the world of late-capitalism, following the deregulation of the markets by Reagan and Thatcher in the late 1980s and 1990s, the spirituality market would burgeon even more than before.

Not uncommonly, religious commodification is undertaken by religious institutions themselves, a process discussed in more detail below. Religions directly enter the immaterial commodity market. The lack of traditional supports for religions (partly due to their removal from traditional contexts and, hence, their modernization) is one reason religions are propelled to enter markets. They may or may not undertake to immunize themselves against market values. For example, the Tibetan Buddhists in Ropka, Scotland, believe they are protected from the typical consequences of commercialization (which I elaborate on, below). To circumvent corporate commoditization, they have branded their group for higher visibility, offer fee-based services such as “courses and health therapies” to the relatively uncommitted, host locals and visitors in their teashop, and sell worship-related objects. On the other hand, the lamas restrict access to higher levels of teaching. “Advanced dharmas are chiefly passed down orally to the most dedicated practitioners, in accordance with traditional practices” (McKenzie 2014, 166-7). Additionally, the commercial activities allow them to pursue “engaged Buddhist” activities, such as “forging environmental conservation programmes and establishing welfare projects” (McKenzie 2013, 171).

Perhaps New Agers' adoption of diverse religious elements to make up their personalized religions—the paradigmatic form of religious *bricolage*—has normalized the “cut-and-paste” practices of immaterial producers, proper, and paved the way for the commodification of cultural contents in general (Miller 2005). One might even consider that the New Age habit of “mixing and matching” for spiritual reasons was anticipatory to the dynamics of the new economy. In any case, once this *bricolage* has achieved social acceptability, religious content can be used as a rich source of cultural content without much censure of this market-oriented production.³¹

³¹ In this context, the maintenance and ever-hardening, as fundamentalisms, of religious traditional values and practices, which is the contemporary compliment of liberalization of many traditions in the global world (Beyer 1994), seems to have as important function. Carrette and King (2005) argue that the boundaries of the religious traditional orders must be maintained to the degree that they remain a source of cultural appropriation for the immaterial economy. The religious content is “stabilized” for commodification by the continued structure offered by religious

Additionally, due to the holistic ethos in which they are embedded, consuming “spiritual” products addresses a dilemma of modern post-Fordist consumers. Through spiritual consumption, they can feel that they are supporting some kind of moral good in a world that has lost its traditional sources of moral persuasion, whether by religious institutions or socially-concerned governments. Spiritual beliefs continue, somewhat against the facts, to be held as countercultural or oppositional to the prevailing economic structure, vaguely felt to be unjust. Accordingly, “spiritual” (like “organic” and “environmental”) consumption validates the consumer’s desire for special status or distinctiveness as compared to ordinary consumers, who supposedly seek only their own good in the process.

The section below focusses on these themes, as developed by key sources. Wade Clark Roof (2001) shows how religion’s contents are marginally differentiated to become spirituality. Evelyn Lau (2000) and Olav Hammer (2004) argue that the act of consumption now substitutes for political action or a sense of engagement in civic affairs, as it also confers a sense of distinction on consumers. Vincent Miller (2005) outlines the implication of this process for religion.

Roof: Marginal Differentiation and Homogenization

In *Spiritual Marketplace* (2001), Roof reported on his studies of American Baby Boomer religion, in the late 1980s and again in the late 1990s. As his title suggests, commercial institutions were shown to play a growing role in structuring American religion in general during that period. Roof suggests that *spirituality* (in his view, amorphous religion) is a construct of the commercial publishing industry. For him, the changes in religious publishing over this period epitomized the impact of commodification on religions. In his view, the commercial need to continuously re-sell what is essentially the same product, slightly changed, is at the root of the emergence of spirituality as a popular religious form. Marginally differentiating (i.e., slightly changing) products from one rendition to the next is intrinsic to how anything is successfully commodified. During the 1980s, the waning economy of traditional religious publishing was further disrupted as the large commercial houses saw opportunities to use broad religious messages (centred in self-help language) to sell books to the general public. They sought to provide content for people experiencing a ‘spiritual vacuum’ in their lives. These new religious suppliers “take religious pluralism for granted and cater to the open religious climate” (Roof 2001, 140). Following the principle of marginally-differentiating one publication from the next, their books addressed these spiritual voids, and sought to “shape and fill them and often in

traditions, making them the “reserve” repository from which the market in cultural goods may draw for its material. This counters the regression to the mean that threatens religious contents when transmitted through market processes (Roof 2001).

ways that are highly formulaic and homogenous” (Roof 2001, 139). They play to theories of choice and provide a “menu” of spiritual possibilities. “They appeal to primitive desires for ecstasy, for bonding, for health, for hope and happiness, for the sacralization of everyday life” (Roof 2001, 140).

Encouraging readers’ identification with their brand is more important to these publishers than respecting the boundaries of readers’ own (residual) religious loyalties. “They are mass producing religious culture—biblical study guides, newsletters, self-help books” (Roof 2001, 139). To maintain their brands, each of the titles in the publishers’ series has to bear a generic similarity with the last. As a consequence, “religious suppliers create fluidity between traditions by using similar vocabularies and common imageries” (Roof 2001, 139). In the process, publishers destroy the distinctions between traditions or sects. Hence, as they develop the religious themes that guide the choosing (and cultivating) of titles, they actually structure the religious consciousness of their subscribers. The product is, in Roof’s view, spirituality.

Ironically, even though their content is homogenized, there is also an “edge” to the messaging in these texts, expressing a theme we will see play out in a number of contemporary contexts. The invocation of the spiritual, in advertising, at work, and even in popular culture, implies that the neospiritual consumer stands out from the passive and mystified masses. Consumers of this literature “buy into the idea of ‘the spiritual’ as somehow ‘alternative,’ counter-cultural or subversive of mainstream values. Here, ‘spirituality’ is sold to the consumer as a form of cultural critique; even if it ends up supporting the very system that at one level it appears to be challenging” (Carrette and King 2005, 134-135)

Lau: Creating ‘Moral’ Consumption

Roof pointed at the marginal differentiation, commercial nature and homogenization of the institutions of the American religious landscape. In Lau’s book, *New Age Capitalism* (2000), she essentially draws out the significance of the “holism” ethos to the religious commodity. She explores what motivates ‘religious consumers’ and finds that, by a series of imaginative steps, they construct the belief that this consumption contributes to a better world.

Lau refers to Ulrich Beck’s (1992) “risk society” thesis to explain why “wellness” appeals. Since our highly-technologized societies create actual risks that cannot be mitigated, people must use their imaginations to feel safe. As the earlier discussion of holism suggests, New Age products communicate this safety through discursively referencing historical or geographical spaces that users feel are romantically attractive, or spaces of innocence. Fantasies work best when the focus is on what are deemed more “innocent” (i.e., primitive) communities—free from the alienation of class structures, and subjugation to industrial production.

Of course, “spiritual consumers” believe that aromatherapy, macrobiotic eating, yoga and *t'ai chi* will bring about personal wellness (if not transformation). More importantly, however, they also believe their consumption will similarly transform the world. This belief that the outside world mirrors you (or reflects your intentions), is called *ethnomimesis* (Cantwell 1993). Through this imaginative process, planetary health, for example, is correlated with personal wellness, which is why the environmental and peace movements attract neospirituals. They expect these practices to bring about planetary health because the practices are imaginatively set within exotic (romanticized, real, or purely imagined) worlds, the values of which are expected to bleed over into present circumstances. Of particular interest are those worlds believed to have used “non-Western paradigms of health and wellness.”

Western populations have been romanticizing exotic communities since European explorers made their ways to foreign climes. These romantic fantasies may have served as a flight from the harsh realities of early capitalism in Europe, or from the cold analytical rationality inaugurated by Enlightenment science. As this fantasizing (and, early on, the trading) most commonly focussed on lands east of Europe (i.e., the “Orient”), the practice has been called *Orientalism* (Said 1992). The most significant (and more recent) example of this behaviour from a group that prefigured New Age spirituality is seen in British and American Theosophy at the turn of the twentieth century. Theosophical literature cites a number of exotic communities, real or imagined, as sources of authority. The imagined were Atlantis and Lemuria; the real, India and other Eastern countries. More exotic sources, still, were consulted by leader Helen Blavatsky. These “ascendant masters,” figures from an unknown space/time (mythically, the past), were claimed to be close to the source of original power and knowledge (Prothero 1996).

Marketers have updated this process for the contemporary culture markets—by not explicitly naming the imagined space. Despite such reticence, New Age marketing allows consumers to “circle back to an imagined past existing prior to industrialization..., epitomized by more integrated relationships with nature and the interconnectedness of all living things” (Lau 2000, 9). The romanticization of nature that frequently underlies Orientalism is an implicit critique of modernity. The references to nature stands in for references to “ages of innocence,” or “ages of energetic connection to nature” that the consumer wishes to revive. As we have already considered, the implied interconnection of the individual and the whole determines that at the same time as one revives oneself, the perfection or purity of the other world to which one refers, is restored to this one (Albanese 2007).

Conversely, referencing the innocent past confers this quality on oneself. The New Age’s “weak, this-worldly mysticism” expresses that the Divine energy or personage can reach across distances of time

and place to the participant's material present. With the conflation of the personal and the global, a single act can address dual problems; and this act is simply one of consumption.

Lau feels that Jurgen Habermas's (1989) ideal public sphere, represented by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century salons where the European bourgeoisie met to debate issues of the day, has been replaced by the space of consumption; consumption is a form of discourse that expresses who the consumer is and what she wants. In Lau's view, "consumer behaviour is a form of communicative action." As noted, communicative capacity is enhanced through the consumption of the exotica from a place that is "different." The consumption of items from the global marketplace is meant to imply sympathy and affinity with the distant climes. Consumers "exploit their associations, both real and imagined, with global, non-Western cultures" (Lau 2000, 10–11).

Lau (2000, 13-14) echoes Albanese (2007) by arguing that, beyond discouraging political action from outside the market, the discourse surrounding alternate health products, which associates them with global betterment, *forces* an obligation on us as consumers: We *must* seek "personal life enhancement" because we "must take responsibility for social and planetary health as well." Alternate health and wellness products "are positioned for the ills of modernity."

The economic imperative that structures economies is the target of this selective consumption. One has choices in what one consumes, and, because they can direct capitalist enterprise towards healthful alternatives for the planet, these choices must be made. The array of one's consumer choices, then, defines one's beliefs about what is a good direction for the planet. Based on refined understanding, certain products, in and of themselves, can be seen to have an intrinsic spiritual quality to them, and their consumption bodes well for the planet. "Buying into this bricolage is the first step towards responsibility.... Such a process is at once social and individual" (Lau 2000, 13). This idea is supported by the presumption that having spiritual beliefs is subversive, as noted above. "It is precisely this impression that consumer power has some ability to undermine capitalist systems that ultimately allows New Age capitalism to thrive" (Lau 2000, 14). However, because the "direction" offered is via the vehicle of the market, capitalism's purview, this is a highly doubtful impression.

Over time, the basis for attributing a spiritual character to a product has expanded. Initially, "spiritual" commodification was only applied to "body-mind-spirit" products. Progressively, this changed. "The language of consumption as political action is not contained within the public sphere of alternative health and wellness, [but, r]ather, it seeps out and into the consumer landscape through advertisements for a range of goods and services" (Lau 2000, 137). Now, the products of the old industrial economy, such as automobiles, are equally marketed with a spiritual mystique. (See television advertising for the Lincoln by

American actor, Matthew McCougnaghey.) We cannot lose sight of the fact that advertising has always created a mystique around its subjects. The “spiritual” motif, precisely because of its obscure content, may simply make this easier. This suggests that advertising around New Age products *per se* had a temporary role to play in the process of identification of *all* consumption as *spiritual*. Once strengthened, the spiritual motif can now be disconnected from its ostensive objects and be made to perform duties for advertising in general.

Lau criticizes such globalization theorists as Roland Robertson, for missing the pacifying implications of the theory of the “global/local” interpenetration of contemporary culture. Essentially, she charges, the intellectual importance placed on this dynamic shrouds consideration of the more important social pattern. “Attention to class and equality issues are supplanted by concern for individual and planetary wellness, considerations... easily accommodated through consumption as a mode of social action” (Lau 2000, 135). One might also note that this transition accompanies the movement away from sociological towards organic worldviews that marks neoliberalism. It appears that New Age commodification has served to reorient a culture, formerly suspicious of consumption, since it was called into question in the 1960s.

Furthermore, spiritual consumers’ holism implies that their “responsible” consumption patterns will naturally reverberate—“globally,” as it were. (New media that enable and celebrate “viral” messaging imply the greater possibility of this—with significant selectivity. The term used to describe this process is, of course, an organic one.) However, as Lau points out, a true diffusion, following this “trickle-down,” or viral, idea is not valid. When New Age consumption becomes material (not just ideational), and despite its “We’re all one!” slogan, it is elitist. New Age product advertising positions would-be consumers socially.

[D]iscourses of alternative purchasing would make no sense [without their registration of class status]. *Despite the anti-material tenor* associated with the public sphere of alternative health, the fact is that purchases reflect social status and class distinctions. Eating macrobiotically is expensive and time-consuming, and many celebrities who extol [it] rely on full-time chefs to prepare it (Lau 2000, 17). [My italics]

We see the economic elevation of access to these services and products in terms of their corporate support. The corporations that employ alternate health practitioners for employees and managers are not poor and small--nor are the “servants” they hire. “The companies that invite Yoga instructors to teach onsite tend to be Fortune 500 companies, not your local mom-and-pop store. The economic reality of pursuing these alternative health practices and buying these products necessarily makes them part of elite culture, and it is this association—in conjunction with the ideology of the alternative—that has made New Age capitalism so profitable” (Lau 2000, 17).

More recently, “mindfulness meditation” has become the preferred focus of wellness efforts. The sale of assistants to individuals, as “apps” for their smartphones or “wearable gadgets,” is very high, to be sure. However, we can infer from the corporate numbers that, by far, the most lucrative contemporary clients of “mindfulness meditation” in its many forms are corporations, for their employees. Jen Wieczner (2016) reported in the business magazine, *Forbes*, that

In 2015 the meditation and mindfulness industry raked in nearly \$1 billion, according to research by IBISWorld, which breaks out the category from the alternative health care sector. But even that doesn’t count the revenue from the nearly 1000 mindfulness apps now available, according to Sensor Tower (top app Headspace recently raised \$30 million and has been downloaded 6 million times), or the burgeoning category of wearable gadgets designed to help people Zen out (the popular Muse connected headband measures brain activity during meditation for \$299).

This year 22% of employers will offer mindfulness training—typically priced between \$500 and \$10,000 for large-group sessions—a percentage that could double in 2017, according to a forthcoming survey by Fidelity Investments and the National Business Group on Health. The survey shows that non-profit Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute, a mindfulness training program incubated at Google, grew revenue more than 50% last year by offering two-day workshops (up to \$35,000 for 50 people) to dozens of other Fortune 500 companies, including Ford... and American Express.

Despite this ready and ever-growing³² embrace by Fortune 500 companies, Lau explains that the exoticism of the religious and cultural traditions that New Age and the alternate health industries draw from is crucial to the coherence of their messages.

This mode of cultural critique in popular discourses [enacted through consumption and articulated in the New Age vision] relies upon an Eastern agelessness, in opposition to a Western modernity.... [T]he West is represented as highly individualized, technologized and scientized modernity, while the East remains the timeless representative of collectivity,

³² “The recent Willis Towers Watson Staying@Work survey found that more employers have adopted a broader view of workforce health that includes physical, mental, emotional, and financial health. According to the survey, 64% of U.S. employers say that by 2018, they will focus on developing a workplace culture that supports employee well-being as a primary strategy to boost health engagement; only 34% stated it was a core strategy in 2015.” (Sanicola, Jun 16, 2016)

spirituality, nature and harmony. It is precisely this imagined contrast that allows for cultural critique by creating a position from which to reappraise and reform... the West. [However, rather than subverting the hegemony of the Western Enlightenment project,] the discourses of bodily practice reinforce it by invoking the impression of a critique as a marketing device and selling points (Lau 2000, 132).

Lau looked at how traditions were used in several industries at a particular point in time. Olaf Hammer, looking at the New Age more directly, argues that “the East” is only one of the possible mysterious cultures that has been or could be used as a foil for said beliefs. Because the cultures must be relatively mysterious for the mechanics of the message to work, the exotic tradition referenced changes in relation to the progressive opening of cultures to Western, particularly American, popular awareness. (This follows the trajectory of travel destinations by Western tourists, too—places are “worn out” of their exoticism as they are visited and become more friendly; it also follows the process of “gentrification” of neighbourhoods by Western middle classes, who want to live close to “ethnics,” and “artists” until their mundane lives become too familiar [while the ethnics and artists get priced out of that local market].) If we substitute “the exotic” in general, for Lau’s term “the East,” as per Hammer’s analysis, her summary of this process is broadly applicable to much contemporary cultural consumption.

Miller: Repurposing Religious Traditions

From his point of view as an American Catholic theologian, Vincent Miller, in *Consuming Religion, Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture*, (2005) directs his attention not as much to the “borrower” of religious traditions—New Agers being the chief perpetrators—but to the impact of that borrowing on the traditions. Essentially, he laments that their meaning, especially the social justice import of Christianity, is lost when they are broken up into parts. Carrette and King (2005, 28) also stated this position: “While New Age followers... selectively ravage the feel-good fabric of ancient cultural and religious traditions, their disciplines and practices can easily isolate them from the resources of social justice and community, to be found within those same traditions.”

Miller argues that cultural objects that are part of a religious tradition get their complete meaning only in their integral aspects. However, they are being extracted from their traditional socio/religious contexts as cultural innovators appropriate and insert them into the wider secular (or ‘spiritual’) culture. He asks how religion can survive in a social structure where culture is the product sold. He considers a wide range of communication and commodity relations theory to define the problem. He concludes that where “production for exchange” is the organizing principle for society, religious communities are threatened. They are subjected to the fragmenting force of the economic machine that adopts and discards cultural novelty continuously. When the constituting elements of a religion, its rituals, symbols, material paraphernalia and

even theological ideas, are extracted from their contexts and their interdependent relations, and are presented to define identities, to sell products, or indeed *are* the products, they lose their meaning and capacity to unite people.

Miller's account of the economic background to this problem is consistent with Lau's analysis and with my analysis of post-Fordism in Chapter Five. The market messages associated with products do not refer to the products themselves but to cultural attributes that are taken on as the identities of consumers. Accelerated borrowing and mixing of cultural contents emerges from the necessity of providing continuous (marginal) novelty in the potential identity markers, as per Roof, so consumption will continue. Miller understands that "the post-Fordist religious marketplace, like cable television, needs content" (Miller 2005, 78). In addition to the more abstract aspects for the information economy, religion's physical objects are also broadly commodified. "There is a particular interest in paraphernalia of a size suitable for mass marketing--prayer beads... , jewellery and body adornments, *bindis*, henna tattoos, [etc.]" (Miller 2005, 78).

In considering the specific issue of how commodity relations may shape the religious traditions that (mostly-involuntarily) provide that content, Miller is concerned about what happens to them in the process. Launching elements of the whole religious experience on the market degrades its experience and power.

[W]hen cultural elements are encountered and engaged in commodified fashion—as floating, shallow, post-modern signifiers unrelated to one another or to particular communities and practices—interpretation and syntheses, no matter how sophisticated, will have little practical impact.... This is a profound problem for theology... Symbols [will] have no cultural friction, [and therefore cannot] impact the life of the believing community, and may be used in any context where they can facilitate the sale of something (including, for example, a 'spiritual' tourist package) (Miller 2005, 66).

Religious concepts can become commodities that reflect on non-religious activities and objects, encouraging "religious" engagement in a provisional and superficial way. Miller mirrors Carrette and King's position as he considers the impact of "the Joseph Campbell Phenomenon." The popular writer about religious motifs compiled others' original work, providing a way for believers (particularly Catholics) to

... re-appropriate (and de-parochialize) the symbolism of their own tradition. In the process, symbolism is freed from its communal and institutional infrastructure. As a consequence, religion is tendered increasingly as private and individual.... Traditions are pillaged for their symbolic content, which is then repackaged and recontextualized in a way that jettisons their communal, ethical and political consequences (Miller 2005, 143).

Miller sums up the situation: “two things... are destabilized by the commodification of culture: a culture in which beliefs, symbols and practices had stable meanings; and communal and institutional infrastructures that linked these meanings to the practice of life” (Miller 2005, 143). What is lost is a common culture (Miller 2005, 70). Miller recognizes the vulnerability of traditional churches to secularization, and the spirit of *bricolage* and reconstitution of culture that dominates in this “post-modern” world. He is also aware that religious authorities alter their own traditions as they respond to commodifying impulse, and struggle with their diminished power due to secularization. Mary Jo Neitz (1987) identifies the same process in her study of Catholic charismatic movements. Religious leaders allow followers to “engage traditions as sources from which [to] draw [without] incurring an obligation for their maintenance” (Miller 2005, 213).

Despite his ‘conservative’ aspiration to revive church-owned media, whose loss Roof described, Miller also reflects on possible counterforces to commodification. He proposes “creative appropriations” from one’s own tradition, for he does not object to “repurposing” cultural content *per se*. However, he strongly distinguishes between what is done to sell products and the use of religious content as a tool of resistance by oppressed people, such as what the liberation theologians aimed for among Central and South American marginal peoples (as per Orlando Espin’s efforts there) (Miller 2005, 166). He would also be sympathetic to the type of activity in which Falun Gong, a Chinese New Religious Movement engages in, in that country. Ming Xiao (2011) describes the group’s strategic use of cultural contents from the Chinese historical repertoire, in rhetorical debates with Chinese political authorities, so as to defend their religious freedom and personal safety against governmental oppression. Miller (2005, 167-72) also approves of the “repurposing” practiced in Spanish Harlem, as Robert Orsi (2010) describes it. Orsi studied the popular appropriation of religious traditions in Harlem New York, over most of a century (such as is demonstrated at the National Shrine of St. Jude, in Chicago).

However, Miller clarifies that repurposing should not be merely instrumental—even if devoted to empowering the oppressed or to other social goods. It should have religious value to people. Religion is “a complex of practices, relationships and desires that entwine and secure the beliefs of the devout in their lives [and its value] cannot be tidily classified as purely liberative or simply repressive” (Miller 2005, 168). Commodity relations specifically hurt (or at least, greatly change) traditional religions, whether Judeo-Christian, Islamic or Hindu, because their traditions are given meaning through multi-faceted, collective obligations and enactments accumulated and reflected on over time. They are grounded in histories and localities. They are virtually *formulations of* history and geography as well as of accounts of humanity struggling with social life in relation to a divine entity. If commodity relations specifically deny history and human struggle, their hegemony clearly strike a death knell for these traditions, barring their questionable contemporary reconstruction as very different entities and adapting religion to a new cultural reality and

environment. Again, this comment reflects the distinction between an historical worldview and the organic (or historicist) one of neospirituality, as defined in the preceding chapter.

Second Privatization: Religion for Production

The above are important themes of the commodification of religion. Despite the recent efforts of scholars to redirect research towards arguing for neospirituality's autonomy, as discussed above, scholars such as Carrette and King remained undeterred. After raising the stakes in the commodification of religion debate by suggesting that as privatized religion neospirituality is *specifically* adapted to the immaterial economy, they advance to the thesis that this is but a stage or moment in a larger process, spirituality's redeployment in the interests of capitalism. They call this movement the second privatization of religion.

However, the discipline of psychology has been important in all stages of privatization. The authors directly link individualism, 'psychologization,' and neospirituality to capitalism. Psychologization is the process that mediates between the two worlds of economics and religion. In his highly theoretically contribution, Carrette (2007) claims that the discipline of psychology rose in importance as the model of society became more economic, i.e., with post-Fordism. His argument is this: Capitalism seeks to satisfy human needs and desires through commodities. Commodities are always, by definition, owned—either by single individuals or corporate entities that distribute access to individuals. (This is as opposed to collective or public goods, where rights to access are informally-identified or weakly-enforced.) The discipline of psychology reinforces the commodification process because it supports the fundamental assumption of a commodity-based culture—that the unit of analysis in the social world is the single individual. "In short, psychology is a mechanism of a wider ideology of privatization and individualization [that creates] a form of subjectivity built on the ideals of consumer freedom" (Carrette and King 2005, 56-57).

By an extension of this argument, the transferral of religiosity from the group to the individual is an interim stage in its commodification, and the discipline of psychology has a role to play here. Since psychology supports the transition from religion to neospirituality, and because that resituation of religiosity into the individual psyche prepares for the commodification of religion, then the pre-eminence of psychology in public discourse is contributory to the commodification of religion. Essentially, Carrette and King (2005) contend that the psychologization of religion naturally leads to its commodification. Although the psychological being is prior to the consumer, the former necessarily becomes the latter. Consistent with this argument is the fact that the most important contributor to religion's commodification was the psychologist, Abraham Maslow (1976), who formulated it as a psychological phenomenon and as an attribute or quality of individuals. However, Western individualism has a much more extended history than this twentieth-

eth-century intervention. Prior to considering Maslow's work, I will provide the definition of the modern psychological individual which grounds Carrette and King's arguments.

The Calvinist In-Worldly Individual

Carrette and King (2005) suggest Christianity can be posed as an antidote to individualism. This seems contradicted by their accompanying point that individualism began with the Protestant Reformation. Moreover, Carrette and King (2005) support the view that Christianity inaugurated the radical idea of the individual person, and that Christianity has not been hostile to certain forms of individualism for many centuries. However, the contradiction can be resolved by understanding the unique nature of modern individualism. To flesh out their argument, Carrette (2007) reviews an aspect of the history of the Western individual. They show that pre-reformation Christian individualism had an "outworldly theology," and is different from the psychological individualism of today.

It is not individualism as such which results in certain economic realities, but a specific ideological framing of individualism. Psychological individualism is an in-worldly individualism, which serves particular ideological purposes... [There are] different forms of introspection. [S]elf-knowledge is stabilized for new forms of political economy. The history of introspection, from its pre-modern psychological roots to modern psychological measurement, reveals the epistemological separation of self-knowledge from out-worldly theology. (Carrette's 2007, 52-53)

The "individual" we see in contemporary times was "established at least from the Enlightenment, but arguably from the Protestant Reformation, which removed religion from the public to the private world" (Carrette 2007, 222).

Louis Dumont (1986, 26-27) explains the creation of the "in-worldly" individual by post-Reformation Calvinism. Earlier Christians had had to weigh their personal concerns with what God wanted from them, making them out-worldly. For guidance, they looked to church officials as well as signs from their environment. However, according to John Calvin (who followed Luther), God would no longer communicate through authorities, and nature too became mute.

[W]ith Calvin the hierarchical dichotomy that characterized our field of consideration comes to an end; the antagonistic worldly element that individualism had hitherto to accommodate disappears entirely in Calvin's theocracy. The field is absolutely unified. *The individual is now in the*

*world, and the individual value rules without restriction or limitation. The in-worldly individual is before us (Dumont 1986, 53).*³³

Following Dumont, Carrette explains that neither the pre-modern self, nor, consequently, his or her religiosity, were well-contained. The private bounded self may have been unimaginable. It was believed that the self (or soul) might disappear, temporarily, or be fused with another's consciousness for a period. By contrast, the contemporary self, is always extant (always *there*), distinguishable from the environment. What's more, the modern spiritual view is that one's spirituality is an attribute of one's own self and is thereby contained.

According to Dumont, Calvin constructed this self by effective "streamlining" what could be admitted as its substance. A Calvinist should have no recourse to claims of an absent self, no blurred lines between self and other, no ambiguity about what belonged to the self, so that there was correspondingly no escaping God's judgement. It is a pitiless ethos. At the same time, as per Weber's thesis (1985) (discussed in Chapter Five), God did not return the favour of self-revelation; his judgement was entirely opaque to the worshipper. It is for this reason that the Calvinist resorted to good works (in the capitalist's view, becoming materially successful). Accordingly, the dilemma that preoccupied pre-Reformation Christians, being torn between the self's interests and God's, was overcome. Now, only the material domain could be perceived.

The Modernized Psychological Individual

The above describes a major development in the history of the modern individual's formulation. However, individualism was also greatly advanced in the near-present, with the rise of psychology. Carl Jung (1875-1961) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) made important contributions to the process of individualizing and psychologizing religion (Carrette and King 2005, 72; Carrette 2007, 222). Then, in the founding of humanistic psychology, Rollo May (1978), Gordon Allport (1950), Eric Fromm (1978, 2004) Carl R. Rogers (1986), and Abraham Maslow (1976) shifted their attention from the study of *pathological* behavior to the study of *healthy* individuals (Lucas 1992, 201–02).

Humanistic psychology portended the human potential movement and its "theoretical wing," transpersonal psychology (Hanegraff 1996, 50). All ground "the extreme focus on the self, seen in the New Age as well as elsewhere in society" (Lucas 1992, 2000). Naturally, this attitude has been judged harshly by scholars of religion, especially as many are sympathetic to Christian theology's emphasis on looking beyond one's

³³ Cited in Carrette 2007, 58

personal interests. Robert Bellah et al's *Habits of the Heart* (1985) is a seminal work, launching an influential critique of "the 'therapeutic attitude' for its emphasis on self-knowledge over community relationships and on 'full, open, honest communication' over communal obligations and commitments" (Nadeson 1999, 101).

As a further affront to traditional religions, Maslow was the chief architect of recasting religious experience as a phenomenon independent of religion. He theorized the existence of "peak experiences" and "self-actualization" as independent of any reference to God or a transcendent entity (Carrette and King 2005, 75). In discussing this point, Carrette distinguishes Maslow's intention from that of philosopher and scholar of religion, William James (1880), who inspired Maslow. James intellectually separated "religious experience" from religions as a method of examining the former more effectively, whereas Maslow aimed for the entire theoretical extraction of spiritual experience from religion. Maslow gave "spiritual values... a naturalistic meaning, that [needed no] supernatural concepts to validate them" (Carrette 2007, 150).

From Theological to Economic Accountability

However, the person who has escaped being shaped by a religion (i.e., is not subjected to "theological accounting") has not escaped any such shaping. "Once boundaries have been drawn around the self, once theological accounting of the self [has shifted] to the contemporary economic accounting, or auditing, the subject can be *fixed* for the economy" (Carrette 2007, 55). The individual developed in this way is prepared for consumerism—and to be a commodity.

To be prepared for consumerism, one must know how to respond to calls for it. One must be alert to suggestions of personal improvement or changes in one's life. However, to be motivated to improve or change, one must understand oneself as a repository of attributes, the quantity and quality of which can be adjusted. This entails measuring oneself—registering a benchmark self against which acquisition can be tested. To be a ready consumer also requires understanding that acquisitions are dependant upon one's own initiative in procuring them. To be a consumer is to have an opportunistic mentality. Only by seeing oneself as relatively autonomous and responsible for the amalgam of personally-held qualities can one keep attention on the process of acquisition.

More centrally, as per the neoliberal transformation of persons from sociological to entrepreneurial subjects, mentioned earlier, the acquisition of qualities, in and of itself, is legitimate consumption. In the neoliberal arena, workers become "active economic subjects, implemented, rationalized, and calculated by

the person who works” (Foucault 2008, 223).³⁴ In this view, the wage then becomes “an income stream, which is a return on an investment, or more precisely, a return on ‘human capital’” (Schultz 1972).³⁵ However, value can accrue to oneself by other means than through income. “Labor conceptualized in terms of human capital is thus not connected to paid work, but any activity that maximizes an individual’s potential to secure any form of material or immaterial future return” (Foucault 2008, 226).³⁶ From the neoliberal viewpoint, work is considered one of a number of alternatives towards this goal, all “opportunities for the individual to work on and transform their initial investment of human capital with different technologies of the self... by their own means or with the help of others ..., in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (Foucault 1993, 203).³⁷

Contemporary technologies of the self include cosmetic surgery, therapy, life-coaching, exercise, and of course, mindfulness training. Labor conceptualized in terms of human capital is thus not considered to be paid work, but any activity that maximizes an individual’s potential to secure any form of material or immaterial future return: ‘Any activity that increases the capacity to earn income, to achieve satisfaction, even migration, the crossing of borders from one country to another, is an investment in human capital’ (Read 2009, 28). In this manner, homo economicus shifts radically from being a ‘partner of exchange’ to an ‘entrepreneur of himself [sic]’ (Foucault 2008, 226).³⁸

Thus, consumption in this culture importantly involves conscious self-production (which is discussed below as spiritual prosumption)—hence the importance of immaterial capitalism. Experiences, for example, may be valued for what they add to the self, by changing her or him—not simply for momentary enjoyment, if they offer that as well.

These processes of consumption for the purpose of self-development are parallel to what is enacted from the outside as one becomes engaged in the knowledge economy. For the neoliberal subject is acted on by both self and “the social order.” The “analytic of governmentality understands subjectivity in its dual sense—that is, to be subjected by a dominant influence and to be subjectivated by one’s own effort and conscience” (Ng 2016, 141) Regardless of the individual’s active participation, the self is translated into a set of

³⁴ Cited in Ng 2016, 137

³⁵ Cited in Ng 2016, 137

³⁶ Cited in Ng 2016, 138

³⁷ Cited in Ng 2016, 138

³⁸ Cited in Ng 2016, 139

data, at the broadest level demographic, but becoming ever-more-refined as one engages with the digital world. Attributes or qualities are added (while others are dropped or subordinated) to a repository or profile. Derived from consumption, institutional or online use, one's actions are continually registered, interpreted and correlated. This may occur anywhere that personal data is collected (with major exceptions for areas that are pointedly sequestered from this scrutiny, such as medical data, in the normal course of events.) This measurement was performed crudely by independent market studies in the past, but with computer-based media, use can be gauged directly. At the same time, precise user profiles can be developed and turned around on the user as targeted advertising and other enticements to further consumption (CBC: Ira Basin interview, Feb 15, 2016). Meanwhile state surveillance systems bank massive amounts of personal data, ready to be searched, if justified, so as to pinpoint or explicate any recorded individual's actions or utterances (Diebert 2013).

Thus, data collection is a routine aspect of the institutional rationalization of the self that must be performed in an information economy. For, to be put to financial advantage, knowledge about people must be *mathesized*—processed to be reducible to a mathematical equation (Carrette 2007, 183). For this to work, attributes must be located in individual selves, each autonomous, bounded and divested of *encroaching* social ties. Hence, the consumer is the measurable self, and is therefore measured, and sold to marketers (Smythe 1981).

Like Calvin, these systems rely on the assumption that characteristics are fully contained by, and so fully attributable to, the individual. People are measured as individuals. This epistemological extraction of the person from his associations—this streamlining of the self—is necessary so that he or she can be *known* (without intimacy) as a compilation of data, a profile. If profiled, each individual is a unique set of scores, unrelated to other individuals, on standard or esoteric measures.

The measures are necessarily a function of the research question. Selves are modelled according to the concerns of funding institutions (Irvine, Miles and Evans 1981). That no statistical study or profile grasps the whole self is a normal understanding within the social sciences. Moreover, the selves described, either for juridical, administrative, or commercial processes, are massed and “played back” as sociological knowledge, shaping collective self-imagery. This is another norm in modern society (Giddens 1991).

Carrette and King call this process the mathesization of the self. Carrette does not entirely reject the reductions that create this accountable self. However, he believes we should be cognizant that this form leaves out the full story about persons. Indeed, what is left represents “the blurring of the value-laden conditions of introspection and the closure of a space to control and limit analysis” (Carrette 2007, 59). If overbearing, these feedback processes can highly limit the individual self-reflexive capabilities. “Such

strategies are not about revealing the truth of being human, but rather the stabilization of a certain truth of the human being for a new type of society based upon an instrumental rationality of calculation for efficiency and control” (Carrette 2007, 54). With these objections, Carrette is validating Michel Foucault’s (1980) well-known summary of the situation: “The individual is a social category of government” (quoted in Carrette 2007, 60).

Above, I discussed neoliberal governance—the political context of the information society. I noted that this governance is expected to compensate for the reduction of government (which is discussed in detail in Chapter Five), whose effect is that services once offered to citizens at minimal cost (i.e., were paid for by taxation) are put out for tender to profit-making or not-for-profit bodies. Moreover, many of the services formerly offered publicly were addressed to creating equality of living standards broadly. Because capitalist economies tend to concentrate wealth, this withdrawal of governmental compensatory programs inevitably results in deficient quality of life for some. As explained above, governments authorize service agencies to address these deficiencies—but not necessarily by correcting them. Rather, they are tasked with motivating those who suffer them to correct their “problems” themselves—either imaginatively or actually, through increased competitiveness. This is the essential underpinning of the “therapeutic society.” The therapeutic self, discussed further below, defines life deficiencies as personally correctable. This discussion of neoliberal governance reveals it to be the link between the mathecization of the self and therapeutic culture. As I explained above, Carrette and King also argue that the “methodological individualism” of psychology is an interim step to translating social life to generalized commodity relations. By their reckoning, Maslow’s work advancing “psychologization” lays the groundwork for this mathesized—and so commodified—self. This is because making *the spiritual* into an attribute of, or something possessed by, the self, was a necessary step in the process of creating the individual that could be subject to general commodification (Carrette 2007, 53-57). Effectively the connection to community had to be broken first; in this case, to a religious community. The meaning of the spiritual person can be assessed without reference to his or her connections, whether communal or divine.

Effectively, we might see “personal spirituality” as the label for the unique valuation that a person makes of their world. Ironically, if the content of a person’s spirituality can be talked about, articulated, or otherwise discerned, it can then be inserted into the commodification process.

The new patterns of introspection are playing with a consumer mentality which Maslow—somewhat innocently—initiates in his work, a consumer mentality that creates notions of ‘religion’ and the ‘spiritual’ inside the psychological for redistribution. This redistribution occurs by bringing experience into the ‘realm of human knowledge’, that is to make it ‘objective,’ ‘public’ and shared’ (Carrette 2007, 55).

The therapeutic process brings these values to consciousness. It is a compliment to mathesization. Therapy is the means by which individuals reflect on, internalize and publicize the qualities they discern in their subtle awareness. Eva Illouz (2004) calls it “the quantification of emotional interest.” Since articulable self-knowledge is a commodity in the post-Fordist economy, and accrues value to the holder if deployed, Illouz calls the new economic structure “emotional capitalism” (Illouz 2004, 60). We will see later the operation of emotional capitalism in workplaces.

The spiritual self might be seen not so much as the *product* of individualism as the *process* of individualizing. Articulating the exact content of one’s self-understanding is possibly the ultimate form of self-differentiation. Carrette (2007) would agree with Illouz, as he claims that spiritual introspection, enacted through the therapeutic process is tied to quantifying the self for consumer society. It is a language for articulating consumer preference in an immaterial economy.

There may be a fundamental difference between the expected returns on consumption in a world where most goods are material and more or less functional, and one where they are immaterial (conceptual/ideational) or a service (abstract). We already know that prosumption operates in the immaterial economy. Consumers are forced into producing (improving, repairing, offering personal data etc.) in order to use, or in the process of using, consumer goods. However, we can now posit a trajectory towards increasing degrees of intimacy or personal tailoring in prosumption. Along this path, we proceed from the more impersonal presumptive tasks, such as assembling a piece of furniture bought as parts in a box, then advancing towards presumptive activities that involve tailoring a process or product to one’s own preferences or particular needs—such as setting up a desired level of difficulty in a video or computer game. This trajectory towards more intimate tailoring continues to the point of inversion of act and acted upon— i.e., spiritual prosumption, as introduced in Chapter One. Here, the self is altered in the process of consumption, and what is explicitly sold on the market is the medium of that transformation. This might be called “self-prosumption,” as the self is consumed as well as produced—i.e., reproduced—in the act. However, A. Dawson’s adds another element to make it “spiritual-prosumption.” This is the transitory process—the movement “from *a* to *b*,” which justifies the perception of “direct (physical and emotional) or indirect (employment and living conditions) betterment” (A. Dawson 2013, 138). That transition is “the product.” Through this process, the change that is produced via consumption is a change to oneself. To acquire new attributes, the self must be *transported* to a new place (a more meaningful place?). Consumption is therefore equivalent to advancing along a spiritual trajectory.

As discussed above, this is a particular kind of spirituality. The in-worldly individual, freed since the Reformation from adjudicating between personal desires and outer signs of God’s direction, makes the self

available for another type of direction, which was taken up in the 20th and 21st centuries, say Carrette and King (2005), by capitalism. Neospirituals' and liberal religionists' refusal of Christian domination does not mean they can escape *any* domination, as they hope; belief in the infinitely-malleable and unencumbered psychological self is an illusion (Carrette and King 2005, 77). Once introspective knowledge is anchored according to an in-worldly individualism and the individual is abstracted from the interrelated needs of the wider community, systems of political and economic control then provide the mirror for the self. The choice involves

an adoption of another authority and another system of constraint. In the very act of freeing the mind from the dogma of religion, consumers now entered the thought-control of individualism. Rejection of the Church, the synagogue and the temple is replaced by the new authoritarianism of the market and capital. Spiritual self-actualisation is a market actualisation, clever in its very concealment (Carrette and King 2005, 77-78).

A precondition for spiritual prosumption is the individually accountable individual (theorized by Maslow, for instance). Once the individual can be *accounted for* in terms of a number of attributes, he or she can be slotted into *an accounting system*, whether, as noted, it is consumerist or bureaucratic. Since, by definition, spiritual prosumption is realized through market relations, we could say that spiritual prosumption is consumerist accounting of/for the self via the therapeutic process.

Carrette's position that Maslow's "peak experiences," held to evoke passion and feeling, are the vehicles for the formation of the commodified self seems to be the ultimate irony. However, the idea that mystical experiences realize or confirm a prior worldview is not foreign to scholars of religion. They recognize that these events are interpreted through the imagery and language of the mystic's own religious beliefs. This being the case, what, then, could be the content of a peak experience of an atheist, or of one whose religious vision regularly shifts? In a consumer society, these environments are continually altered. For example, it is no less common for participants in a large, popular-music concert to achieve a sense of collective absorption and ecstasy than it is for successful meditators to do so. Peak experiences, or periods of "flow" (Czitzentihalyi 2007) appear to be relatively common in this entertainment-oriented world. However, the embracing environment for such a succession of environments as the concert and the meditation hall might be the economy that processes the commodity form.

Carrette (2007, 160) tells us Maslow came to *regret* the uses to which his theory of self-actualization was put, including at Esalen. "He was concerned about the 'over-extreme, dangerous and one-sided' use of his work and believed he had been 'too imbalanced toward the individualist and too hard on groups, organizations and communities.'" He modified his "peak experiences" term to "plateau experiences."

However, in Carrette's view, "Maslow's efforts to reposition his psychology also faced calamity when he saw how his work inspired the privileged culture of capitalism. [Failing to realize that] his hierarchy of needs was a hierarchy of capitalist values, and that the idea of 'self-actualization'... was locked into a fundamental individualism and motivation of capital," Maslow tried to argue that the poor can be self-actualized too (Carrette 2007, 160-161). The founder of *est*, Erhardt, disagreed. Michael York (1995, 56) supplements Young's (1987, 142) observation that *est* followers come from the liberal and intellectual classes of North America and Western Europe, by adding: "The appeal to these various people is explained as a search for satisfaction in lives otherwise evaluated as successful. As Erhardt explains, satisfaction is not the concern of hungry people."

However, prior to his regrets, from the 1950s to the 1970s, Maslow worked to theoretically *contain* spirituality in the individual. In doing so, he made a tentative rapprochement with experimenters at the Big Sur California, Esalen Institute. As a secular humanist, Maslow's first contact with a mystical approach to self-actualization occurred there in the early 1960s (Alexander 1992, 36). Scholars have differences of opinion as to the relationship of Maslow's humanism, the New Age, and "transpersonal psychology."³⁹ At Esalen, experimenters explored both Eastern Yoga practices and Fritz Perls' Gestalt therapy. The Esalen practitioners corrected (precursor to New Age) New Thought's emphasis on *the mind* as dominant in mind/body integration, by elevating *the body's contribution* to 'wellness,' or 'wholeness' in the pursuit of self-transformation.⁴⁰

Other scholars indicate that transpersonal psychology added to humanistic psychology a spiritual dimension, such as "personal experiences that go beyond the usual range of humanistic investigations" [Campbell 2007, 95]). In transpersonal psychology, "interest in self-actualization developed into a concern with 'soul-actualization'" (Alexander 1992, 38). Marilyn Ferguson (1980) noted that the "transpersonal perspective" added a holistic cosmology, "that can best be conveyed through paradox, meditation and mystical experience."

³⁹ "Activities and interests under this rubric include hypnosis and clairvoyance, spiritualism, and mediumship, psychical research and survival issue, parapsychology and ESP, and such diverse esoteric schools as Anthroposophy (Rudolph Steiner), Rosicrucians, and an interest in past lives" (York 1995, 46).

⁴⁰ In 1964, the first Gestalt training workshop was held at Esalen by Perls' students. Perls had learned of the impact of the body on the mind from his analyst, Wilhelm Reich, in Frankfurt, prior to the fifties and founded Gestalt Therapy Institutes in America from the 1960s onward. Reich called his study *bioenergetics*. (Alexander 1992, 39-40)

Considering Maslow's intervention through to the addition of a supposed mystical dimension, via the holistic transpersonal psychology, we might ask whether these developments show a return to "religion, proper," with implications for compassionate behaviour, which Maslow had, arguably, undermined. Apologists for this belief system contend that they do. However, if so, it is with "a twist." Carrette and King deny that it has restored what was lost in the Christian worldview, or that transpersonal psychology *re-turned* spirituality to its collective origins, from the privatization that humanistic psychology and the human potential movement supposedly advanced. Rather, "despite its considerable promise as an antidote to psychological individualism..., transpersonal psychology maintains the technical language of religion, but locates such experiences in [essentially individualistic] human potential and states of consciousness" (Carrette and King 2005, 72). Transpersonal psychology was unable to make an adequate transition back to language of collectivity--which is why it does not inspire collective movements, and also why, in its optic,

spirituality emerges as a product of religious fragmentation and eclecticism, hidden in the psychological structures of individualism. It is a box without content, because the content has been thrown out, and what is left is a set of psychological descriptions with no referent (Carrette and King 2005, 73).

Carrette (2007) suggests by the above that once a common ethos is ceded in favour of individual experience and interests, thereby subordinating collective considerations, restoring a sense of responsibility to the group is not easily accomplished. Doing so demands the complete reconstruction of an ethical system, the content that is absent from the box, and integrating it somehow in community relations. Carrette and King (2005, 77) suggest that these contents must relate to meaning at a social level and, therefore to belonging. Otherwise, it lacks the basis of a viable religion.

After Maslow, spirituality became the new addiction for the educated, white middle classes... the new cultural Prozac, bringing transitory feelings of ecstatic happiness and thoughts of self-affirmation, but never addressing sufficiently the underlying problem of social isolation and injustice. In an environment where many experience a lack of meaning in their lives, spirituality offers a cultural sedative providing individual rapture (Carrette and King 2005, 77).

In Carrette and King's view, the loss of a sense of collective identity is the most deleterious implication of psychologized religion. The loss proves, for them, that it is commodified, and not genuine religion.

Different 'Wholes' in the Global Capitalist New Age

Leinberger and Tucker (1991) provide substance to the theory of the "second privatization" of religion thesis by defining the important contemporary condition of its implementation. They diagnose the process through which workers are led to accept the contemporary corporation as the "whole" that consolidates

their religiosity. Their analysis (like Carrette and King's) does not apply to all workers in this economy, who are not, in any case, universally encouraged to adopt a spiritual orientation or exposed to programming to encourage this. It applies to a broad, somewhat elevated category of workers who, as I have argued, and will clarify further in a later chapter, are the "classic," or "iconic" post-Fordist workers in this new economy. As I explained in Chapter One, they—the symbolic analysts—are generally technically-skilled, and do creative work with relative autonomy. The characteristics of their work are fully examined in later chapters.

Leinberger and Tucker (1991) explain that management's encouragement of humanistic language in workplaces (which primarily posits that workers should feel empowered by their work), while actually running workplaces according to the old human resources (HR) principles of emotionally manipulating employees in the interests of company profits, requires careful direction of employee expectations so that their aspirations appear to mesh with corporate goals. As these authors' see the situation, through actions on company culture, HR professionals and managers cast the company as the organism with the most legitimate aspiration to its own self-realization (with the support of workers). Workers then see themselves as resources devoted to sustaining the subjecthood of the corporation (Nadesan 1999). The company becomes then a psytopia, or psychological utopia, according to the authors. Leinberger and Tucker (1991), and Nadesan (1999), explain the basic conundrum. Lip-service paid to the employee's self-actualization prevents their being managed simply as members of groups. At least superficially, the aspirations of each individual must be honoured. However, a business corporation is not a provisional association of individuals temporarily supporting/exploiting each other in pursuit of their own goals. The corporation acts as an entity, and its survival depends on its performance according to exacting business parameters. A business's brand focusses or refines how it aims to succeed in the marketplace. Companies aim for superiority on the basis of service, innovation, quality and/or price. For example, while IBM may compete on service, Hewlett-Packard may compete on price. None of these can be the personal goal of an employee. At best, the latter can only be temporarily-aligned or ancillary to any corporate goal (while shared profits, of which these workers often partake, may compensate for misalignment). The idea of "pull," discussed below—which implies that the company follows the (personal) objectives of (carefully-selected) employees, at least for a time, does not seem credible under these conditions. Hence, in order for a personal goal to be conflated with a corporate goal, a process of translation of corporate to personal goals must occur.

Leinberger and Tucker (1991) feel that the historical culture of Post-Fordist workplaces, first populated by the residues of counterculturalists and New Agers, accounts for why managers must pay lip service to employee actualization. Although this narrow attribution somewhat overlooks the larger cultural context of broad pursuit of self-actualization and autonomy that would have brought these values to workplaces in any

case, there was a concentration of efforts to make work actually empowering and autonomous at an earlier stage of post-Fordist implementation, which I document in Chapter Seven. Organizational activists and managers responded to aspirations inside and outside companies and sparked a period of organizational experimentation that inculcated humanist values in companies. Employees continue to insist that they be personally empowered. However, what happens in fact is a major restriction of the term *empowerment*. As a result, according to Leinberger and Tucker (1991, 193), an elaborate apparatus of worker psychic conditioning is necessary. The manager “must find ways to adjust humanistic values to commercial ones.... The result is a systematic conflation of instrumentalism (HR) and irrationalist humanism.”

As noted earlier, Lordon (2014) calls the the alignment process “co-linearization.” He argues that the “coaching” operation, found either in special consultations or workshops, or fulfilled by the “team-leader” as a matter of course in team culture, is the prime operation for effecting this transposition. As will be shown in a later chapter, the nature of workplaces in this economy requires a high degree of employee autonomy, which the conviction of empowerment necessarily supports. It is essential that workers require little specific direction to exert creativity and energy in doing their jobs. “Employees who occupy themselves of their own accord... is uncontestably the greatest success of the neoliberal co-linearization program” (53). Coaches are skilled at helping employees (including high-level managers) redefine problems stemming from objective conditions of their work—over which they have little control—into personal problems they can try to address. The primary goal of their intervention with the coachee is to “transform an exogenous pressure into an andogenous motivation” (98). They are led to understand that “what happens to them inside the enterprise cannot be called into question—only how they deal with it can” (99).

In addition to coaching, hi-tech behemoths, such as Google Inc., have additional procedures and discourses that also help align employee and corporate interests. Prior to this process, however, Google acknowledges discordant interests by offering workers a segment of their working day to freely work on their own projects (assumed to be for eventual company exploitation). This is known as a “20% time” program (Cruz 2016, 64). The acknowledgement of different interests is somewhat contradicted, however, by the adaptations that Google has made in its employee mindfulness program. “Search Inside Yourself” (SIY), as it is named, asks meditators to “find aspects of their relationship with work that are out of alignment and work with management to address them; it promises to help workers reach a place where ‘your work will become a source of your happiness’” (Chade-Meng 2012, 139).⁴¹ Founder of the SIY program, Chade-Meng Tan

⁴¹ Cited in Cruz 2016, 67

(2012, 135) drew on Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (1988) concept of "flow" in suggesting that "aligning ourselves with our work through mindfulness can help us achieve a 'state of peak performance... , being completely involved in an activity for its own sake'" (Cruz 2016, 65-66). Meng's "pithy summary of the primary objective of his program is simple: 'Optimize Thyself'" (Chade-Meng 2012, 17).⁴²

The contradiction is acknowledged by organizational theorists Tom Peters and Robert J. Waterman's (1982), in their immensely popular management text, *In Search of Excellence*. This business book asserts that "a chief attribute of excellent companies is productivity through people. It is the old conundrum of human relations: The most effective means is to treat people as ends." The authors add, "The rationalized employment relationship misses out on a key value driver in the postindustrial economy: employee commitment and loyalty. As such [they say], organizations ought to instill the workforce with strong sentimental attachments to the business enterprise" (Peters and Waterman 1982 112).

Human resource philosophy and practices emerged from a particular interpretation of the Hawthorne experiments by Elton Mayo in the late 1920s and early 1930s. These researchers discovered greater productivity when workers were given an opportunity to collaborate on how to do their work. However, instead of pursuing the actual worker empowerment that this implied, the HR profession worked on creating an appearance of consultation and personal concern. In fact, paying attention to workers' emotional needs in this way was for purely instrumental purposes, a means to better motivate workers (Leinberger and Tucker 1991, 191-92).

There was a break from using this philosophy during the post-war expansion (when economic growth, leading to good wages, made it unnecessary) and throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s, when organizational innovation was sincerely attempted. In Chapter Seven, I discuss this latter period and the largely failed attempts of organizational theorists and job-redesigners, such as W. Edwards Deming (1986) and Chris Argyris (1964) (guided by Maslow's thought) to make workplaces genuinely more humane, and workers empowered.

However, in the 1980s, the HR philosophy and practices that developed in the early 20th century returned to workplaces. The booms were over, and accountants regained their traditional places as regimenting controllers of company operations. By the time of this revival, however, the HR philosophy had to be melded, however incongruently, with the humanistic concerns that had guided the creative-work initiatives of the

⁴² Cited in Cruz 2016, 67

interregnum. According to Leinberger and Tucker (1991, 192-195), this fusion creates contradictions in company culture that must be glossed over for employee acceptance. The mystification necessary to make this work is one of holding the company up as a spiritual entity in and of itself. The logically-inconsistent discourses are combined to create an ideology of the corporation as organism, as “the whole” around which all human activity orients. In the end, according to Leinberger and Tucker, this “elision” of the two contradictory philosophies has created a more extreme, but yet a more subtle state of instrumentalism in workplaces.

The world of New Age or neospirituality outside of corporations, religion in its *first* stage of privatization, might be considered an *embryonic* psytopia. I have already documented some of the elements of the New Age’s emergence in parallel with humanistic psychology, transpersonalism, and the human potential movement. However, as theorized by Leinberger and Tucker, the concept of the corporate psytopia adds aspects to and supports Carrette and King’s thesis of a *second* privatization of religion. Tucker and Leinberger make a distinction very similar to Carrette and King’s, between the first and second privatization, but, again, make the process more concrete for us.

The casting of the corporation as a kind of spiritual organism is certainly an extension of the corporation’s legal status in American law as “a person.” However, how can a company be seen as “a soul”? Of course, an organization is essentially a social system, but “the organizational model for humanizers becomes a much more nearly psychological one, sanctioned by the ineradicable American habit of personifying organizations[;] at its most extreme, this model of the organization becomes, in effect, a psychic projection” (Leinberger and Tucker 1991, 193). Peters and Waterman (1982) acknowledge this. They declare the singular mark of an excellent company to be a company’s ““acceptance of the limits of rationality.””⁴³

The corporation, inscribed as *a person*, must be “endowed with a psyche,” as part of the process of transmuting the aspirations of employees to personally self-actualize into an effort to help the company do so. The corporation becomes the only actual agent as employees’ sense of personal agency is reassigned to the corporation (Nadesan 1999, 17). In Nadesan’s view, this means that because the corporation’s “life force” actually comes “from its entrepreneurial-like employees[, a] critical reading of this discourse reveals a tendency for individuals to be seen as ‘soft,’ ‘corporate assets’ ready to be engineered to enhance ‘corporate soul’” (Nadesan 1999, 17).

⁴³ Cited in Leinberger and Tucker 1991, 195

When contemporary efforts to humanize the workplace are assimilated, covertly or overtly, to the instrumentalist goals of the far older human-relations movement, they promise an even more totalizing machine in the form of an even more encompassing personification: the organization as artificial psyche (Tucker and Leinberger 1991, 195).

Organizational behaviour theorist Eric Berne's 1963 publication, *Games People Play: The Basic Handbook of Transactional Analysis*, demonstrates the veracity of this claim. He initiated a therapeutic discourse for corporations, suggesting that corporations could be seen as organisms which "might need therapy." Additionally, a 1987 publication, F.R. Kets de Vries and Danny Miller's *Unstable at the Top*, is a "full-blown recent view of organizations as psyches" (Tucker and Leinberger 1991, 195).

Although workplaces are supposed to be humanized for the benefit of workers, worker energies are instead devoted to humanizing an inanimate entity. Since this is an absurdity, "psychic apparatus" is devoted to mystifying the situation. For, if "the organizational is not *enough* of a person [, and so] wants a little humanizing..., the only way to go about such a thing is through more artifice, more systems of control, however diaphanous or 'non-directive'" (Tucker and Leinberger 1991, 195). I show in later chapters and introduce below that many of the new forms of work organization that survived from the innovative period have now become icons of employee actualization but, arguably, not its reality. They do, however, embody processes that require considerable emotional commitment and energy from workers. These efforts might be seen as the resources that vivify the corporation.

Within the contemporary understanding of the modern corporation, the belief that workers are self-actualized extends to the view—mentioned above and to be discussed in more detail later—that an employee's pursuit of his or her own goal(s) can "pull" a company along. Workers are hired for their abilities to "pull" the corporation in the direction of the workers' own interests. In the light of the resolution claimed above, between the company's and the worker's objectives, this idea provokes immediate skepticism. Carette and King (2005, 134-35) reject the idea that the worker leads, and they implicate neospiritual programs and discourse at work, precisely, in the misrepresentation of the relationship:

Thus, while claiming to be 'alternative'..., the goal is to align the employee's personal mission with that of the organization for which they work. This is an attempt at thought control, further facilitated through the use of 'mood altering techniques' in staff-development seminars devoted to 'exploring the spiritual dimensions of life.'

Lisa Goldschmidt-Salamon (2001) has a slightly-different view of the site of the godhead in the corporation, but her focus is on corporate CEOs. In their holistic worldview, the "whole" they relate to is the world that global capitalism embraces. This, however, is different from the global community. Having global

concerns used to be referred to as “internationalism.” Fordist citizens were inspired by the “universalist ideals” of the (waning, imperial) world. But the contemporary idea is different. A global corporate CEO, as a model of a world administrator, has provisional loyalty to a whole that nevertheless lacks a formally-articulated system of political representation (i.e., through government) and demands little or nothing of them in terms of extent and responsibilities within that commitment.

This cosmology of the New Age-type [of globalism] is ‘self-religious,’ and whilst sometimes voicing Universalist ideals, it is not *practically* interested in modernist universal programmes of large-scale, organized order-creation and human equality. It is concerned with *the individual living in a corporate community*. [This] tends to commodify identity into what I want to call instant identity; a non-obliging access to short-term, but highly intensive *communitas*, that can be cast away and replaced with the next move of career (Goldschmidt Salamon 2001,168).

One can sense the psychologistic processes in this description. Group association is achieved (in the context of temporary association) through identification or empathy, which can wane. This kind of identification with the group does not require sustained commitment of resources based on principled decisions to suppress self-interest for the greater good, as many international governmental programs promote (at least in theory). We can logically extend this explanation back to the other case, which Leinberger and Tucker outline, where “the whole” focussing employee energies—the corporation—is at a lower register but in the same relation to them as global capitalism is to corporate CEOs. The energies of workers, theoretically expended for self-realization, are transferred along with the conferral of “spiritual agent’ status, upward. The recognition of an embracing whole is an emotional process—a psychological identification—which endures for the length of time the material association continues. Then, presumably, in the worker’s case, it is transferred to a new collective entity, a new corporation that acts as the whole, as the worker is employed anew. This is Goldschmidt-Salamon’s “instant identity.”

As Lau (2000) and Hammer (2001, 2004) explained, New Agers evoke real or fantastic pre-modern (or time-travelling) cultures as foci of their aspirations for unity, and the innocence and purity of the imagined world is felt to be conferred back on their own lives. However, the object to which innocence or natural power is attributed must continue to be either exotic (named, but elusive) or entirely mysterious. In the case of successive New Age manifestations (i.e., “metaphysical religions”), the projection has to be redirected from one fantasy world to another as believers became more “worldly” (Lau 2000; Albanese 2007).

In other words, if the imputation of innocence is lost, “the exotic” must be redefined. This may be the meaning of urging managers to recognize “the limits of rationality.” They can exploit irrationality and project a mysterious character on workplaces. Carrette and King (2005) discuss an aspect of this as delib-

erate corporate branding of the company as spiritual. I will discuss many of the organizational features of SA work in later chapters (such the common pretense that “work is play”) that also contribute to the mystification of corporate purposes. In general, the need to maintain a company’s (and the CEO’s) mystique under pressure of the contradictory obligations to workers and corporate profits, which Leinberger and Tucker describe, likely accounts for why Peters and Waterman also strongly assert the CEOs must be charismatic (Peters and Waterman, 1982). The “inspired” leaders of corporations, such as Richard Branson, Bill Gates, for a period, and, of course, Apple Inc.’s Steve Jobs, “displaying the qualities of religious leaders,” help this animation process (Carette and King 2005, 159) In representing themselves in this heroic, or guru-like way, they no doubt help maintain the corporation’s mystique.

That these leaders influence the self-perception of workers by their model is suggested by a theory of good management practices offered by psychologist Steven Reischer (2002). He claims that good leaders are “entrepreneurs of identity.” The leader must be sufficiently like the worker to be identified with. Leaders “can articulate our values; be prototypical...; represent for us what our values are.” Furthermore, to maintain worker interest, the leader must continually remake him- or her-self.

Leinberger and Tucker’s text is really about generations. Because they were the children of “organization men,” (i.e., of Fordist managers and “bureaucrats”), the authors call the New Age baby boomers the *organization offspring*. These were the agitators for the humanistic workplaces mentioned above, in keeping with their rejection of their parents’ perceived subjugation to their roles in Fordist corporations. However, the younger members of the baby boom cohort participated in the transition from celebrating the self-actualization of the personal self to that of the corporation. As these younger members began to attend business schools and move into workplaces a decade or two after the older ones, they found, in their new employer, a different “corporate person” to work with than their older siblings had found. For, if the corporation could be seen as a psyche, as Tucker and Leinberger muse, it could take on particular forms of that psyche. As post-Fordism advanced into the 1980s, and managers freed of Fordist restrictions transferred their efforts from making industrial consumer products and maintaining high levels of employment, as agreed upon with governments, that psyche began to develop an ego. In that case, the powerfully-energized neoliberal corporation may have simply been too overbearing a personality for workers to resist. Write Leinberger and Tucker (1991, 196): “If, for many of the older members of the (post-Fordist) generation, the ‘self’ became the measure of the organization, for many of the younger members, it would be the other way round: The organization would be the measure of the self.”

Conclusion

As I noted earlier, Taves and Kinsella (2013) identify three successive trends in the study of New Age religiosity. These are as individualistic religion, as a product of commodification, and as a religion with a networked organizational structure. We considered the network structure in the preceding chapter. Now we have considered both individualism, and how it leads to commodification. The works discussed in the second section of this chapter, taken together, paint a compelling portrait of the commodification of religion as neospirituality. Whereas religion scholars described the marginal differentiation of *new religions* proliferating from mid-century, Roof anatomized this process occurring for religion-in-general through commodity-production (rendering *neospirituality*). Lau's work shows how holism makes New Age spirituality amenable to capitalist commodification and how spiritual products can be marketed via their tendency to refer to exotic worlds--simple, non-alienated places where the individual feels a unity with his or her environment, not challenged by contradictions and social constructs. Miller's work demonstrates how traditional integrally-related religious icons, symbols and practices are pulled from these relationships and placed in incongruous relation to elements from other traditions as they all provide the ideal raw material for commodification in a high-circulation, immaterial capitalist economy.

Important as these analyses are, however, I moved beyond these arguments to discuss theoretical presentations of neospirituality as an ingredient in production. I provided Carrette and King's philosophically profound and historically extended argument as to how religion was prepared, by individuation, privatization and psychologization to be entirely subsumed by capital. The other side of this process is that "We are now seeing... the tailoring of those individualized spiritualities to fit the needs of corporate business culture in its demands for an efficient, productive and pacified workforce" (Carrette and King 2005, 29). Nadeson, Goldschmidt-Salamon and Tucker and Leinberger deepen this argument, by showing why and by what mechanisms the corporation becomes "the whole" for the workers within it. Finally, Andrew Dawson's concept of spiritual prosumption provides the bridge between the roles of neospirituality in consumption and that in production. Indeed, as we will see in later chapters, workers in iconic post-Fordist sites, producers of immaterial products and services, must continually transform themselves to provide, access and understand the cultural material that is the raw resource of post-Fordist production.

The next chapter reviews the industry literature on spirituality in the workplace. Although it is huge, reflecting the degree to which spirituality is promoted there, a selection of key texts from among it show that, although the scholars attempt to grapple with moral and political-economic issues in relation to this rather anomalous phenomenon in a supposedly modern and technocratic world, the approaches they take, in general, are circumscribed and unable to reach the kinds of comprehensive analysis that the above scholars provide. It is to these presentations that we now turn.

Chapter Four: Spirituality at Work

Introduction

In Chapter Two I discussed the beliefs and practices of neospirituality. In Chapter Three I explored the relationship between capitalism and neospirituality, considering both commodification and production as theorized by religion scholars. I tracked the progressive realization of religion's privatization (which neospirituality expresses) from its implication in consumption, to its engagement in spaces of production. I proceeded from showing spirituality to be a good marketing message or product, to assessing its capacity to socialize workers when inserted into the production process.

In this chapter, I consider spirituality in the workplace as presented by industry scholars. This review illustrates that the association between new workplaces and neospirituality is robust and continuing. New Age and spirituality programs and language have indeed been introduced into workplaces by managers for a number of decades. The programs are well-accepted by global corporations, though the degree to which employees embrace these programs is not fully known. Organizational and management theorists have already created a legacy literature about them. University-based business programs teach the 'whys' and 'wherefores' of spirituality in the workplace.

Historical Summary

Throughout the latter part of the twentieth century and since, much has been written from management-oriented sources about how to introduce, and the effects of incorporating, spirituality practices into the workplace. Since the 1970s, companies have supported New-Age-type training courses and workshops for their employees.⁴⁴ During the early stages of post-Fordist retooling to sell 'cultural,' instead of 'hard' products, organizational consultants emerged directly from communities exploring New Age values and practices, especially those realizing its human potential arm. (I will consider this process and implications

⁴⁴ These include Transcendental Meditation (TM) (www.tm.org) , Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) (www.neurolinguisticprogramming.com), and The Learning Organization (www.solonline.org) Course emerging from Peter Senge's innovative theory of management (1990). Senge's website describes him as 'a senior lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is also founding chair of the Society for Organizational Learning (SoL), a global community of corporations, researchers, and consultants dedicated to the "interdependent development of people and their institutions."' The Financial Times (2000) named him as one of the world's "top management gurus." *Business Week* (October 2001) rated him as one of The Top (ten) Management Gurus. In 2008, Dr. Senge was named by the *Wall Street Journal* among the top 20 most influential business thinkers. Peter Senge received a B.S. in engineering from Stanford University, an M.S. in social systems modeling and Ph.D in Management from the MIT Sloan School of Management.

in more detail in Chapters Seven and Eight: *Posthierarchical Illusions* and *The Net Age* respectively.) These consultants wished to change attitudes and behaviours in corporations, particularly those of managers, since the way to manage ‘creative’ information workers differed greatly from what had been needed in an earlier era for industrial workers.

The assumptions and value orientations of the human potential movement influenced nearly every sector of American life, as secular contexts such as the family and school were targeted for transformation into sites for individual self-actualization. It also had a significant impact on the workplace, as it added to the earlier human relations (HR) theories, as we will see in Chapter Seven. Important innovators include Douglas McGregor (1960) and Rensis Likert (1961), among others. Whereas HR practitioners up till the 1950s sought to minimize worker opposition and increase morale by encouraging managerial empathy towards employees (Hertzberg 1964), a key strategy in early post-Fordism was to change job structures so that work would be intrinsically fulfilling for employees. The objective was to create employees who felt so rewarded by their work that they were motivated to go beyond their stated duties to ensure the quality of the company’s products. Organizations would benefit by decreased demands for external control mechanisms and enhanced workplace productivity.

These innovations were needed because “Corporate downsizing, declining wages, and job security, coupled with increased workplace demands . . . , place[d] considerable demands on managers [to] motivate both low- and high-end employees” (Nadesan and A. Trethewey 1998, 56). Job insecurity meant that employees lacked traditional positive motivators, such as promotions, merit increases, and profit-sharing programs. These trends are put in a larger context in Chapter Five, which details how economic structural change influenced the employment landscape.

Initially, to produce the positively-motivated and self-directed attitudes these new job structures required, ‘mainstream’ companies invited representatives from new religious and New Age communities on site to teach their consciousness-raising techniques to employees (Bovbjerg 2010, 120-21; Aupers and Houtman 2010, 135-60; Mikaelsson 2010, 160-74; Heelas 1996, 139-66).

In the 1970s and 80s, the more secularly-branded “human potential’ programs or initiations were also represented. Werner Erhard Seminars Training, known as *est*, and spinoffs,⁴⁵ and similar programs such as

⁴⁵ Est was replaced in 1984 by The Landmark Forum (www.landmarkforum.com)

Lifespring, and Insight Seminars,⁴⁶ were provided at special in-house sessions. These programs ran in such preeminent sites as General Motors, General Electric, Procter and Gamble, Lockheed, Scott Paper, Chemical Bank and the U.S. Social Security Administration, to name a few (Rupert 1992). Other companies that have engaged these practices over the years include “Guinness, General Dynamics, and Boeing Aerospace, and even the US Army” (Aupers and Houtman 2010, 149).

Although the above appears to be a list of old-guard corporations, over time, the typical hosts of these programs became the “post-industrial [companies]... especially the organizations producing immaterial services rather than material products” (Aupers and Houtman 2010, 150). This is because much of the work in post-Fordist companies demands significant emotional and mental effort. “Burnout,” which “might more clinically be classified as depression, [or] anxiety” (Berardi 2009, 135) is a typical hazard in these sites. It is commonly met by voluntary (unpaid) sabbaticals, so employees can recover. Tellingly, Google Inc.’s employees have a median tenure of only 1.1 years (Cruz 2016, 241). In these high-pressure industries, notably those in Silicon Valley, California, employees identify “feelings of vulnerability, hyperactivity, unsettledness and affective exhaustion” (Cruz 2016, 42). Companies attempting to retain employees are willing to experiment with ways to improve employee morale and effectiveness. Many such experiments can be classified as neospirituality exercises.

However, Aupers and Houtman (2010, 156) generalize the type of employee who receives this training beyond the hi-tech workers of Silicon Valley. They clarify that it is the “highly-educated professionals working typically in top- to mid-level management, [rather than] production workers” who are more likely to be involved in workplace spirituality training. Aupers and Houtman concur with Mitroff and Denton (1999) that these upper-level employees “are more oriented to intrinsic motivations, goals and rewards [and seek] interesting work [and to realize] their ‘full potential as a person’” (Aupers and Houtman 2010, 156).

In the 1980s, internationally-respected business publications regularly promoted and studied such training programs. The *Training and Development Journal* (December, 1986) explains this activity as: “training in the use of the ‘higher self’ for improving job performance and satisfaction” (cited in Heelas 1996, 91). However, the concept of a “higher self” has little intrinsic content, without the context of the human potential and New Age movements it references. When they are urged to reach for their higher selves, what is expected of employees?

⁴⁶ www.lifespringclinics.ca and www.insightseminars.org

Jerry Biberman (2014, 108), a well-cited scholar on this topic, defines workplace spirituality, on a three-factor scale, making it easily recognizable as New Age or neospiritual. The elements are “interconnection with a higher power, interconnection with human beings, and interconnection with nature and all living things.”

In the 1990s, in both Europe and North America, a number of consultancies took up corporate spirituality training as a specialty. This service has been a mature and stable industry since the late 1980s in Holland. “We are not dealing with a mere hype or the latest management fashion,” note Aupers and Houtman (2010, 156) about this industry in their native country. Currently, major Dutch banks and insurance companies utilize the programs. An example given is the Dutch bathroom equipment retailer, Morca, which regularly offers employees opportunities to engage in various New Age courses, expecting that as a result its employees will be “more happy, and hence, more effective, so as to increase productivity and profits” (Aupers and Houtman 2010, 153).

One of many Dutch consultancies, Obibio, offered a myriad of courses, such as “‘Team management and the soul’ and ‘Management in astrological perspective,’ to keep companies ‘ready for battle’ in times in which ‘dynamic streams of production, services and information increasingly put pressure on organizations and managers’” (Aupers and Houtman 2010, 149). Heralding the breakdown of differentiation between workplace and home that is a feature of post-Fordism, the consultants aimed at “deconstructing the typically modern separation between the private and public realms, by trying to impose the logic of the former upon the latter [in order to make] the rationalized environment less alienating and open to ‘authenticity’ and ‘spirituality’” (Aupers and Houtman 2010, 150). In other words, the workplace should be ‘like home,’ where relationships are both ‘spiritual’ and ‘authentic.’ What is the advantage of such initiatives for the company? “‘Authenticity’ is held to result in both well-being *and* efficiency; ‘spirituality’ in happiness and profit, while ‘soulful organizations are portrayed as successful” (Aupers and Houtman 2010, 150).

As introduced in the previous chapter, “Mindfulness” meditation programs are currently very popular in workplaces. In the US, Oprah Winfrey’s Harpo Productions make daily mindfulness exercises mandatory for employees (Cruz 2016, 41). Aetna Insurance offers mindfulness-based stress reduction and mindful eating workshops, among other mindfulness teachings. The company believe these programs “have re-

duced its health care costs by seven percent and improved productivity by \$3000 per employee” (Gelles 2016, 177).⁴⁷

Jeff Wilson (2014, 191) considers that contemporary mindfulness training is consistent with Catherine Albanese’s (2007) criteria for metaphysical religion, including, its emphasis on mobilizing “energy.” This places it within the domain of neospiritual practices. Certainly influential in the wider culture, mindfulness meditation is now specialized to appeal to almost every urban demographic and social need. It embodies “the mystification of Buddhist mindfulness,” advanced particularly in the twentieth century throughout Western nations (Wilson 2014). The mystification includes reinterpreting Buddhist cosmology--not least by defining “freedom from suffering” differently than does traditional Buddhism. In the traditional sense, “freedom from suffering” is only possible when the cycle of rebirths has ended. Mindfulness posits that people can free themselves from suffering while continuing their existence on the material plane—i.e., in the present life (Wilson 2014, 171). Mindfulness “recontextualizes [Buddhist meditation] as a psychological technique” (Wilson 2014, 76).

The mindfulness-based practice, SIY, was initiated at Google Inc. in 2007 (Cruz 2016, 41) to address “poor leadership and a lack of trust within teams” (Cruz 2016, 64), as well as to reduce short employment tenures due to “burnout” (Cruz 2016, 241). SIY teaches improved attention and listening skills and enhanced self-knowledge about capabilities and motivations (Cruz 2016, 64). “SIY can be seen to function as a sort of affective release valve, forcing workers to turn off their brains in order to recuperate from the mental demands of creative labour” (Cruz 2016, 65). Program developer Chade-Meng Tan (2012, 182, 212)⁴⁸ insists that “regular meditation produces better workers, who are not only more productive, but happier, [and] more compassionate.... Mindfulness enables people to ‘become more perceptive and receptive’ to others’ perspectives, which enables, in turn, ‘stronger leadership and teamwork qualities.’” SIY is not a mandatory program; yet, there is a long waiting list to join it, of six months on average (Cruz 2016, 64).

To add a contemporary Canadian example, a Toronto-based consultancy that accepts donations as well as fees for service advertises that it offers “coaching, mentoring and consulting services... to bring more spirit into your work... and grow more work that enriches your heart, your life and the planet”

(<http://spiritualityatwork.org>). The Centre for Spirituality at Work offers help to those who feel a desire for “greater clarity about direction and purpose, practical ways to use spiritual wisdom to grow your work,

⁴⁷ Cited in Cruz 2016, 41

⁴⁸ Cited in Cruz 2016, 65

insights into how to make ‘more of a difference,’ new ways to communicate your ideas, projects, events, products or service, and greater understanding & connection with clients/customers, co-workers/colleagues.” The consultancy arranges regular teleconferences for many southern Ontario cities, and offers in-person services in Toronto.

Above I provided glimpses into the contents of spirituality programs in workplaces over the decades of new economic structures. In the following section, I provide an overview of industry discourses on the topic.

Industry Scholarship

The terms “spirituality in the workplace,” *aka* “workplace spirituality,” “spirit at work,” “faith at work,” “workplace ministry” (Neal 2013, 4), refer to the upwelling of practices, professions and publications linking religion to issues of work, labour, management and business ethics that occurred in the mid-1990s and early 2000s, primarily in North America, but also internationally.

The movement of *spirituality at work* has an institutional basis in organizations such as the International Center for Spirit at Work, Spiritual Business Network, and the Foundation for Workplace Spirituality, as well as academic programs training business leaders in spiritual practices. Lake Lambert (2009, 121) writes: “One study identified 115 refereed journal articles on work and spirituality in business publications between 1990 and 1999. The *Journal of Organizational Change Management* was the most prominent publication with sixty-eight articles from 1992 to 1999 mentioning spirituality and two special issues on the subject.” At the end of this period, the Academy of Management annual conference hosted “workplace spirituality” workshops, which led to the establishment, in 2004, of the first refereed journal in the field of workplace spirituality: *The Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion* (Lambert III 2009, 121).

Reva Berman Brown (2003, 393) enlarges this list: “Cavanagh (1999) comments that the field of spirituality in the workplace expanded rapidly during the 1990s, and that a bibliography distributed at a session on spirituality in the organization at the 1998 Academy of Management conference listed no fewer than 72 books on the subject, 54 of them published in the five years since 1992... Numerous journal articles have appeared on the subject, as well as special issues of journals devoted solely to the concept—see, for example, the special issues of the *Journal of Managerial Psychology* (1994); *Chinmaya Management Review* (1999)...; and *American Behavioral Scientist* (2000). A special issue of the *Journal of Management Education* (2000) has advocated the teaching of the subject to management students. There are also two journals devoted to the topic: *Spirit at Work* and *Business Spirit*.”

In sum, this drive to “connect spirituality to mainstream organizational research”—often with the explicit goal of helping “successful organizational performance” (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz 2010, back cov-

er)—has generated a substantial literature; some of which can be considered as advocacy for “spirituality in the workplace,” some of which takes a scholarly approach towards it, and much that sits somewhere between these two poles.

One study (L. Tischler, J. Biberman and C.J. Fornaciari 2007, 106-108) assessed the research focus of 187 empirical journal articles appearing between 1996 and 2004 on the topic of management, spirituality and religion. The authors created a three-dimensional matrix with which to classify the articles. Levels of analysis ranged from individual to societal. Types of analysis were either self-reporting (“interior”) or based on observation and measurement (“exterior”). Measures included cognitive, emotional and action-related. The authors concluded that most of the studies were at the individual level, and qualitative research methods significantly outweighed the quantitative types of study. This means that “most of the studies used interior validity for some type of self-report” (L. Tischler, J. Biberman and C.J. Fornaciari 2007, 108). Not even the impact of spirituality on work groups received much attention; much less spirituality within the whole organization or in relation to society. Given the limitations of theorization and analysis that these choices of subject and method allow, the current industry research would seem to preclude rigorous soul-searching on the meaning, purposes and advisability of encouraging spirituality in workplaces.

Nevertheless, in 1999, Ian Mitroff and Elizabeth Denton’s influential study, *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America*, drew on 131 in-depth interviews and 2,000 questionnaires in American companies, to demonstrate that employees and managers felt a great need to integrate spirituality into their business life:

This age calls for a new ‘spirit of management.’ For us, the concepts of spirituality and soul are not merely add-on elements of a new philosophy or policy. (...) No management effort can survive without them. We refuse to accept that whole organisations cannot learn ways to foster soul and spirituality in the workplace. We believe not only that they can, but also that they must (Mitroff and Denton 1999, 14).

Some early and influential advocacy works in the field were G.W. Fairholm’s *Capturing the Heart of Leadership: Spirituality and community in the new American workplace*, (1997); and J.Biberman’s edited collection, *Work and Spirit: A reader of new spiritual paradigms for organizations* (2000). Today this literature includes many anthologies and handbooks, such as Judi Neal’s *Handbook of Faith and Spirituality in the Workplace: Emerging research and practice*. (2013); Louis W. Fry’s *Psychology of Religion and Workplace Spirituality* (2012); Robert A. Giacalone and Carole Jurkiewicz’s *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance* (2010); Joan Marques et al.’s *The Workplace and Spirituality: New perspectives on research and practice* (2009), as well as single monographs, such as Neal’s *Creating*

Enlightened Organizations: Four Gateways to Spirit at Work, and Sue Howard, and David Welbourn's *The Spirit at Work Phenomenon* (2004). There is even a *Complete Idiot's Guide(R) to Spirituality in the Workplace* (Early 2002). In what follows, I review the contents of commonly-debated themes within this literature.

Perhaps one of the most balanced (i.e., sympathetic-yet-critical) accounts of 'spirituality in the workplace' is Lake Lambert's *Spirituality, Inc.: Religion in the American Workplace* (2009). Using a broad brush, he describes the results of the movement as follows:

At food giant Tyson Foods, workplace chaplains roam the corporate halls and processing floors. Corporations like Ford and Xerox sponsor spiritual retreats to spark creativity, and small businesses include Bible verses and Christian symbols in their advertising. In the fast food industry, Chik-fil-A honors the Sabbath by closing on Sunday, and amid rapid growth they dedicate each new store to God's Glory. Prominent business theorists . . . write books about Jesus as a leader, and even Wal-Mart sells the publications. At the same time, major American universities . . . offer courses touting the value of spirituality to future business managers, and . . . public policy makers wonder how to respond to a rising tide of religious discrimination complaints (Lambert III 2009, 1).

Lambert acknowledges the two major strands within the 'spirituality in the workplace' movement, the Evangelical Christian and neospiritual forms (which is sometimes referred to as "New Age" and more commonly, "spirituality" or "spirituality at work"). However, his understanding of the origins of workplace spirituality (as well as overt discussions) is very much focussed on the Christian forms. Admittedly, Evangelical Christians have made a distinctive, direct contribution to workplace spirituality through "their Protestant roots," in the form of "the tradition of vocation.... In their formative history[, they] had readily embraced business and market culture as an economic system, means of evangelism, and form of ecclesiastical organization" (Lambert III 2009, 13–14). Therefore, he locates the roots of the movement in the Christian notion of "calling" or "vocation" (Lambert 2009, 3) and the link made by Puritans between business and spirituality, i.e., Weber's "Protestant ethic."

Indeed, Evangelical texts such as Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life* (2002) play an important role in the spirituality in the workplace movement, effecting an integration of the values of the new American capitalism with religious beliefs to achieve a new iteration of "the gospel of health and wealth[, with] work serving as a primary point of reception for God's abundant blessing" (Lambert III 2009, 15). However, Lambert acknowledges that the contemporary "spirituality in the workplace" movement occurs in a context that is definitely "not a Puritan New England economy" (Lambert III 2009, 8). Although Lambert never uses the term "post-Fordism," many of the workplace features he identifies—increased insecurity at work,

loss of long-term employment relations, technological change, and the new corporate stress on creativity—match those that I will describe as post-Fordist in the following chapter. Lambert, too, ascribes much of the rise of “spirituality in the workplace” movement to the emergence of a new group of “knowledge workers.” He argues that “[c]reativity, community, autonomy and holistic concern became new employee benefits that supported the productivity of the new knowledge class, and a particular type of spirituality found a partner in knowledge work” (Lambert III 2009, 12–13).

The wellness gospel seen in Evangelicism is also, however, fused with what Lambert terms “a faith that some would regard as no faith at all”—that is, the diffuse current of the ‘spiritual but not religious’ (Lambert III 2009, 15-16). He correctly associates this faith with the ‘metaphysical tradition’ that Catherine Albanese anatomizes in *A Republic of Mind and Spirit* (2007). It consists of “theories of mind power, mysticism, energy therapy, and healing, plus forms of occultism” that co-existed with orthodox Christianity, “even in Puritan New England.” Following this line into the modern era he refers to Leigh Schmidt’s account, in his book *Restless Souls* (2005), of a ‘religious liberalism.’ This encompasses “desire for mystical experience, valuing meditation and silence, a fascination with Eastern religious traditions, the idea that all religions have ‘common ideals’ [and] an emphasis on creative self-expression and adventure-some seeking” (Lambert III 2009, 13-16). Lambert also refers to Robert Fuller’s (2004) discussion of the ‘spiritual but not religious’ as an ‘unchurched tradition.’ However, despite Lambert’s acknowledgement of this strand, most of his analysis, with the exception of a brief section examining the Maharishi University of Management, (owned by the Transcendental Meditation Corporation) implies or states a Christian spirituality. He discusses practices in “Christian” companies,” and books that “attempt to make Jesus into a source of leadership and management guidance,” and theologically based “life coaching” (Lambert III 2009, 125).

Converging onto Generalized Neospirituality

Despite judicious references to traditional religiosity, discussions of the liberalization of churches in earlier chapters should lead us to suspect only a modest difference between what organizational scholars call Christian spirituality and New Age-derived spirituality. This is, in fact, quite evident in the contents of Lambert’s discussions, as it is in the organizational literature in general.⁴⁹ In this respect he reflects, rather

⁴⁹ One example of the similarity, as I wrote in Chapter One is that “New Agers (like Pentecostals and Charismatic Catholics) ‘believe in the reality of a spiritual realm that is distinct yet parallel to the physical world of our senses, one that is capable of breaking through into the latter’ (Campbell 2007, 345).”

than questions, the internal tendency to assert a polar relationship between liberal Christianity and New Age in general when, in fact, they tend to converge on each other, as the underlying neospirituality. As has been explained, almost all modern religions have adapted their theology and practices to the generic *spiritual* outlook or ‘liberal religion’ (Bramadat and Seljak 2009; Schmidt 2005). Heelas and Woodhead (2005) found the same was true in the town of Kendal, England. In other words, modern forms of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, on close examination, are very similar to neospirituality in terms of their emphasis on individual authenticity and subjectivation.

Despite this, the tendency to assert the polar relationship is highly apparent in Sue Howard and David Welbourn’s *The Spirit at Work Phenomenon* (2004). While in many ways it draws on very liberal ideas within Christianity, such as the writings of Teilhard de Chardin, it concludes with a short but pointed rejection of the New Age term, although not its values. In the appendix: “The New Age and SaW [Spirit at Work]” the authors, reveal that the average corporate practitioner has little understanding that esoteric New Age (i.e. *sensu stricto*) has given way in general to the diffuse spirituality (New Age *sensu lato*, or SBNR) that now strongly influences Christian spirituality.

It is difficult to say what proportion of people in SaW are following or have followed—as some no doubt have at one stage or another—a distinctly New Age path. Our impression though is that most of the people we have met or read about, or whose books we have studied, would have little sympathy for the more extreme or bizarre aspects of New Age belief. Many SaW writers, and writers quoted by them, make no reference at all to the New Age or show ambivalence towards it. Some make distinctly hostile remarks about it (Howard and Welbourn 2004, 222).

Assessing the balance of SaW opinion Howard and Welbourne (2004, 223-224) claim it rejects “New Age beliefs, as ‘superstition,’ ‘spiritual shopping’ or ‘hocus-pocus,’ and insists that “a spiritual journey is not a trip.” However, they clarify that “many who are unwilling to have the actual label ‘New Age’ attached to them have in fact taken on board aspects of New Age thinking, [and that] it is therefore difficult to draw firm conclusions about the degree to which New Age has influenced SaW,” the overwhelming impression left by this discussion is that they are anxious to set a firm distance between the two currents.

Arguably, corporate promoters unwittingly perform the important function of rationalizing the spiritual for the contemporary age and for corporate consumption, as SBNR values are progressively accepted as normal culture both within and outside workplaces. Manifestations of the more historically located, esoteric New Age and its theatrical aspects become superfluous to this normalized culture. This normalization of “spirituality” values at work, which reflect those of society at large, explains why regular HR programs, as Lambert notes, are increasingly more difficult to distinguish from efforts to induce a spirituality culture in

workplaces. “More significantly, for business leaders and managers, as spiritual practices sneak into corporate America through mainstream training programs, it may be increasingly difficult to parse out what is religious or spiritual and what is legitimate and truly ‘secular’ professional and organizational development” (Lambert III 2009, 151). As the broader culture is indeed, moving towards being neospiritual, this difficulty is predictable.

This tendency to default to a generic spirituality is predictable on the basis of what we know from the previous chapter about the regression of many different religious traditions to a ‘mean’ of spirituality once their elements enter secular institutions. Roof (2001) theorized this process in the context of ‘spirituality’ publishing. Each new version of ‘the teaching’ must be different from the last, but similar enough to be sought after by readers. They are, therefore, marginally-differentiated products, which is a basic feature of all good commodities.

Since the 1990s, workplace spirituality has indeed changed its face: most programs that lean towards inner values, now, are coached as ‘spirituality.’ This refers to a melange of practices. Lambert reminds us that “spirituality programs, meditation, yoga, the writing of personal mission statements, and even Native American spiritual practices have been used for team building and tapping the creative processes of employees, [and are all] presented under the guise of professional development” (Lambert III 2009, 150).

Generic spirituality is no doubt increasingly preferred in workplaces because the concept of spirituality has now been cleansed of overt esoteric or religious references, either New Age or Christian. This cleansing process can be recognized in almost all writing about religion, in terms of the replacement of the term ‘mysticism’ with ‘spirituality.’ Referring to Walter Principe’s (1983) research, Carrette and King (2005, 43) summarize the history:

While both spirituality and mysticism went through the process of psychologisation, the former has emerged as preferable in designating a de-traditionalised and this-worldly phenomenon in western society at the beginning of the twenty-first century. ‘Mysticism’ still carries with it the connotations of occultism, mystery and association with particular ‘world religions.’ In that sense the term ‘mysticism’ has lost much of its earlier appeal precisely because it has remained strongly associated with religion and the supernatural, ideas that have been largely eradicated by the ‘this-worldly’ and individualistic uses of the term ‘spirituality.’

We can assume that the principle behind this substitution also operated in the gradual dropping of modifiers of ‘spirituality’ that referred to outside communities and loyalties (except where they have been transformed into trademarked brands, such as for TM meditation products). Broadly speaking, ‘New Age spirituality’ has become ‘spirituality’ in workplaces.

There is evidence now that spirituality is being further rationalized. An example is provided in Sweden, where the esoteric New Age has long been accepted (but is now rejected as “flaky or mumbo-jumbo” [191]) and where neospiritual therapies are common. Neospiritual therapies experienced a surge of adoption by layman coaches (192), who multiplied in response to a dramatic expansion of contracts let by the Swedish Employment Service in 2009 after a surge in unemployment. These coaches were contracted to mitigate or redress the effects of that unemployment. They were charged to encourage “250,000 unemployed Swedes... to search for their inner potential, boost confidence and find a job” (193). Hornborg argues that neospirituality and the coaching practices are converging. A key ingredient to making these services fundable by the secular state (which as explained earlier, is required for governance in an era of retracted public services) is a transition in terminology that will finally stamp out any suggestion of religion. Indeed, this can be seen in the common promise of coaching services not to enhance clients’ spiritual awareness, but to “free their inner potential”—this, while using neospirituality’s practices and referencing its worldview (196-197).

Roof’s contribution was to show the age-old perennial philosophy to be a tool of modern commodification. For, the process he describes is a form of reversal of the reductionism of that philosophy, which presumes that all religions are at root the same. Perennial philosophy’s assertion of common root of all religions is generally accomplished by noting that all religious people seek mystical experience, that the latter defines religion, *per se*, and that all of the other features of religions are epiphenomenal to this (ways to bring people to and help them understand this essential experience). Ironically, the marginal differentiation of commodification restores different ‘clothes’ to the essential experience. However, of course, these clothes are not the historical ecclesiastical garbs of the different traditions, but guided by the mix-and-match ethos of fast fashion.

Biberman (2014) seems to be reading straight from the perennial philosophy (and neospiritual) rule-books when he defines workplace spirituality, saying about religions that “the mystical experiences of the key figures in each religion form the basis of the religions.” That “the experience of the mystics came first, and the laws and dogma for each religion then followed,” serves for him as an argument that religions are essentially that experience. “Thus, there can be no religion without its spiritual or mystical roots. On the other hand, it is possible to claim to be ‘spiritual’ or to follow spiritual practices outside of a religious context (such as New Age spirituality).” From these judgements, it is not surprising to see Biberman’s claiming religions to be “concerned with belief, faith and dogma, [whereas] spirituality is more experiential, and is more concerned with values and experiential feelings of transcendence and interconnectedness with others, and with the practices that individuals engage in to attain these experiential feelings of transcendence and interconnectedness with others” (Biberman 2014, 104). This is none other than the popular assertion of the

‘spiritual but not religious’ ethos, as discussed extensively above. Popular self-help and spirituality literature has found a place in the business world. It has been fashioned in many ways to put greater emphasis on conflict-resolution, stress-reduction, and other secrets to workplace success. The texts “constitute a general blend of humanistic psychology, New Age Spiritualism and human resource precepts” (Nadeson 1999, 10).

Following the norm for workplace practices, a genre of popular business literature strongly muddies the distinction between Christianity and neospirituality. Although labelled as “Christian” and pitched to the many self-identified Christians in the business and working community, its content often has little to do with Christianity. A good example is *Jesus, CEO*, one of a series of similarly-titled ‘you can do it’ (or ‘human potential’) paeans by Laurie Beth Jones (1995) that advocate ‘emulating Jesus’ in one’s businesses. Jones’s recommendations include: have a plan, and guard your energy. Although Jones evinces a degree of ‘feminism’ in her writing, and refers to evolution, Lambert identifies her as a fundamentalist. However, her work appeals both to self-identified Christians and “adherents who seek guidance from the Jesus who is the great teacher of wisdom” (Lambert III 2009, 83). Jones accommodates this second audience by using ‘generic God-talk.’ “Jesus, God and a Higher Power [are conflated]; the latter two are clearly synonymous for her, but it is not clear if Jesus is divine” (Lambert III 2009, 80).

Implementing Religious Doctrines

As we have seen, there is a tendency for the industry scholars to disparage any practice associated in their minds with “New Age,” even though ‘Christian’ spirituality is more legally troublesome. Although more often in the United States than elsewhere (Rhodes 2006), spirituality tends to be prefaced by the modifier ‘Christian.’ In most cases, the *actual* activities and ideas identified as Christian—formally or informally, depending on the conditions—are shaped by neospirituality, sometimes bearing little resemblance to traditional Christian spirituality. However, there are a number of business owners and managers of a variety of religious traditions who make an attempt to create “religious businesses.”

Some companies self-promote as sites for the realization of religious doctrines. A specifically “Christian” spirituality is promoted and supported, usually by Evangelicals. A number of other private-held companies claim to be Muslim, or Jewish, businesses.⁵⁰ In Western democracies, it is theoretically legal for private employers to promote religion as long as practices are not forced on employees, and all are fairly hired and promoted. In both the US and Canada, the principle of ‘freedom of religion’ protection for workers prevents

⁵⁰ An example is a company owned by a practicing Evangelical Christian: Chik-fil-A --a fast-food chain in the United States (Lambert III 2009, 76).

managers in public companies, or secular non-profit agencies and government departments, from promoting religious values in workplaces (Lambert III 2009, 76–77). New Age spirituality and human potential programs have been less identifiable as religion, making their presentation in work-settings more palatable to authorities (and possibly to workers). These programs have been protected from legal challenges until recently, a protection that now seems to be waning.⁵¹ Glenn Rupert notes that, although Yoga or ‘native American spiritual practices’ may not seem so to regular practitioners, “to a fundamentalist Christian or devout Muslim, these practices may be the very essence of idolatry” (Rupert 1992, 135). As of 2008 in the United States, these programs would be judged by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) as ‘religious’ (Lambert III 2009, 150).⁵²

Consequently, for business managers and owners, explicitly religious language is restricted to after-hours ‘parachurch groups,’ in which they meet to discuss their faiths and how the latter could impact their businesses. Most of these groups are organized by Evangelical Christians, since “most evangelists, from Charles Finney in the early 19th century to Billy Sunday, operating during WWI [and onward, have been interested in] saving souls through business practices, [as they] continue to be apologists for the divine character of capitalism” (Lambert III 2009, 53). Lambert assures us that, despite complications, those businesses (in the US) that are privately owned by Evangelicals, “are quietly creating new business paradigms that are distinctive in the way they draw upon Evangelical theology and practices in their forms, function and sense of mission” (Lambert III 2009, 54).⁵³

Industry Self-Critique

While most of the literature about ‘organizational spirituality’ simply describes and prescribes it, some insiders have begun to analyze and critique it. Lambert III (2009), as we have seen, reviews many possible challenges to claims about the workplace spirituality phenomenon by industry insiders. The following is a selection of texts by authors who present themselves as critical voices in the industry literature on spiritu-

⁵¹ Recent lawsuits suggest that such programs are indeed vulnerable to the definition of *religious* indoctrination (Rupert 1992, 133–135).

⁵² As of 2008, “the EEOC has defined the religious protection of the Civil Rights Act to include ‘moral or ethical beliefs’ and any other sincere belief that an individual might hold—whether it is found among a religious group or not. Since the distinction between spirituality and religion has no meaning as a matter of law, ‘spiritual-but-not-religious’ practices in the workplace (and education) might lead to these calls for accommodation and complaint of harassment or discrimination that more traditional forms of religious practice and belief might cause” (Lambert III 2009, 151).

⁵³ This includes ‘honest dealings’ and ‘quality products’. Since employment discrimination based on religion is illegal, it is the two ‘stakeholder groups’ that managers deal with—customers and suppliers—who suffer the brunt of the proselytization (but who may also benefit from the principles) (Lambert III 2009 54-56).

ality in the workplace that support his analysis. The nature and promotion of ‘spirituality at work’ is questioned in the industry literature in terms of: appropriateness of the corporate setting of spirituality programs, effectiveness of strategies for resolving different religious affinities in workplace programs, quality of definitions of spirituality, and assessments of the programs’ impacts. I will consider each of these themes separately, through the writings of particular authors. This cannot be a representation of all themes in the literature, but identifies common and important ones relevant to this dissertation.

Appropriateness of corporate setting:

A question implicitly or explicitly posed in the industry literature is whether there is a conflict between spiritual concerns and the profit-making orientation of corporations. The literature reveals ambivalence about whether ‘the systemic logic of global capital’ must be circumvented for spirituality programs to work, or whether ‘spirituality’ indeed can work for the betterment of both workers and the corporation.

Ken Kamoche and Ashly Pinnington (2012, 504) pose the essential question here, by asking whether the managerial fostering of spirituality aims at “profits and enhanced employee productivity [while] concealing these objectives behind a veil of higher spiritual ideals.” The answer typically given to this question is that there is no conflict between profits and spirituality, so no veil need exist. William O’Brian (2012) provides the argument of Margaret Benefiel (2008), an important ‘spirituality in workplaces’ scholar, on this question. She argues that “this quality of care does not ignore bottom-line concerns but energises individual and corporate activity towards these concerns[, by which she means that] good interpersonal relationships lead to cooperation in an organization [and hence make it] more efficient and profitable” (O’Brian 2012, 101).

O’Brian characterizes spirituality as concern for others and the collectivity. Based on interviews with a small sample of employees “from a Christian background,” O’Brian finds that employees “expressed their spirituality by utilising their talents, education and energy *in the service of others*[; in] the way they help and respect each other . . . , trust and comfort each other in times of crisis . . . , share problems, [and] cover for each other and support each other in times of sickness and bereavement” (O’Brian 2012, 99-101). Thus, O’Brian characterizes a mutual-support community.

O’Brian seems less convinced than Benefiel that there is no conflict between the above behaviour and the demands of production. He knows that concern for others may come in conflict with company profit-making. But his equivocation between acknowledging and denying the significance of this is a highly typical apologist salve; in the end he suggests that the resolution rests on managers’ overriding the structural demands of their positions by adopting a ‘spiritual’ mantle. The structural demand drops out of consideration, however, as O’Brian characterizes the issue as a function of personal characteristics. “[W]hen employees are treated solely as factors of production, their spirituality can be exploited [but suggests that]

this is not an outcome of the systemic logic of global capital but is rather dependent on the quality of ‘spiritual leadership’ exercised within a corporation” (O’Brian 2012, 103).

Better still, all corporate actors can take such initiatives. O’Brian (2012, 108) concludes by asserting that “any employee can be a leader with soul, irrespective of the level of job he or she occupies . . . can educate, inform, support, challenge and influence all those who come into contact with them . . . can connect with their authentic selves, and by expressing their spiritual values in the way they give service to others, they can facilitate personal and organisational transformation.” O’Brian does not so much defeat the materialist argument as try to overwhelm it with lofty thoughts.

Effectiveness of strategies for resolving different religious affinities in workplace programs

Judi Neal (2013) is a leading ‘spirituality in the workplace’ scholar. Neal (2013, 4) is more open to New Age spirituality in workplaces than others. However, her work exhibits a different form of ambivalence. Her liberal dilemma generates from posing the ‘workplace spirituality’ problem as the resolution of different religious preferences, particularly between the New Age and Evangelical Christian sensibilities, which is a particular source of conflict in workplaces. While pursuing her goal of overcoming these differences, she seems to minimize the shaping process of the corporations themselves—i.e., both New Age and Evangelical Christianity being shaped into a generic spirituality that is appropriate to workplaces. This somewhat begs the question of resolving conflicts between the supposedly different religious sensibilities.

Ironically, she takes a classic neoliberal stance by positing that the corporation as a neutral ground on which value-based issues can be freely debated, and policies implemented untarnished by the supporting economic infrastructure. She presents workplaces as sites of multicultural or multi-religious debates, with the help of mediation too, as she is noted for offering as a consultant. In posing the drama of competing religious worldviews which need to be reconciled with their integrity intact, while ignoring the setting issue, Neal is an important consolidating figure within the movement to promote workplace spirituality. In slight contradiction, she also repeats the “perennial philosophy” fallacy—let’s get together; we all have the same interests at heart. She does not wonder why there is a convergence in workplaces towards one form. The very assumptions behind her efforts prevent reflection on the shaping processes that Carrette and King (2005), and Tucker and Leinberger (1991) define.

In the introduction to the recent edited collection *Handbook of Faith and Spirituality in the Workplace: Emerging Research and Practice* (Neal 2013a), Neal characterizes the early years of this conflict as between ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ *per se*. These were widely regarded, she asserts, as “mutually exclusive. The religion-focused camp felt that the ‘spiritual but not religious’ emphasis left out centuries of human wisdom and tradition that could have a great deal of value for the workplace and for society, and that the

focus on spirituality was too light-weight and, worst of all, ‘airy-fairy’” (Neal 2013a, 13). She claims that “over time, practitioners and scholars have been able to find more common ground” across this divide. To some degree Neal’s very ecumenical collection, which includes contributions from “faith and spiritual leaders and scholars from many traditions including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Baha’i, and indigenous traditions,” bears out this hope. Neal’s own work clearly draws on the New Age literature and she acknowledges the importance of Ferguson’s *Aquarian Conspiracy* in a growing movement to “integrate faith and spirituality in secular life.” Nonetheless, the index to the collection contains no entry for “New Age.”

Neal’s way of framing the softening of conflict between promoters of ‘Christian’ versus generic (holistic) spirituality as a principled debate, is a good illustration of the ‘idealism,’ that grounds liberal discourses. If the general thesis of this dissertation is correct, this was not a principled debate at all, but a shaping of spirituality to conform to the changing structure of workforces and the kinds of skills/capacities employers needed for profit. Neal overlooks that different religious beliefs and practices are implicated in power structures (McCutcheon 2004), or, alternatively, that the roles they play in communities is part of their meaning (Orsi 1985). Having an ‘idealistic’ understanding of belief systems commonly presupposes the possibility of reconciliation through discourse on a neutral ground.

Quality of definition of spirituality

Arguably, many papers on the topic of spirituality in the workplaces appear to use definitional confusion to evade its critical consideration (often, as we have noted, to maintain the ‘Christian’ face of the ‘spirituality’ in question). Definitions, especially confusing, multiple or multi-layered ones, can go far towards shrouding the actual nature of spirituality at work. This confusion may reflect ambivalence about the changes to Christianity I described earlier, as a result of modernization, wherein the forms of rituals, the dogmas, and church attendance have been downgraded in relation to experiential aspects of religion, rendering the common SBNR attitude. Even apologists who wish to identify or promote those formal elements of Christianity end up identifying only perennial aspect’—rendering it like neospirituality—despite what they intend.

In Michael O’Sullivan’s (Sullivan and Flanagan, 2012) work, seemingly both goals are met. (They may be indivisible.) In the “Introduction” to *Spiritual Capital: Spirituality in Practice in Christian Perspective* he notes that “the language of spiritual capital is seeping into management, leadership, international development, social science and education courses” but lacks a clear definition within “the academic study of Christian spirituality” (2012, 1). To redress this, he takes as a starting point the work of the Catholic ethicist Luk Buckart, which has been developed by the *Spirituality in Economics and Society* (SPES) forum.

Buckart treats 'spiritual capital' as a 'multivalent term' referring both to the "extrinsic commodification of the spiritual [in new forms of capitalist enterprise and] intrinsic meaning [of spirituality] that applies the instructions of the great spiritual teachers, such as Socrates, Jesus Christ and Gandhi [to] the tasks of the marketplace." He refers to the latter, 'intrinsic,' version of spiritual capital as 'profane' in the sense that "it seeks to draw Christians and non-Christians together in a dialogue to look with Jesus, Buddha and other great spiritual teachers at the economic crises engulfing the world" (O'Sullivan 2012, 3). This is another form of the perennialist argument: these religious figures have the same message. That the message is called "intrinsic" indicates that it is the personal, feeling-related aspect of religions, neospirituality, to which he refers.

While O'Sullivan claims to set 'spiritual capital' in a specifically Catholic horizon—an extrinsic or public form of religiosity—as defined by the encyclical utterances of successive Popes, he makes the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction again: There are "two poles" of Christian spirituality—"Christo-centric[with] an emphasis on the practices... taught to the disciples by Jesus, [and] Pneumo-centric, (i.e., intrinsic), with] a focus on the outpourings of the Spirit... and on the diverse races, creeds and tongues by which glory is given to God" (O'Sullivan 2012, 5). Classically, although lipservice is initially paid to a formal religious association, since workplace spirituality cannot in fact be practiced in respect of it (for a variety of reasons), he brushes this option aside. Instead, as if this choice is voluntary, he writes that the approach of the collection "tends towards the second [Pneumo-centric, intrinsic] pathway" (O'Sullivan 2012, 5).

It might be these alternating distinctions and confused connotations that led Berman Brown (2003, 393) to assert that, after a review of the literature, she found the organizational spirituality concept to be incomprehensible. She summarizes: "At its best, workplace spirituality is intended to provide a means for individuals to integrate their work and their spirituality, which, it is alleged, will provide them with direction, connectedness and wholeness at work. At its worst, workplace spirituality is a new management fad, with sinister undertones, which, when unmasked, is likely to prove ineffective and ephemeral. Because most of the literature is discursive, there is little empirical evidence to show which aspect is most likely" (Brown 2003, 394).

An article by Emma Bell (2008) may exaggerate the political-activist potential of spirituality in workplaces, by minimizing the differences between liberation theology-influenced activism and neospirituality. She proposes that "subjective life" spirituality (Heelas and Woodhead's [2005] term for neospirituality) might be harnessed to political action in workplaces. Following others, such as Casey (2012), she charges that a discipline referred to as Critical Management Studies (CMS) is not doing its proper job in that respect. Where these scholars consider religion, they look at its traditional form and consider it oppressive. "Critical

analyses have therefore focused on the disciplinary effects of religious values and beliefs in maintaining control of organization members and have highlighted the individualizing, patriarchal effects associated with evangelical capitalism (Nadesan 1999)” (193). She urges (Pratt 2000) CMS scholars, to encourage an activist stand in workers with spirituality as their vehicle (Bell 2008, 295).

Bell follows Lau (2000) in conceding that spirituality is open to cooptation by capitalism. But, that does not prevent her from urging CMS scholars, with their “Marxism and labour process” roots, to explore “how ‘subjective-life’ spirituality could potentially enable critical organizational praxis;” one that makes decisions in other than utilitarian terms (Bell 2012, 294).

Bell argues that there are places where “critical workplace spirituality” is being practiced and theorized. Citing C. Casey (2002, 165), she suggests a “revolt from within,” where professional corporate employees seek out spirituality as a response to the “pressures associated with rationalizing modernity within organizations.” Casey “contends that this is in the form of a social movement based on spirituality, concluding that ‘one-sided modernity now meets a counter-force it unintendedly helped generate’” (Casey 2002).⁵⁴ This idea, which references an important Marxian concept, is worthy of further consideration. Although Bell’s and Casey’s proposal cannot be resolved in this chapter, or even over the course of this dissertation, I will return to consider the possibilities they raise (and further study that it suggests) in its concluding section.

Bell’s line of argument is that because there have been important historical examples of traditional (Heelas and Woodhead’s “life-as”) religious figures’ intervening in workplaces to facilitate worker activism, neospirituality could possible play such a role as well. This might be true if neospirituality or subjective life religion were not in fact the product of capitalism, which research cited in this dissertation suggests is true. If so, she underestimates the shaping that capital has done on religion to produce spirituality, precisely because it is at least benign with respect to workplace injustices. The exemplars she presents of (Christian) religious activists are the French worker-priests of 1943–54, and the industrial missionaries in the British coal miners’ strike, 1984–85.

Bell does not entirely ignore that her sample workers were supported outside workplaces by communities with strong Christian and Marxist commitments to justice. In fact, she betrays ambivalence over the political character of spirituality. She agrees with Kamoche and Pinnington that the form of organizational

⁵⁴ Cited in Bell 2012, 295

spirituality, with its denial of conflict and thrust towards a New Age orientation are “an ideological attempt to capture the power of religion for the purposes of supporting capitalist interests” (Bell 2008, 293) and to prevent the emergence of “radical organizational alternatives.” Yet, she retains hope that neospirituality can play a role for the political left, as a counterbalance to the workplace influence of Evangelical Christians. Because, as she sees it, the power of the political right is being exercised without challenge in American workplaces, Bell argues that critical scholars cannot afford to simply write off neospirituality (as it, presumably, scorns the Evangelicals). She argues that “benign neglect or outright rejection by the left will mean that the immense power of religion can be captured by the ideologies of the right” (McLellan 1987, 5).⁵⁵

I stated above that Bell used the term “subjective life spirituality,” coined by Heelas and Woodhead (2005), to describe workplace spirituality. This “subjective life” attitude is one of the four types of religiosity identified by these scholars during their interviews. Bell correctly assesses the term as meaning “a more privatized, subjectivist approach to belief systems based on personal experience rather than conformity to a higher truth” (Bell 2012, 302). However, Heelas and Woodhead used this terminology to describe what would I have argued can be called neospirituality (and workplace spirituality) in other contexts.

This calls into question Bell’s argument that subjective life spirituality is a third type of religiosity, other than the supposedly compliant neospirituality and the Evangelical Christianity that is potentially emerging in workplaces. She suggests that ‘subjective life’ spirituality merits critical management scholars’ attention. Of course, it bears little similarity to the activist Christian behaviour of her exemplars, but she feels that in some way its manifestation as “spirituality at work” can promote social justice.

This is certainly a matter of definition, and calls for intensive examination in the future. For Bell’s thesis to be accurate, the ways that “workplace spirituality” might differ from “subjective life” spirituality would have to be identified. There are indeed many practices that are grouped under that rubric, as we have seen. However, the trend she has identified is not immediately obvious. This is more so when the history of spirituality in the workplace is examined. Carette and King’s would counter Bell’s hope with the claim that only a particular kind of ‘religious’ orientation *can* emerge in workplaces, and this is because it has been cultivated for that very purpose. They would reject the idea that such a genuine variety of religious orientations could exist within companies. Bell may be mistaken in thinking that the full political spectrum of religious actors can win any kind of self-expression to workplaces.

⁵⁵ Cited in Bell 2012, 293

Bell also mentions the work of Michaela Driver (2005, 1106–7), who sees the “possibility of both repression and liberation” in workplace spirituality. Neither she nor Driver (see below) can be accused of ambivalence regarding the prevailing situation in workplaces, which Bell identifies as repressive (with a few, pointed and well-theorized exceptions). However, as noted, Bell implies that there may be an embedded potential activism in workplace spirituality, if it could be channelled. In other words, it might benefit the worker to gain some detachment from the corporation environment rather than greater integration with it. This hope may have some grounding, although it was not provided by Bell. Bell’s reference, on the other hand, to historical workplace interventions by *Marxist worker-priests*, who emerged from the prophetic and ‘liberation-theological’ traditions of Christianity offers questionable insight as to how neospirituality could be harnessed in this way. Comparing these activists connected to powerful religious institutions and through a strong religious doctrine to professional workers trying to lighten their pressured lives with meditation practices, does not seem helpful to her project. This too-casual conflation/distinction of different religious forms in the discourse about organizational spirituality cannot lead to comprehensive understanding of its nature and effects (nor, probably, to revolution from within). To achieve greater understanding, she could first pursue a rigorous analysis of workplace spirituality’s social and political roles. Otherwise, her argument that resistance is possible in workplaces is weak.

Misunderstanding spirituality’s impact

Michaela Driver (2005) has a more pointed thesis *vis a vis* the great majority of definitions of organizational spirituality, which she believes can be consolidated into “three core dimensions, namely transcendence of self, holism and harmony of self and personal growth” (2005, 1091). Flatly, she then claims that they point not at employees’ liberation or empowerment, but at their oppression. Her observations, too, are piquant in relation to the charge of corporations as psytopia.

Driver expands briefly on these three dimensions, using language perfectly consistent with the contents of New Age or neospirituality discussed in Chapter 2: “Specifically, experiencing spirituality at work means that the individual feels part of something larger than him/herself. It also means that the individual experiences the self as integrated and is able to reconcile in an authentic manner the various dimensions of the self at work. Finally, spirituality is experienced when the individual feels him/herself to be on a developmental path toward self-actualization and the realization of inner potential” (2005, 1091). A number of important scholars on workplace spirituality have spoken in this vein. For example, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003, 42) claim workplace spirituality “to be a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employee’s experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy.”

As we have seen, objections to such claims have oriented around questioning whether claimed experiences of completeness and joy are valid, rather than, say, the context for employee manipulation. If experienced, other critics ask whether it is appropriate that employee's sense of connectedness should be to corporations. Driver, however, challenges the complex of values itself. She sweeps aside the very assumption that seeking "wholeness" is, in itself, psychologically healthy. In fact, she turns to Lacanian (or 'depth') psychology to show that it is not. Her thesis is that all of the summary values noted above are misguided as representations of an empowered or vitalized person, a true self, in Lacanian language. She explains:

Current definitions of core dimensions of organizational spirituality rest on conceptualizations of the self that, while claiming to increase the autonomy of individuals in organizations, actually lead to delusion and potential repression. Specifically, they claim to lead to the experience of an authentic self at work, which is connected to a higher order, fully integrated, balanced, complete and ultimately fulfilled. However, from the perspective of depth psychology such claims capture little more than the imaginary function of the ego and the empty speech in which it engages (Driver 2005, 1997).

Driver provides a brief but clear summary of Lacanian thought. Essentially, Lacan claims that when engaged in discourse that reinforces a myth about one's autonomy--the only type of knowledge about the self that the ego can retain--one is engaging in 'empty speech.' Accordingly, Driver argues, as per Lacan, this spirituality is not in employees' interests. This is not because it misdirects loyalties, but because it encourages them (through their 'empty speech' about their autonomy) to adopt a 'false self.' Even if one were to accept the narrowing of the referent for the 'whole' in 'holism' to the workplace community, or even to the corporation itself (as opposed to the whole global community, or beyond--as one might think to be the proper scope of a religious belief), Lacan's analysis shows the encouragement of identification with any whole to be exploitative.

While this is indeed an eye-opening criticism of workplace spirituality, suggesting many subsequent lines of enquiry, Driver does not pursue them. We are left wondering how this false formulation of human authenticity in corporations could be so widespread. We realize that, undoubtedly, the pervasiveness of the pursuit of the psychological condition premised by workplace spirituality clearly shows that it has a function for corporations, if not for employees, but we cannot glean what that could be from Driver's article. This lack, then, propels us on to discern the logic by examining the question in more detail, approaches to which have already been mooted, and are presented in the following chapters.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that practices which purport to benefit employees under the rubric of enhancing spiritual awareness are widespread in North American and global companies, especially those that

are part of ‘the new economy,’ which we will explore as post-Fordism in the next chapter. There is a huge industry literature on this topic, commensurate with the pervasiveness of spirituality programs and exercises in workplaces. Supporting this is scholarly reflection on the topic and the training of future corporate managers in spirituality practices within the confines of respected business schools and university programs. There is continuing disagreement as to how to define workplace spirituality, not least because a large contingent of its promoters, who identify as Evangelical Christians, do not recognize that this form of Christianity, like liberal religions in general, have moved towards neospirituality or the SBNR conviction, in beliefs and practices. Regardless of the religious affiliations they support, analysts provide definitions of workplace spirituality that show that tradition as increasingly privatized, with all that entails, as discussed in earlier chapters. In addition to problems with the definition of spirituality, there is also increasing difficulty in distinguishing spiritual practices from mainstream training programs and the more truly ‘secular’ professional and organizational development. This evolution is consistent with the pressure to avoid accusations of promoting ‘religion’ in workplaces, (whose definition expands indirectly with the abandonment of traditions), as it is also a reflection of the infusion of neospiritual values and discourses into the wider contexts of these workplaces.

Critical scholars consider workplace spirituality to be in the interests of employers for the sake of extracting more productivity from workers and otherwise disciplining their workforces. (This perception is reinforced by the observation that Evangelical Christians, who are the voices of right-wing politics in the United States, figure prominently in the promotion of workplace spirituality.) However, industry critics may overlook more basic issues such as injustice in the workplace or the subordination of employee interests for profit, or when they do not, are unable to grasp the depth of these problems, which stem from the basic nature of capitalist workplaces, or the specific features of those in this economic period.

I have argued that critics of workplace spirituality, a segment of the industry scholars considering it, snap at its edges with their criticisms, but generally fail to take large bites out of it. This is normally because they do not challenge the fundamental *raison d’être* of capitalist enterprises, or more narrowly, their specific nature as post-Fordist enterprises. For example, the vested nature of precarious work as a major source of sustenance of the corporation must now continually intrude upon an employee’s pursuit of psychic well-being therein, but this issue is not taken up as fundamental in the supposed study of the function or workplace spirituality.

Driver’s commentary is the most intriguing of those I referenced above, in that it turned the tables on many other supposedly critical analyses of workplace spirituality. Her article potentially adds further complexity to an effort to draw out the implications of the holism of neospirituality, which is undertaken in general in

this dissertation. To fully understand workplace spirituality, the Lacanian ideas behind her judgement deserve to be considered in their own right in future scholarship. However, lacking in Driver's account, and more generally throughout the literature I have reviewed in this section, is any systematic account as to why 'spirituality in the workplace' should have burgeoned in the very period that saw a dramatic change in the production methods, labour requirements, and managerial techniques of capital—that is to say, in the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism. Without such an analysis, relating changes in 'spirituality' to changes in 'work,' 'workers' and 'workplaces,' it is impossible to really place 'spirituality in the workplace' in a materialist and historical context. It is to this task that we turn in the following chapters. Accordingly, I begin in the next chapter with an in-depth analysis of what has changed in terms of economic structure and work, in the last half-century, to render "post-Fordism."

Chapter Five: Post-Fordism and Work Culture

Introduction: Accumulation and Regulation

“Post-Fordism” designates the type of capitalism that evolved in Western nations since the early 1970s—a departure from “Fordism.” Many elements of society and culture change in this transition, including forms of religion and spirituality. The purpose of this dissertation is to establish a correlation between these two sets of changes by arguing that neospirituality, which became a popular ethos as post-Fordism developed, is a particularly apt belief system for iconic post-Fordist workers. I have already discussed hypotheses about how and why neospirituality has moved into workplace settings. However, a clear picture of the economic model these workplaces emerge from has yet to be shown. This chapter, accordingly, establishes some of the basic political-economic features of “post-Fordism”, and how it differs from the preceding Fordist era of capital, particularly in regard to the types and practices of labour on which it depends.

European scholars of the *Regulation School*, such as Michel Aglietta (1979) and Alain Lipietz (1985, 1987) first proposed the term *post-Fordism* in the 1980s. Examining the new conditions of capitalism they had seen developing over the previous decades, they observed a production/consumption model very different from mass-market, assembly-line-based *Fordism* and deemed the new order evolving in Western nations a *systemic* change in capitalism. To analyze this change they deployed two related concepts, that of the *regime of accumulation* and the *mode of regulation*.

The *regime of accumulation* refers to the set of business mechanisms—organizational structures, technologies, typical raw materials, labour-sourcing techniques, financing procedures, ways of distributing goods, etc.—that creates a successful business environment. Properly speaking, a regime of accumulation deserves its name when it demonstrates a pattern of “generalized and sustainable economic growth” (Tickell and Peck 1995, 373). In more technical language, the term describes “the stabilization over a long period of the net product between consumption and accumulation” (Tickell and Peck 1995, 374). Fordism and post-Fordism refer, then, to different conditions of stabilization or sets of such mechanisms.

The system does not, however, function in an institutional, social and cultural vacuum. The counterpoint to the regime of accumulation, the *mode of regulation*, is the way a social order develops coherent cooperation amongst society members, so that the economic regime functions smoothly. I introduced this term in Chapter One, but the concept requires further clarification. One author calls it the set of “institutional forms, procedures or habits that either persuade or coerce private agents to conform to [the] schema” (Lipietz 1987, 55) of the regime of accumulation. Another states that the mode of regulation is “a “facilitation shell” of economic, social and political arrangements, cultural and artistic sensibilities, the world of ideas and

bodies of knowledge, everyday life experiences, and the conceptions of the individual in society” (Fisher 2010, 20–21). These varying definitions indicate that the concept is broad, but they all make clear that social habits, institutions and conventions work to support economies; practical, social and cultural life behaviours are institutionally integrated, and they in turn support the way a society provides itself with material goods. This concept opens the way to the association we will make between neospirituality and work in the recently-changed economies of the West, arguing that, as an element of the culture of work, neospirituality is a component of the mode of regulation of post-Fordism.

The distinction between the regime of accumulation and mode of regulation, defined as complements, leads to reflection on a higher-level question that perpetually engages philosophers, historians, political economists and others—: to what extent do material, economic and other structural factors dominate ideation of cultural ones, or vice versa, when societies change. Scholars theorizing large-scale change have staked their reputations on claims of one or the other as a leading factor, or neither. Clearly, societies do change. If the regulation school thesis—of a full correspondence between cultural and material factors—were taken strictly, such change could not occur. Necessarily, there are deficiencies of correlation between them.

The debate relates directly to a secondary question of this dissertation—if there is a correspondence between the culture and practices of work and of neospirituality (the primary question) what has been the influential, or “push” factor, in the pairing of these two societal elements? Neospirituality strongly belongs in the ideational or cultural camp (a part of the mode of regulation, as I posit) and work in the material structure of post-Fordism (integrated with the regime of accumulation).

As is well-known, the important sociologist, Max Weber (1986), debated the question of the nature of mutual influence between a religious ethos and the expansion of a political-economic regime when he studied how Calvinist Protestantism and a nascent capitalism interacted in a major sites of its early emergence—i.e, in England, Holland and France. In this section, I preface the primary material of this chapter, about the post-Fordist economy and working conditions, with a critical discussion of “determination” that focusses on Weber’s thesis. This debate is particularly relevant to this dissertation, which should provoke general reflection on the issue of causation. Therefore, in order to inaugurate the topic of this chapter, and theoretically orient the reader to the “material-ideal forces” conundrum, I consider aspects of the debate over those same considerations sparked by Weber’s (1986) thesis in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* in this section.

As the Weberian debate is left unresolved, so will the parallel one presented in this dissertation—regarding the role that neospirituality, a cultural factor, plays in the construction, destruction or maintenance of the economic order. Despite this lack of resolution, however, issues considered in the Weberian debate alert us

to relevant considerations in the contemporary example, and provide us with guidance as to how to conclude it. Dilemmas abound. On the issue of workplace spirituality's early history, for example, I show in Chapter Seven that the 1960s counterculture as well as the nascent New Age practitioners introduced ideas about good work prior to post-Fordism's maturation, which may seem to support the idea that culture determines the material base. Furthermore, as I also explore in Chapter Seven, and have noted earlier, ideas of self-actualization, global interconnection and other ideas identified with New Age were incubating in the culture that spawned that movement, as was the agitation for meaningful work. Neospirituality could not have been successfully introjected into workspaces without a prior receptivity to it within the population from which workplaces draw for workers, regardless of the structure of the work itself.

On the other hand, as industrial societies have moved more assuredly into post-Fordism and the neoliberal regime, I document an increasing alignment of neospirituality with capitalism, which strongly suggests the latter has the upper hand in shaping the former. Overall, I support the thesis that neospirituality has been shaped for post-Fordist capitalism and the neoliberal order, and believe that the weight of the theoretical material provided in this dissertation supports this position. Essentially, I see the formulators of New Age as vanguard cultural interpreters who anticipated material developments. Thus, these vanguard members who began to understand the post-Fordist social order before it had entirely coalesced.

The Material/Ideal Quandary

In focussing on an iconic worker, I might be said to be using Max Weber's approach in *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* (1985), as he modelled the ideal capitalist on the basis of his belief structure.

Michael York tells us that: "In Weber's work, the ideal-type is an "analytical construct"—one not expected to be found in reality, but nonetheless useful as a basis for comparison and measurement" (1995, 276).

Weber (1985) proposed associations between religious and political-economic forms. He argued that an emerging capitalism was enabled by the belief-structure of Calvinist Protestantism in England, Holland and France (Weber 1985, 98), because it encouraged the new economic model more effectively than those countries that lacked such an ethic. Based on the Christian presumption that God was all-powerful, John Calvin (whose theology built on Martin Luther's) preached that membership in the elect, those who were to be saved for a life of eternal bliss, was pre-ordained. As an all-powerful God cannot change his mind, Calvin reasoned, there can be no alterations to these pre-ordained decisions for the Christian in this life, either through acts or belief. Nevertheless, a good Christian must practice unwavering faith that he or she is amongst the elected ones. Deprived of any way to either seek this status if it is to be denied (Weber 1985, 105) or even to confirm or disconfirm that status (Weber 1985, 110), Protestants had to find some personal peace under the circumstances. Moreover, they could not abandon themselves to the pleasures of the world,

since they were required to practice worldly asceticism. Such as stricture did not go to the extreme of requiring a purely ascetic life, such as Catholic monks practiced (Weber 1985, 120-121).

As Calvinists were required to embrace their time on earth, they were “now forced to pursue their ascetic ideals within mundane occupations” (Weber 1985, 121). Combatting self-doubt through good deeds and hard work (Morrison 1995, 250) was the only avenue sufficiently engaging to help them stave off loneliness and even despair, Weber reasoned (Weber 1985, 113-115).. He argued that the class of people who adopted Calvinism chose to become leaders within the new business communities, the activity presented them by virtue of their class positions and the declining feudal structure..

There was no contradiction between Christian conviction and making money, as Weber explained. Although the Puritans (who derived from the Calvinists) had railed against wealth, a more careful examination of what they preached revealed that it was indolence and self-indulgence that might emerge from holding wealth that was criticized rather than wealth itself. Though an immodest display of wealth was not acceptable, the effort put in to develop wealth was an act of glorifying God. “Not leisure and enjoyment, but only activity serves to increase the glory of God” (Weber 1985, 157). Enrichment meant that the businessman was realizing the gifts of skill and competency that were from God. Since profit could not be translated into consumer goods, re-investing it in the business was the common recourse. This “accumulation of capital” in the Calvinist countries that resulted from this reinvestment was the root of the development and spread of capitalism.

In this dissertation, I adopt Weber’s use of an ideal model. More importantly, Weber (1985) juxtaposed the rise of a particular religious sensibility and changes in an economic order, which is precisely my topic. Weber also used several concepts that are useful in what follows, including, for example, his term “elective affinity,” which he uses to mean a “resonance or coherence between aspects of the teachings of Protestantism and of the capitalist enterprise, notably the ethos of the latter. The relationship was unconscious so far as the actors involved were concerned” (Scott and Marshall 1988).

The term applies to the relationship I argue exists between the new conditions of workers and New Age spirituality (NAS). The demands put on workers due to the nature of contemporary work organization and requirements create a receptivity of workers towards a certain set of values and worldview which match the NAS values and cosmology. I posit that maintaining a NAS belief system lends coherence to the unique set of work practices and mirrors values promoted within corporations. It helps workers make sense of their existential condition. As I have stated, many corporate managers have instituted corporate cultures that promote the adoption of “spirituality” values in workplaces, as they also establish relevant training programs and practices on-site.

Weber's analysis serves as a model, too, because, although the Protestant ethic was chiefly a value system for capitalists, businessmen who were in the higher levels of enterprise, capitalism's success would naturally influence the social importance of Calvinism and promote its diffusion. Weber contended that workers, too, adopted many of the commitments of capitalists, although he has been taken to task over this assertion, which I will discuss further below. In any case, Weber has taught us that Calvinists developing capitalist businesses integrated a religious tradition with new work and behavioural demands, and so served as vanguard members of a process of political-economic change. They played this role indirectly, through capitalism's progressive social acceptance, but also directly, i.e., ideologically, through their support of Calvinism as a religion for all. They were key players in the institutionalization of a new type of rationality for the community at large.

The thesis explored in this dissertation generally follows Weber's model, but for a different religious orientation and different work and behavioural demands. As its major focus is not the major corporate decision-makers, but a form of upper-middle class found particularly in the media and hi-tech industries, symbolic analysts (SAs), it also focuses on a different capitalist stratum than did Weber. Scholarship shows that these are the most common adopters of NAS within contemporary capitalist workforces. Their workplaces are the most common sites for spirituality training and discourse.

This suggests that NAS is particularly appropriate for a type of worker within the leading sector of the economy. These workers can and do influence others in the community, and there is reason to believe they are a vector for the general diffusion of NAS attitudes. I suggest they have a role in popularizing NAS values and worldview both through the indirect process of simply performing their jobs (for example, by launching new technologies that dictate new forms of sociality for the consuming public), but through intentionally exploiting their communications skills and social prestige to persuade others of the attractiveness of their personal cosmology (importantly, through the promotion of a technology-based worldview parallel to the NAS worldview).

However, Calvinism was established prior to a mature capitalism, and Weber contends that the former influenced the evolution of the latter. At least one form of challenge to this position, as I explain below, is to argue that changing material conditions and sites of power forced capitalist innovations, and the Calvinist commitments of the innovators was either somewhat secondary, or a result of material conditions. In fact, the argument is that Luther's teaching and Calvinism could have been interpreted in many ways, according to what fitted the conditions of the interpreters. For example, the radical religious sects collectively referred to as Anabaptists interpreted Luther as validating individual religious choice. In their view, Luther repudiated his initial insistence that all Christians follow their consciences when he allowed the supportive

German princes to impose Protestantism within their sovereign territories. By accentuating what they saw as Luther's initial support of radical individualism, they interpreted Luther's message very differently than capitalists did Calvin (Hill 1972). The convictions of Anabaptists (i.e., adult baptism advocates) influenced other Protestant radicals who "opposed state interference in religious matters" (Hill 1972). In England, Levellers sought economic equality and the Diggers were "agrarian communists" who built on the spirit of the Reformation (Malik 2014.). Luther was as conservative in his politics as he was in his faith. He supported the ruthless suppression of the revolutionary movements, especially during the 1524 Peasants' War

This brings us to the issue of the direction of causation between the material and ideological when society changes. What is the relationship between the institutions that define a society when change occurs? Do cultural values and ideas lead changes in material structures and vested interests during any such period of major social transition—or vice versa? This question is also a concern in this dissertation.

Weber considered this question throughout his sociological corpus, which ranged in subject matter through many civilizations and time periods. However, he often presented his position in relation to the theories of Karl Marx (Morrison 1995, 214-217), who was an important influence on his work. Both Marx and Weber argued that religions and economic structures must complement each other. However, their positions generally *conflict* with respect to the direction of influence of the two social parameters. Weber objected to Marx's argument that prevailing value systems—i.e., here, established religions—only *reflect* material conditions and, indeed, "legitimate" the power structure (as part of the superstructure). According to Marx, the legitimation that religion affords makes the superior privileges of the powerful appear to be "natural." Weber insisted that religious values could have, as it were, a life of their own, and actually influence how power structures evolved. At root, this is an idealistic view of history. In fact, Weber claimed to reject this extreme view and felt his analysis captured the back and forth procession between these two moments. Weber argued that there were *four* social institutions that played a part in changing society—religion, the economy, law and the state (Morrison 1995, 225). He opposed the supposedly pre-determined nature of Marx's historical predictions, and argued that the specific contributions of the economic as well as the non-economic determinative forces (i.e., the four listed above), cannot be predicted in theory, and that combinations of all of these may be varyingly influential at different times (Morrison 1995, 215-216).

Accordingly Weber wrote that he did not want "to substitute for one-sided materialist, an equally one-sided spiritualist causal interpretation of culture and history" (Weber 1985, 183). However, Kieran Allen (2004, 40) argues that Weber was not able to resist the opportunity to make an "implicit polemic against Marxism," so that he greatly exaggerated the religious (i.e., idealist) over any material causes of the rise of capitalism in this argument. Allen claims that Weber ended up representing the German idealist tradition in

his account—showing the Protestant Ethic to be a *geist*—“an historic prime mover” (2004, 40) that drew history along without the necessary execution of power struggles by classes of actors, attempting to direct changes in their interests.

Georg Lukacs also takes Allen’s position. “Lukacs has argued that the overall effect of Weber’s account was to “de-economize” and “spiritualize” the nature of capitalism. In other words, capitalism is presented as a byproduct of rationalising forces, which grew out of moral duties imposed by religion” (Allen 2004, 45). By implying a relatively smooth, self-propelling transition, Weber suppresses the amount of violence it took to procure the wealth or seed money for capitalism, to actually force former feudal peasants and guild craftspeople to submit to the disciplines of capitalism and to create a global trade system that worked in the interests of the capitalist countries. “The account leaves out the role of brutal force in accumulating capital, in imposing new disciplines on labour and in subjecting the colonies to the economic needs of the metropolitan countries. In doing so, it romanticizes the origins of capitalism” (Allen 2004, 45).

However, Allen considers criticisms of Weber’s view that are focussed on exactly how the Protestant belief system *applies* to the newly-emerging capitalist mentality to be “beside the point.” He also considers the (naïve Marxist) argument that “Protestantism was simply a “reflection” of the bourgeois class position,” to be irrelevant, too (Allen 2004, 40). The important question is the material forces that triggered the rise and prevalence of the ethic in the first place. With Talcott Parsons, Allen notes that “in emphasizing the primacy of ideas, [Weber provides no] systematic account” of the material events that led to the broad reception of Luther’s ideas, nor for the (non-capitalist) revolutionary impulses that carried it along (Allen, 39). In fact, there was a distinct political agenda in Luther’s initiatives. “Luther denounced usury and speculation; the displacement of local customs by Roman laws; the draining of Germany’s wealth into a grasping and wasteful Church. His doctrine of the priesthood of all believers provided a powerful incentive for removing the privileges of the clergy and subjecting them to taxes” (Allen 2004, 41).

Even Protestant theology itself has political implications, as “it stresses its objection to mechanical religious actions which do not involve the heart; its emphasis on morality being self-imposed rather than coming from obedience to priests; its stress on preaching rather than prayer and sacraments; its use of the vernacular Bible and Prayer Book” (Allen 2004, 42). Luther’s assertion of “the right of Christian assemblies to appoint, install and dismiss their spiritual teachers... was but the corollary to the ‘communal principle of self-government in the secular sphere’” (Allen 2004, 41). Furthermore, even if capitalists made of the Protestant Ethic what Weber claimed they did, others may have made something else of it. “Even if we assume that Weber’s non-revolutionary model of Protestant theology is correct, historically, it does not follow that humans necessarily lived by an official theology that is prescribed by their leaders. So Luther

may have preached obedience to secular authority, but this did not prevent a peasant's revolt that used some of his doctrines as justification" (Allen 2004, 43). Christopher Hill (in Fisher 2010, 35-36), finally, rejects even the basic thesis of Weber's argument. He argues that "there is nothing in Protestantism which leads automatically to capitalism. Its importance was rather that it undermined obstacles which the more rigid institutions and ceremonies of Catholicism imposed."

Despite what these criticisms suggest, Weber professed that both economic and non-economic forces led to the Reformation and subsequent developments (Weber 1978 and 1985, 90). Indeed, the non-economic forces he delineated were varied. Morrison (1995) rebuts charges of Weber's account as narrow. He notes that, in his attribution of "non-economic factors in capitalist development, Weber was completely unique and differed from Marx significantly. [As noted, these factors are] the emergence of a system of rationality..., the development of a system of laws and forms of citizenship..., the rise of the state..., and the growth of the 'gain spirit' and the system of ethics" (Morrison 1995, 226-27). The gain spirit "is based on a rationalization of the conduct of everyday life in general and a rationalistic economic ethic in particular. By 'gain spirit,' Weber meant a system of conduct based on ethical norms which govern commercial activity and which serve to bring the economic and religious spheres into a relationship with each other" (Morrison 1995, 230). Only the last, the 'gain spirit,' and the system of ethics, related directly to religion. William E. Connolly (2008) essentially agrees with this point, although argues it in a different way from Morrison. Most interestingly, he shows that Weber looked at culture as implicated in materially-based practices, such that it bears strong resemblance to the Regulation School's *mode of regulation*. He explains:

In playing up the encoding of spiritual forces neither Weber [1985] nor Blumenberg [1999] is an "idealist"—contending that ideas and beliefs alone are the motor of history.... While Weber sometimes talks as if it is the beliefs of the devotees which inspire a specific mode of conduct, a closer reading of his text reveals that a complex set of beliefs, habits, techniques of induction, and larger institutional processes complement each other, creating a complex reducible to no single element alone. This becomes most clear when old habits of conduct continue for a time after the beliefs to which they were attached are superseded. These habits will eventually wither unless they become attached to other disciplinary techniques (Connolly 2008, 18).

Allen and fellow critics accept a significant part of Weber's argument. "Weber was correct to stress the affinity between Protestantism and the rising capitalist class... [C]learly, the religious ideas themselves played a huge role in stimulating the revolt of capitalist forces" (2004, 40). Allen also grants that Weber's broad historical attribution of the reasons for the transition from feudalism to modernity accords with accepted materialist accounts. "Overall, the Reformation was seen as a revolt against the Catholic Church,

which was directly tied to the feudal order and the aristocracy. It found an echo in many social classes—disgruntled German princes, peasants but particularly among the small manufacturers, lesser merchants and craftsmen who constituted its rank and file” (Allen 2004, 40). Nevertheless, the critics insist, the emphasis on Luther’s theology rather than politics mars Weber’s representation of the rise of capitalism in Europe. Weber “discards entirely the social dimensions to the Reformation and concentrates instead on its theological essence” (Allen 2004, 42). In so doing, his account suggests an “unreal historical vacuum, [because] it is difficult to explain the audience for Luther’s religious ideas without examining the high level of social unrest which prevailed” (Allen 2004, 40).

To clarify the latter point, as feudalism broke down, both the Church’s and the aristocracy’s normal sources of wealth were depleted, so they exacted new taxes on peasants and urban craftsmen in order to compensate. Cities had exploded, peasants were freed from feudal obligations, and craft guilds, which had protected entry and incomes, had been weakened. “[T]he growth of the market made it easier for the wealthier classes to free themselves from guild restrictions. They demanded the right to hire rural labour, to dispense with notions of ‘the customary price’, to impose new divisions of labour on their journeymen. The instability created by the growing market also forced the feudal orders and the church to increase the pressure on the peasantry for more taxes and tithes” (Allen 2004, 41). By the time Luther declared his 95 Theses, (in contrast to many reformers who had preceded him, with similar treatises [Allen 2004, 40]) the material and social stresses of society moving away from feudalism had finally reached high enough level to motivate revolt. “The Reformation received huge support precisely because it was seen as addressing these issues. It was not simply an abstract theological corpus as Weber presents it, but a movement that fused religious, social and political demands” (Allen 2004, 41).

[Weber] assumes that Calvinists of the time were all motivated by the belief that an all-powerful God meant pre-destination, which produced anxiety, which led to worldly asceticism. Yet even in the case of Calvinism, these themes may not have been picked up with the same emphasis by all social classes. There are some indications, for example, to show that Weber played down the more revolutionary aspects of Protestant theology.” [Additionally,] “it is difficult to disagree with [R.H.] Tawney’s (1938, 99) assertion the ‘both an intense individualism and a rigorous Christian Socialism could be deduced from Calvin’s doctrine, [depending on] differences of political environment and social class’” (quoted in Allen 2004, 43).

Allen particularly recommends Christopher Hill’s (1972) *A World Turned Upside Down*, for details about the integral nature of the religious and political messages of Luther—especially to peasants and labourers. This history “shows a clear link between the ideas of some Protestant sects and a demand for ‘a levelling’ and a sharing of common land” (2004, 43).

The above is only a suggestion of important debates that circulate around the issue of the contribution of ideal versus material factors in social change (taking Weber's history as the case). This study's purpose is certainly not to adjudicate that debate. However, I have reviewed it in order to establish that the mere claim of an "elective affinity" of new workers for New Age spirituality should be only part of the project. Accordingly, in addition to outlining the complementarity of work and religious values, I also suggest, through several lines of argument, the material forces and historical events that would have brought the two into alignment.

In this dissertation, I take as a given what the Regulation School argues: there is congruity between culture and material forces. However, I also argue, (along with David Harvey and others), that the congruity is not tight. Moreover, the question of which of the forces, culture or material, is determinant relative to the other when society changes is also left unanswered. As my analysis below demonstrates, my leanings are towards the "materialist" position—i.e., material factors, concentrated as a "power structure"—are primary. This is the general argument of the theoreticians I chiefly cite here. Indeed, as I explained in Chapter One, an important goal of this dissertation is to refine and fill out a materialist critique of neospirituality, by looking at work culture and conditions. This is not to "prove" that the critique is true but to give it full form for future assessment.

As the debate between Weber and Marx also suggests, a correlation does not establish a direct influence, or 'causality.' Indeed, both New Age spirituality and new work forms are together in a milieu of larger processes that shape them, such as globalization, secularization, and new technologies. (Broad economic changes are reviewed in Chapter Five. An aspect of larger cognitive changes is reviewed in Chapter Seven, as developments in large-scale systems analysis that emerged as globalism advanced.) Although these larger forces cannot be denied, my argument in this dissertation is that New Age spirituality and new work forms have developed in such close physical proximity and historical relation to each other, and that New Age spirituality answers the meaning-demands of these new workers to such an extent, that we should see them as having a special relation to each other—enough for each to influence the other's futures.

As I promised to in Chapter One, I maintain a degree of ambivalence about the question of determination. Overall, however, I lean towards a materialist analysis—that the material is the leading force despite that, as I continue to show throughout this dissertation, there are many elements that appear to influence the ready admittance of neospirituality in workplaces. I argue that, if we wish to look for the direction of 'causation' (while granting a dialectical process at the same time) neospirituality should be seen more as being *shaped* by new working conditions and corporate interests than the reverse.

From Fordism to Post-Fordism

Fordism: Mass Production

Fordism preceded post-Fordism as the dominant model of industry and life conditions in Western democracies. According to Dyer-Witheford (1999, 52) Fordism refers to three interlocking systems: “the integration of a Taylorist division of labour with intense mechanization pioneered in the auto-plant assembly-lines of Henry Ford..., its subsequent connection to mass markets consuming standardized manufactured goods..., and Keynesian stabilization of the business cycle.” Of course, Ford built his automobiles and instituted the assembly-line and the ‘living wage’ in the early part of the twentieth century, but the impact of these innovations, along with complimentary social-democratic institutions that added to their effectiveness, was particularly felt after World War II. This is the era to which the term “Fordism” chiefly refers.

This period was one of broad affluence for Western Europeans and North Americans. The Fordist model sees a significant segment of Western (male) workers, supported by union-negotiated high wages and benefits, settling into stultifying and deskilled, but secure, work routines. During this time, family security and quality of life were enhanced by large-scale government expenditures on public works and social services. Workers produced masses of goods that were duly and daily consumed by fellow (and ‘third-world’) citizens. European and North American national GNPs (gross national products) rose steadily and impressively. “[L]iving standards rose, crisis tendencies were contained, mass democracy preserved and the threat of inter-capitalist wars kept remote” (Harvey 1990, 129). The stability was also based on a post-war financial arrangement between nations that the US dollar would be the “free” world’s reserve currency in a fixed rate of exchange with other currencies. The United States and, eventually, Europe and Japan, would supply manufactured goods to other countries able to buy them, whilst drawing on recipient countries’ raw materials to make them, and the US military might maintained the system (Harvey 1990, 141).

This balance depended on a ‘compact’ between labour, government, and business. Union bureaucracies did their part by restricting workers’ demands to better material compensation rather than to more democratic control (such as allowing workers’ influence on how their work was structured or on what was produced in the factories). Corporations, on the other hand, were responsible for “enhanc[ing] productivity, guarante[ing] growth, and rais[ing] living standards while ensuring a stable basis for gaining profits. This implied a corporate commitment to steady but powerful processes of technological change, mass fixed capital investment, growth of managerial expertise in both production and marketing, and the mobilization of economies of scale through standardization of product” (Harvey 1990, 134). Governments provided strong legal protection for workers, including their capacity to unionize and bargain with employers effectively.

They also supported business success. To maintain predictable consumption patterns, keep businesses profitable, and encourage them to reinvest their profits, Keynesian policies controlled inflation and economic slumps. “To the degree that mass production requiring heavy investment in fixed capital in turn required stable demand conditions to be profitable, so the state strove to curb business cycles through an appropriate mix of fiscal and monetary policies in the postwar period” (Harvey 1990, 135).

The leading economic sectors in Fordism were heavy industries, which produced cars, ships, transport equipment, steel, petrochemicals, rubber, consumer electrical goods, and construction goods. Work relations were shaped by the “mass industrial factory, which defined the circuits of labouring cooperation primarily through the physical deployments of workers on the shop floor” (Hardt and Negri 2000, 295). The literal weight of productive materials and processes tied corporations to places. By virtue of its necessary fixed investments, a company had an unavoidable presence, and therefore profile, in a particular community. Employers generally supported their host communities, most importantly through local hiring, but via other community support as well. In any case, factory labour is not a specialized workforce, so recruitment from the general locale of the plant was unproblematic.

After WWII, counting in post-war subsidies of Germany and Japan, Fordist industries clustered in grand production regions in the world economy, such as the Midwest of the United States, the Ruhr-Rhinelands of Germany, the West Midlands of Britain, and the Tokyo-Yokohama production region. Third-world and native “inner-city” development monies created or maintained populations of consumers more generally. To compensate for decades of pre-war and war-time deprivation experienced by Allied citizens, governments also sought to establish standard, high quality living conditions by providing social services for their entire populations (Bauman 2005, 47–49). The services provided “a strong underpinning to the social wage through expenditures covering social security, health care, education, housing and the like” (Harvey 1990, 135). At least on paper, governments pursued a norm of equal success for their entire citizenry.

These investments in social and material infrastructures “were vital to the growth of both mass production and mass consumption, and ... would also guarantee relatively full employment” (Harvey 1990, 135). The result was a complex but functioning international exchange process:

The privileged workforces in [the first-world] formed one pillar of a rapidly expanding effective demand. The other pillar rested on state-sponsored reconstruction of war-torn economies, suburbanization particularly in the United States, urban renewal, geographical expansion of transport and communications systems, and infrastructural development both within and outside the advanced capitalist world (Harvey 1990, 132).

The Fordist 'golden age' persisted for a generation until in the early 1970s it was thrown into crisis by a variety of problems, both internal to countries and as the result of growing economic globalization.

“Stagnating consumer demand for big-ticket durable goods, new sources of international competition, rising unemployment, creeping inflation, and the oil shocks of the 1970s were among a variety of factors that would ultimately throw Fordism into economic crisis” (de Peuter 2010, 8).

The rising and effective wage demands of unionized workers resulted in a “worldwide wage explosion” (de Peuter 2010, 8). Pay raises, however, were only one among other demands. Workers also revolted against rigid and alienating working conditions, especially in factories. “The years 1968-1972 in particular witnessed a wave of labour unrest, as frustration with working conditions boiled over in costly wildcat strikes, absenteeism, and sabotage. The demand that most concerned managerial powers was that for greater participation and self-management in production” (de Peuter 2010, 9). However, dissatisfaction extended beyond workplaces, to encompass the student, “black power” and anti-Vietnam war movements, as well as nascent environmentalism and second-wave feminism. The smooth climate for corporations changed dramatically. “Within a matter of years [in the late 1960s,] the appearance of peaceful, passionless capitalist stability was spectacularly contradicted by the upsurge of domestic and international dissent” (Dyer-Witthford (1999, 17).

Changes in global business conditions and regulation additionally affected internal economies. Chiefly, the industrial countries lost control of their power to set interest-rates (a power that had been advantageous for their global trade), with the cancellation in 1971 of the Bretton Woods agreement to fix gold prices and tie currencies directly to the US dollar. Tickell and Peck (1995, 371–72) explain:

As private capital began increasingly to circulate globally on a deregulated basis, Keynesian nation-states progressively lost control of one of the most important macro-economic levers—the setting of interest rates. The loss of interest-rate sovereignty was a significant contributor to the breakdown of the fragile international order established under Fordism.

National economies weakened “as cheaper or technologically more sophisticated imports successfully competed with indigenous industries which were reaching the limits of the Fordist division of labour” (Tickell and Peck 1995, 372). International institutions representing the globalizing Fordist economy, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), took advantage of this weakness to support the interests of their new constituency—large corporations (often registered as American) that increasingly saw themselves as “transnational.” Diminished national loyalty propelled companies to export more of their jobs, beyond a tolerable balance for local employment levels, precipitating chronically-high levels of unemployment in many localities. On the government’s part, since

these newly-exported wages were not to be returned to local economies, the domestic incentive for high-wage policies diminished. “[T]he growth of the export sector meant that wages were increasingly seen as a drag on economic competitiveness rather than a contributor to consumption. Consequently, real wages began to slow and then decline, compounding the problems of stagnating consumer demand” (Tickell and Peck 1995, 372).

What had once been a relatively successful reciprocal system began to fail, offering diminishing returns to those actors who tried to maintain it. “The virtuous cycle of Fordism had turned vicious” (Tickell and Peck 1995, 372).

Post-Fordism: Flexible Accumulation

The question of what kind of regime of accumulation has succeeded Fordism, or even if such a regime has successfully cohered, is a matter of debate. Nonetheless, the concept of a new post-Fordist system, first broached by the Regulation School theorists, has been widely advanced by both political economists and cultural theorists. One of the most accessible accounts is that offered by David Harvey (1999).

Harvey explains post-Fordism primarily in terms of capitalists’ strategies for attacking the rigidities of the Fordist economic structure, which were deemed to be the chief cause of falling profits. Post-Fordism is a regime of “flexible accumulation.” Harvey identified

...flexibility with respect to labour processes, labour markets, products, and patterns of consumption. [The new regime] is characterized by the emergence of entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets and, above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological and organizational innovation” (Harvey 1990, 147).

The demise of Fordism was an outcome of the breakdown of the coordination (described above), between consumption and production. Despite the existence of a particularly youthful, mostly middle-class, sector of American society who for the first time had disposable income and made this very visible in the heyday of the counterculture (Campbell 2007), “the bulk of the American public found themselves at the beginning of a four-decades long (and counting) stagnation of real wages” (Konings 2015, 90). From the early 1970s on “global capitalism has experienced chronic problems of surplus capital needing to be absorbed” (Marchak 1993, 17). Consumers no longer had the capacity to buy the ‘surplus’ that capitalism put on the market. Mass consumption and productivity gains were out of sync, but their coordination is the key requisite of an effective ‘regime of accumulation.’ Therefore, capitalists “sought alternatives, as they had done in the past” (Marchak 1993, 16). Corporations needed either to change their means of production, their products, or both. Both, it was!

The challenge was to speed up the rate at which products were consumed, so as to ‘mop up’ any surplus of goods that might otherwise stall the economy. This meant either that goods had to wear out quickly or be replaced more often by consumers motivated by advertising-induced, changing tastes. Both of these strategies were, in fact, time honoured. However, post-Fordism embraced them with fervour and a new twist: make the products so ephemeral that their value dissolved nearly at first use. Media products, services and information met the definition of this ideal product. Furthermore, by enhancing consumer assessment, targeting, and delivery capacity, the emerging interactive computers and communications technologies (ICTs) made their intensive production worthwhile.

Computing and network technologies gave companies greater capacity to identify, poll, produce for and sell to relatively small and specific population segments. Close tracking of these targeted markets allows them to make quick responses to changed tastes—replacing economies of scale with economies of scope. These possibilities emerged hand-in-hand with the reduction of the public sphere, and collective provision of services, converting to market what were formerly common solutions to social and personal needs (Frank 1997, 23-24).

The post-Fordist term signals the implementation of fast turnover time in production and exchange as required, to keep up with this proliferation of consumer goods. For citizens to consume at an increasing speed, media ‘coordinated’ a medley of reminders to do so, and governments gave political, legal and regulatory go-aheads and supports to technologies that could ‘refresh’ consumption messages frequently. Consumers learned to respond to the reminders and messages of their own volition. Additionally, media messages and the consumption patterns they urged were integrated (amid some protest) into hitherto unconquered terrains—such as in schools. Branded products were introduced to lunchrooms and complimentary learning aids, such as computers, to classrooms—training young people for consumption (Barlow and Robertson 1994).

The acceleration of consumption and economic activity also implemented the speeding-up of other domains of post-Fordist life. In this new regime, “the time-horizons of both private and public decision-making have shrunk, while satellite communication and declining transport costs have made it increasingly possible to spread those decisions immediately over an ever-wider and variegated space” (Harvey 1990, 147). The new regime’s sped-up turnover times, realized across increasingly global markets, generated a “space-time compression” that Harvey (1990, 147) sees as characteristic of the Post-Fordist world.

‘Ephemeral’ Products

Rather than just the heavy industrial goods of Fordism, ‘ephemeral,’ or ‘immaterial’ products become the life-blood of economies, particularly in North America. The service category includes “not only personal,

business and health services, but also entertainments, spectacles, happening, and distractions” (Harvey 1990, 156). In their production cycles, even manufactured goods appear to be ephemeral. Post-Fordist clothing production and distribution cycles epitomize these changes. During Fordism, the trend-setting elite ‘couturier’ centred in Paris was relatively slow-moving. Moreover, men’s clothing tastes changed at glacial rates. However, the durable, relatively-expensive, conventional clothing of the Fordist middle class (reflecting high-fashion at a remove) gave way to more cheaply-made, ‘stylish’ and disposable wardrobes, “fast-fashion.” In Harvey’s view, fast-fashion exemplifies post-Fordist innovation, and is a syndrome that reaches well beyond clothing production. Again, planned obsolescence (as for automobiles) is not new. But, now, all manner of consumer items that were formerly appreciated solely for their functionality are included within the gaze of fashion-seeking. An ever-expanding array of consumer products has been brought into the regime of fashion, from kitchen appliances to travel destinations.

The media promoting ‘fast fashion’ are selling not just the new, but change itself, in “a wide swath of life-styles and recreational activities, [it] actively produces the very ephemerality that has always been fundamental to the experience of modernity” (Harvey 1990, 185). Harvey explains that “the half-life of a typical Fordist product was, for example, five to seven years, but flexible accumulation has more than cut that in half in certain sectors (such as textile and clothing industries), while in others—such as the so-called ‘thoughtware’ industries (e.g., video games and computer software programmes)—the half-life is down to less than eighteen months” (Harvey 1990, 156).

This is to say nothing of the “fashion” associated with the true post-Fordist ephemeral products, not only media products, proper, but ideas, opinions, personal qualities, etc., through social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, etc. Attach advertising to these and, in a powerful positive-feedback relation, the medium actually becomes the message! Celebrity is now reified on electronic platforms, while, as people continually seek to be hip through their knowledge of technologies, the platforms themselves become the celebrities. More mundanely, ‘trending on Twitter’ has accelerated fashion’s turnover to an order of magnitude faster than fast-fashion’s improvement on couturier.

Vertical Dis-integration

Because they expected their business’s basic dynamics—products, markets and modes of distribution—to persist over the long-term, Fordist companies sought to own as many as possible of the constituents of their operations as they could afford and manage. This meant owning buildings, machinery, suppliers, sources of material, distributions systems, etc., in order to control costs. By virtue of this “vertical integration,” companies maintained “long-term and large-scale fixed capital investments in mass-production systems that precluded much flexibility of design and presumed stable growth in invariant consumer markets”

(Harvey 1990, 142). This approach was efficient in the stable and predictable Fordist business environment. However, by the 1980s, the globalizing business environment required firms to reconsider the role of these company commitments and recast them as ‘business rigidities.’

The movement towards vertical disintegration, or, less drastically, “quasi-vertical integration” (Harvey 1990, 147), is particularly marked in the business services sector and the producers of other information and cultural products. It includes not only shedding of subsidiaries but, in many cases, partial dismemberment of the owning corporation. The dismembered or “spun-off” parts might, then operate as small business entities in long-term contracts with their former owners, or become “free-agents,” offering their services to a variety of the powerful corporate “shells,” making and breaking connections on project-by-project basis.

Commonly, stripped-down corporations that maintain the all-important brand identities, along with their profits, get products to market through maintained links with a proliferation of small independent commercial units (sometimes composed of groups of “outsourced” employees), contributing to production on a contingent (i.e., as-needed, just-in-time) basis, as a coordinated chain of sub-contractors. Depending on fluctuations in business conditions, these patterns of associations can be easily reconfigured through non-renewal of contracts etc.

These organizational forms partly mitigate endemic business instability in the more risky conditions of the global, post-Fordist economy (Harvey 1990, 157-165). This is one form of the “flexibility” of the post-Fordist regime of accumulation. It is also a painless way of gaining people’s services without employing them. The work of “spun-off” employees, managing their own subcontracting companies, is available on an irregular basis without the impediments of labour-legislation that might otherwise protect them from such unreliable working conditions. Moreover, the self-employed must absorb normal business risks that would otherwise accrued to their employer, such as “the demand for a product, bad weather, worker error resulting in liability, etc. [These] become a problem for the independent contractor—not the large corporation.”

Of course, the success of these organizational arrangements is premised on effective communications networks and business-processes--supported by all manner of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ technologies as local area networks, groupware, intranets, collaborative project schedulers, conference programs etc. (Liu 2004, 44). The point is to coordinate all of the links along the chain so that relevant information is “up to the minute,” and supplies are delivered “just-in-time,” and productivity is not lost through delays or misdirection at any of the nodes. Another strategy for downloading risk, just-in-time delivery also “eliminated the need for large, expensive warehouses (and warehousing staff). The delivery was downloaded to independent con-

tractors, truck drivers, for example, who now carried all of the risk that their former employers used to carry.”

The new information systems that allow coordination of production across the globe, including contracting out and just-in-time networks, have been accepted as posthierarchical forms that help undermine the advantage that large corporations with their substantial capital base enjoyed in Fordism. If this were so, it is appropriate that these services were largely bought through the public purse. Despite that research and development of innovations in software and hardware are popularly presented as “private” enterprise, the different technologies of communication and control are mostly the result of huge governmental investments in computer power, telecommunications and database technologies during the past half-century, many for the purposes of enhancing military power. As to democratizing access to business, despite apparent opportunities presented to small economic actors by this scenario, it is the highly-capitalized umbrella organizations, the stripped-down global “shells” we call global corporations, that have the capacity to develop the government-funded basic technological research that essentially underwrites commercial production worldwide (but pre-eminently in the US). Essentially, the behemoths are more able to leverage the public subsidies in technology research to their advantage than are small companies.

In the global economy, the technologies that confer the most advantage are data-processing and networking capacity. Company success depends on immediate knowledge of technological developments, markets, including financial and currency markets, and government policies (Harvey 1990, 161). Access to the high-cost technologies that provide this knowledge is now the ultimate determinants of success in the global post-Fordist marketplace, and what led early post-Fordist analysts to anticipate a new “information society” (for example, Fritz Machlup 2016; and Daniel Bell 1976). At the same time, its importance is the major reason large companies can maintain their advantage over smaller companies. Since wealth buys more of this essential technology (which, in turn, creates more wealth), Harvey and others argue that post-Fordist information technologies basically concentrate, not disperse, corporate power (Harvey 1990, 157–158). In other words, they contribute towards consolidating power, or hierarchy.

This reality is also a direct contradiction of the general belief in posthierarchy, which frames much popular ideology. I discuss forms of the posthierarchical belief in Chapter Seven. More specifically, this argument contrasts with the image of the new marketplace in the age of the internet (although the latter’s transition to the commodified “information superhighway” [see Kroker and Weinstein 2001] is giving them pause). This popular perception is enhanced by the ideologues of a ‘network cosmology,’ technology workers who promote the entire e-media industry through mythologizing their worldview, as will be discussed in Chapter Eight. Apologists for this network cosmology (as I argue, an adaptation of neospiritual holism for

technologically-steeped workers) contend that the internet and personal communications e-tools are democratizing, because a world full of engaged e-technology-users has been flattened of hierarchy.

Post-Fordism and Neoliberalism

Post-Fordist companies wanted freedom not only from the traditional ‘rigidities’ of business, but also from those imposed on them by governments that had commonly intervened in their economies. They expected globalization and certain changes in public policies to solve their economic problems. Through their agents, the intergovernmental regulatory agency, such as the WTO, they launched an unrelenting campaign to press governments “to decrease expenditures, reduce public services, and privatize public properties” (Marchak 1993, 22). Their aim was to “break the consensus of the welfare state” (Marchak 1993, 9).

‘Reaganism’ in the US and ‘Thatcherism’ in the United Kingdom were evidence of their success. The neoliberal philosophy behind the policies urged on nations aimed “to liberate the market from political oversight and integrate social life as much as possible into markets” (Fisher 2010, 46–47). Fundamentally, this campaign meant dissolving the Fordist pattern of reciprocity amongst “big labour, big capital, and big government[, which] increasingly appeared as a dysfunctional embrace of such narrowly defined vested interests as to undermine rather than secure capital accumulation” (Harvey 1990, 142). Under the new economic conditions, the Fordist pact became an intolerable rigidity.

Governments under pressure inaugurated new economic policies that reduced social welfare provisions. They worked at minimizing the costs of providing services and regulatory protections to citizens (as they reduced corporate taxes). They reduced the provision of ‘common goods’ and public infrastructure, while spinning these off to the private sector, where possible. They embraced ‘free trade’ pacts amongst themselves, reducing or eliminating tariffs that protected native industries and controlled prices of commodities. They also repudiated responsibility for the enhancement of the social fabric through economic redistributions and to the future via strong environmental protections (Harvey 1990, 167–168).

As noted above, long-term commitments to labour, either by corporations or governments, were also targeted as ‘rigidities.’ “There were problems of rigidities in labour markets, labour allocation, and in labour contracts (especially in the so-called ‘monopoly’ sector)” (Harvey 1990, 142). The strength of Fordist industrial employment was partly based on the trade-protectionist measures that supported domestic factories and their workforces. Unfortunately for workers, “[t]he first political condition [sought by global capitalists] was the private right to disinvest and move capital elsewhere” (Marchak 1993, 12). This right already existed within the free enterprise ideology, but it had been delimited by long-term obligations to labour enforced by union contracts and state legislation. It was also “morally constrained by a history of grants, taxation holiday, and government-provided infrastructure and resources intended to induce com-

panies to locate in particular regions” (Marchak 1993, 12). However, flexible production processes worked best with a global scope and a “flexible” labour force. Geographical flexibility helped the corporations but hurt many domestic industrial workforces. Without their traditional pact with governments, and desperate to reduce costs, companies became willing to ignore their putative obligations to their traditional communities to hire locally.

‘Flexible’ capital is far freer of frustrating governmental restraints than it was in the Fordist era. Furthermore, its international representatives keep a close watch on governmental policies in order to maintain that freedom. However, according to the plan, the reduction of the government in the economy is not to be complete. Governments have an important role in maintaining global trade, such as through free-trade negotiations. They are also, however, strongly relied on to subsidize companies in a wide variety of ways.⁵⁶ National governments have to maintain a comfortable environment for business, ensuring not a fully competitive economy but a selective free market system. Global capitalism’s agents instructed the (now) “internationally-organized governments to be authoritarian instruments for the protection of private property” (Marchak 1993, 195). This is the focus during the periodic policy summits of such agencies as the WTO.

Limitations to Coordination of Regime of Accumulation and Mode of Regulation

In presenting this overview of discussions about the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism, I do not want to gloss over the controversies that attend these categories. One such is the debate within post-Fordist economics as to how strictly companies need to hone down to flat-organizational and teamwork formats. Above, I noted that there are several different accounts of post-Fordism, placing different emphases on its various components, including its workplace components, and on their evaluation and interpretation. In this spirit, one critical analyst of post-Fordism, Stephen Vallas, indicates that post-Fordist economists take different positions on how closely companies need to take up that model in order to do well under post-Fordist economic conditions (Vallas 1999, 69).

As Vallas (1999) points out, in the years since the Regulation School proposed their concepts, they have been adopted and inflected in a wide variety of ways. Vallas argues that only the strictest of a number of subschools of post-Fordism insist there is a very tight coordination between the regime of accumulation and the mode of regulation. Vallas (1999) refers to its members as “posthierarchy economists.” Important

⁵⁶ See Kenneth Boulding 1981, on the “grants economy.”

members are Paul Adler (1991, 1992), Larry Hirschhorn (1984) and Shoshona Zuboff (1988).⁵⁷ According to them, the flat organization is a necessity for companies to succeed in the contemporary economy. In their view, “the economic survival of technologically advanced firms hinges on their ability to forge new organizational structures that are capable of fully engaging the skills of their employees” (Vallas 1999, 70).

Vallas criticizes posthierarchy economists as essentially technological determinists. Interestingly, these economists seem to collapse this “is” and the “ought” in their analysis in the way that Albanese argued New Ager do in their judgement of individual responsibility to act for the whole, which is purportedly unavoidable anyway. In the same way, according to Vallas, the posthierarchy economists are apologists for a system they also argue is inevitable. They “typically emphasize the implicit structures (and, at times, even the emancipatory thrust) of new information technologies,” as they argue their positions (Vallas 1999, 70). Again consistent with New Age beliefs, they also condense the present and the future, effectively asserting that if the situation has not arrived yet, it must. Moreover, it should (because the outcomes would be good). This is a teleological position, a key argumentative strategy of technological determinists. “Consistent with its origins in [Douglas] MacGregor’s work, the posthierarchical view anticipates the transformation of workplaces to more creative places as a matter of course; in other words, as ‘technological imperatives,’ writ large, force new forms of work on organizations” (Vallas 1999, 71).

The mixing of an apologetic aspect with analysis, as Vallas claims the posthierarchy economists do, presents complications in crediting their analysis. This mix does, however, underscore that there are (at least) two debates about post-Fordist workplace organization: whether “classic” post-Fordism organization structures comprehensively operate in companies, and whether, if so, they offer the salutary impact for employees that posthierarchy economists, argue it does. These two debates should not be confused in what follows.

There are certainly questions as to the scope of post-Fordist transformations. Although work does seem to have undergone profound changes since the 1970s, it is important not to overstate their completeness. Even in the ‘advanced’ sectors of capitalism, there are workplaces whose practices are classically Fordist. Furthermore, on a planetary scale, it is clear that however much Fordism may seem to fading in the global north-west, it is only because it is has been transferred elsewhere, to sites such as the notorious Foxconn

⁵⁷ Vallas (1999) finds this term in Zuboff (1988), and with somewhat different vocabularies, the same principles can be found in Adler (1988, 1991, 1992) Adler, Paul, and Bryan Borys (1996), Hirschhorn (1984), Heckscher (1994), and others.

factories in Southern China, where electronics for the world's computing devices are made under severely Taylorized working conditions (Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter 2009). Lastly, it is important to recognize that, particularly since the global financial crisis of 2008, the question of whether capital actually has found a new, sustainable "regime of accumulation"—or is, instead, instable—must be considered unresolved.

David Harvey and others debate the factuality of the strict coordination. Harvey (1990) nuanced this determinism with his concept of flexibility, arguing that many different kinds of organizations can flourish in a post-Fordist regime. Harvey showed that post-Fordism embraces everything from the industrial sweatshop to the post-Fordist ideal I presented above as the iconic SA work. Vallas himself demonstrates his support for a position more like Harvey's, as he claims that what he regards as orthodoxy's incorrect conclusions stem from its narrow focus on technology, and underplays "the bearing that social and political structures have had on either the origins or transformation of Fordist organizations.... [He adds that, to] suggest that efficiency imperatives require firms to adopt one or another form of workplace organization, then, is to embrace a view that seems both sociologically naive and empirically indefensible" (Vallas 1999, 75).

There are also, as noted, debates about the value, from employees' points of view, of the post-Fordist organizational innovations that have been achieved. Vallas claims that some scholars—such Michael Piore and Charles Sabel (1984)—are relatively sympathetic to management claims about the benefits of team work and flexible labour relations and the reality of flat- or non-hierarchical post-Fordist workplaces. Others—such as Harvey and Liu—are far more skeptical about what they see simply as new refinements in the old story of capital's exploitation of its workforce. As such, the skeptical judgements reflect those of the majority of scholars I review in this dissertation.

This argument is not to be taken as conclusive, however. As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, the theoretical material I examine in depth is so consulted in order to produce a strong argument, for subsequent, further examination. Despite these problems, however, the concept of post-Fordism does provide a valuable starting point for considering the relation of changed forms of work and economic circumstances to new forms of religion and neospirituality. As Harvey—not, himself, strictly a Regulation School analyst, but one who considers its concepts valuable—observes:

The virtue of 'Regulation School' thinking is that it insists we look at the total package of relations and arrangements that contribute to the stabilization of output growth and aggregate distribution of income and consumption in a particular historical period and place (Harvey 1990, 123).

Indeed, Harvey's own work exemplifies the fruitful use of the concept of a transition from Fordism to post-Fordism to look at a 'total package' of social relations. Having explained the political economics of this process in terms of the appearance of new forms of "flexible accumulation" he goes on to argue—complementing Fredric Jameson (1991)—that there is a parallel between the emergence of post-Fordist capitalism and an ephemeral, eclectic and globalized post-modern culture.⁵⁸ Even more ambitiously, Brian Holmes (2002) proposed a link between new forms of post-Fordist work and the appearance of a new type of "flexible personality." What is notable, however, is that neither of these thinkers makes any mention of issues of religion or spirituality, even though it is a clear part of workplace culture. This dissertation therefore moves down this unexplored road, asking whether the corollary of post-Fordist capital's regime of "flexible accumulation", and "flexible workers", is not a new "flexible spirituality"—that is, neospirituality.

Post-Fordist Work: The Flexible Labour Theory

Among the arenas where the "rigidities" of Fordism are challenged by this new regime, of most interest to us is that of labour relations. "Flexibility" is now foisted on workers. This section discusses some of the characteristic features of their working conditions. Likewise, there are evidently many kinds of post-Fordist workers—in factories, offices, service jobs or professions. Theorists of contemporary work such as Robert Reich's correctly place considerable emphasis on the often sharply different conditions and rewards of "symbolic analysts," "routine workers" and "in-person service" workers. In the next chapter, I return to this crucial issue of different types of jobs within the contemporary workforce. I pinpoint the iconic worker whose work embodies these features most completely (the symbolic analyst), and who is the basic focus of study in this dissertation. I also consider the significance of these differences for understanding the class composition of New Age spirituality. Keeping these qualifications in mind, what follows here is a composite representation of working conditions that affect different sectors of the workforce to different degrees. Drawing primarily on the work of Liu (2004), Stone (2004), and Fisher (2010), I give a summary

⁵⁸ Harvey built on Fredric Jameson's challenge to postmodern theory's idealistically-conceived 'turn to the cultural.' Jameson argued that the expansion of cultural activities observed by postmodern theorists emerged from structural changes in capitalism that required its re-orientation to products with high turnaround. This made postmodernity a product of "post-Fordist flexible accumulation." Religion scholar David L. Johnston considers his book—as it is "more detailed than Jameson's work... a first guide for explaining how postmodernity came to be, and how it should be defined" (2010, 29). From Jameson's work, Harvey "progressively developed an analysis that identified the cultural, intellectual and aesthetic practices of postmodernism in terms of capitalist cycles of accumulation and overaccumulation" (Johnston 2010, 30).

overview of features of work dictated by the general form of post-Fordist economies, only briefly indicating how they may vary between different milieus of production.

In a nutshell, post-Fordist “management wants companies that are lean, nimble, flexible, responsive, competitive, innovative, efficient, customer-focused, and profitable” (Liu 2004, 16). These criteria are reached by the corporate “strategy of permanent innovation: accommodation to ceaseless change, rather than an effort to control it” (Holmes 2002, 5). As described earlier in this chapter, this strategy often “works through the agency of small independent production units, employing skilled work teams with multi-use tool kits and relying on relatively spontaneous forms of cooperation with other such teams, to meet rapidly changing market demands at low cost and high speed” (Holmes 2002, 6). As noted, these teams can be fully independent, working as private subcontractors, or formed and reformed inside companies, depending on the project.

The team format rejects Taylorism (i.e., assembly-line-type activity), which is repudiated in the interests of activating workers’ creativity, involvement, “knowledge and imaginative capacity in the production process” (Stone 2004, 91-92). Whereas earlier, employees were prevented from using their personal discretion and judgement in the work process, because it would slow down the work, now, “professionals... determine how best to induce employees to exercise their discretion on behalf of the welfare of the firm” (Stone 2004, 88).

Many specific features of work conditions and culture are outcomes of these economic and organizational requirements. These include flat organization and participatory management; team culture and Toyotism; ‘soft’ training and cultural indoctrination; flexibility, precarity and ‘boundaryless careers;’ surveillance and social monitoring; and passion, fun and exhaustion. I discuss these topics below.

Flat Organization & Participatory Management

The *flat* organizational form, with little management hierarchy, is characteristically post-Fordist. In management texts, the postindustrial corporation is made up of loosely-connected project-based parts communicating horizontally. It is theorized as “an optical fiber or superconducting wire designed for resistance-free flow of information..., free from the friction of matter” (Liu 2004, 43). Management theorist Tom Peters famously supplied the iconic image: “Organizations are pure information processing machines—nothing less, nothing more” (Peters 1992).⁵⁹ The hierarchical organizational structures of yore

⁵⁹ Cited in Liu 2004, 45

supposedly generated this friction that must be avoided, since managers supposedly had to clear every action with their superiors. Consequently, the radical reduction of management layers is considered the key to this dematerialization. Even company CEOs are subject to its strictures. “[A]ny vertical hierarchy remaining in the flattened organization is greased for information flow: the ideal CEO communicates with operations, directly or through severely pared-down middle management layers” (Liu 2004, 43–44).

‘Flatness’ has implications for what the remaining managers do. Managers act not as supervisors, but as team leaders. Referring to downsizing in the 1980s, Liu reminds us that “after the damned middle managers [were] laid off in the millions..., the managers who remain ostensibly have greatly increased ‘spans of control,’ more flexibility in their new roles as ‘facilitators’ or ‘coaches’ of work teams, and more cross-field expertise gained on ‘management teams’” (Liu 2004, 46). John Philpott agrees with this assessment, and adds that “the cadre of leader managers able to motivate teams and network is growing” (Philpott 2007, 76).

Participatory management is an umbrella term that dictates and structures many features of work organization that follows from company “flatness” and “posthierarchy.” Those managers retained to direct projects and act as ‘team leaders’ must avoid the impression of direct supervision of workers. Additionally, because there are fewer managers in companies, team members must take more responsibility than did traditional workers. In flat organizations, team members are required to informally and collectively manage their own and team-members’ work. Furthermore, as teams often function as individual business units vis a vis other company departments or other companies, team members might have to function as high-level managers in their entrepreneurial-type relations with other such units. In addition to being aware of new technologies and the changing exigencies of the business environment, employees must also be kept informed of *company situations and strategies* to a level that goes well beyond what was required for the performance of Fordist jobs. As team projects may require members to communicate outside of companies and make decisions at relatively high levels, they must be well-versed in company “values,” policies and other guidelines.

As incentives, such workers also now often receive company securities, or shares, as part of their remuneration, which tends to reinforce their assumed identities as company owners (i.e., capitalists). Responsibilities to manage themselves and fellow-workers are thrown on the shoulders of these workers.

“Self-management” is one aspect of the supposed *employee empowerment* that is found in new workplaces. However, employees’ decision-making power within organizations is nevertheless restricted in key ways and “also very demanding of these workers” (Liu 2004, 45–46).

Team Culture and Toyotism

Both by default, and by design, claims Liu, *team* culture is the expected norm of post-Fordist work organization: “The team is the unit of ephemeral identity that most flexibly fuses technologies and skills into skill sets (called innovation, creativity or resourcefulness)” (Liu 2004, 47). Liu makes clear, however, that a team is a new sociological entity: “it is *not* an identity group and assuredly *not* a class formation” (Liu 2004, 47). The ‘technologies’ referred to, above, in “fusing of technologies and skills” are the same that keep business networks “well-greased” for information flow. They are a continually changing array of technical aids to communications, project organization, and information processing that team workers rely on, (Liu 2004, 44) and whose effective use determines the success of the enterprise.

The performance demands placed on teams as a whole and the imposed opaque nature of their inner workings, throw all team-members together, since ‘success,’ according to team discourse, is (with significant qualifiers) only for all; never only for one. To an extent, each member is expected to ‘cover’ for the others (with their variety of talents and skills) to compensate for tight deadlines or weak individual performance. The pressures put on teams, without much formal internal scrutiny that would identify and perhaps eliminate unproductive workers or force recognition that the tasks assigned the team have unrealistic deadlines is an effective system for forcing overwork. Team structure can thus contribute to intensive conditions of work as teams struggle to meet deadlines, regardless of work/life balance concerns.

In terms of team organization and participative management, the archetypal form of post-Fordism is *Toyotism*, which Liu (2004, 5) calls the “mytho-Japanese antifoundationalisms of the new corporate correctness.” It is the management system that has defined new productive organization. Toyotism, which of course gained its name (but not its origins—see Chapter Seven) from the post-war Japanese Toyota Corporation, was a systematic attempt to break through the rigidities of Fordist production which were slowly throttling the productivity of the once-dominant US car industry.

Toyotism instead demanded from its workers engagement in a process of “continuous improvement.” This objective called for workers to exercise collective responsibility within their fluidly organized work teams to continually demonstrate total commitment to refining the company’s efficiency and profitability, exploiting the considerable latitude they were allowed in the execution of their combined tasks (Liu 2004, 5). Central to this effort was an attack on the sharply delineated worker job-descriptions that were the outcome of the Fordist capital-labour compact. In place of the sharp distinctions between ‘hand and brain’ (the workers and the managers), conception and execution, that characterized classic assembly line work, they were recomposed in the new worker.

As Toyotist organizations in Japan trounced the US automobile companies in global competition during the 1970s and 80s, US corporation responded by mimicking them. However, the introduction of the team concept into US auto production had a devastating impact on workers there. This is because teams obliterated their long-developed and fought-for distinctions and rights as union members, as they also diminished US trades unions power and working class strength *tout court*. “The broad band team concept... deleted the entire apparatus of classification earned through class struggle, by flattening everyone to the status of all-purpose, anonymous worker in an ant hive” (Liu 2004, 60–62).

The long struggle of US organized labor in the twentieth century won work rules and job classifications, whose perpetual contest of status differentiation *within* the class expressed—in what was only apparently a contradiction—the *solidarity* of the working class. Liu explains that unionized workers maintain their power as individuals in the union structure by virtue of the finely-differentiated positions (in terms of seniority and skills qualified to exercise) within the unions, effectively putting them in competition with each other. However, these differentiations made each individual stronger as a member of the group, even though group strength was only exercised at crisis points in their working lives, such as during contentiously bargaining with employers. In other words, workers in the union hierarchy identified with each other as a class *contra* management only insofar as they could stake out their position on the line or shift according to openly-understood, fair rules that applied class-wide, that is, without the “toadyism, favoritism and arbitrariness endemic to the straw-boss system” prevailing from 1910-1930 (whose vagaries were the initial spur to developing strong American labour unions). This is akin to saying the group only has power to the extent that its constituent elements are finely, mutually articulated. According to Liu (2004, 62), if *either* the ties based on sameness *or* the internal differentiation are degraded, the strength of the group in general is weakened. Therefore, the *destruction* of the working class’s heterogeneity (based on union agreements) degraded worker solidarity. This internal structure was precisely dissolved when assembly-line workers were reorganized as team members and expected to perform more-or-less as a flat collective.

Labour researcher Katherine Stone supports Liu’s argument, which can be extended to white-collar work. The loss of traditional strategies of labour protection: *seniority*, which “allocates priority and privilege on the basis of length of service [and] *narrow, precisely defined job definitions*... , protect workers against excessive demands by a supervisor and at the same time protects them against displacement by outsiders who might otherwise be hired to perform their work.... But narrow job classifications are the opposite of the flexible work places of the new employment relationship” (Stone 2004, 203). Indeed, notes Liu, (2004, 47) “Instead of [being] laborers chained to piecemeal tasks, multi-competent work teams are supposed to oversee projects holistically with perspective on the total company strategy.”

Fisher also agrees that elements of the *team culture*, such as the elimination of titles, which were meant to have “workers...assume more functions and be more flexible, [on the contrary] undermine workers’ ability to construct... careers” (Fisher 2010, 101). After analysing engineering workplaces, Gideon Kunda (1992, 218) is even less equivocal about the disadvantage to workers of the “de-hierarchized management style” that is intrinsic to team culture. He concluded in his study of corporate culture in high-tech industries that it “elicits more, not less, control over workers.” These corporations, argues Kunda (1992, 218-19), employ a set of managerial policies “designed to minimize the use and de-emphasize the significance of traditional bureaucratic control structures... and to elicit instead behavior consistent with cultural prescriptions.” Formal control, Kunda maintains, is replaced by a “‘softer’ normative control.” Finally, his judgement supports the claim made by labour scholars, Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt’s (2008, 18–19), that participatory management and the team concept can be considered to be invasive “technolog[ies] of power, technolog[ies] for creating and controlling subjective processes.”

‘Soft’ Training and Cultural Indoctrination

Lacking bureaucratic control structures, post-Fordist companies allocate significant resources to the tasks of defining and inculcating good ‘workplace culture.’ They must do this for several reasons related to managing a workforce that is expected to be entrepreneurial and creative: because of the difficulty of having employees dedicate high levels of energy and personal commitment and judgment under the conditions of constant insecurity in which many of them work, because their necessarily “creative” employees may overstep certain limits in their passion, and because, given the favored flat organizational structures, employees must internalize management values. Restricting employee initiatives to within the bounds of corporate interests is intrinsic to relying on creative, entrepreneurial workers. F. Lordon (2014, 88) explains:

[E]ach employee’s ‘own desire’ must be aligned with the desire of the enterprise. But there comes a point when hierarchical relaxation, the better to give free rein to the creativity of the ‘creatives’, begins to contradict the very existence of the structure of capital. If, in order to give the best of their talents, these employees must be left to themselves, nothing can stop them from escaping should they find even the residual managerial supervision too onerous, and the appropriation of the fruits of their singular creativity too abusive.

As a result of this conundrum, managers and HR professionals who employ creative employees have a heavy burden of indoctrination as part of their duties. Earlier, the coordination of the interests of employees with the corporation was referred to as “co-linearisation,” and the cultural community that results, as a psytopia. As part of the process of keeping company goals at the forefront, employees police themselves as well as their co-workers. This gives further credence to the argument for the company as a psytopia.

Workers must identify with the company quite spontaneously, and this can only occur through indoctrination. It is hoped that this identification becomes embedded in employee behaviour through ‘regular’ team activities and communications. Teams *require* and are *also sites for*, this intensive learning.

Team-members also need be sensitive to the economic environment in which they work, because in one way or another, their jobs are market-oriented, but they also must be primed to maintain favourable and productive relations with co-workers. Team members must participate in “frequent brainstorming, meetings, perpetual retraining motivated by ‘pay for knowledge,’ and constant dissemination of company-wide philosophy and performance data” (Liu 2004, 45). Industry apologists have accordingly referred to the team itself as a sensing mechanism.

The result of this requirement to couple group social and observational skills with an orientation of high-engagement in the company’s interests, is that most training programs in companies are not technical or instrumental, but rather *cultural* in nature, explicitly aiming at “worker-involvement.” In Canada, labour researcher Heather Menzies wrote in 1996, that the “corporate-culture aspect is obvious in the PR component of quality circles and total quality management” (Menzies 1996, 102). Menzies observes that “worker-involvement programs have moved into practically every line of work since the late 1980s Even manufacturing workers were not exempt from such ‘training.’ Dave Robertson, Canadian Auto Workers, director of work organization and training, estimates that this cultural orientation—including seminars on corporate marketing and global competition, accounts for the bulk of the ‘training’ that workers are now receiving on the job” (Menzies 1996, 102).

Flexibility, Precarity and ‘Boundaryless Careers’

Unlike Fordist corporate workers, many post-Fordist labourers have no binding commitment of sustained employment where they work (Stone 2004, 110). Although the original version of Toyotism guaranteed life-long employment to workers who could adapt to flexible conditions, this guarantee did not survive the translation of its managerial philosophy to other contexts. On the contrary, one of the many “flexibilities” post-Fordist capital seeks is the flexibility to shed workers as and when it requires. While the merits of a “free agent” economy are expounded by various work pundits (Pink 2001), what for capital is “flexibility” is for workers often “precarity.” Stone distinguishes contingent from precarious employment on the grounds of the expectation of employment’s continuation of the employed worker. To describe the new conditions, Stone believes the term ‘precarious’ is better than a related term, ‘contingent,’ because, unlike the latter, ‘precarious employment’ refers to “work that has no explicit or implicit promise of continuity” (Stone 2004, 72).

Temporary employment agencies were legalized *as employers* in the early 1960s in the United States, and later, in the 1970s and 80s, state regulations made firing employees more difficult, discouraging promises of permanency from employers (Stone 2004, 68, 83–84). As the use of temporary agency services became normal, many employers abandoned internal hiring, career ladders, and full-time employment objectives (Stone 2004, 68-70). Beyond accommodation by temporary agencies, the ‘better reason’ for the “re-casualization of work [is] that work practices are being adjusted to production requirements...; [managers] have to pay more attention to short-term cost reduction, [so they seek out] just-in-time’ workers” (Stone 2004, 86).

By 1996, 78% of American companies surveyed used ‘flexible staffing’ arrangements. “By 2001, nearly 2 million [American] workers worked for temporary employment agencies, many of whom were in highly skilled positions” (Stone 2004, 67). Increases of atypical employment included part-time, contract, on-call, and independent contracting (Stone 2004, 69). Stone assesses that the “change in the nature of full-time employment signifies the undoing of the scientific management and personnel management movements of early twentieth century” (Stone 2004, 72).

Even for relatively secure post-Fordist employees, patterns of movement within companies diverge from Fordist patterns. Formerly, personnel managers ensured (as unions also required) progressive wage levels based on orderly promotion for employees (i.e., career ladders) (Stone 2004, 62, 70). New positions were filled through the internal labour market. Youthful new employees who performed adequately had their careers more-or-less planned for them, with regular and successive advances in pay and responsibility (Stone 2004, 91). By contrast, post-Fordist careers, insofar as they exist, do not respect age or length of tenure. They are “not linear or hierarchical; they rarely proceed along well-defined paths to progressively higher levels of responsibility and income. Even those with similar levels of experience and in the ‘same job’ may be paid differently” (Stone 2004, 93).

Robert Reich, writing about some of the higher strata of post-Fordist work, amongst “symbolic analysts” (who we consider in detail in Chapter Six), reminds us that, at this level, employees “may take on vast responsibilities and command inordinate wealth at rather young ages. Correspondingly, they may lose authority and income if they are no longer able to innovate by building on their cumulative experience, even if they are quite senior” (Reich 1992, 178–79). This differential pay is enabled by ‘broadbanding,’ in which “jobs are defined by generalized competencies . . . rather than in a narrow job category,” allowing managers to assign workers to a wide range of tasks without formal reclassification (Reich 1992, 179). Firms utilize cross-functional teams that cut across departmental lines for many projects. In these and other ways, horizontal mobility has become ubiquitous in the transfer and deployments of personnel. In this system, those

with similar qualifications and history can be paid very unequally. Their individual contribution to company profit is the supposed standard (Stone 2004, 111–14). In theory, every employee, on his or her own, must repeatedly negotiate for pay and benefits.

The obvious and traditional way of maintaining the loyalty of employees was by ‘instrumental’ means, through job security and good pay packages. However, since these means are not usually available, new-type companies must still demonstrate, by some standard, that they treat workers ‘fairly.’ Unable to offer employment security and career ladder promotion, what form of ‘fairness’ can a company demonstrate? What reward is the good worker offered? As it turns out, the most that can be offered is the continued opportunity to work! In management literature, the reward for good work is another (or a next) position, which is called “employability security” (Stone 2004, 91, 111). In theory, workers valued by peers and team leaders leave completed projects with a good referral to an active project leader in the same or another company. Many such referrals are also procured during after-hours socializing—networking—which is a near-compulsory social practice of team workers. With the next project, the successful employee is then enabled to further expand his or her “skill-base,” or “develop their human capital” (Stone 2004, 111).

The renowned CEO of General Electric, Jack Welch, promoted the idea that workers should expect to have “boundaryless careers” which

... unfold unconstrained by clear boundaries around job activities, by fixed sequences of such activities, or by attachment to one organization.’ It is a career that does not depend upon traditional notions of advancement within a single hierarchical organization. It includes an employee who moves frequently across the borders of different firms; such as a Silicon Valley technician.... A boundaryless career also refers to career paths within an organization in which individuals are expected to move laterally without constraints from traditional job ladders or hierarchical career ladders. (Miner and Robinson 1994, 345-347)

The lack of security this implies creates a worker with a different kind of attention from those whose concerns were restricted to activities within the boundaries of the corporation that employed them. This requires a continuous scanning for new opportunities. Welch admitted this to be the case. “People’s emotional energy must be focused outwardly on a competitive world” (Ticher and Cahran 1989, 111).⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Cited in Stone 2004, 71

Surveillance and Social Monitoring

Not only are post-Fordist workers expected to exercise autonomy and responsibility, but they are also scrutinized as they do so. The license necessarily afforded semi-autonomous team-workers is complemented by corresponding surveillance practices. Surveillance occurs both interpersonally and technologically. For example, the opacity of team operations from the outside, coupled with their catechism of non-codified performance criteria, makes the peer-reviewing function and judgments (and referrals) by team leaders, all-important to team-members' careers. These functions are forms of interpersonal surveillance built into the work structure. These forms are intrinsically non-systematic and intimate and effectively subject a team-worker to on-going scrutiny.

There is also a great deal of technological surveillance. Liu notes that mainstream business magazines discuss this openly. "*Business Week* observed in an article published in 2000, for example, that firms have recently been motivated to boost their monitoring of employees because of concerns over trade secrets, worker productivity and legal liability (for 'sexually-explicit, racist, or other potentially offensive material'). Information technology is both the means and the object of such monitoring" (Liu 2004, 269). There is also ample use of cameras in workplaces, and electronic monitoring of keystrokes for those employees expected to be tied to their computers for the duration of their work periods (Liu 2004, 299). However, mathesization of performance extends across all levels and types of employment. "There is an increasing trend towards e-surveillance in the workplace.... Examples include the comparative application of performance information in fields as diverse as lawyer's billable hours, call centre operators' response times, surgeon's morbidity rate, and academic's research outputs" (Liu 2004, 299).

Passionate, Exhausting Work

The pleasure of passionate work is a different motivator of employees from those of the Fordist era. Before, unpleasant or even miserable work was tolerated for the reward of the paycheck and "the goods that wages circuitously permit buying" (Lordon, 2014, 44). Pleasures occurred around and in spite of work. In the post-Fordist world, by contrast, joy must be found in the activity of labour itself (Lordon, 2014, 44).

Passionate involvement of workers is assumed in the iconic and powerful high-technology companies such as Google, Inc. (Auletta 2009). Post-Fordism's new productive modes are supposedly exciting because they "allow more people to engage more meaningfully with—to bring their skills, talents, and passion to bear more fully upon—the productive process...; involving creativity, deep engagement, interactivity and interpersonal communications" (Fisher 2010, 7).

One view of this situation is that companies are now supposed to operate in a "pull" relationship with their employees as described in *The Power of Pull* (2010), by John Hagel III, John Seely Brown, and Lang Da-

vision.⁶¹ According to the authors, *Pull* does not refer to *pulling employees* along towards a company goal, but the reverse. The company now seeks to find an alignment between the employee's passion and the company's goals so that the former, i.e., the employee, can be the engine of success. (This is in obvious contrast to the Fordist 'push' process.⁶²) The consulting company Kinsey defines pull as "the new strategy of complex and compulsory self-engagement" (Hartmann 2009, 179). The authors of *The Power of Pull* create a vision of organizations forming around personally-motivated people, or firms drawing in people with personal mandates parallel to the company's, once these latter have been identified.

Behind the thesis of "pull" is the assumption that the personal motivation of partner/employee motivates intensive work patterns that are exploited by the company, until paths diverge or energy wanes (Hagel, Brown and Davison 2010, 67–68). However, at least as commonly-stated as the "pull" thesis—where the alignment between employee and company is understood as essentially serendipitous and temporary—is the idea that workers must, in fact, actively realign their interests with the corporations.'

For example, this principle is openly promoted at Google through the discourse around the SIY program. In most worksites, mindfulness meditation, or its more scientifically-validated version, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MSBR), is offered as a mode of worker regeneration. However, the SIY program at Google has added a different function to MSBR. Chade-Meng, SIY's developer, clarified that its purpose is to help employees find their passion in company goals (Cruz 2016, 69). Chade-Meng specifically rejects "regeneration" as a proper pursuit for the high achievers at Google. Instead he suggests mindfulness as a means for workers to identify what type of job would best suit their values and preferences. "If life lacks meaning, pulling back is not the solution. Rather, advancing further into commitment is" (Cruz 2016, 52). Google executives Eric Schmidt and Jonathan Rosenberg (2014, 13)⁶³ reinforce this judgement. They "recognize the potential for workers to suffer from burnout, [but] insist that this occurs not because of overwork but rather due to 'a mismatch between people and their jobs.'"

⁶¹ This book is a popularly-addressed explication and promotion of post-Fordist organizational forms, typical of its genre, in which features of the post-Fordist work-world are presented as only partially *realized*, still *to be developed*. The form includes outlining a "trend" in business forms or practice that supposed cannot be resisted by other managers, while at the same time urging readers (i.e., managers) to stop trying to resist it, for the good of their companies. The literature is a cross between prognostication and promotion. This common thread indicates that post-Fordism as a regime is unevenly distributed or actually inchoate.

⁶² "The people participating in push programs are generally treated as instruments to ensure that activities are performed as dictated. Their own individual needs and interests are purely secondary, if relevant at all.... *Push* programs lead to a curious combination of boredom and stress among participants." (Hagel, Brown and Davison 2010, 36)

⁶³ Cited in Cruz 2016, 52

Workers are expected to “love their work,” to value it intrinsically, not just for the income it offers. According to McKinlay and Taylor (1998 173)⁶⁴: “Macro-level surveys have registered the emergence of a new discourse of work: employment becomes membership, control is redefined as commitment, management transmutes into leadership. The new language of employment denies the very possibility of class conflict at work...the most sophisticated HR strategies are those which envisage workers as active participants in the construction and refinement of hegemonic factory regimes, complicit in their own subjugation.”

As Cruz (2016, 69) avers: “Here lies a fundamental contradiction of corporate mindfulness: traditional Buddhist mindfulness was about ridding oneself of attachments, yet SIY is designed to increase worker retention by aligning their values and desires with organizational objectives.”

Self-Entrepreneurship: Continuous Personal Branding

To employ those who might ‘pull along’ or align with the company, employers must identify them. This requirement points to the need for workers to create themselves as a ‘brand’ or celebrity, someone who literally has market presence. The proper cultivation of a public persona facilitates these matches. This means that the most marketable quality for a worker in this regime is not (theoretically) that they will do anything requested of them, but rather that they have some strong personal desire or commitment (to be or do something) that can be operationalized as a personal brand that guides accomplishments that the corporation desires. This in turn contributes to reputation and one’s differentiation from other potential employees.

Moreover, the networking this employee performs to make employment contacts necessitates having a ‘personality’ or persona that can stand out from others in the hurley-burley of parties, receptions, and electronic social networking sites, where contacts are made. As noted, one is expected to bring one’s persona, personal interests and special (i.e., personal, or tacit) knowledge—derived from interesting experiences—to work. At minimum, the requirement to create a brand of oneself constitutes significant unpaid labour expended in order to procure or keep a job. This adds an entirely different, and additional, obligation on workers as they go about “reproducing their labour power” (Marx, 1990).

Consequently, the work day does not end when the worksite is left (if the worker has such a site). The entrepreneurial worker has his or her attention on the next project during “off-work” time as well. There-

⁶⁴ Cited in Cruz 2016, 69

fore, “bringing work home” refers to workers who must utilize their personal spaces to do work because they are offered no alternatives, to those whose “work is never done” because they are on call at odd hours, and to those who must do the unpaid work of creating a persona or brand (or learning new skills), in addition to the hours they work for pay.

Bringing Home To Work

Bringing personal interests, relationships and commitments into the workplace is the converse process to bringing work into the home site. In fact, they are different sides of the same coin. Fundamentally, intensive work requires that workers substantially abandon their homes, if they do not work there, and spend their time at worksites. “Today’s employers want to colonize as much of their workers’ waking life as possible, particularly those in primarily creative professions” (Cruz 2016, 69). Employers accentuate this blurring by trying to imbue the workplace with features of social and domestic life. This includes characterizing work as “fun”—essential to making work feel like “home.” This idea is reinforced by the insistent informality of work relations, often spearheaded by corporate leaders through their dress and language (invoking a childlike demeanor) and choices of offices similar to those of other workers. To these rhetorical ploys are added play areas for workers.

Companies also offer services that in normal circumstance would be done informally in the home. “By providing access to perks and services previously relegated to the domestic or private sphere of social reproduction—childcare, intramural sports, leisure activities, wellness programs—management attempts not only to tie workers affectively to their employers, but also to normalize the conflation of work and leisure time” (Cruz 2016, 4). Certainly, there is no more time for uncommodified “women’s work,” whether performed by a male or female member of the family. As Peter Fleming (2009,75)⁶⁵ notes, “(e)ven though the ideology of a ‘frictionless capitalism’ has a good deal of popular currency, work is still generally considered formally troubling by many, involving a ‘lack of life’ that the corporation seeks to suture and exploit by co-opting the external and internal commons to provide a *life of sorts*” (emphasis in original).

The outcomes of this attempt to link joy and work are, needless to say, complex and contradictory. Of course, the pretext of ‘fun’ convinces workers to maintain the long hours companies want from them. “No more coffee breaks; let’s have refreshments at team sessions instead,” Liu imagines leaders saying (Liu 2004, 299). Yet Gill and Pratt tell us that, despite “all the affective features of cultural labour that do not involve affirmative feelings...; for example, the fatigue, exhaustion and frustration that are well docu-

⁶⁵ Cited in Cruz 2016, 4

mented in studies of cultural work... [o]ne of the most consistent findings of research on work within the creative industries is that it is experienced by most who are involved with it as profoundly satisfying and intensely pleasurable (at least some of the time). [Accordingly,] we might dub this kind of labour ‘passionate work’” (Gill and Pratt 2008, 15). Fisher quotes von Osten (2007) that the “vocabulary of love is repeatedly evinced in such studies, with work imbued with the features of the Romantic tradition of the artist suffused with positive emotional qualities” (Fisher 2010, 15).

However, many observers recognize that in these work settings, “joy” may be replaced by exhaustion, since much of the work is done under time pressure and long or extremely long work days can be deemed normal conditions. “Burn-out,” often entailing enforced periods of rest (aka, unemployment), is commonly encountered. Thus, working conditions are popularly deemed “bulimic,” indicative of the “binging and purging” of extreme dieters (Wittel 2001). These negative forms of affect at work “are not incidental features of the experience of cultural labour; they are toxic, individualized but thoroughly structural features of the workplaces that include television production companies, fashion and web design houses, and (not least) the neoliberal university” (Gill and Pratt 2008, 16). This system is so accepted that overworked employees (SAs) who quit sustained employment in order to recover (at their own expense) from the intensive work, can be repetitively readmitted, once they have finished their periods of rest (Conversation with intermittent Pepsi Inc. marketing worker, 2013).

The need to get the next referral so that one can continue working after the current project produces continuous anxiety (and divided attention). “You are only as good as your last job!” is the chant that quietly echoes through these workspaces. In this vein, Gill and Pratt remind us that the positive representation of affect at work [i.e., feelings of “excitement” and “fun”] “misses, also, the fears (of getting left behind, of not finding work), the competitiveness, the experience of socializing not simply as pleasurable potential, but as a compulsory means of securing future work. Above all, it misses the anxiety, insecurity, and individualized shame that are endemic features of fields in which you are judged on what you produce[;] your whole life and sense of self is bound up with your work” (Gill and Pratt 2008, 16).

Conclusion: The Post-Fordist Package

After a discussion of theories of causality, and establishing the history of post-Fordism’s development and the character of post-Fordist work in this chapter, I move on, in the next, to distinguishing the types of post-Fordist workers and the relationships amongst them. I also provide contesting scholarly opinion as to how that breakdown should occur and pinpointed themes of particular significance within the debate on new work conditions in general. Additionally, I propose and justify the choice of symbolic analysts as a particular segment of the workforce I consider most relevant, useful and appropriate for understanding the

parallels between worker and neospiritual attitudes and behaviours that were listed in Chapter One, declaring them to be iconic post-Fordist workers. However, I note that the additional blurring, nuancing, and even confounding of the SA category provided by the dissenting scholars should not be forgotten, as these differing assessments, especially the operation of presumption and the possible hegemony of immaterial labour, helps us understand how a belief system grounded in work practices could diffuse beyond workplace boundaries. Beyond these processes, I also add specific hypotheses as to how the iconic workers, SAs, could be spearheading a diffusion of the neospiritual ethos amongst the general public.

Chapter Six: Types of Work and Iconic Workers

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I provided a brief history of the transition in Western nations from Fordist to post-Fordist economies, explaining their differences and elaborating on the key features of post-Fordist work. These are features that best reflect the broader economic changes. We will see below that one type of worker in this new economy most bears the brunt of these changes: the symbolic analyst (SA). The SA category groups together many professions of the former Fordist middle class, including technical and business experts, professionals and artists. At the same time, it drops some traditionally middle class types, such as many middle managers. SAs have social status because they are the more highly-skilled members of the post-Fordist workforce. However, many work under conditions very different from those who did the high-skilled work of Fordism—particularly in terms of the commonly short-duration of tenure at those jobs. They may well be “precarious” workers, moving from contract to contract. In this chapter I explore features of their work in more depth.

Although I explained earlier that the workforce is composed of many types of work-forms—Harvey calls post-Fordism “flexible” capitalism partly because production and work-forms vary so much—the one that is most different from Fordist work in general is the SA form. I therefore define the SA model as predictive of trends in employment, and call SA iconic of post-Fordist labour in general. As this dissertation is concerned with the existence and nature of the complementarity of neospirituality and new work patterns (which, as a whole, SA jobs represent) I restrict my focus vis a vis this comparison to neospirituality and SA work.

The primary distinction between SA work and the other types is the high level of autonomy allowed in its performance, reflecting the fact that SAs are a distillate of the Fordist middle and professional (upper-middle) classes. Due to the flat nature of post-Fordist companies, symbolic analysts tend to share the day-to-day management of operations with co-workers. This level of autonomy is felt to be necessary because of symbolic-analysts’ strategic role in propelling company profits. They are the designated innovators in an economic system that heavily relies on such action. SAs are expected to continually invent and operationalize the marketing of new commodities or services that respond to perceived needs. Global competition in providing these commodities and services, in the context of technological change that activates new possibilities for them, promotes continual redefinition of the needs that can be satisfied through the market. However, as needs are frequently redefined, so is team composition in many workplaces. Though team-members have considerable autonomy at their jobs, team-participation may be obligatory,

and job tenure short. Indeed, the prevalence of teamwork on short-term projects most decisively distinguishes the iconic new working conditions from the older Fordist form.

In order to understand SA work better, I begin by placing symbolic analytic work in the context of the entire post-Fordist workforce, identifying the main types of workers that compose it. The discussion relies on the foundational assessment by American sociologist and labour economist, Robert Reich (1992). Reich's typology includes three categories of worker: routine, service and symbolic-analytic (Reich 1992, 171-184). Other scholars of labour whose work I consult in this chapter add complicating analyses to the work landscape provided by Reich. For nuances and qualifications of Reich's typology, I focus particularly on the contributions of autonomous Marxist⁶⁶ scholars, chiefly Maurizio Lazzarato (1996, 2000) and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000). An important corrective to Reich is their emphasis on the high levels of intuition and affective skills, in addition to analytical abilities, required of SAs. Challenging Reich, they assert that these emotional skills are as important for SAs as they are for service workers. Additionally, other theorists of affect discussed show that media workers, a subset of symbolic analysts, are purveyors of feeling perhaps more than they are presenters of data or even of images, the conventional characterization of their work by communications scholars.

Hardt and Negri also partly challenge Reich's (and hence, my) schema through their claim that the iconic post-Fordist work-type is indeed much broader than SA work; rather, it is "immaterial labour." This category includes under one umbrella workers that Reich had separated. Hardt and Negri argue that the attitudes and skills needed to do immaterial labour extend into types of work from which Reich would exclude them, as well as beyond formal workplaces in general. They argue that immaterial labour is generalized across post-Fordist society. This latter part of their extension seems to refer to the process of prosumption, that "amateurs" use essentially the same tools (for consumption and entertainment) and therefore have a similar orientation to life as workers. Hardt and Negri argue that immaterial labour's values are *hegemonic* across the entirety of post-Fordist-industrialized nations. Although their claim of a pan-societal immaterial

⁶⁶ The 'Autonomous' tradition of Marxism, elaborated first in the 1970s, in Italy, seeks a new way of conceptualizing 'the revolutionary subject,' in the face of the apparent failure of traditional Marxian class dynamics which would have seen the blue-collar 'working class' oppose capitalism. Fordist post-war arrangements, and the expansion of the entertainment and media industries, together made it comfortable with capitalism and to seem unlikely to fill that role. In a violation of classical Marxism, the Autonomists imagined a revolutionary subject who could 'make himself,' lacking the spur of the traditional class dynamics, on which Marx claimed the revolutionary was dependent for his form of consciousness. Hence, the new revolutionary could, as they theorized, be 'autonomous.' *Immaterial labour* is the concept from which Hardt and Negri develop the idea of a new (potentially-revolutionary) polity that spans class. This expansive group they call "the multitude."

labour is not verified in this dissertation, its possibility must be considered in an exploration of the relation of work culture to neospirituality. Hardt and Negri's modification of Reich's vision suggests that if a spiritual attitude emerges from SA work (my thesis question), its broad diffusion follows as a matter of course.

As I have indicated in an earlier chapter, attempts to categorize the post-Fordist labour force are contradictory and subject to revision. For several reasons, the symbolic-analyst is an ambiguous class. For one, their class-status is affected because they are differentially-remunerated and work under varying degrees of insecurity. Additionally, whole tranches of their work have been, and will continue to be in the future, eliminated or severely reduced through automation. As one example, the graphic arts workforce generally shrank in the last century as computer-based drafting, design, animation and illustration reduced the number of such workers required by various industries. Meanwhile, those in a "substitute" profession, web-site designers, compete for income with a large population of similarly-skilled amateurs. In short, for SA workers, large differences in remuneration patterns and working conditions, and lack of career stability due to continual recomposition of work skills rewarded within the SA class, make the SA classification ambiguous. These provisos and difficulties only complicate the objective of positing a culture for this type of worker. Nevertheless, the effort is made, below.

The extent to which symbolic-analytical work is truly broadly diffused outside formal employment environments, as per Hardt and Negri's characterization of immaterial labour (and its significance, if so) has yet to be determined. However, even if their theory were to be invalidated, this would not effect my identification of symbolic analytical work as iconic for post-Fordism. Nor, indeed, would it discredit the idea that symbolic-analyst values influence popular culture merely on the basis of these workers' social status and the types of work they do.

Robert Reich's Work Types

The previous chapter outlined how the employment landscape for Western workforces changed since the 1960s as a result of the transition to post-Fordism. The general redirection of productive activity away from industrial to information, communication and service, or *immaterial* production, brought about a number of changes in the conditions and practices of all work in the post-Fordist economy. However, post-Fordist jobs are obviously not all of the same kind, and represent *several* new modalities of employment. As noted, Reich's taxonomy of worker-types includes routine workers, personal-service workers, and symbolic-analysts. In Reich's view, members of each of these groups enjoyed different future prospects. While 'symbolic analysts' were in a 'rising boat,' the 'routine workers' boat was sinking, and the prospects for the third group, personal service workers, was unclear. Below, I consider each of these categories of workers in reverse order to their power in the marketplace.

Routine Work

Reich claims that routine producers do “the kinds of repetitive tasks performed by the old foot soldiers of American capitalism in the high-volume enterprise” (Reich 1992, 174). This category includes traditional assembly-line workers. In general, the material they worked on was correlated with gender, race and ethnicity: men worked on metal; women (especially black and Hispanic females), on fabric, circuit-boards and information. Supervisors for all were normally white males (Reich 1992, 175-76).

The low and mid-level managers who monitor routine workers also do routine work, “involving repetitive checks on subordinates’ work and the enforcement of standard operating procedures” (Reich 1992, 213). In an update of the old factory labour story, the term “routine workers” includes as well the vast cadre of records or data-processors required of the post-Fordist economy, “stationed in ‘back offices’ at computer terminals linked to world-wide information banks,” also following standard procedures and codified rules. “[E]ven their overseers are overseen, in turn, by people who routinely monitor—often with the aid of computers—how much they do and how accurately they do it.” The cardinal virtues of all are “reliability, loyalty and the capacity to take direction” (Reich 1992, 175). In this category, Reich also includes some traditional professionals (such as real estate lawyers) who largely repeat familiar tasks during their work-days (Reich 1992, 180). Overall, claimed Reich in 1992, these types of jobs comprised about one quarter of those in the US, but that percentage was declining (Reich 1992, 175). However, when he wrote this book, Reich may have underestimated the extent to which jobs could be automated. Many of the most creative workers at the inception of the post-Fordist era, early symbolic analysts, have seen their work routinized, as software applications that could do their jobs emerged.

In-Person Service

In-person service work is the second of Reich’s categories. This work is also simple and repetitive. However, “in-person servers are in direct contact with the ultimate beneficiaries of their work: their immediate objects are specific customers rather than streams of metal, fabric or data” (Reich 1992, 176). In-person service work is highly varied in its content. Included in this category are “retail sales workers, waiters and waitresses, hotel workers, janitors, cashiers, hospital attendants and orderlies, nursing-home aides, child-care workers, house cleaners, home health-care aides, taxi drivers, secretaries, hairdressers, auto mechanics, sellers of residential real estate, flight attendants, physical therapists and—among the fastest-growing [at the time]—security guards” (Reich 1992, 176).

Work at these jobs cannot be done at a distance—it must be performed in person. Therefore, these jobs are not exportable, as is routine work. This protects them from wage deflation due to global competition. Reich is unsure of the prospects for those doing this work, but notes that for many of them their fortunes are tied to

the material conditions of the third category of worker, the symbolic analysts, who mostly employ them. Besides application to routine tasks, service jobs require good ‘affect skills.’ Service workers have to create emotionally soothing spaces for the served. “They must smile and exude confidence and good cheer.... They must be courteous and helpful, even to the most obnoxious of patrons. Above all, they must make others feel happy and at ease” (Reich 1992, 176). Though such work has traditionally been done by women, it has now become generalized.

Predominantly, service work has been framed as ‘women’s work,’ and Reich’s personal service workers clearly do ‘affect labour’ in that traditional sense. Since the 1970s, American feminist scholars have explored these “gendered forms of labor that involve the affects in a central way, such as emotional labor, care, kin work, or maternal work, both in the waged and unwaged economies” (Clough and Halley 2007, xi). As this work was progressively pulled into the waged economy (and divested of its exclusively feminine purveyors), the language of critical analysis was applied, such as from Elizabeth Wissinger (2007, 234). She explains that “the affective economy is one in which the human body and its pre-individual capacities are made the site of capital investment for the realization of profit[;] as socialization, therapeutic interaction, cooking, cleaning, child care, health care and the like have increasingly been pulled into the domain of capital.” We will return to the topic of affect as a product later in this chapter. In the meantime, we can discuss it in this simple sense of the comfort provided by service workers.

Reich explains that, due to the privatization and commodification of social and personal needs that is a feature of post-Fordism, in-person services expanded greatly after 1980. A decade later the number of new jobs in fast-food outlets, bars and restaurants alone exceeded three million, more than the total number of routine production jobs in automobile, steelmaking and textile industries combined. In 1990, about one-third of the American population did in-person service work, with numbers expected to grow from there (Reich 1992, 177).

As noted, the *future* of personal service workers is strongly tied to the fortunes of the wealthier members of their community—often from the class that has seen its fortunes rise with post-Fordism. Wherever there are geographical concentrations of these busy, sometimes-rich, mostly symbolic-analyst consumers, almost anything that would have been done personally or informally by family members or friends (or not at all) in the Fordist world can now be bought as a service. This trajectory towards commodification of services has, in extreme cases, introduced ethical and legal dilemmas not faced in the past. Globalization and wealth

inequality have led to grotesque forms of exploitation such as the sale of personal body organs by the poor and surrogate parenting for money. Flourishing pockets of (clandestine) slavery in rich countries is another example.⁶⁷

Symbolic-Analytical Work

Here we come to the category of worker that focusses this dissertation. This is Reich's *third* employment category—the symbolic analysts. As he contends, these workers are in a 'rising boat.' Their work "drives the service sector at the top of the information economy" (Hardt and Negri 2000, 293). SAs do "problem-solving, problem identifying and strategic brokering activities" (Hardt and Negri 2000, 291). As distribution of their products is generally not geographically restricted, they are in global competition with others. However, because each of these workers is in theory uniquely-skilled, they are not in *direct* competition with each other as are routine workers. Their outputs "do not enter world commerce as standardized things. Traded instead are [manipulations of] symbols—data, words, oral and visual representations" (Reich 1992, 177). When he wrote his text, Reich expected that SAs high skill-levels and relative rarity across the globe would allow them to more-than-maintain their pay levels. As noted above, this has since been the subject of debate in terms of the continued deskilling and accelerating insecurity of many forms of work, with that of symbolic-analysts being most dramatic (Barley and Kunda 2004; Keen 2007; de Peuter 2010; Huws 2003).

Symbolic analysts are well-educated, and "the vast majority are white males" (Reich 1992, 179). In 1990, no more than 20 percent of American workers had such jobs, but this number was a significant rise from the numbers of a comparable class in the 1950s, when only 8 percent of workers were (that era's version of) symbolic analysts (Reich 1992, 179-180). These fit the statistical category of "professional and technical workers" in the old employment datasets. Nevertheless, Reich notes that the pace of SA employment growth slowed greatly in the 1980s (except for certain professions, including investment banking) (1992, 180).

⁶⁷ In Waldie, Paul, "Women held in servitude under intense 'emotional control,'" *The Globe and Mail*. Sat Nov 23, 2014, p. A19, the author writes: "Figures on slavery and human trafficking are unreliable because so few cases are reported. A recent British government report put the number of cases in the UK at about 2,200 in 2012, up 9 per cent from 2011. The majority—71 per cent—were adults. A global slavery index developed by Australia's Walk Free foundation estimated that nearly 30 million people live in slavery worldwide. That included about 4,400 cases in Britain and about 5,800 cases in Canada.

Karlee-Anne Sapoznik, co-founder of Toronto-based Alliance Against Modern Slavery, said the Canadian figure is probably much higher because of under reporting... Many of those cases involved are aboriginal girls and women, she said."

In Reich's view, researchers make a big mistake by equating the "professional and technical" employment classification of the past with the SA category of today, as they persist in doing. "Such categories are no longer very helpful for determining what a person does on the job and how much that person is likely to earn for doing it" (1992, 182). There is an alignment of the worker and the knowledge they consult in each era, and the most notable difference between the two groups is their differing understanding and use of "knowledge."

Reich (1992, 180) assures us that the traditional way of classifying workers, including technical and professional workers, "dates from an era in which most jobs were as standardized as the products they helped create." The knowledge these workers applied in their jobs was also similarly standardized. A traditional professional is accredited on the basis of tested knowledge on a specialized subject area, which is applied to different types of situations or problems. "That knowledge existed in advance, ready to be mastered. Once the novice had dutifully absorbed the knowledge and had passed an examination attesting to its absorption, *professional status* was automatically conferred—usually through a ceremony of appropriately medieval pageantry and costume" (Reich 1992, 182). Their stable knowledge base was fundamental to their employability and authority.

However, the status of knowledge changes greatly as the needs of symbolic analysts in a post-Fordist economy replace those of professionals. The team format of symbolic analytical work requires that its members be *non-specialists*—ready to do anything necessary "to ship project deliverables." The speed of production and the innovative nature of SA work dictate against several things: firstly, insisting on one's authority amongst team members based on special expertise and secondly, relying on only one such body of expertise for ideas and the verification of business strategies. The revamped authority of SA workers is based on the ability to access and deploy relevant knowledge from a number of sources to manage a swiftly-changing business environment.

In theory, where new products continually emerge in the marketplace, conventional market and technical knowledge is repeatedly rendered as invalid. "Textbook" arguments are only moderately persuasive to team-members looking for guidance. Where commodities are informational and partially a function of technological development, their very use transforms the base conditions for the next innovation. Planners of product development can rarely proceed according to a linear calculation based on what happened yesterday. This creates a situation of barely-controlled chaos, which SAs must constantly seek to understand through their individual or collective "sensing."

[I]n the new economy—replete with unidentified problems, unknown solutions, and untried means of putting them together—mastery of old domains of knowledge isn't nearly enough to guarantee a good income.

Nor, importantly, is it even necessary. Symbolic analysts often can draw upon established bodies of knowledge with the flick of a computer key.... What is more valuable is the capacity to effectively and creatively use the knowledge (Reich 1992, 182).

Team-members are expected to share their knowledge. The “worldly,” experiential, or “tacit” knowledge of other team-members is as valued as their formal knowledge. “Since neither problems nor solutions can be defined in advance, frequent and informal conversations help ensure that insights and discoveries are put to their best uses and subjected to quick, critical evaluation” (Reich 1992, 179). Coworkers consult each other to verify their orientation and broad understanding of what they have heard, read, intuited, or “mined” from a database.

SAs “manipulate” the sensory material, ideas and data they have available to them. The tools they use could be “mathematical algorithms, legal arguments, financial gimmicks, scientific principles, psychological insights about how to persuade or to amuse, systems of induction or deduction, or any other set of techniques for doing conceptual puzzles... When not conversing with their teammates, symbolic analysts sit before computer terminals—examining works and numbers, moving them, altering them, trying out new words and numbers, formulating and testing hypotheses, designing or strategizing” (Reich 1992, 178-179).

The purposes of such manipulations could be

... to more efficiently deploy resources or shift financial assets, or otherwise save time and energy[; to] yield new inventions—technological marvels, innovative legal arguments, new advertising ploys for convincing people that certain amusements have become life necessities[; with] other manipulations—of sounds, words, pictures—... to entertain their recipients, or cause them to reflect more deeply on their lives or on the human condition[, or to] grab money from people too slow or naïve to protect themselves, by manipulating them in response (Reich 1992, 178).

The demands on good SAs go well beyond the brief of “problem-solving.” In fact, they frequently have to first invent the problem that they, then, must solve. Indeed, “discovering a new problem” is Reich’s language for “identifying a new market,” which means “finding that a specific problem exists which consumers are eager to remedy”—or creating one (Reich 1992, 106). The progression from problem-definition to solution is very slow at first, because defining the project while negotiating with employers and contractors is “by far the most absorbing and time-consuming element.... Final production is often the easiest part. The bulk of time and cost (and, thus, of real value) comes in conceptualizing the problem, devising a solution, and planning its execution” (Reich 1992, 106). This work often involves iterative consultation with others as well as private exploration using the knowledge sets, apps or other tool of the trade identified. Analysts who concentrate on this are in the highest pay-bracket (Reich 1992, 104).

Naturally, good communications and liaising skills figure prominently during these preliminaries. Referring to higher-level employees, Reich explains that “SAs spend long hours in meetings or on the telephone, and even longer hours in jet planes and hotels—advising, making presentations, giving briefings, doing deals. Periodically, they issue reports, plans, designs, drafts, memoranda, layouts, renderings, scripts, or projections—which, in turn, precipitate more meetings to clarify what has been proposed and to get agreement on how it will be implemented, by whom, and for how much money” (Reich 1992, 179). The reward system for this work is very different from how most professionals earned their livings in Fordist times. SAs are rewarded not for hours worked, but for “the quality, originality, cleverness and, occasionally, *speed* with which they solve, identify or broker new problems” (Reich 1992, 178).

As a result of their high-level, but generalized skill-sets, symbolic analysts have progressively won a larger share of the over-all returns of 20th-century capitalism. “In 1920, more than 85 percent of the cost of an automobile went to pay routine laborers and investors. By 1990, these two groups received less than 60 percent, with the remainder going to designers, engineers, stylists, planners, strategists, financial specialists, executive officers, lawyers, advertisers, marketers and the like. As an example, of the price of a semiconductor chip, “[m]ore than 85 percent is for specialized design and engineering services and for patents and copyrights on past discoveries made in the course of providing such services” (Reich 1992, 178).⁶⁸

As it discredits the authority of narrowly-defined knowledge bases, the demands of SA work also confound the Fordist distinction between creative and technical approaches to problems. This is why Reich is able to group, in one broad symbolic-analyst employment category,

... research scientists, design engineers, software engineers, civil engineers, biotechnology engineers, sound engineers, public relations executives, investment bankers, lawyers, real estate developers and even a few creative accountants. Also included is much of the work done by management consultants, financial consultants, tax consultants, energy consultants, agricultural consultants, armaments consultants, architectural consultants, management information specialist, organizational development specialists, strategic planners, corporate headhunters, and systems analysts. Also advertising executives, and marketing strategists, art directors, architects, cinematographers, film editors, production designers,

⁶⁸ See also Hagel, Brown and Davison (2010, 48-49): “Declining ROA [company return on investment], even as labour productivity rises, suggest that firms are unable to hold onto the financial benefits created by steady gains in labour productivity. Who is capturing the rewards themselves? Our metric suggests that creative talent is one beneficiary—for example, computer engineers, health-care professionals, architects and managers, whose total compensation has more than doubled during the past five years.”

publishers, writers and editors, journalists, musicians, television and film producers, and even university professors (Reich 1992, 177-78).

Clustering investment bankers and systems analysts with cinematographers (i.e., analytical with creative workers), is not as anomalous as tradition would suggest. Brian Holmes makes sense of it by building on Jameson's (1991) and Harvey's (1989), accounting for the post-modern worldview as a function of cultural commodification. Digitization and the network business model now allow for the commercialization of 'art production and exchange.' Creative abilities can be integrated into the economic machine. "Cultural expressions, recoded and processed as multimedia, can enter the value-added loop of digitized communications" (Holmes 2002, 8).

Complicating Reich's Typology

As compelling as it is, Reich's typology has certainly not been the last word on post-Fordist workforce restructuring, and indeed may miss some important aspects of this process illuminated by more recent work on the topic. In order to scrutinize and supplement Reich's model, I provide below the partially-dissenting views of a number of other scholars. This dissent illustrates that debate continues about the nature of new working conditions, which at minimum must nuance what we have learned about post-Fordist labour through Reich.

Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt (2008) narrow down Reich's SA category. They focus on the *creative worker* segment of symbolic analysts as exemplars of the new labourer. The authors explain that they have won their status based on a dubious distinction, their persistent insecurity and often, poverty. "They are... conjured... as exemplars of the move away from stable notions of 'careers' to more informal, insecure, and discontinuous employment (Jones, 1996), [and] are said to be the iconic representatives of the 'brave new world of work'" (Gill and Pratt 2008, 2). On the other hand, being members of the "creative class" (Florida 2002) makes them a population sought-after by planners; they attract their better-paid, mobile, confreres to particular cities and neighbourhoods, who hope to be entertained and culturally stimulated by them. Because of their potential boost to economies, industry and government figures worldwide try to promote their activities, as sources of "cultural capital." Despite their often straitened circumstances, they are deemed important to the composition of a neighbourhood and an economy. As consultant Richard Florida's advice to numerous municipal planners makes clear, much is expected of attracting these workers to their cities (Florida 2002). "Creative workers and cultural or creative industries more generally are imbued with an

extraordinary range of capacities, which relate to wealth creation, urban regeneration and social cohesion” (Gill and Pratt 2008, 13). They are also valued for being “model entrepreneurs.”⁶⁹

Whereas Gill and Pratt shrink it, Brian Holmes expands Reich’s category, by combining with creative work, employment in services provision, including counseling, therapy, and education (Holmes 2002, 9-10). Finally, as noted earlier, the autonomist scholars also productively complicate Reich’s typology. They situate symbolic analysis within a much broader category they call “immaterial labour,” which they claim includes almost all contemporary workers. Thus, their schema stresses the broad category of immaterial labour over sub-categories. Immaterial labour is such an inclusive class that it really amounts to a descriptor of skills-and-culture-in-general in post-Fordism. To put this differently, Hardt and Negri emphasize common experiences and skills that unite workers in Reich’s categories, rather than focussing on what distinguishes them from each other. However, they do sub-divide immaterial labour into three sub-categories. The first is industrial production, but changed through its “informationalization” via robotics; the second is SA work; and the third is work involving the “production and manipulation of affect;” the generation of a sense of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement or passion (Hardt and Negri 2000, 289-94).

Along with SA work, then, immaterial labour includes all kinds of creative and much personal service work. Therefore, with this consolidation, emphasis is on the common subjectivity of post-Fordist workers rather than the clustered distribution of particular skill-sets. All require the same raft of core competencies to different degrees, such that most jobs train or condition workers in a similar way. Lazzarato claims that for almost all post-Fordist workers, social and communications (i.e., affect) skills are added to technical or analytical skills as prerequisites for effective performance. It is this broad diffusion that allows the inclusive

⁶⁹ Gill and Pratt (2008, 13-14) elaborate: “Here our emphasis is on the claims that artists and creative workers are model entrepreneurs, the ideal workers of the future. In recent years, a number of qualitative and ethnographic studies have examined the lives of artists, fashion designers, television creatives and new media workers, and this research has raised critical questions about the much-vaunted flexibility, autonomy and informality of these domains. A clear and largely consistent picture of creative labour [emerges,]...particularly micro-business in the cultural industries—what Ulrich Beck (2000) refers to as “Me and Company,” Leadbetter and Oakley (1999) dub ‘the independents,’ and Ross (2003) explores as the ‘industrialization of Bohemia.’ Studies highlight a number of relatively stable features of this kind of work: a preponderance of temporary, intermittent and precarious jobs; long hours and bulimic patterns of working; the collapse or erasures of boundaries between work and play; poor pay; high levels of mobility; passionate attachment to the work and to the identity of creative labourer; an attitudinal mindset that is a blend of bohemianism and entrepreneurialism; informal work environments and distinctive forms of sociality; and profound experiences of insecurity and anxiety about finding work, earning enough money and ‘keeping up’ in rapidly changing fields.”

category immaterial labourer to be applied to most of those who work at the centres of the information society globally.

However, the category also includes non-workers in the ever-expanding post-Fordist milieu. Many of these have adopted the tools of the iconic workers, particularly electronic devices for core communications and many social activities. Prosumption dictates that consumers, too, have learned the skills and adopted values similar to workers. Accordingly, these scholars hold the “immaterial labourer” mindset to be “hegemonic.” Lazarrato claims that immaterial labour occupies “a strategic position... at a wider level..., in cognitively and affectively shap[ing] subjectivities throughout and for other parts of the economic system” (de Peuter 2010, 21).

Inevitably, criticism has been levelled at the concept of “immaterial labour” because of this very comprehensiveness. Gill and Pratt (2008, 19) assert that grouping personal service and mediated communications is a strategy that “lacks conceptual coherence and ends up collapsing entirely different kinds of work and experience.” For example, it conflates “within a single category the very different conditions of say, a network system administrator, a latte-serving *barista* and a sex-worker” (Dyer-Witheford 1999, 98). Scholars of women’s and “global-south” labour complain that “routine work” is buried through this intellectual formulation. Routine work represents the common experience of female workers in general and almost all workers in the global south. Moreover the interests of routine workers and SAs are not the same. The SA work of (mostly) northern white males is made possible by the drudgery of others. Mass-producers *support* their activities. “Post-Fordism actually displays a bifurcating occupational structure, in which only one part corresponds to the ideal portrait of the technological adept ‘knowledge worker,’ while the other is constituted by a mass of low-end, poorly-paid, insecure, service workers[:] the postindustrial sector of janitors, fast-food operatives, and data-entry clerks” (Dyer-Witheford 2005, 147). Furthermore, even *within* the cadres of elite workers, in high-technology development (Barley and Kunda 1992), and financial services (Ho 2009), women and people of colour are discriminated against. They may be absorbed into these categories, but they experience them differently.

Adequacy of Reich’s Typology

As with any typology, Reich’s categories are not sacrosanct. However, the alternatives I discussed above can also be debated. Scholars fairly object to the comprehensiveness of Hardt and Negri’s and Lazarrato’s category of immaterial labour and its implication that people with very different work skills, experiences and degrees of power can be meaningfully grouped through it.

With these and other objections to the alternative typologies in mind, then, I conclude that Reich’s analysis proves to be more useful than the other contributions. Reich’s typology has the advantage of being rela-

tively simple, and his types clearly delineated. The SA is an appropriate choice for “the iconic post-Fordist worker,” whose working conditions and beliefs, as compared to neospirituality, are represented in the tables in Chapter One. In addition to the clarity of the category, the SA type explicitly amalgamates analytical and creative skill-sets in one worker, which is surely a key change from Fordism. This, in turn, puts prime emphasis on teamwork. Allan Liu (2004, 53), for one, considers this a pivotal feature of post-Fordist work organization: “Once team culture is in place..., all of the rest of downsizing culture follows: smart work, flexible competence, flat management and so on.”

Reich’s analysis also leaves space for the class-conflict analysis that Dyer-Witheford suggested above. My larger analysis of the relationships between neospirituality and new work requires acknowledging these class dynamics. Furthermore, despite stated objections to the idea that neospiritual practitioners are middle class in an era where the class has lost its traditional shape, the suggestion is surely approximately true. This makes their comparison to SAs, who are also only roughly in that category, a reasonable strategy.

However, the degree to which the skills and values associated with immaterial labour may be diffused beyond workplaces, still an open question, is provocative for the conclusion of this dissertation. If new work forms drive workers’ religious sentiments towards New Age spirituality, the possibility that an entire population *acts like* and *believes with* these focal workers has powerful implications for neospirituality’s diffusion. I will further consider this point at the conclusion of this dissertation. Below, I add other arguments as to why, in terms of processes (which include, but go beyond, hegemony), SAs might influence a larger population to adopt NAS commitments.

Iconic Workers can Disseminate Values

Below, I also consider ways that the specific social situation and work-forms of SAs may affect how influential they are for the general values of whole populations. Including the iconic status of SA work, these arguments are fivefold: the work of SAs allows them to communicate their values implicitly; SAs are in an important industry, and that status makes them admired, and so, influential; SAs skills are diffused through general consumption (i.e., prosumption); SAs have the motivation and capacity to promote themselves/their industry. These arguments, in more detail, are:

- Based on the nature of their work, SAs are influential. They have ready-built audiences, since they communicate to the public as an integral element of their work. They can implicitly disseminate their attitudes and values purely through this communications function, as Harvey reminded us about fashion’s valorization of work intensity as part of its product.

- Based on their social status, SAs are influential. The digital technology and media sectors, employing SA work in an essential way, have been major economic engines for much of the post-Fordist period (Hardt and Negri 2000, 291), particularly from 1996 to 2004 during ‘the building out’ of the internet (Phelps 2013, 219-221). Because their industry is a major driver of the economy, the people and jobs in those industries are a strong focus of media attention and popular attention? SAs model a certain kind of social actor whom others wish to emulate because they see SAs as influential and commanding social resources.
- Since it is iconic, SA work epitomizes post-Fordist work in general, and workplaces will be structured to accommodate their unique form of productivity. Other workplaces may not strictly require these forms, but they will mimic them anyway. If work form is a source of culture, then all workers will be forced to adopt the SA workplace culture.
- The skills and attitudes required to do SA work are substantially spread throughout the population—if we credit either a hegemonic process as posited by Hardt and Negri or the operation of prosumption (since, according to this theory, all those who *consume*, also *work* while doing so). The *hegemonic* character of information work and the operation of *prosumption* allow people to identify with SAs on the basis of their daily experiences with similar technologies and life-practices. The validity of the last point suggests that we can posit the symbolic-analytical mentality as having been shaped into a general worldview, which qualifies it for comparison to an equally-broadly-shaped worldview, that of neospirituality.
- Broadcasting values implicitly as part of the process of communication is *one* way to disseminate beliefs. Direct promotion is another. Because the industries they work in sell consumer items, are supported by public monies, and are reliant on favourable regulation, they need to maintain good public relations. Accordingly, SAs have an interest in presenting their products and industry as socially-valuable. Through successfully projecting a positive impression of their industry, they further motivate members of the general population to adopt their values.

To summarize, being an *iconic* worker means being representative of all workers in a particular economic regime. The term suggests that other work will be more or less like that of the iconic worker with respect to key characteristics. Values that derive from SA work will spread to other workers. However, the SA class of workers is critically placed and has the skills to *intentionally* as well as tacitly disseminate their understanding of the world. In a classical ideological gambit, as SAs aggrandized the importance of their tools and products, so they did the same with their careers and social positions. The rash of young communicators and software workers in early post-Fordist days did indeed discover that their interests were aligned with

the advancement of post-Fordism. In Chapter Eight, I show that an important spokesperson for the industry, *Wired* editor, philosopher and author, Kevin Kelly, actively developed a mystique around their work, and so produced value for their industry (Fisher 2010, 49-53). He did this partially through formulating a model of a worldview similar to the New Age's holism, the network cosmology.

An additional consideration from this chapter, as Dyer-Witheford implies, is that SAs are in at least partial alignment with the interests of post-Fordist capitalists. With this in mind, Brian Holmes (2002, 6) asks the pointed question: "Which social groups were integrated to the new hegemony of flexible capitalism, and how?" As an answer, he endorses the thesis of French scholars Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005) that employment in the early days of the computer industry became the vehicle for the social advancement of what they call the new *management cadre*. Although the SA cadre about which they write are the children of the French bourgeoisie, as their focus is on France, their analysis has been made more general by a number of scholarly efforts in the disciplines political-economy, communications and sociology. Different scholars label and theorize this group in different ways.⁷⁰

Types of Affect

Above, I presented the arguments for primarily referencing Reich's typology for our understanding of new workers. However, the emphasis on *affect* provided by other scholars is an innovation in the thinking about new work that Reich neglects somewhat. The theory is an important addition to Reich's type, and the topic requires more elaboration.

A recent compilation edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth (2010) provides *eight* different definitions of affect in its preface, which suggests considerable ambiguity around the concept. On the other hand, Lazzarato (1996) is very specific, representing the enhanced requirement for affect skills in contemporary workers as an element of the communications skills workers need to self-manage. From this multifaceted landscape, I restrict the discussion of 'affect labour' to three senses: the communications skills exercised for the purpose of self- and group-management, the efforts that produce good feelings in the clients of personal service workers, and the evocation of enlivening energy. We can pass lightly over the first of these in this section, as it has been discussed in terms of SA skills. Similarly, the affect provoked by personal service is not, basically, problematic. Therefore, the main purpose of this section is to define and consider the validity of the other form of affect listed above, 'enlivening energy.'

⁷⁰ For examples: Kroker and Weinstein (2001) call it "the virtual class;" Ursula Huws (2003), "the Cybertariat;" Alvin Gouldner, "the New Class;" and Daniel Bell (1976), "the cultural mass."

Broadly speaking, characterizing post-Fordists as affect workers emphasizes the importance of social skills and the ability to manage feelings as key requirements of most work, from service to media work, to analysis. SAs, for example, need to maintain an intensive work-life schedule while constantly casting about for new ideas, exchanging information with fellow employees, working their network contacts, negotiating with others, etc. This involves demonstrating active intelligence and good ‘people skills.’

Reich certainly implies that these skills are important for SAs, especially as he groups “creative” with technical workers and foregrounds the negotiation and team processes that SAs participate in. However, he does not question the nature of these skills in any way. Lazzarato (1996), Hardt and Negri (2000), other autonomist Marxist scholars, and some sociologists and critical psychologists do so. Among the latter are Brown 2003, McRobbie 2007a, 2007b, Nicholas Rose 1990, and Walkerdine et al 2001 (Gill and Pratt 2008, 18). These analysts discuss the fact that, in post-Fordism, the system delves into the worker’s psyche and exploits capacities traditionally considered “private.” Success at work “is increasingly dependent on communicative and emotional capacities[;] ‘cognitive capitalism tends to prioritize extracting value from relational and emotional elements’” (Morini 2007, 40; quoted in Gill and Pratt 2008, 8).

This value is extracted in most post-Fordist jobs. Ignoring the self-management category, Michael Hardt argues in *The Affective Turn* (Clough and Halley 2007), there are basically two “rather disparate” scholarly traditions for the study of affect, well-being as a result of “personal service” rendered, and feelings that energize and excite. We have already seen that Reich restricts affect-skills to the category of personal-service work, whereas Hardt and Negri (2000) insist that they are required in all information work—including symbolic analysis (a subset, they acknowledge, of the “immaterial labour” category). Stretching across another bridge, Hardt and Negri (2000, 30) contend that, although personal service work is “corporeal, somatic,” it is similar to what creative cultural and information workers do, because the “product” for each is “immaterial.” Both rely on “the affective labor of human contact and interaction.... Health services, for example, rely centrally on caring and affective labor, and the entertainment industry is likewise focused on the creation and manipulation of affect. This labor is immaterial, even if it is corporeal and affective, in the sense that its products are intangible, a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement or passion” (Hardt and Negri 2000, 293). We see with this explanation that the definition of immaterial labour is so broad as to challenge its characterization as a category. It is ironic that Hardt and Negri have presented this theory as a way of defining a new potentially-revolutionary class, the multitude (Cruz 2016). On the contrary, we might keep the concept in mind more as a tool to justify the de-differentiation of workers (particularly within the SA class) which is undertaken as a feature of post-Fordist work organization, and which is more in the interest of managers than workers, as discussed above.

Nevertheless, with their elisions, Hardt and Negri pass into the territory of a generalized “enlivening energy,” supposedly prevalent as an outcome of expanded personal service and media activity. It is the supposedly exceptional potential of new media (versus the old analogue forms) to emotionally *move* users in a way that traditional media such as film and television cannot, combined with the proliferation of services that also play on affect, which justifies the new idea of “affect.” Alternatively, if not in form, at least in degree, this generates a different experience than in the analogue era. This form of affect is claimed to cause multiple modes of excitement and impacts on recipients’ *bodies* as of a type of *energy*. “Atmosphere, mood, feelings, states of mind such as well-being, depression, disorder, harmony, have all been converted into information flows, stimulated and orchestrated by a team of experts that includes, doctors, psychologists, spiritual healers, design experts, marketing teams, product managers and consumers” (Seshadri 2007, 88). The density of pitches within everyday experience supposedly creates an intensity of engagement that discourages reflective activity (Clough 2007).

As feminist scholars first theorized the “caring feminine service,” which generates comforting affects, as discussed earlier in this chapter, so did they also theorize the newer meaning of “affect work.” They imagined a different function for media than had communication scholars at the dawn of post-Fordism, that extended beyond mere signification or image creation. Rather, as noted, media create energetic flows and excitement. Analysts assert that “an image can have an effect that does not necessarily correspond to its meaning, or without meaning anything in particular to the viewing subject that it affects” (Wissinger 2007, 237). The focus here is on the simple capacity of imagery to arrest and focus attention, regardless of its content. Media that effectively create such effects can be seen as offering a form of personal service similar to what is traditionally understood with this term, impacting the body in a way that is *preconscious* in nature.

Fashion modeling provides an example of this process. Instead of focussing on how fashion models represent beauty and cultural ideals, scholars stress the enlivening energy they instill in recipients of their work. Fashion’s impact is measured by how well it *stimulates* observers in some visceral way.

[Fashion photography shows] less evidence of an effort to construct the fashion model as a particular cultural ideal, with a culturally assigned and subjectively interpretable meaning, and more evidence of effort... focused on the model’s capacity to constantly change appearance and personality, an effort aimed at modulating the affective flow to be activated by the model’s presence in persona, or by his or her virtual presence in photographs. [In other words,] the work of models is not so much aimed at the ‘narrative construction of subject identities’ as it is oriented to ‘affecting bodies directly’ Wissinger (2007, 235).

As one of the modelling agents put it, “‘models are just conduits most of the time,’ [of the] unexpected, something extra or unplanned[; that] creat[es] an image that is unassimilable, that pushes beyond the borders of conventional interpretation” (Wissinger 2007, 243). Additionally, a model’s different images are layered upon each other for progressively greater impact the more she is seen. A model’s impact does not derive from the stability of her “image,” but its variety, and the intensity of its appearance in public spaces (Wissinger 2007, 239-240).

Like a number of other scholars, Gill and Pratt (2008, 15-16) reject Wissinger’s implication that affect directly impacts the body without recourse to the mind and her definition of affect as enlivening energy, “conjured as a pre-subjective intensity, which exists outside signification.” They also criticize Hardt and Negri’s promotion of this idea, identifying the Autonomists’ support as a strategic contribution to their theory of the multitude as “the new revolutionary subject.” Hardt and Negri’s thesis is that affective immaterial labour, required throughout the population now, has radical consequences. They theorize this affect as “essentially transgressive,” and expect it to eventually overspill the boundaries of workplaces and turned against capitalists. But Gill and Pratt ask: “How can [this idea] be defended? [It ignores] the extent to which emotions are ‘put to work’ in post-Fordist capitalism” (2008, 15-16).

The idea of affective impact not routed through “the mind” of the observer evades examining what might be the contents of the mind during an affective event such as a fashion show or other spectacles in the immaterial marketplace. Again, if a holistic worldview is generic throughout the post-Fordist population, as I would argue it is, there may be “a whole” providing the mental contents, even if subtly registered. This could be the sponsor of the event, routed through the brand that it projects. In relation to understanding cultural labour, the “enlivening energy” model is too abstract, and fails to scrutinize the ways that worker behaviour is conditioned by it. The concept “leaves us with no way of grappling with the role played by affect in generating consent (or even passion) for working lives that, without this emotional or symbolic sheen, might appear arduous, tiring and exploitative” (2008, 17).

Criticism is also offered as part of the “demoralization thesis,” (Lynch 2007, 150-52). Scholars suggest the affect enjoined in workplaces expended in the course of SA labouring is not enlivening but the opposite. Their thesis is that work harnesses “dead, abstracted and artificial emotions,” which causes us to lose touch with our authentic feelings. Lynch agrees with Stjepan Mestrovic, “who sees emotions constructed and circulated [with a] purpose.” Sociologist Arlie Hochschild (2012) has written about the emotional labour that must go into many jobs. Especially because workers “voluntarily” put in long hours due to their “excitement” over the work, Gill and Pratt (2008, 17), conclude that “Foucauldian-inflected accounts appear

more compelling in their ability to make sense of how pleasure itself may become a disciplinary technology.”

The complexity of interpersonal relations and technology, especially as they interact both in the domains of consumption and production, presents a challenge to personal capacities to manage feelings and social discourse that generally surpasses demands made in the Fordist past. Certainly, we can agree that the ability to manage emotions is an integral component of new production methods, broadly. The management of personal feeling is now fully acknowledged as a workplace skill, and capacity with it predicts competent team participation and leadership. This competency is tested as emotional intelligence (EI) before hirings and in other ways. This contrasts strongly with the Fordist model of production, i.e., Taylorist workplaces, in which no managers sought creative and energized employees or tried to enhance their social capacities beyond basic levels. Communications among line workers was a threat to productivity.

Assessment of Affect Theory

As indicated above, in the light of the concerns of this dissertation, of the three kinds of affect labour pinpointed in this chapter—simple caring, managerial caring, and euphoria or ecstasy—the first and the third are most relevant. As for the first, there is a strong emphasis on empathy in the neospiritual world. However, in the light of neospirituality’s emphasis on energetic transactions, the most intriguing is the production of affect as enlivening energy. For audiences or recipients, these flows of energy most strongly suggest “religious experience,” the spiritual euphoria experienced through appropriate spiritual practices, such as meditation. These experiences, claimed by neospirituals, are described in similar terms to the presumed, preconscious feeling, somewhat undifferentiated by cognitive contents, which is a product of, but also circulates within, post-Fordist workplaces.

But what are the sources of these energetic flows at work? For religious holistic believers, generally, the source may be a guru, a divine presence, the living earth as Gaia, or others. For the more instrumentally-inclined, certain practices, such as meditation, may be considered the source, or almost any other activity that profoundly absorbs the attention, such as running or rock-climbing, evokes this energy, considered either mysterious or coming from one’s own mind or body (Csikszentmihaly 2007). How, though, is this energy understood to appear in workplaces? The classic answer by corporate managers would be: “the individual passions of workers, focused by team culture.” The post-Fordist, flexible company requires a different type of worker, one who stirs co-workers, customers and audiences.

A number of the features of post-Fordist workplaces are addressed to raising energy-levels. One is the representation of work as play. Play provokes excitement, which employees can carry over to their work. “Play” spaces (such as games rooms) are provided partly to allow for periods of rest between bouts of

intensive work. However, the presence of such spaces implies the similarity of work and play and suggests the subconscious idea that “work is play.” These spaces socialize the workspace.

Energetic flows are honoured in companies in other ways. In Chapter Five I discussed the characterization by scholars, such as Peters and Waterman (1982), of companies as pure transmitters of information. More precisely, a company should be like “an optical fiber or superconducting wire designed for resistance-free flow of information..., free from the friction of matter” (Liu 2004, 43). We can also see this streamlining, flow-like energy as implicit in the concept of “pure business culture,” where work is to be free of the obstructing personal habits of workers mired down by parochial attitudes. “Idiosyncratic” affinities, residues of loyalty to ethnicity, race, or community, which might deflect from pure devotion to the circulation of global capital, are not admissible in the workplace. They are to be thoroughly routed out by team members (as Lui argued it), unless they can contribute to a cultural product or are contained within company “diversity” policies.

However, the most direct source of this energy in workplaces is surely attributable to human effort therein, which spiritual practices may support. In any case, whatever the means for its activation, workers themselves are the only possible source of this energy. This is equally so, according to the ideology: only individuals can be “empowered.”

However, as explained earlier, the “personal empowerment” ideal emerges from the human potential discourse, itself steeped in holism. Hence, it references a larger whole for its coherence (i.e., through claiming that realizing oneself is realizing a whole community). The argument for corporations as pytopia asserts that the corporation stands in for that community. The “universe,” that benefits from the unleashing of one’s potential is, in practice, the corporation (Nadesan 1998).

From one point of view, the imaginative displacement of energetic source to the corporation itself, as the sole agent, is entirely valid. Under its auspices, the employer has compiled these sources of energy. However, conceding this point begs the question of the real nature of the “enlivening energy.” Does it come, viscerally, from workers, or does it merely motivate them? If the latter, this enlivening energy would have to be understood as the product of capitalization, or money (see Goodchild 2009, for exploration of this theme). Corporate capital enables, so the “energy” celebrated and considered the ultimate enabler of a project may well be capital. However, defining “pure desire” directly as the pursuit of wealth (worse, corporate wealth) might be a poor motivator of team members. Furthermore, it would countermand the requirement that they cooperate. Additionally, workers are prevented from deploying the capital at their own discretion. A basic capitalist principle is that workers are denied “control over the means of production” (Marx 1990). Furthermore, only a tiny fraction of the profits from the labour of workers accrues to

them. Is it not more appealing to believe that the partaking of enlivening energy (whose source needs to remain mysterious) is the ultimate experience itself? Since energy clearly cannot be stored, there can be no question after the conclusion of the project as to where the store might reside.

I am not necessarily arguing that money is the source of this energy. Certainly Marxian theory insists that only worker's labour produces value (Brennan 2000). Despite debate as to whether "enlivening energy" is real or can be distinguished from emotion—self-conscious feeling—we must take the claims for its importance in workplaces seriously. This is because the ability to evoke or project enlivening energy is a cherished capacity of neospiritual practitioners. Whether the excitement evoked in work and experienced in the course of immaterial production and consumption is of the same nature as this claimed capacity remains to be determined. The test would presumably gravitate around the idea of the ability to renew vitality, a characteristic neospiritual practitioners would attribute to their enlivening energy.

This is the root, in my opinion, of the "experience economy." Energy (including passion and excitement), whether for workers or consumers (essentially, including many young people, in these post-Fordist industries), is symbolic wealth in this economy, accepted as a substitute for "real" wealth. The "turn to the East," etc. the preference for experience and "connection" (universalized by the "smart phone") over things, is an unconscious accommodation to a projected life of relative poverty, either of the "organizational offspring" in rich northern nations or, more generally, populations in the global South. Especially with further pressure on resources as limits on carbon-capturing are reached (while a small class also hoards what is available), there is not enough "stuff" to go around, so better to be satisfied with "experience," however ersatz.

Further opportunities for understanding the operation of affect in workplaces open up when we review the history of organizational restructuring and development that has occurred over the course of post-Fordism's establishment, changes in philosophies and programs of human resources development, including the explorations in spiritual awareness. This is the topic of the next chapter.

The possibility that "energy" is a metaphor for exercised capital (i.e., power in operation), is a reminder of Albanese's inflection of the New Age valorization of harmony, which is implicit in the holistic worldview (noted in Chapter Two). Albanese (1992, 73) claimed that for New Agers "acts of harmony are simultaneously acts of power." In operation in workplaces, those who move smoothly within the parameters of their work obligations, are propelling instrumental transactions that circulate wealth (energy) and are also, in the process, aligning themselves with power (i.e., the corporation).

As discussed above, the circulation of this energy, in the neospiritual domain as in companies, is conceived to emerge from, contribute to, or create a whole. Goldschmidt-Salamon argued that "the whole" that in-

spires spiritual feelings is the supposed globe itself; but actually, this is only the section of the world that has been activated or embraced by global capital. “Wasting” or “wasted” spaces and populations are excluded. However, she attributes belief in this particular worldview specifically to those at the apex of corporations. In Chapter Eight, by contrast, I consider a holistic worldview based on the internet that was constructed by, and arguably for, the SA stratum of workers. The “network cosmology” imagines a mostly-disembodied whole, which, while dependent on technology, applies to the internet’s worldwide users, theorized as phenomenologically-situated outside the centres of global power. I will consider in Chapter Eight the validity of this implication as part of the question of the network cosmology’s inclusiveness.

In the light of the reflections above, we might also return to the question: if spirituality exercises and discourse in workplaces inspire the feeling of enlivening energy, do these initiatives make work flow more smoothly for greater productivity, primarily to promote worker well-being, or are there any differences between these alternatives? Which of these is the major reason for managers’ emphasis on spiritual awareness in workplaces? In Chapter Four, I showed these questions as plaguing industry scholars of workplace spirituality. I introduced in the previous chapter, and will clarify in the following chapter that, to the extent that work has been reorganized to create more responsive and productive organizations in fluctuating economic conditions, so also has the autonomous creative worker been pursued for the same reasons. The justification for the flat organization is the same as that which argues for worker self-actualization, creativity and autonomy, that is, business effectiveness. Spirituality is supposed to help create this worker. Because of their common origins and purposes then (company profit and empowered workers) it would be difficult to answer which of these could take priority over the other. They are of a piece. Spirituality, the posthierarchical, team work form, with its presumed energy-flows, and the discourse of worker empowerment have never been well distinguished. Therefore, the question the industry analysts brood over may be moot. However, Lazarrato (1996) takes the position that energetic flow, which can only originate in workers’ efforts, benefits the company, “What modern management techniques are looking for is for ‘the worker’s soul to become part of the factory;’ [i.e., the] worker’s personality and subjectivity have to be made susceptible to organization and command.”

Considering the range of phenomena in which affect labour is said to play a part, the explicitly different definitions of the latter, and debate over the reality of some forms and the roles they may play in work sites, I conclude that the reality, modes and implications of post-Fordist affect labour need more study. Consequently, we are far from understanding if new work has invented (or utilizes) new feelings and how it exploits the old. Nevertheless, there are tentative truths that can be gleaned from my exploration.

Conclusion

In this chapter, using Robert Reich's typology, I broke down post-Fordist workers into types, and proposed the relationships among them. I also provided contesting scholarly opinion as to how that breakdown should occur and pinpointed themes of particular significance within the debate on new work conditions in general. Additionally, I proposed and justified the choice of symbolic analysts as a particular segment of the workforce I consider most relevant, useful and appropriate for understanding the parallels between worker and NAS attitudes and behaviours that were listed in Chapter One, declaring them to be iconic post-Fordist workers. However, I noted that the additional blurring, nuancing, and even confounding of the SA category provided by the dissenting scholars should not be forgotten, as these differing assessments, especially the positing of the hegemony of immaterial labour, helps us understand how a belief system grounded in work practices could diffuse beyond workplace boundaries. To this possibility, I also added specific ways in which we can see the iconic workers, SAs, as the vanguard population of disseminators of neospirituality.

I have put strong emphasis on affective labour in this chapter because it is a growing component of many skill-packages among new-economy-type workers, and because its reality and function in jobs and as part of the consumer experience, although ill-understood, appears to mark a significant difference between post-Fordist and Fordist work that is relevant to the recent move of corporations towards neospirituality's promotion. The degree of equivalency of affect labour, particularly as the production of enlivening energy, and neospiritual practices whose outcomes are felt to be energetic connection and vitalization of practitioners, is an important research question in the pursuit of understanding why post-Fordist managers and employees engage with neospirituality in workplaces.

Accordingly, I included in this chapter an analysis and detailed discussion of the types of "affect" that are held to have a strong presence in new workplaces (as with their products). I considered how this affect, in operation, might impact the workplace experience and operation. I also suggested a high-level conclusion about affect, its relation to the "experience," or "emotional" economy and the relevance of both to future employment and material conditions of succeeding generations of both consumers and producers.

In the next two chapters, I reveal the associations, both personal and ideological, between early post-Fordist workers and New Age practitioners. I show that a belief in posthierarchy has influenced management theory in post-Fordist corporations since their beginnings—particularly through the vehicle of consultants who sought to create employee-empowered work sites. In Chapter Eight, I argue that concept of posthierarchy was developed into a worldview by high-technology workers and their spokespeople. Their formulation mirrors New Age holism. I also show an extensive history of the cultural interaction of these new

workers and New Age practitioners, to suggest that the openness of post-Fordist companies to spirituality, demonstrated in Chapter Four, may be a function of persisting loyalty to New Age values of this population.

Chapter Seven: Posthierarchical Paradigms and Practices

Introduction

Post-Fordist businesses and governments function in a global world that is often subject to crisis. Under these conditions of instability, as I argue below, certain precepts akin to core neospiritual values have emerged as a way to manage resources in the larger political, economic, and technological environment. These include holism, insight, and collectivity. I show that, applied to socio-technical systems, these precepts guide a philosophy of action for managers of institutions in a post-Fordist, globalized world. This philosophy has fluctuated in its popularity as globalization has advanced, but it has both influenced managers and bureaucrats and been imposed on symbolic analysts in their daily business. In other words, these strategies are found both in the macrocosm of business and governmental management and in the microcosm of post-Fordist workplaces.

As parallels to the hallmark neospiritual values, the three approaches I show decision-makers using are: gaining a comprehensive or holistic vision of a situation through data-modelling and -analysis, consulting putative visionaries to identify key factors in complex conditions that managers can influence, and exchanging knowledge with those who share an experience for better understanding and therefore greater effectiveness in action. All of these approaches were used during the Fordist era. However, they gained greater urgency and effectiveness with post-Fordism. New sciences, the integration of the world through economic globalization, and novel technologies developed to manage this integration, have made these strategies more meaningful. These practices can be generally grouped under the popularized paradigm of posthierarchy, which was originally seen as a protest against all hierarchy during the social revolutions of the 1960s. However, I argue that these protests were supported if not undergirded by the responses to global interconnectivity advanced by the technocrats, engineers and decision-makers managing the new conditions it brought about. I suggest below that governmental decision-makers and planners, computer scientists engaged in a variety of activities, and serious scholars of organization and business were major critics of the old, bureaucratic models of information-gathering and decision-making. Not only their changing ideas, but the social innovations that emerged from them, would have provided backdrops to the early emergence of New Age spirituality (which was later to become neospirituality) and new worker values.

Accordingly, commitment to posthierarchy has also framed innovations in workplaces. As the normal structure of commercial organizations changed during the transition from Fordism, the precepts of holism, insight and collective consultation appeared to guide both these changes and new work patterns. Restruc-

turing corporate operations to make business visions more holistic, rewarding insight and authorizing responsiveness and autonomy in workers were initiatives felt to be integral to making companies effective.

In workplaces, quasi-managers (symbolic analysts) must create innovative products. To do this, they must gain “grass-roots” understanding of the universes of both consumer-goods and consumers as well as continually refamiliarize themselves with the changing ecology of technological and business services that they must build on with these new products. Intensive communication with fellow team-members, personal insight, continuous polling of the consumer landscape and constant technological upgrading together are hoped to create a holistic understanding of the “problems” of these terrains as well as paths to their solutions. In other words, gaining a comprehensive vision of a situation (holism), synthesizing (through insight) the experiential knowledge of others, and consultation and data-collection (bottom-up understanding) have served as guiding principles to address uncertainty in commerce.

Minimizing hierarchy has been the one underlying and common effort that organizational theorists have relied on as the basic *modus operandus* (or precondition) to creating these lauded conditions for companies. Having a cadre of employees who generally take on managerial functions and act autonomously is essential to this strategy. In short, above and beyond SA employees’ cultural histories and personal preferences, their “workplace empowerment” is an element of the post-Fordist corporation’s organizational structure—devoted to “sensing” and responding to the complex business environment. These corporations certainly sustain political processes, but these latter are not as explicitly structured and rule-oriented as they were in the classical Fordist corporations.

Hence, although early neospirituals and counterculturalists advocated autonomous and non-alienating work on their own behalf, parallel discourses appeared amongst specialists and professionals promoting similar interests while they also argued that these were equally good for corporations. A coterie of “posthierarchy theorists”—including CEOs, management theorists, managers and organizational consultants, as well as a segment of post-Fordist economists—sought to establish the practices and attitudes in workplaces that could allow the corporation to succeed in the new global, flexible business environment. These early organizational activists tried to make work more humane as they also promoted organizational effectiveness. In the process, employee empowerment and posthierarchy values found a secure (symbolic) home in business theory and practice.

In short, the “posthierarchy” ethos and its accompanying practices have been consulted and promoted for both management and political purposes. Whereas the counterculture primarily advanced posthierarchy as an antidote to overwhelming domination by instrumental rationality, “the military-industrial complex,” and repressive working conditions, within the confines of business environments an aversion to hierarchy

probably always had mixed objectives. However, the managerial purpose generally won out, and the posthierarchy impulse eventually played out as a deep hostility to the Fordist bureaucratic structures, regarded as antiquated. Supported by sources cited in this chapter, I argue that the current interpretation of the posthierarchy ethos is managerial in nature. From the political point of view—i.e., the countercultural version—this may be seen as a subversion of a political agenda—a technologization of a social or political value. Moreover, due to posthierarchy’s historical association with political activism it has an additional function as an ideology for both managers and workers who have a pedigree of activism for worker empowerment. Despite many indicators that the realization of genuine worker-empowerment is unlikely under capitalism, belief that posthierarchical forms at work can help achieve it is widespread and sustained. These beliefs are core elements of the post-Fordist workplace ideology.

In this chapter, I initially review the explorations of holism, insight and a consultatory mindset at the broader level of society as well as in the more confined environment of workplaces. At the societal level, I show these principles operating in particular moments and spaces. The purpose of this first discussion, of the societal level, is to tie together the three basic practices of the neospiritual value system as references to, and supports of, the strategies that secular decision-makers have employed to manage socio-technical systems under global conditions. This inevitably “relativizes” New Age values.

In sum, this first part reviews elements of the social background to the theoretical establishment of the empowered employee in the posthierarchical organization, posthierarchy’s implementation in workplaces, divergences from the model there, and strategies and the implications of maintaining the ideology in workplaces despite its limited reality. I first highlight several epistemological movements that have affected the globalizing world in general—stemming, as I explained, from the requirement in many domains of human endeavor to integrate vast amounts and different kinds of knowledge to allow effective action in a changing and complex world. I characterize these movements in only a cursory way, however, as sketches of important cultural figures reaching a crossroads in their professional treatment of problems that have arisen as a result of the increasing complexity of a globalizing, technology-enabled world, and who reacted to new conditions by adopting either a holistic, inspiration-seeking, or grassroots-consulting behaviours to solve problems they encountered. They all bear a mark of reaching for understanding of life processes without resorting to Cartesian—putatively, top-down and strictly analytical—modes of knowing—approaches we would identify as posthierarchical. I suggest that these developments form the backdrop to the emergence of the New Age as well as new worker values. These higher-level approaches are not disengaged from capitalism. Directly or indirectly, they must have both structured post-Fordism as a system and been influenced by it. As I consider the manifestations of these three approaches to knowledge in the

larger milieu than either the neospiritual ethos or new work values, I also draw associations between these higher-level manifestations and both of the latter cultures.

Then, the remainder (and the bulk) of this chapter traces the trajectory of the intellectual and practical innovations in workplaces. As part of this brief history of workplace innovation I also discuss these posthierarchical principles' operation in the iconic post-Fordist workspaces. I show that a general hostility to formal bureaucracy and expressions of social hierarchy (rendering a belief in posthierarchy) has framed the ideology of post-Fordist work throughout its development. This conclusion will draw us into the next chapter, where I will discuss more directly the ideology of these workplaces, through which posthierarchy is valorized as a network cosmology. Through a review of the contents of particular media, such as *Wired* magazine, which speak for technology workers but are read well beyond this audience, I also suggest that the posthierarchy myth diffuses well beyond corporate managers and workers into the public arena.

Mid-century Explorations of Posthierarchy

The pursuits of organic holism, inspiration, and grass-roots participation, all bear the mark of reaching for understanding of life processes, so as to facilitate effective action and understanding in the complex world of mid-to-late-century globalization. I broadly refer to these as efforts to go beyond hierarchy. All of these movements are also reflected in New Age values and, ultimately in work process and beliefs. I will touch on particular manifestations of each of these in this section.

Grass-Roots Participation

The work of British economic thinker, statistician and economist, E.F. Schumacher (1973, 1977) is not strictly within the lineage of organizational development writing, but much of his commentary on technology was relevant to it. He had an early context for developing his views as Chief Economic Advisor to the UK National Coal Board for two decades (Wikipedia, EF Schumacher). An early book addressed to the public, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (1973), gained a broad popular audience. It was among the 100 most influential books published since World War II (*The Times Literary Supplement*, 6 October 1995, 39). Most importantly, he embraced a politically-left position and did not give primacy to private corporations either in his theory or actions. Schumacher was interested in posthierarchy, but this interest was expressed more positively as the need to consult users in the design and use of technologies and public works. He could be considered an important cross-over figure between the counterculture and New Age, on the one hand, and left political activists and supporters of public resources, on the other. An important public figure during his career, Schumacher gained his following of New Age proponents as the author of *Small is Beautiful* (1973) (Lynch 2007; Heelas 1996, 87). He promoted an organic model of society and argued vigorously for empowered work. A review of his major ideas shows the level of partici-

pation (if mostly ideational) of the New Age in the development of new organizational forms as post-Fordism advanced.

Perhaps Schumacher expressed the importance of bottom-up consultations for large technology projects better than anyone at the time. He and his editor and interpreter, Peter Gilligan (Schumacher and Gilligan, 1979) did not swing towards the extremes of reifying technology as good or evil, a practice of which others at the time could be accused. Along with a few other critics of technology, such as the city planning theorist and activist, Jane Jacobs (1961), and scientist and technology and culture analyst, Ursula Franklin (1990), they expressed a more nuanced view of technology's deficiencies and possibilities. Like Jacobs and Franklin, Schumacher argued that technological solutions should enhance public life. Communities can only remain vibrant and self-actualized when technological projects are kept modest in scale and tailored to community needs. In order to follow these principles, designed solutions should be arrived at through community consultation. Franklin theorized this conviction by distinguishing between what she calls "holistic" and "prescriptive" technologies. The latter, comprehensively integrated with other technological solutions, sets up a somewhat strict way of life for people, so she calls them "social designs for compliance." By contrast, holistic technologies leave open spaces or "gaps" in the technological landscapes which people can creatively "fill in," or through which they can intervene to adapt the technologies to their community needs. This approach accommodates citizen consultation and principled discussions about the nature of the communities in which people like to live. Prescriptive technologies follow a "production" model, where the holistic form favours "growth." By using the "growth" concept, Franklin referred to natural processes, which exhibit rhythmic patterns and a resistance to unlimited expansion.

Schumacher did not reject technology, including the old "industrial" technology (Gilligan 1977, 174-75). However, by the 1970s, he saw corporate and governmental operators as too reliant on technological solutions to managing social interaction—i.e., the prescriptive approach. The scale of the typical technological solution dwarfed human impulses to take responsibility for solving social problems collectively. The power to organize and activate knowledge in gargantuan projects led to "a strong, continuing trend towards large organizations and large technologies, and towards the orchestration of hitherto fragmented individual efforts within large corporate structures or systems" (Gilligan 1977, 177).

Schumacher believed that beyond a certain level of complexity and scale, the technological solution to a problem would backfire. Such approaches would create unintended and often undesirable consequences, while also using too many resources. Implicitly criticising what Franklin would call "prescriptive" technological solutions, Gilligan claimed that "the great professional, technical and organizational juggernauts developed irresistible momentum. They have carried us into ever more complex, interdependent and im-

perfectly understood sets of relationships. Only now[, he noted,] are we beginning to recognize the human and resource costs extracted by these behemoth dinosaur activities” (Gilligan 1977, 179).

Schumacher and Gilligan’s proposed alternative was not to have more sophisticated programming of people’s lives, but to integrate problem-definition and -solving into communities themselves. They suggested giving people a measure of authority over the design solutions. Solutions would trickle-up from the grass-roots if the scale of the problem-definitions were kept modest and the proper consultation processes carried out. In this way, people would learn to take responsibility for their own welfare. Such self-determination and popular cooperation as an approach to achieving social order naturally reduced the power of governmental technocrats. In Schumacher’s vision, the technical solutions should give way to social, democratic and participatory practices.

Schumacher’s nuanced view of the technology-society relationship—as continuous consultation of participants in the design and operation of a socio-technical system—makes sense, because human beings cannot be easily managed. They are innate sources of randomness and unpredictability. Seeking continuous inputs allows for “tinkering” with the social and technological infrastructures to make the best of human innovativeness and respond to their people’s perhaps-changing desires and habits. To state this in terms of ideas of machine intelligence that were also being explored at this time, constant consultation facilitates the system’s learning. Having built-in “feedback loops” constitute a system as “organic,” engaged in a holistic growth process.

Schumacher saw the relationship between organic approaches to technology and the conditions of work these would allow. Like his intellectual contemporaries, as well as actual and potential assembly-line workers, he abhorred the “soul-destroying, meaningless, mechanical, monotonous, [and] moronic” nature of such work (Schumacher 1973, 35). He related his general critique of technology to the goal of achieving “good work” with the preferred form. He influenced the New Age discourse on work, arguing once again for decision-making from the bottom up (Gilligan 1977, 142; Schumacher 1979, 139).

Accordingly, Schumacher encouraged youth to resist repressive, Fordist work in addition to other manifestations of bureaucracy and power. He supported the emerging beliefs among countercultural youth that they could change their prospect of working as “faceless” and soul-destroyed white-collar workers or Fordist factory labourers. Schumacher insisted that people refuse bad work: “Meaningless work is an abomination.... Work should not be ‘*meaningless, boring, stultifying, or nerve-wracking*’” (Schumacher 1979, 118-19). He also wrote: “It is interesting to note that the modern world takes a lot of care that the worker’s body should not accidentally, or otherwise, be damaged.... But his soul? Or his spirit? If his work damages *him*, by reducing him to a robot—that is just too bad” (Schumacher 1979, 119-20).

In Gilligan's voice, Schumacher may appear to express millennialist and human potentialist views: "There is an enormous slow upward heave in the mass of mankind measured by the numbers of people beginning to sense that they are capable of directing their own lives, of taking their own initiatives, of formulating roles or rules or operating procedures for themselves rather than having others do it for them, of making their own choices, of assuming increased responsibility for themselves and others as their sense of their own capacities develops" (Gilligan 1977, 173). However, Schumacher's expansive vision acknowledged more levels of human satisfaction or "being" than human potential language typically connotes. In speaking of the conundrum of oppressive technology, he urged looking at the "metaphysical or, if you like, the philosophical or religious causes of this situation" (Schumacher 1979, 139). His recommendation: "To act as spiritual beings; [as] Man [is] a divine being[;] to act as neighbours; [as] Man [is] a social being[;] To act as persons; [as] Man [is] himself or herself" (Schumacher 1979, 116).

Schumacher's legacy persisted into the 1990s within a number of organizations, including a Schumacher College and Society, and institutes organized around such principles of "right livelihood," "intermediate technology" and "alternate technology." Contributors to these discussions have included New Age spokespeople, such as Marilyn Ferguson (1982) and Matthew Fox (1994), and scholars of religion such as Rosabeth Kanter (1978) and Milton Yinger (1982) (Heelas 1996, 103).

Insight-Seeking and Intensive Consultation

The career of engineer Willis Harman illustrates someone frustrated with technology who eventually pursued direct insight as a way to understand his changing world. Eventually an important figure associated with the Esalen Institute, he initially struggled with computation to understand complexity, but eventually rejected calculation *in toto* as a solution. Harman's career demonstrates a final concern for deepening intuitive awareness as a way to confront change, which I call an alternative strategy with the same goal as certain mathematical approaches. Not surprisingly, the intuitive or non-rational ways of understanding phenomena he adopted became a religious commitment for him.

In the early 1960s, he and his partner Oliver Markley were cast in the role of futurists by the US Office of Education. They were asked, "in the context of the Great Society agenda of the 1960s, to divine how people could be educated now to meet... the year 2000" (Kleiner 2008, 168). They explored the newly-emerging computational forecasting to understand societal trends. The Rand Corporation's Herman Kahn, then writing his book *The Year 2000* (Kleiner 2008, 169), assisted them. But they rejected the modelling method and, from Kahn, learned to use another innovation in predictive methods, the scenario approach. "Scenarios," are images of some non-existent world and are generated by groups of knowledgeable people consulting each other about future prospects. The goal of this practice is "insight," collectively generated.

The product Harman and Markley delivered to the Department of Education was a classic vision of an organic, postindustrial society. Their “New Society” was notable for its “openness and adeptness.” They asserted that the cultural values of industrialization and consumption had to shift, while governments should “adopt an ecological ethic” (Kleiner 2008, 170-171).

Harman and Markely’s model was not implemented. However, Harman carried his rejection of computation further, through involvement in the extrasensory perception (ESP) experiments conducted by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). He rejected the “numbers” approach (i.e., calculative, rational analysis) as “a giant flaw in the existing rationalist mind-set.” He felt that “numbers” simply could not reproduce the complexities of real-world human situations. His conclusion was that “awareness must be cultivated, because the future cannot be predicted or planned in a mechanistic way” (Kleiner 2008, 121). Harman began to believe that the old industrial mind would fall away, and people “would become aware of the most exciting prospect of the time, designing a postindustrial, participative society no longer hamstrung by the tired political debates or the fixation on economic growth of the industrial era” (Kleiner 2008, 172). Harman turned away from high-level analysis and planning and actively exploring spiritual consciousness. He “played a key role in an alternative religious movement [and] another leading role in psychedelic drug and parapsychology research. [He] renounced the value of rationality. In the process, he engineered the beginning of the new age movement. [As such, he] was part of a long-standing tradition of visionary engineers” (Kleiner 2008, 157).

Harman is a key figure in the story of the interconnection of “the establishment” and the New Age. Despite his “rejecting rationality,” he maintained the objective that motivated his early explorations in technology-based planning. He wanted to live fully in an increasingly insecure and unpredictable world. If we see the search for deeper insight, in which he was latterly engaged, as another way of learning to predict and manage the future under such circumstances, we can see his defection to the New Age as a further exploration of the “living-with-complexity” problem. According to this logic, this association situates the general pursuit of New Age spirituality within domain of such problem-solving as well.

Kahn, himself, developed his scenario method while playing war games of military strategy. He periodically “cloistered a half-dozen [fellow] RAND [Corporation] staff-members in a week-long meeting” to play “what-if” exercises of global prediction (Kleiner 2008, 129). Invitees to his Hudson Institute considered civilian rather than military scenarios through intensive, collaborative exchanges. Like Harman and Markley, Kahn was concerned to avert the worst possibilities feared for the planet at the time. In some cases, he challenged people to envision shocking futures, such a global nuclear war, in order to awaken decision-makers from their somnambulant progress towards such awful ends (Kleiner 2008, 128).

Eventually, Kahn had to turn the institute towards research for corporations to keep it solvent (Kleiner 2008, 131). A company that responded eagerly to the forecasting capacity of this institute was Royal Dutch Shell (Kleiner 2008, 132-41). At the time, oil prices were fluctuating due to OPEC intervention, and oil companies urgently needed guidance to see what the future held. As explained in Chapter Five, the oil crisis brought on by OPEC's actions are often marked as signalling the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism, and the beginning of a sped-up world-economy. Shell was a petrochemical company unique for its truly global character. It was additionally forward-looking in its hiring of prediction teams that used the human imagination and insight to address its problems, as it was at also at the forefront of embracing new organizational structures and exploring New Age religiosity for its workers, as discussed in Chapter Four.⁷¹

Seeking the Organic Form

In Cybernetic Systems

Like New Age theology (Hanegraff 1996, Hammer 2001, 2004), organizational theory has tended to exhibit scientism. Contemporary ideas about how the non-human world is structured established templates for envisioning business enterprises. As different arms of science (progressively) delve into the realities of different modalities of nature (for examples, from gross processes such as the biological inheritance of traits through to the counter-intuitive dynamics of “black holes”), developing different models and tools for understanding these unique phenomena in the process (Bernstein 1983), people tend to understand their own affairs according to these models.

Organizational theorists negatively judged the traditional managerial hierarchies of Fordism as depicting the relations of inert elements, which Newtonian physics describes. Alternatively, the model for the bureaucratic organization is often a “tree, whose rooted and vertical unity has long made it the favourite map for the hierarchical organization of knowledge and patriarchal authority” (Davis 1998, 329). In any case,

⁷¹ Kahn later became a member the Club of Rome, a group of one hundred people—“business leaders, government ministers, and academics”—hand-selected in 1968, who were thought to have enough technical knowledge, political power and special insight to assess possible outcomes of common social problems and perhaps influence policies to mitigate them (Kleiner 2008, 168-71). The group's most famous accomplishment was to look at the implications of population growth, including resource depletion, pollution, and other ecological issues, so as to predict its impact in the year 2000. Its findings were published as the ground-breaking *Limits to Growth* report (Meadows et al. 1975) (Kleiner 2008, 181-82). Illustrating the parallel character of software modelling and insight (despite Harman's claim), Club members commissioned the most illustrious computer modeler from among their membership, Jay Forrester, discussed in the next section, to design a predictive model for their work (Kleiner 2008, 178-80).

anti-Fordists reckoned the Fordist company to be a “dead entity.” For, as science flourished in the twentieth century, many alternative visions to the mechanical form emerged. As different as they are, in contrast to Fordist business models, “posthierarchy” is a broad concept that references a number of new forms of scientific inquiry in the twentieth century.

Business philosopher, Moid Siddiqui (2005, 24) summarizes this history of scientism in organizational modelling:

Supervision and control—the buzzwords of an older generation of businessmen, drew their inspiration from the gravitational force theory that was propounded by Isaac Newton. Participation and involvement were the shibboleths of a later generation that had grown (sic) on Einstein’s theory of the cosmos. Today, the world has hitched its coattails to Steven Hawking’s ideas about the cosmos, where everything is inter-connected under the laws of the string theory. Suddenly, people in corporate board-rooms have started talking about the “Big Picture,” a frame that since has been enlarged to cover the broad discourse over “eco-systems”. As knowledge grows, perceptions change.

Nature or organicism provided a model for many mid-century endeavours (Stanley 1978) other than business structures. The emerging science of cybernetics addressed the need for greater sensitivity to complex environments and understanding of their processes. The career of Jay Forrester demonstrates cyberneticists’ transition to organic models to guide social forecasting and socio-technical system modelling with computers. Forrester turned to these tasks after having first become “one of the most accomplished engineers alive” (Kleiner 2008, 173). With wartime scientists, he had invented the random-access addressing system for digital computer memory. First trying the conventional approaches to social forecasting at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), under Douglas McGregor, Forrester decided that the prevailing methods of applying computation to human situations were ineffective. Needing to assimilate multidisciplinary data, as varied as “population, economic growth, technology and human aspiration” (Kleiner 2008, 157), he rejected the use of hierarchically-structured representations of the data and their relationships. “Forrester said he needed a ‘less mechanistic’ way of thinking about his problems. All of these various factors were related, and could not be considered apart from each other (Kleiner 2008, 157). Proper models must incorporate feedback. More properly, they needed to model “growth and resistance, which required a non-linear calculus” (Kleiner 2008, 174). Seeking a solution, Forrester joined a number of

cyberneticists, such as Austrian theoretical biologist, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, ⁷² who sought to match the behaviour of biological entities in their designed socio-technical systems. They concluded that “in any system involving feedback (which includes all of nature and human activity), influence is cyclical. There is no single cause-and-effect; the effect always influenced the cause” (Kleiner 2008, 174). Forrester’s transition is another example of the use of organism as a metaphor for guiding action under conditions of complexity in the early post-Fordist era.

In Building

Another thoughtful exploration of modelling human enterprise on the organic is seen in the work of American architect and scholar, Christopher Alexander (1977, 1979, 1980). He specifically objected to building being constructed of standardized units, following the industrial model (and the relatively new trend of modularization). He developed a popular following in the 1970s and 80s by theorizing and developing participatory, emergent (versus industrial) building methods. In *The Timeless Way of Building* (1979, 144-147), he explains the non-modular character of organic forms. “‘The character of nature’ is no mere poetic metaphor.... Nature is never modular. Nature is full of almost similar units (waves, raindrops, blades of grass)--but... no two are ever alike in detail.” In form, elements of the same type follow a few invariant patterns. The patterns repeat, but the elements manifesting them are always different, to accommodate variations in their settings. Invariant patterns in always-different settings create the ultimate novelty of every element in nature.

[The result is] a constant play or repetition and variety. [From this play], it follows that the overall geometry is always loose and fluid. There is an undefinable roughness, a looseness, a relaxedness, which nature always has: and this relaxed geometry comes directly from the balance of repetition and variety. [This relaxed quality is the mark of live entities and reveals that] the repetition of patterns is a very different thing from the repetition of parts (Alexander 1979, 148-150).

Alexander attempted to realize these principles of natural growth in his buildings. He and his team identified and codified the “invariant patterns” of “beautiful” vernacular architecture, as gleaned from non-industrial, traditional (or folk) buildings throughout the world, to help guide their work. A key feature

⁷² Art Kleiner cites L. von Bertalanffy (1950) as an Austrian biologist commonly cited for reinterpreting biological processes for social and technical systems design. He developed general systems theory (GST), along with Anatol Rapoport, Jay Forrester, Kenneth E. Boulding, William Ross Ashby, Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, and others in the 1950's. Biological processes transposed into the theory include growth, homeostasis and evolution (Gregory Mitchell, 2005). A classic application of these principles in organizations is seen in D. Katz and R. L. Kahn (1966).

is that these buildings were built incrementally, in context, and using a small number of simple patterns to guide design rather than models, which have a different epistemological function. Many public buildings that his team built (such as the University of Oregon campus) were done so with intensive participation by future users. They published their research as “a pattern language” for buildings (Alexander, Ishikawa and Silverstein 1977) which included instructions for participatory building of structures that ‘grow’ rather than are planned. As true of these production methods, “buildings which are alive are fluid and relaxed in their geometry” (Alexander 1979, 152).

In Workplaces

As Alexander sought “buildings that are alive,” other innovators sought the same quality in workplaces. Post-Fordist theorists argued that the corporation is better seen as a live, or organic, entity. The move to flat structures, Toyotism and the “quality” movements that emerged from it (as discussed below), and multi-skilled, self-managing teams, was a way to “enliven” the company. These were responses to growing scientific understanding of how life forms grow, not through top-down modelling, but emerging in forms responsive to the environment, but from a “genetic code.” Workers were expected to be sensors of the corporate body and its environment. Exhortations by the organizational activists for team members to constantly monitor “quality” meant they were to reflect the way organisms worked. Rather than wait for the summary assessments, quantitative performance analyses performed by the “numbers men” at the ends of the shift, the week, or the year, etc., they were to respond on the spot to problems and inefficiencies they might identify during the course of their work. They were to act to restore homeostasis to the operation. A company should be continually processing information, both internally-derived and acquired through multiple points of contact with its environment. Indeed, as management theorists Peters and Waterman (1982) explained, the whole company is charged with being a sensing mechanism.

The need for workers as sensors was one source of the workplace redesign and different hiring practices of the period. Although in the 1960s the wholesale “creative” work of “the information society” was only nascent, managers began to realize that they required a different kind of worker. In the emerging economy, the market face of a product was often more important than its substance. Buyers were now well-supplied with functional goods, but they still had to be encouraged to consume. However, whether they were substantial consumer goods or ideas, entertainment and culture, the essential product bought was the feeling of well-being. Many workers were needed for the job of honing consumer subjectivity. They needed to be comfortable with high levels of social engagement and imaginative discourse, rather than the technical

disciplines (Frank 1997, 26). Of course, the bureaucratic structure of Fordist companies was felt to stifle this kind of worker. William H. Whyte (1956) author of *The Organization Man*, warned that “the most deleterious effect of the ‘social ethic’ [of Fordism], was that it inhibited creativity.”⁷³

The virtue of creativity and iconoclasm reached the general public as well. The changes in consumer advertising ostensibly reflected greater respect for audiences by applauding their independence of thought. Fordist advertising had basically touted the functionality of products or assumed consumer naivety in terms of the psychological motivators hidden in messages. Recognizing its limitations, managers agitated to change the Fordist *status quo* (Frank 1997, 25-28). However, the new material was doubly crafty, flattering consumers over their supposed awareness of the embedded “con” in traditional advertising. In the process, they merely inserted a different subliminal message. Marketing campaigns elevated iconoclasm to the status of personal virtue, and advertising became ironic. Avis Rent-a-Car’s “We’re number two!” campaign is an example. In this contrarian spirit, the CEO of this large corporation published *Up the Organization: How to Stop the Corporation from Stifling People* (Frank 1997, 22).

In hiring practices, employers too appeared to act against their traditional interests. Reflecting new ideas on what was needed in a good worker, employers downgraded the importance of company loyalty and discipline. Now, CEOs and managers wanted employees to reach beyond the boundaries of narrow company cultures and job descriptions. They supposedly wanted non-compliance. Managers, like advertisers, valorized the “quest after the new, [the] willingness to violate boundaries, and [the] hatred of the old and habitual” (Frank 1997, 19-20). In both of these domains of the corporation, we can see the incongruity, if not absurdity, of control structures (i.e., corporations, which largely dictate distribution of societal resources) challenging their dependents to (at least symbolically) refuse them fealty. This seems like an effort to create bottom-up effervescence by fiat.

Posthierarchy at Work

Theory Y

As marketers sought to change attitudes, organizational activists and a small population of economists worked to change organizations. According to Vallas (1999), the posthierarchy economists (a subgroup of the post-Fordists) pressing for posthierarchical forms in the workplace, took their lead from the organizational activists. They borrowed from the organizational development ideas seen in the “older job redesign

⁷³ Cited in Frank 1997, 21-22

literature” of Douglas McGregor (1960) and Frederick Herzberg (1973) as well as “a dissident strand of organizational theory (Burns and Stalker 1962)” (Vallas 1999, 70). The early organizational activists saw reducing alienating and enhancing creativity and autonomy for workers as potential contributors to productivity. As the rest of this chapter shows, employee empowerment (at least for SAs) continues to be presented as a key reason for the teamwork arrangement, whereas at the same time there is also a strong argument that it is necessary for companies to profit.

As we shall see, only some elements of a posthierarchical workplace (as ideally imagined) survive in companies, and certainly not the elements that would spell genuine employee power. Despite this, posthierarchy is cited by the vast majority of contemporary managers as the essential element of good organization. They often claim it to be fully implemented in their companies when this is far from the truth. That the posthierarchy thesis is insisted upon in the face of contradiction may imply that this process is still under development. However, scholars (Stone 2004) show that posthierarchy is claimed in the present against the facts. The idea has an important function in these new organizations, which will be analyzed more intensively in the next chapter. I complete this chapter, however, with an account of the implementation of workplace changes by various job redesigners, while also noting the association of its activists with NAS. This account relies heavily on the history by Art Kleiner (2008), who was close to both communities as the restructuring proceeded, having been an editor of the *New Age Whole Earth Catalogue* before he moved more exclusively into examining technology and corporate organizational issues.

In *The Management of Innovation* (1961), T. Burns and G.M. Stalker studied organizations systemically, thinking about how organizational norms and procedures could bring about specific outcomes. Like systems designers in general at the time, they consulted the organic models first developed in biology to understand organizational dynamics. They judged that “organic” models, as distinct from the “mechanical” models (i.e., hierarchically-structured bureaucracies), were the source of innovation. In the end, they determined that good organizations exhibited low “hierarchical differentiation” (i.e., flatness), much low-level decision-making, high personal feedback to employees, low levels of control by plan and flexible production technologies (Hull and Hage 1982, 568). This list of features conforms to considerable degree to the characteristics of flat, team-structured workplaces outlined in previous chapters, and suggests a biological metaphor. High personal feedback makes employees good sensors. Low levels of control by plan suggests the use, perhaps, of patterns or rules of thumb, or adherence to scripts, as in genetics. A flexible production strategy hints of adaptation to environment, as natural entities grow.

Of researchers who provided fundamental guidance for altering organizations—i.e., “organizational development” (OD) consultants—among the most important are Kurt Lewin, Fred Emery and Eric Trist, who

defined “open systems” and practiced “sociotechnical design;” an organizational theorist and educator on “the learning organization,” Peter Senge (1994); and long-time consultant and scholar Chris Argyris (Argyris 1957,1964, 1985). Despite their own innovations, Senge (1994, 50, 237) and Argyris, like Vallas, considered the Douglas McGregor’s *The Human Side of Enterprise* (1960) to be seminal to the new vision for organizations. This is the same McGregor whose work on large-scale computer modelling Forrester had rejected as too mechanistic. However, McGregor’s lasting influence was in the area of managerial theory and training. Indeed, with his mentor in mind, Argyris famously claimed that all organizational development was “but a footnote to McGregor.” It is appropriate, therefore, that we begin with his work.

In the late 1950s, McGregor realized that changes in work organization demanded changes in management style. Although the sociotechnical position is that organizational structures influence how people behave, he also realized the personal change does not happen smoothly. McGregor believed that the contemporary radical innovations in technology should be met with equally radical innovations in human behaviour. However, people had to be trained to understand and accept the behaviours that new technologies demanded of them. This is why he famously claimed that there needed to be “developments... with respect to the human side of enterprise comparable to those that have occurred in technology” (McGregor 1960).

Accordingly, McGregor sought to define the attitudes and behaviors managers should have in the new economy. He revealed that the old and new styles could be distinguished by their contrasting theories as to what motivates workers. “Theory X” stood for the old, and “Theory Y,” for the new. Theory X-type managers used rules and discipline to control behaviour, and “coerced, supervised, and directed by a hierarchy of power” (Kleiner 2008, 36). New managers believed that workers were “motivated by progress towards an objective, rather than fear or punishment” (Frank 1997, 22). His theory was that employees working for the rewards of achievement pushed themselves in the process. Reflecting Maslow’s work, the participative strategies that emerged from Theory Y-type attitudes promised to “link improvement in managerial competence with the satisfaction of higher-level ego and self-actualization needs” (McGregor 1985).⁷⁴ This approach assumed that employee and employer interests could be aligned, as does the psychopopia model.

The first real test of McGregor’s theory, in 1958 at a US Esso plant, is telling in several ways. His job was to prevent already-unionized employees from signing on with the much more militant and powerful Teamsters Union. To prevent this, the McGregor team trained managers in the Theory Y style. Experi-

⁷⁴ Cited in Frank 1997, 22

encing a softer management, workers then voted against joining with the Teamsters. Later, with a change back to “a more hard-edged rationalist manager who tried to show immediately how he could squeeze the union,” employees reversed direction once again and joined the Teamsters. The failure of the company to support the organizational innovation and to continue to training managers in Theory Y methods resulted in frustration and failure for McGregor. Similar situations are seen repeated over many decades of OD activity and illustrates of key element of the history (Kleiner 2008, 43-45).

Toyotism

An early template for work reorganization bears the moniker “Toyotism.” It is also called “Japanese management theory.” As defined above, Toyotism importantly emphasizes continuous monitoring of work processes by all employees so that “quality” is maintained, rather than relying on after-the-fact analysis by specialists.

In the traditional accounting method of management, company processes were periodically monitored and mathematically-assessed against predefined benchmarks, providing abstract information about a health of the company. The lack of timeliness of this approach could obviously create risk in a highly-volatile business environment. Some Japanese companies, on the other hand, had a history of not aspiring to meet targets or benchmarks at all, but of more commonly training employees to look continuously and contemporaneously for opportunities to improve company operation, to report to managers or implement themselves. This approach was incorporated into Toyotism as the “continuous improvement” (Kleiner 2008, 284-88) ethos or, as a Japanese expression, *Kaizen*.

As a comprehensive program that bears its name, Toyotism was not chiefly the product of that company, but of the efforts of an American business consultant in consultation with it. As part of a post-war reconstruction project, statistician and operations researcher, W. Edwards Deming, went to Japan in the 1950s. After watching wartime armies (dys)function, he had concluded in frustration that the “performances” metrics they used had nothing to do with effective performance. They would be even less effective in corporations after the onset of post-Fordism and its sped-up business demands.

In Japan, Edwards Deming found the Toyota Corporation to be singularly receptive to his ideas. It had had a long history of innovation prior to contact with Edwards Deming. This former loom company had already secured worker cooperation with new methods of automobile production (also explored in Scandinavia) by offering continuous assured employment in return. All workers were entitled to stop the assembly-line (an authority strictly controlled in the US) at their station if they noticed defects or other evidence of dysfunction. Edwards Deming incorporated this practice as a general principle in his model of Toyotism: all employees are tasked with improving operations all of the time. He also noticed another practice that was not

systematized as part of his program, but infused into its spirit. Toyota engineers had been trained to observe operations very closely, quietly and even meditatively, to recognize irregularities that might have negative impacts at a later time if not corrected (Kleiner 2008, 287-290). This is an example of insight applied to the most industrial aspect of company operations.

Eventually, other Japanese companies noticed and followed Toyota's lead. Unfortunately for American car companies, it took them till the 1980s, only after the native car industry lost considerable market share to Japanese competition, to do so themselves. Then began a flurry of training sessions under Edwards Deming's direction, until his death in 1993 (Voss 1995, 17). From 1981 to 1993, Edwards Deming gave 250 seminars for US managers (<http://www.fr-deming.org/whoised.html>). Edwards Deming led the American "quality revolution," with its many restatements and revisions, in programs taking such titles as "six sigma," "planning as learning," and "open-book management" (Kleiner 2008, 296). Edwards Deming's legacy includes "leaness" and "just-in-time" production (an aspect of flatness that discouraged companies from holding inventory and encouraged seeking parts and materials only when needed), "continuous process improvement" and team-work to varying degrees and in a variety of forms. (Just-in-time production principles have now spread to the worker as resource. Precarious employment practices free managers from having idle human resources to support during periods of low demand.) Many of the general features associated with post-Fordist work are elements of the Toyotist package of innovations. However, the year of Edwards Deming's death, 1993, marked the waning of interest in his innovations, "particularly in operational quality, excellence and developing people.... Chiefly, the numbers culture had reasserted itself" (Kleiner 2008, 297). Production metrics and after-the-fact quality-analysis were restored.

Companies had been motivated to adopt Toyotism to improve their competitiveness. In its more ideal form, Toyotism offered this partly because it enlisted the engaged participation of workers. Because this participation required the removal of barriers to such participation, by according certain types of authority to these workers, and challenging workers to cooperate in its administration, this feature of Toyotism is correctly understood as aimed at "employee empowerment."

Overall, Edwards Deming's legacy was a focus on customer interests, workforce empowerment, and planning (Stone 2004, 104). In now-familiar language, Edwards Deming recommended "flattening of management positions and a shift to cross-functional work teams, widening jobs and instituting "horizontal management practices," involving broadly defined tasks rather than narrowly defined departmental objectives. Finally, he promoted giving ordinary workers more responsibility" (Stone 2004, 104). However, as noted, a basic element of Edwards Deming's fourteen-point scheme [Kleiner 2008, 293], one he considered

essential (but never fully realized in any case), the promise of guaranteed employment, was quietly dropped from the agenda.

In labour analyst Katherine Stone's view, the most radical of his fourteen principals of work reorganization was the last: "Put everyone to work to accomplish the transformation" (Stone 2004, 106). This directive implies that workers could not be content to perform automatically in their own domains (pejoratively, as "bureaucratized" workers) without concerning themselves with the overall picture of company operations. They were expected to aid coworkers whenever possible. Accompanied by its necessary context, teamwork, this directive anticipates the devaluation of "professional" or "skilled-worker" status and expertise, normally marked by a defined purview or set of responsibilities in a company, beyond which the worker is not required to reach. This directive puts a premium on generalized worker engagement. As we have seen, these developments undercut worker's power relative to management that Fordist era labour enjoyed.

After Toyotist practices and principles moved from Japan to the shop floors of auto-plants and other factories of the West, they were extended into white-collar settings. Total Quality Management (TQM) is one among a range of new programs that follow similar principles to Toyotism and were widely adopted in American offices in the 1980s.

One such program first originated in England. It was promoted in the Tavistock Institute in London. Pre-war, this institute was home to post-Freudian psychological research.⁷⁵ In 1947, a postgraduate "action researcher" at the institute, Eric Trist, began studying teamwork in a British coal mine (Haighmoor) that was noted for its productivity and lack of accidents. The unique way of mining at this site was invented by the miners themselves, as their mine did not lend itself to the common, "assembly-line" format. With relative autonomy as they developed their unique method, they responded effectively to the real mining conditions they confronted, which is just what Alexander charges builders to do if they want to achieve vital, beautiful architecture.

Exploring forms of organization, Trist also studied Norwegian resistance fighters in World War Two, who had practiced keeping hard boundaries around cell activity so as not to expose fighters from other cells if members of any one cell were interrogated (Kleiner 2008, 50-51). This is suggestive of contemporary team activity wherein its activities are largely opaque to upper management. Trist also understood and inter-

⁷⁵ Wilfrid Bion, who had studied under Melanie Klein, founded the Tavistock Institute, and research here laid the groundwork for object-relations psychology (Kleiner 2008, 40).

nalized the standard military practice of granting authority and responsibility to enact orders to officers close to the site of action without specifying exactly how to do so. This contradicts the understanding of military organization as hierarchically-ordered and bound by rules and procedures—which is true of its structure and in non-combat conditions. However, within the military model of authority in combat, responsible decision-making is expected of those tasked with a job.⁷⁶

From these studies, Trist came to understand the value of consulting and enabling “the grass-roots” when a job is to be done. Additionally, as we have seen, this idea also emerges from the organic models consulted by systems designers. Trist recognized that these principles are particularly critical when the environment in which people act changes often. From his studies, he concluded that “as a business’s environment became more turbulent, top-down hierarchies would cease to be effective—just as they were ineffective amid the disorder of nature. [By contrast,] living systems coped with this turbulence by generating their own order from the bottom up” (Kleiner 2008, 51).

Accordingly, Trist and company translated this principle into organizational functioning by having control rest with the people closest to the borders of the organization, those in contact with clients and customers. They were the last contact, as it were, with the product or service before it reached the customer. Since these people had greatest access to customer needs and responses, they should have some authority over how these meetings proceeded. This is another form of rationale for flat organization, or, to use earlier language, it leaves employees free to be ambassadors for the company enhanced the “sensing” capacity of the team and let information flow through it without obstruction. It also explains the rationale of the multi-skilled team. Each member is expected to be capable of fulfilling a number of functions if the situation around which they have considerable autonomy demands this. In addition, as we know, rendering responsibility like this changed what was expected of the managers of teams. Managers are expected to lead teams, not to instruct or discipline them, while “making sure the work teams had whatever they needed and coordinating information so everyone had a view of the organization as a whole” (Kleiner 2008, 52).

Trist moved to America and was an important organizational change professional and scholar for many decades. His career spanned from the 1960s to the 1990s. A significant part of Trist’s work was done with

⁷⁶ This is simply called the “command tradition,” found in militaries in general. Edwards (1997, 106) explains: “To a casual observer military forces, with their strict hierarchies and authoritarian ethos, epitomize a rigid, rule-bound bureaucracy (and that is, unquestionably, a well-deserved reputation). Scrutinized more closely, however, traditional military hierarchies are anything but mechanical. At every level, individuals *bear responsibilities*, rather than *perform functions*. A field officer may be ordered to ‘take that hill,’ but the whole point of such an order is that how he carries it out is up to him.”

an Australian, Fred Emery. They explicitly declared themselves to be using an ecological model of organization, as they believed that “corporations were analogous to ecosystems” (Kleiner 2008, 51). They called their organizational innovations, variously, “industrial democracy,” “open systems,” and “sociotechnical systems.”

Reminding us of the form of the Taylorist model, Kleiner (2008, 51-52) notes that at the time of Emery and Trist’s early innovations, “nearly all work was organized as if it were an elaborate machine. Work was broken up into disparate, specified tasks. Workers were programmed, through stringent rules and elaborate pay scales, to be specialized in those tasks. Expert engineers designed the jobs, set the pace, and inspected the products. Workers who followed the rule got pensions. Workers who faltered got disciplined.” The alternative vision Emery and Trist had of companies is “the factory as community” (Kleiner 2008, 52).

National Training Labs

Early consultants and ideas also emerged from the American east coast, at the National Training Lab (NTL), where the theories of Maslow and Fritz Perls⁷⁷ were influential (Alexander 1992, 40). “Group dynamics” training sessions were developed by the scholars and trainers who met there. A basic precept of these workshops was that group processes helped forge an “authentic self” (Alexander 1992, 40). Unnecessary barriers of suspicion, and struggles for power between people could be eliminated. Participants who attended these workshops in the first decade (prior to the 1950s) were teachers, academics, social workers, and church group members (Kleiner 2008, 32). Through the experiments, these participants found that they learned more open patterns of communications over the course of the weeks-long, intensive sessions.

When they originally set up their lab, researchers had intended to merely study small-group processes (i.e., social and communications patterns) by simulating group interactions with volunteering subjects. These were to be exercises in “action research,” as originally developed by the Tavistock Institute. As the subjects interacted, however, they were emotionally moved by their awareness of being studied. Subjects admitted feeling emotionally reborn by revealing themselves to others. Responding to this discovery, researchers changed the goal of the workshops. Subjects came to NTL workshops for a form of therapy. Self-revelation helped people to overcome “slavish attention” to social roles, which they generally felt to be oppressive and

⁷⁷ Fritz Perls’ Gestalt therapy was also an important discipline there (as well as at the Esalen Institute). “Edwin Nevis (2000) described Gestalt therapy as ‘a conceptual and methodological base from which helping professionals can craft their practice.’ In the same volume, Joel Latner [Latner 2000] also stated that Gestalt therapy is built upon two central ideas: that the most helpful focus of psychotherapy is the experiential present moment, and that everyone is caught in webs of relationships; thus, it is only possible to know ourselves against the background of our relationship to the other.” “Overview: Gestalt Therapy,” in *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gestalt_therapy

a result of effort to maintain a level of status in a social hierarchy. They learned to be intimate with others and felt that through this processes they discovered their “true selves.” We see in this the pervasive repudiation of persona, of a public face, which is an important feature of the New Age ethos as well.

NTL activity, such as “T-groups” (transaction-groups) or “encounter-groups,” resonated with the pervasive popular belief that psychological ill-health is the result of repression, understood as “keeping secrets.” Indeed, the institute, along with the psychology of Fritz Perls and other iconic experimenters of the era, was likely a major source of this popular belief. However, participants, many of them psychological professionals themselves, did not seek to shake off the effects of trauma so they could function “normally.” They wanted to overcome “normal” repression and raise the quality of their experience with others to the “vital” level.

The dysfunction they sought to redress was normality itself, i.e., relying on social roles and status positions to facilitate social engagement. Accordingly, NTL workshop participants called their activities “therapy for normals.”⁷⁸ As a result of the workshops, participants found they had gained more fluid and intimate relations with others. Changes were particularly dramatic amongst people formerly alienated by class, race, or roles in bureaucracies. In the process of responding to researchers’ provocations to seek greater intimacy, participants discovered that intimate interactions made them feel more personally alive and “real.”

The project that NTL happened upon seems appropriate in the context of swift social change, where social hierarchies were, de facto, being shaken up. Insisting on markers of prestige that have become irrelevant due to social change certainly would lead to dysfunctions such as loneliness and depression. The relief of throwing off these irrelevancies could understandably bring about a powerful sense of unburdening for those doing so. However, there was an important anti-racist thrust to NTL programs and similar initiatives. Many liberal-minded participants wished to escape the endemic racism in their society.

⁷⁸ Wexler (2000, 96-97) puts this orientation in its religious context: “Christianity had assumed that all individuals experienced an on-going struggle between body and soul and sought to encourage everyone to suppress the promptings of the former in the long-term interests of the latter. Even those secular systems of thought that succeeded Christianity had not really departed far from this basic framework of thought, effectively replacing “soul” with “mind” and thus also endorsing an ethic of personal self-control and discipline. However, once these systems of belief lost their credibility, not only did asceticism lose its rationale, but also constraint and restraint necessarily took on the character of repressive and alienating forces. It is in this context that antinomian and anarchist impulses become justified as about the ego and social forms become [read] as hindrances to happiness and fulfillment. It is this that explains why, from the perspective of those in the human potential movement, all ‘normal’ people require therapy.”

In another development, motivated by a funding crunch, NTL therapists became facilitators of workplace relations. From about 1956, negotiation- and communications skills-teaching came to the fore (Kleiner 2008, 32-34). The lab was now following the path established by the work-process consultants. In fact, they trained many of the latter. The lab's acolytes were entirely sympathetic with McGregor's promotion of Theory Y personality types as managers for new, reorganized workplaces. Logically, if companies wanted to change, they had to alter the basic paradigm, even to the personality type of their managers. The organizational development consultants who emerged from NTL and eventually spread throughout North American industrial regions were skilled "group dynamics" leaders. Managers of companies, now more dependent on creativity and innovation for success, sought their services. Consistent with Theory Y values, these consultants tried to teach managers new approaches to supervision (to become softer and more participatory "leaders") while they also helped restructure workplaces along the post-Fordist model.

Cases

The above are some of the people and principles that prepared the climate for company experiments in reorganization for post-Fordism. Several examples of projects, taken from Kleiner and provided below, trace typical trajectories of such experiments, while they also indicate the involvement with New Age spirituality of some of the key organizational innovators.

In a review of the change processes that organizational developers enacted in corporation, the most radical of them were carried out under the engaged direction of innovative company managers. Several examples of plant-wide experiments show how American companies retooled for post-Fordism (and well as how they retrenched). The story of a number of plants owned by the personal and household care conglomerate, Proctor and Gamble (P&G), is unique in that these plants' founders invented new organizational forms and practices internally (with the initial assistance of Douglas McGregor, and later under the leadership of Charles Krone). They implemented them in their new factories, such as in Augusta, Georgia, and Lima, Ohio, (in 1963 and 1966, respectively) and kept these practices secret even from the upper managers of the multinational, as well as all other potentially-interested parties (Kleiner 2008, 55-60). Low costs, high wages and quick responsiveness to market changes continued to characterize P&G's operations for many years after their innovations were implemented. However, despite continuing efforts at renewal over subsequent decades, the company eventually "regressed to the mean" and allowed the most innovative practices to be abandoned. This tendency is seen again in further examples.

Charles Krone was one of the first P&G employees to attend NTL workshops (Kleiner 2008, 56). He was also a follower of the modern Sufi mystic Gurdjieff, who lived and worked with his acolytes in Paris from 1920 till his death in 1957. Groups in his worldwide following "practiced and studied self-observation,

group mirroring, and reflective dances” (Kleiner 2008, 56). In an anti-Fordist strategy, Krone was noted in his work for ignoring rules and schedules. With his innovations, he sought to instill in workers what he had acquired in these practices, i.e., that they “give up knee-jerk reactions [to situations,] eliminate the automatic learned behaviour or ego-driven responses, [and so discover] their true selves” (Kleiner 2008, 57).

The social activism of these experimenters is evident. For example, the first of the innovative P&G factories was set in Augusta because it was at the centre of American race conflict at the time. Planners hoped new team practices could improve race relations, and there is evidence that it did so (Kleiner 2008, 58-60). At Augusta, team workers were universally called “technicians,” and spent four hours per week training and two hours discussing production problems together. The goal was to increase the scope of everyone’s responsibilities--learning, for example, marketing, machine design, and point-of-sale issues. No one was to be dependent on specialists (Kleiner 2008, 55-59). At Lima, pay rates were determined by how many skills a worker had acquired. They were paid enough that they were not tempted to work on their weekends, a principled position now actively abandoned by employers. Leadership on a particular project was determined by whoever was most committed to it (Kleiner 2008, 59-60).

Before Krone’s influence in the company waned, he had shared his spiritual interests with other corporate innovators and their wives. They became “a tightly-knit group of friends during the 1970s, a kind of Midwestern Bloomsbury” (Kleiner 2008, 60-61). Along with Gurdjieff’s teachings, they also studied Tibetan mysticism and Robert Owen’s transcendentalist New Harmony community. Krone left the company when opinion turned against his innovations. He moved to California and spent a number of years consulting and leading NTL-like workshops on both coasts (Kleiner 2008, 58, 81).

Another plant that stood out was a Gaines dog food plant, a subsidiary of General Foods, in Topeka, Kansas. This was “the first major showplace of the postindustrial era” (Kleiner 2008, 68). Plant process designers used similar methods to Augusta and Lima, with the result that, through the 1970s and 1980s, Topeka was the most productive plant in the General Foods system (Kleiner 2008, 79). Despite this, in 2001, after this plant changed hands several times, the program was shut down (Kleiner 2008, 81). One of the developers, Robert Ketchum had long-since been sidelined into an organizational development department in the company. His response illustrates how far away such departments were from the possibilities initially imagined. “Its purpose was to help factory managers learn to communicate better. [However,] under my system, there wouldn’t be a traditional factory” (Kleiner 2008, 80).

A final biography I include here is that of Pierre Wack, at Royal Dutch Shell. When the formation of OPEC created uncertainty in the refining industry (1973), the company sought Wack’s help. Along with Krone, he had a history of experience with Gurdjieff’s practices, and had lived in the principle retreat outside of Paris.

He adopted “a lifelong preoccupation with the art of what he called ‘seeing.’ To *see* [according to Wack, which contrasted with analytically *observing*] meant not merely being aware of an element of your environment, but seeing through it, with full consciousness. Wack continued his spiritual explorations in Japan, Burma, and Thailand, and studied Japanese garden design” (Kleiner 2008, 134-35).

To help the company anticipate future conditions, Wack sought out and consulted those he referred to as “remarkable people,” generally found outside the company.⁷⁹ Wack’s strategy is an early instance of what we see commonly in post-Fordist companies—mythologizing certain consultants or company executives as having special insight. (I explained earlier that, if a psytopia is to be made of a company, the corporation must somehow be identified as a mystified whole that warrants superior effort on the part of the worker. The company CEO, as guru, enhances this myth, or stands in for the corporation.) However, many (unheralded) company managers resented Wack’s practices, as, by inference, they themselves were “not remarkable.” Seeking out “remarkable people” was an affront to Fordist values. “The idea contradicted the unwritten axiom of postwar management: that any manager would be ‘remarkable’ enough to step into any role” (Kleiner 2008, 141).

Like Edwards Deming, Wack had found in Japan that companies there did not plan, but worked towards “visions” of their futures. An Indian Swami had told him that through insight he could “understand the forces behind the vast number-crunching for futures” (Kleiner 2008, 136-138). Certainly, Shell’s managers had any amount of the data-analysis available to them. However, Wack found that in the face of new demands from oil-source countries, they could not grasp the nature of the new conditions. “They lacked the necessary gut feel for the new world that Mack and Newland were trying to describe. They did not clearly see its geopolitics, changing markets and inconstant cultures. And without that gut feel, they could not act” (Kleiner 2008, 140-41). Clearly, “gut feel” refers to having an overall vision of a situation—a whole picture, gained partly from intuition, but also a great deal of knowledge of situations—which would again be necessary if the metrics that the company typically relied on had become irrelevant. Wack’s position was that if company insiders could not generate that special insight (gut feel), he must find those who could.

These principles of relying on experience and special insight, whilst downplaying “orthodox” knowledge, now frame discussions and justifications for the team format and flat organizational forms, discussed in the previous chapter. However, like the degradation of the godhead in successive stages of New Age-like re-

⁷⁹ This is reminiscent of G. I. Gurdjieff’s title for his second volume of the *All and Everything* (1950) trilogy, “Meetings with Remarkable Men.”

ligion, and the reduction of the transformation from society-level to personal level as the new form of its millennialism, the nature of the insight demanded is more modest than that of Wack. Now, the understanding sought by insight is about “the next big thing,” a development team should pursue. These are often digital products that operationalize very basic, even trivial activities, such as a phone “app” that counts the number of steps a person walks during the day as a representation of “fitness.” (This is an example is, of course, of “mathesizing” one’s own activities so as to better measure oneself.) The ideal of “remarkable men,” which may have been more meaningful and potent in Wack’s formulation, is trivialized for team operations.

Superficially, “valorizing insight” would seem to be incongruously related to the high amounts of data-collection and processing that Harvey insists is the ultimate determinant of company power. However, as I have shown, the former was conceived as a method of proceeding past metrics and information systems that may not have been very sophisticated in early post-Fordism, making them uninformative. (The requirement to include hard assumptions in scenario-modelling, such as that the price of oil always hovers around a certain value, or rises only slowly, a common presumption before 1973, is an example of a limitation of the predictive technology of the time.) “Computers that learn” is, of course, a way to correct the flaw of wrong assumptions. In the next chapter, I review the transition to this forecasting approach.

Even today, only a subset of companies can afford the highest quality data-analysis. Many may still find that the personal insight of gurus is their best chance at understanding their business environment. Kleiner’s (2008, 301) observation about this issue supports the assumption. He distinguishes companies that have created “sensing” cultures from those that primarily have “numbers” cultures to manage their operations. However, as I have argued, these are not dichotomous methods. Rather, they are both devoted to unearthing the contents of trends that, because of their opaqueness and complexity under post-Fordist conditions of continual transformation, require innovative approaches to identify and understand.

Posthierarchy Fails

Kleiner documents decades of effort by a succession of apostles to establish workplace institutions that put employees first, by affording them significant authority. However, the products of their painstaking interventions were repeatedly degraded by the actions of, variously, managers and CEOs, apparently stemming from incomprehension, disinterest or hostility to the new practices. Often, but not always, union representatives and some workers opposed them, but they protested even more the cases where managers overrode workers’ authorized decisions, which they often did (Kleiner 2008, 74).

Kleiner makes clear that the reason for the constant recapitulation of the same themes by a generation of organizational consultants is that most of the efforts of these post-hierarchical activists failed. One of the most persistent crusaders, Eric Trist “was mournfully aware [at the end of his career] that the prevailing

institutions of his world did not live up to the great destiny he saw for them” (Kleiner 2008, 49). As Edwards Deming had conceived the Toyotist philosophy, it also failed to flourish once translated from Japan to North American and other global contexts. This is chiefly through evasion of Edwards Deming’s “number-one” precondition for its effectiveness: the assurance of permanent employment for participants. Recall that, even before Edwards Deming’s arrival in Japan, Toyota offered secure work as a trade-off to encourage employees’ active participation in teamwork. During his practice, Trist also negotiated job guarantees, eventually overturned as well (Kleiner 2008, 53). These innovators knew that employee empowerment, or genuine engagement, could not be secured without them.

However, as explained in Chapter Five, responding to the unpredictable economy through flexibility was the original impetus behind teamwork and the other features. As post-Fordism advanced, converting workers’ tenure in companies from permanent to temporary was yet another strategy to meet the goal of flexibility, which followed on the heels of the earlier strategies. Consequently, these early promises of security had no material grounding. Moreover, they even contradicted the purposes of the other conditions that were to accompany that security.

According to Kleiner, managers rejected Wack’s methods for lack of nerve (Kleiner 2008, 301). However, when such psychological explanations for innovative failure are repeated throughout Kleiner’s text, as they are, one assumes he ignores important political-economic realities, such as my suggestion, above, that worker insecurity is a structural feature of this economy. In his writing, Kleiner frequently poses dramas between innovators and the superiors who suppress their work or ideas. For example, taking P&G’s reversal of methods, even in the face of its successes along the parameters of efficiency and productivity, Kleiner does not ask whether these parameters are really (or are now) the goals of the corporation. Kleiner’s is in fact the narrative form of many organizational textbooks attempting to get “old-school” managerial types, who clearly still exist, to respond to post-Fordist requirement for organization and supervision. His narrative form (as his title suggests) chronicles the struggles of the renegade hero, whose efforts are continually rebuffed by the power structure. Because Kleiner does not deeply scrutinize the systemic forces that might repeatedly incline managers to revert to traditional organizational structures and management styles, his text falls short. It can be grouped with others that agitate for the “true,” as-yet-not-realized, organizational form, in the many guises revealed earlier.

Kleiner himself is a proselytizer for posthierarchy in corporations, without taking a hard look at its capitalist context. (He was also an early developer of *The Whole Earth Catalog*, along with Brandt, who we discuss in the next chapter, which gives us an idea of his posthierarchical credentials.) Nevertheless, granting these limitations, his detailed accounts show that many organizational innovators subordinated corporate objec-

tives to the goal of liberating workers from oppressive and uninspiring conditions. His account also makes clear that much was tried and little succeeded.

I conclude that, as originally developed to support worker engagement and self-fulfillment, the posthierarchy catechism might have been coherent with the assurance of job-security backing it. However, posthierarchy policies, though attractive, were not convincing to managers as ways to confront business unpredictability. Furthermore, to the extent that employee empowerment found its place in their priorities, this was only as far as it supported this objective. Even for workers in the heart of a limited posthierarchy success story (SAs in still-lucrative work sites) worker empowerment has been a double-edged sword, as discussed in Chapters Five and Six. The evidence points to a wavering embrace of posthierarchy practices in workplaces, even at the iconic centres of post-Fordist work. Regardless, many workplaces never really saw these reforms, and many that did had advances rolled back over time. The short list of sustained innovations, below, is a summary of conditions across the American workforce. Despite a long history of post-Fordist organizational theorization and experimentation, a “Survey of Employer Provided Training” by the US Bureau of Statistics in 1993 (Stone 2004, 114) revealed that a limited number of “worker-engagement” practices had survived:

- Worker teams
- Total Quality Management
- Quality circles
- Employee involvement in technology purchase decisions
- Job rotation
- Significant investments in worker training

This study was followed up five years later, and showed that all (save one) of the practices had doubled its rate of implementation over that period (from 1992 to 1997), resting at 55% and 60% rates of use. However, *team* organization (stable at 40%) had not expanded. Stone attributes this to the investment required to establish well-functioning teams, including “training in cooperation and teamwork skills.” Since the team format carries with it the principle of short-term employment, implying the transience of team members after a project has been concluded, employers who developed a compatible team would regard its dismemberment as a distinct loss. This suggests a contradiction between two of the signal features of new organizations, insecure employment and teamwork. Stone notes that “teams only work when team members trust each other—a process that requires multiple repeat interactions between team members. Teams thus

rely on the very feature that the new workplace repudiates--long-term attachment of the employee to the firm” (Stone 2004, 202).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided a review of the essential theories and practices of changing workplaces, as North America moved towards post-Fordism. I provided examples of how these were enabled and enacted. As I explained, SAs working in teams in a flat workplace is an organizational form designed to maintain immaterial production that responds to quickly-changing market needs. All significant work innovations, including employee self-actualization or empowerment, should be seen, at least partially, as subordinate to the purpose of dealing with the uncertainty of the unpredictable economy. The more concrete demands of managing businesses under uncertain conditions has led managers and organizational experimenters towards three basic strategies, encouraging insight and seeing the “the big picture,” intensively collecting and analyzing environmental data to create holistic visions, and enabling employees to provide to on-the-ground input, tacit or experiential knowledge and empowering them to take responsibility with it.

The last is one reason for the flat organizational form. However, in a complication to post-Fordist orthodoxy (following Harvey) I showed that Vallas took issue with the idea that this flat form (i.e., iconic SA teamwork model which I described in previous chapters) really is necessarily more efficient and productive. Harvey contradicts this when he calls the new economy flexible; he means that many different forms intermingle. I showed that, despite post-Fordism’s value as a body of economic thought, scholars debate the degree to which post-Fordist macro-economic structures require, for effective engagement in the economy, that organizations be posthierarchical. Vallas and Harvey criticize the strict posthierarchy advocates as technological determinists, who are, in their analysis, neglectful of social and culture determinants of work organization.

This proviso might suggest that posthierarchy is an ideal but not necessarily effective business strategy for many types of businesses. If so, one might ask why. More in accordance with the arguments I have made in general in this dissertation—that there is an iconic form of labour that hosts a certain ideology that, in turn, spills beyond its boundaries—a major “purpose” of the more properly “posthierarchical” workplaces may be to disseminate certain values across all workplaces. Ideals that are drawn from the posthierarchical discourse are the possibility of ecstatic labour and the prior necessity of short-term work engagements for that ecstasy to be possible. As we have seen, experiences of ecstasy, or at least fun, may be important for motivating SAs, but they are not necessary for many other kinds of workers, and assuredly a faint hope for them. However, should these workers identify with SAs, they too might internalize the necessity of insecure

labour for the (elusive) tradeoff of passion at work. If, through these processes, precarious work lives become normalized, then it is easier to distribute across all forms of work.

As Harvey argues, and we have seen, the flat form, with teamwork, is far from universally found in companies. Kleiner's and Stone's contributions verify this analysis. Though posthierarchy is more ostensive than real in post-Fordist companies, it is not normally questioned as an organizational goal. This valorization without validation (i.e., enactment) suggests an important ideological function for the posthierarchy ethos. Despite managers' faithlessness in actually implementing (and/or maintaining) these innovations, managers nevertheless quote chapter and verse of the posthierarchy catechism when asked. Managers may believe what they have been told by organizational theorists and HR professionals, but often resist fully-flat work-teams. On the other hand, pure posthierarchy may not in fact be an effective business strategy in many cases. Whichever is true, we know that the idea of posthierarchy is highly persistent within managerial circles despite its sketchy implementation.

One such function appears to be that this organizational form is considered essential for employee empowerment. The two factors have been tied together at the outset. Indeed, one may stand in for the other in the corporate imagination. The association of posthierarchy with employee-empowerment motivated organizational activists, from Burns and Stalker, through Edwards Deming, McGregor, Argyris and the rest to pursue the former for the sake of the latter. They either tacitly assumed or argued for the intertwined nature of posthierarchical organizational forms and employee empowerment. This assumption of the intertwined nature of the two terms seems also to explain the difficulty that industry literature has over identifying the purposes of spirituality in workplaces—as to whether this is for the employees' or the company's benefit (which we saw in Chapter Four).

The post-Fordist organizational innovations explained above took place at the same time as the New Age emerged. Many of the basic pursuits of the organizational developers are similar to those of New Agers, including principally, creating organic models of social relations, where power rests at the grass-roots levels of associations, and creating a holistic vision of one's personal situation. The goal of personal empowerment is basic to the NAS culture as well. The New Age movement and organizational innovators were also co-located, with a concentration on the California coast. In fact, there was overlap in their ideological sources, particularly the human potential movement and transpersonal practices. This further supports the argument that the counterculture and New Agers consciously supported the thinking of innovators in high-tech organizational structures. That they did so is confirmed (at least) by their engagement with the philosophy and work of Schumacher.

In the next chapter, I illustrate a convergence similar to the way that managers associate flat organization with empowerment, but generally broadened to the level of social organization. The network cosmology I consider is more appropriately seen as a worldview than an organizational principle. Yet we can see the latter (the organizational form) relying on the former (the cosmology) for its imaginative sense. The network cosmology is a generalization to the level of society of the drive to posthierarchy in organizations, which itself is more amorphous and yet more narrowly grounded. The ideologists of net culture essentially propose that society itself should be organized in a network form, obviating the need for people to be governed as members of groups.

The community of focus in this next chapter is the melange of New Agers, counterculturalists, computer hackers, neopagans, and the SA employees of the Southern California coastal industries, in the Silicon Valley high-technology and Hollywood global film industries. I explained in the last chapter the potential for SAs to influence broadly, and the next chapter shows how this is an actuality. The Silicon Valley SAs are globally powerful, and they took the lead in defining SA culture in general. They developed an ideology for the Net Age. As the cosmology extends beyond their immediate community, it promotes the industries that employ them and advances their own wealth. Although it is a technologically-defined cosmology it has features very similar to the neospiritual worldview, as illustrated in the tables in Chapter One.

According to this worldview, governments are stodgy, wasteful and authoritarian. (So are regressive, Fordist corporations.) Governments are held to be deficient partially because they function through hierarchical or bureaucratic structures. They are presented as the oppressors from which a network society would liberate us. In reality, governments are also tax-collectors. California SAs, with their generally high salaries, have good reason to fear that function. In implicitly denigrating the activities of governments through their network cosmology, they also advance their own wealth and power, along with those of their employers. These ideas come to us in the form of the Californian ideology (Barbrook and Cameron 1997), another characterization of SA culture that I discuss in the next chapter. This construct adds nuance to the network cosmology vision. Its theoreticians show that reviling governments and their hierarchical structures serves to resolve the central contradiction of post-Fordist SA consciousness: they emerged from an anti-capitalist counterculture yet are completely dependent on the market because of the nature of post-Fordist industries in which they prosper and at whose worldwide centre they essentially reside. Wariness of governments (stemming from two completely different sentiments) is the ideological common ground that unites both the right and left-leaning political impulses that California-based SAs must harbour and continuously reconcile if they are to function in their work milieu. If we can get at the heart of how it does this, we may be able to provide ourselves with insight as to what role neospirituality has in this resolution.

The outcomes of the campaigns to restructure workplaces and recondition workers (and managers), shows that the ideal of posthierarchy at work, implemented in the form of flat organizations, has been accompanied with a number of degradations of the quality of workers' lives, which include job insecurity and greater intensity of work. Now, worker empowerment is firmly married to insecure employment policies and high-pressure work that creates "burnout," which sometimes forces employees to quit in order to recover. As we recall, these insecure conditions contrast sharply with what was proposed in the original posthierarchy model developed in Japan with the help of Edwards Deming. Edwards Deming insisted upon employment security for workers as a precondition for his program, which evolved into Toyotism.

Workers now lack the original Fordist rewards of security, increasing remuneration and a career path. Intensity and precarity tend to mitigate the quality of employee autonomy or empowerment that the ideal of flatness promotes and indeed implements to a degree for particular workers. Hence, the claim to empower workers via flat organizational structure is dubious or, at best, qualified and equivocal. I have explained that empowerment is not real for employees who are chronically threatened with loss of employment. However, the "flat" employment structure institutes this threat for workers. The discourse around flat organizations claims it promote employee power, but the organizational form provides little of its substance because the discourse does not look beyond the confines of the workplace.

In this situation, requiring commitment without the reciprocal loyalty of the company that Edwards Deming demanded creates a problem for employers trying to secure worker engagement. This dilemma points squarely at the need for considerable employee indoctrination to secure participation, and the pervasive ideology of posthierarchy (erroneously equated with democracy) in companies (either that it already exists in workplaces or is just around the corner) is an element of this indoctrination. I have already reviewed aspects of this indoctrination at work, especially as it applies to transforming corporation into psytopias, and will consider the issue further in the next chapter.

Chapter Eight: The Net Age

Introduction

In this chapter, I consider the value-system of new-economy workers as an inheritance of their cultural forebears—American West Coast software and media producers of early post-Fordism who intermingled with New Agers and other members of the local counter-culture. Especially the software workers were incubated within a heady mix of New Agers, alternate communards, technology enthusiasts, celebrators of alternate consciousness (including through drug use) and aspirants to “interesting work.” At the heart of the digital “new economy” as they were, they were also shaped by the signal events and cultural Geist in which their lives were embedded. Over time, the participants within this milieu who mastered the new tools became the workers of post-Fordist high-technology capitalism, as well as its consummate expression. Immediately below, I explore this interaction of populations from the work and technology milieu and the New Age. I show that many new workers in the vanguard post-Fordist jobs, Silicon-Valley high-tech workers, had New Age beliefs and engaged in New Age practices, as they also embraced a network cosmology and the digital world in general. These compound loyalties continued. I consult Erik Davis’s, *Techgnosis*, to show that beliefs in posthierarchy, holism and self-actualization are fundamental not only to the early neospiritual’s worldview, but also to those of the workers and managers who matured along with them.

I show in this chapter that the commitment to posthierarchy in workplaces now appears in a technological guise, with social relations modeled on the network. Since network dynamics are considered to be intrinsically “levelling,” they work out the posthierarchical society. They are seen as an instrumentalization of the democratic process. They not only reduce the social need for the traditional electoral apparatus, but even for governmental activity *per se*. Therefore, those living their lives through network relations can pursue their personal interests without concern for their former commitments to political activism.

This identification of network relations with the automatic emergence of a just social order creates the basis for mythologizing both the Internet itself and net-related work. I will discuss this mythologization, below, in the forms of a “hacker ethic” (Pekka Himanen 2010), a “network cosmology” (Fisher’s 2010), “dataism” (Hariri 2015) and “the Californian ideology” (Barbrook and Cameron 1995). As worldviews, each of these describes similar dynamics of identity construction, in the face of a commonly-defined contradiction experienced by workers engaged in iconic post-Fordist industries. They all define collective relations as a product of network dynamics, using slightly-different characterizations of the problem, and solutions.

These versions of the culture of SA workers are ingredients to the mode of regulation of post-Fordism. To remind the reader, a mode of regulation is the “ideas and bodies of knowledge, everyday life experiences, and the conceptions of the individual in a social era” (Fisher 2010, 20–21) that complement the specific structure of an economy therein. The social habits, institutions and conventions work to support economies; practical, social and cultural life behaviours are institutionally integrated, and they in turn support the way a society provides itself with material goods. That way, the economy, is referred to as the regime of accumulation. Hence, following regulation theory, we can assert that the worldviews I reveal here somehow support the post-Fordist regime of accumulation. In the earlier discussion about the mutual determination of the material and ideal ingredients in a social order, I discussed the debates over which of the culture or economic factors dominates in historical change processes, leaving the question unanswered at the conclusion of that section (as in this dissertation). Nevertheless, regulation theory posits a correspondence. Accordingly, the representations of worker cosmologies I present in this chapter are models of an ideology of SA workers but, as they were created by individuals they emphasize different aspects of the worker ideology. On the other hand, especially with the interpretation I put on them to show their similarities, these models roughly conform to each other in terms of certain principles. In the same way, I have argued that neospirituality, which has a strong presence in these worksites, exhibits belief-structures similar to them. I have hypothesized that neospirituality is, equally, a component the post-Fordist mode of regulation. A purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the explicit ideas about the nature of the world that engage iconic post-Fordist workers, SAs. This allows me to complete the comparison of the explicit SA worldview and show their parallel character to neospiritual views of the world.

Counterculture and New Agers Adopt the Digital

Nearly all characterizations of the post-Fordist worker that have risen to prominence in the last generation, regardless of the particular sector they address, emphasize mastery of new technologies for work. Prior to this period, Fordist industrial technologies were also celebrated. However, they produced marvels of mass-production and dramatic achievements such as sending rockets to the moon, nuclear power, inter-continental transportation, common utilities, and other massively-funded and often government-directed endeavors. Because they are centred on the digital, post-Fordist technologies are different, or so it is claimed. Models of socializing, working, society and economy based on the computer network have become ubiquitous, globally. The digital has excited interest and involvement well beyond the ranks of its true adepts, becoming part of popular culture. It has excited such adulation that it can be said ICTs (information and communication technologies) have become profoundly mythologized (Mosco 2004).

However, this contemporary love of technology occurred only over a period of time and through several steps. In the earliest days of the counterculture, “technology” generally referred to the large-scale enter-

prises described above. It was understood as integral to the Fordist power structure, and provoked considerable hostility. Similarly, all workplaces were identified with the bureaucratized global corporations or heavy-industry's assembly-lines. Criticism of the Fordist stifling of human creativity was widespread, as we have seen. However, having been guided since the early 1960s by the founders of humanistic psychology, Rogers and Maslow (Carrette 2007, 165), many thought that work (and machines used for it, if any) should serve the self-actualization needs of individuals. Technology, and the bureaucracy that organized it, were felt to inhibit the free exploration of the self through work and to mean subordinating oneself to "the machine." The paradigmatic Fordist forms of labour were, in the managerial office, "the organization man" and, on the factory assembly line, "the mass worker." The critique of instrumental rationality (considered the mode of operation of both bureaucracies and "industrial society"), was popularly transmitted through Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) and levelled at many different situations in contemporary life, including work. Work represses the human spirit, so must be eliminated or changed (Campbell 2007, 291-98).

More generally, critics of Fordism included scholarly and political Marxists, members of the "New Left," New Age activists, humanists, and posthierarchy advocates, to describe some of the constituent groups of the counterculture. Some of these we considered in the preceding chapter. Activists articulated the public's offence at being transformed from citizens into "statistics," through its integration into the grand post-war infrastructure and social-management schemes, which were also the target of E.F. Schumacher (1973, 1977 and 1979). Consistent with this were the organizational activists' attempts to redirect managers towards quality work-design and away from the running of corporations "by the numbers"—the periodic quantitative assessments and other statistical practices we discussed in the previous chapter. In the context of Schumacher's (1973) "small is beautiful" critique, and new insight on ecological issues, particularly from Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), the impacts of industrial technology on the natural world added to concerns. Additionally, wide attention to the Club of Rome's *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows, *et al* 1972) transmitted a new fear of global overpopulation if the industrial model persisted.

Opponents of the status quo raised their voices, but they also formed "alternate" communities. These were organizational and social experiments, often with ecological concerns prioritized. Some were entirely secular, whereas others featured religious practices derived from foreign or native, and sometimes Chris-

tian, religious traditions. Communes and retreats organized around new religious ideas and practices were not highly distinguishable from those formed around the other types of alternate practices.⁸⁰

As technology was broadly considered the vehicle for perpetrating many social ills, those seeking “alternate lifestyles” usually experimented with technologies, in their newly-designed lives. Terms such as “alternate technology,” and “appropriate technology” named what emerged. Often, tools from another era were re-adopted. Alternatively new ones were invented. As a basic standard, they were hoped to be solutions that could be built, disseminated and used independent of market systems. Technology theorist, Ursula Franklin (1990), calls these “holistic” technologies. They were to be free of the industrial model in their production, so they did not reinforce industrial structures (Hull 1992, 137).⁸¹

However, despite the counterculture’s endemic suspicion of “technology,” from the earliest days of personal computers (PCs), large swaths of its technologically-adept users have believed in the general emancipatory power of these devices. Even prior to the PC’s invention, those who could gain access to university resources had explored computerized interconnectivity using the mainframe computers on campuses.⁸² Users marveled at the new “bottom-up,” “organic,” and reciprocal communications patterns enabled, as well as the evidence that circumventing authority structures was possible through them. This was rather ironic, since corporations and the military had developed the computer and the embryonic Internet they were using.⁸³ Even with this knowledge, however, users believed that computation could be wrested from the grasp of the military-industrial complex (as provisional evidence, indeed, suggested). Although the idea that any technology could function separate from capitalism was contested, high hopes were held for digital technologies under exploration.

⁸⁰ One way that ecological issues were associated with religion was through the revival of interest in and re-mythologization of historical Christian figures believed to have represented the connection of God to nature. An example is the 12th-century abbess Hildegard of Bingen, who “saw the Earth as vibrantly alive with God. The Holy Spirit to her was greening power and Christ was greenness incarnate” (Hull 1992, 128). Early and iconic examples of intermingling religious and ecological (and other) concerns are Stephen Gaskin’s *The Farm*, in the United States, and in Scotland, the Findhorn community. The latter has been called, along with Esalen, a Mother Church of the New Age (Hull 1992, 127). Other such centers are discussed in Pike (2004, 81, 152) and York (1995, 35).

⁸¹ For a Canadian example, see the *Canadian Renewable Energy News*, published from 1975 to 1979, in Ottawa, Ontario.

⁸² They took advantage of the time-shared computer, introduced by JCR Licklider at the US military’s Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA) to develop the internet (Edwards 1997, 260).

⁸³ “The IBM corporation only built the first programmable digital computer after it was requested to do so by the US Defense Department during the Korean War... For the first twenty years of its existence, the Net’s development was almost completely dependent on the much reviled American federal government. Whether via the US military or through the universities, large amounts of tax payers’ dollars went into building the Net infrastructure and subsidizing the cost of using its services” (Barbrook and Cameron 1995, 7-8).

Both the communal experiments and exploration of digital technologies aimed at securing ways to work around traditional social and political structures. Initially, highly-motivated individuals (“hobbyists” or “hackers”) built personal computers and learned to program them. Using them as communications devices, i.e., connecting them up via telecommunications, was always part of the project. For the first time in history, so it was believed, networking with computers would enable individuals to communicate with each other (and build communities) with the assistance of technology *but without* the intermediation of a corporate entity, be it the state or a corporation. (Indeed, the Internet is the quintessential work-around technology. After all, the US military had designed its precursor, the Arpanet, to allow for alternative communications routes if main communications lines were cut by enemies.) Because of their radical novelty and the demonstrated fact that small groups and individuals *could* powerfully shape their capabilities, computers offered a more substantial or valid scaffolding for these hopes than had traditional tools. With public imagination primed to believe in the right tools, there was little to hold back those involved from mythologizing the digital technologies they mastered, by exaggerating their contrast to the heavy industrial technologies and projects of Fordism.

Barbrook and Cameron (1995, 9) offer an underlying reason for resorting to these experiments with alternate communes and technology that differs from the motives stated. Like many other scholars, they think that “the workaround ethos” is a compromise offered to a failed political movement; a failure “of renewal in the USA during the late ‘60s and early 70’s[, because] the hippies and their allies in the black civil rights movement were... crushed by a combination of state repression and cultural co-option.” This idea is discussed further below.

In his *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (2006), Fred Turner argues that counterculture and cyberculture were at origin inseparable, and that the latter grew from the former. Turner’s account revolves around the figure of Stewart Brand, creator of the iconic countercultural document, *The Whole Earth Catalog* (published from 1968-1972), which became the bible for hippie communes, back-to-the-landers, organic gardeners, and do-it-yourself, millennialist survivalists. It became an integral part of a broadly defined “New Age movement.” Soon after publishing *The Last Whole Earth Catalog*, Brand started to write about the computer scene, and helped create the *The Whole Earth Software Catalog*. In 1985, he became a founder of “the WELL” — The Whole Earth ’Lectronic Link — a pioneering online community, which John Perry Barlow (1990) (a former lyricist for the Grateful Dead), called “the latest thing in frontier villages.” The WELL proved to be a forerunner of the hip *digerati* culture that would soon cluster around *Wired*, whose most famous editor, Kevin Kelly, had also worked on the *Whole Earth Catalogue*. We will discuss his critical involvement in more detail below.

Marking himself as a crossover figure in many ways, Brand moved on again, to become a private-conference organizer. In 1988, he co-founded the Global Business Network (GBN) for corporate futurists and strategists. GBN is a “New Age think tank..., underwritten by major companies like AT&T, Volvo, Nissan and Inland Steel” (Carette and King 2005, 133). Brand’s trajectory can be taken as paradigmatic of the gradual integration of baby-boom counterculturalists into the social system they had rejected in their youth.

However, if Turner hangs his study on Brand’s career, it is underpinned by a broader analysis. He suggests that although the countercultural movements of the 1960s initially rejected computers as instruments of the militarist and corporate society they sought to transform, the scientific discourse around computers sparked their interest and initiated a turnaround in their anti-technological stance. Activists felt an affinity with some computer theorists based on apparent commonalities of worldview. As I have noted, the cybernetics thought of early computer scientists, such as Norbert Wiener, had profound similarities with the organic holism—“everything is connected,” “it’s all one”—that characterized New Age counterculturalism. Many developers of cybernetics or systems theory (seminally, Ludwig von Bertalanffy [1950]) took guidance from the principles of organic wholeness emerging from biology at the time. Gregory Bateson (2000), who developed a brand of systems/information theory based on biology, was an iconic countercultural figure.

As Turner points out, cyberneticists proposed that humans and machines alike could be seen as entities through which information flowed in interconnected systems. Although cyberneticists might start from the technological side of these interconnected systems and counterculturalists from the organic, they could meet in the concept of systemic cosmos in which natural and human worlds flowed in and out of each other, and from which new possibilities and entities could emerge. This cybernetic-holism is conceived of as more or less ontologically horizontal or “flat,” a system of interconnected fluidity. Although cybernetic (and biological) models recognize different registers or levels (spiralling up to higher-level organisms with more power and complexity), signals at the borders are absorbed by the larger whole, and have major or minor implications at other levels, depending on whether, as Bateson (2000) states it, applying information theory to biological processes, they are “differences that make a difference.”

Early developers of the nascent internet latched onto this idea of modelling social life on these cybernetic-biological models. The models served as a basis for their theories of network relations as holistic processes, through which they argued that a number of spontaneous, low-level interventions (i.e., participation) of many users could somehow create order, or “a polity.” This idea compares well to neospiritual holism: like organic system dynamics, participation in a number of different esoteric pursuits by a number of individuals creates a strengthened whole that is more than the sum of its parts (as well as, somehow, an

authentic representation of the parts). Once Brand had interpreted network relations as supports for countercultural values, such as organic participation and personal self-actualization, he surprised many *Whole Earth Catalogue* readers with his enthusiastic embrace of the personal computer. It was not, however, as anomalous a choice as they supposed. Rather, he was following a coherent intellectual trajectory that fused countercultural and cybernetic thought into a posthierarchical vision.

Following from these similarities, the early experiments with networks and new communications technologies were widely informed by countercultural values, and in some quarters, mystical beliefs. The world's population was imagined as a "global village" (McLuhan, 1966). *The World Symposium on Humanity*, simultaneously convened in Toronto, Los Angeles and London, U.K. from April 7-14, 1979, was an early experiment with this principle in mind. At the event, keynote speakers, Canadian communications theorist Marshall McLuhan, American visionary designer Buckminster Fuller, and a third figure from London, convened a global conference from their native cities, via satellites used for perhaps the first time in this way. The schedule of presenters over the three-day event was a "who's who" of important social critics, artists and countercultural and New Age figures. R.D. Liang, Carl Rogers, Dick Gregory, John Denver, Ralph Nader, Joseph Campbell, Michio Kushi, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, and Marcel Marceau presented on the first day alone. Participants also had opportunities in each city to explore religiously-tinged (New Age and paganistic) rituals and practices with, for example, a session of "Rajneesh Meditation" and a "Living Earth Seminar" on the agenda in Toronto.⁸⁴

Throughout the weekend, the imperfectly-functioning satellite technology nevertheless enabled real-time shared meetings across three global cities. Among other novelties, this event was an innovative exploration of networking culture. Presciently anticipating online "social media," conference organizers enlisted volunteers in many cities to promote the event in advance, through informal means. Small groups studied conference themes and expanded their reach through a conscious-raising format; they followed a "viral" communications model. In the end, the symposium seemed to be a milestone in igniting a burgeoning, technologically-adept, spiritually-oriented global counterculture (Stewart 1979; Author's personal experience).

⁸⁴ See advertisement: *Yoga Journal*, Sept/Oct 1978; See partial event program at www.curezone.org/blogs/fm.asp?i=1260067; See review of event at *Notre Dame University Student Press*, 1979; See 25th Anniversary notice at www.worldtrans.org/index.html.

Humanistic Critique Supersedes Social Critique

Increasingly, computer-communications devices were seen as “appropriate technologies.” They began to preoccupy those who hoped to transform society.⁸⁵ New technologies offered hope for a non-violent (i.e., evolutionary, not revolutionary) way of changing society. At least since the Kent State University killing of four students protesting American involvement in Vietnam by the American National Guard (May 4, 1970), many American youth saw confrontational politics as ineffectual (and dangerous). They chose instead to step aside from direct conflict with authorities and build new forms of action and other innovative structures for positive change. They experimented with “non-materially dependent life-styles, consensus decision-making, nonhierarchical forms of leadership, self-responsible health care, economic cooperatives, and a variety of efforts in both rural and urban settings to heal the environment by emphasizing the importance of organic gardening, urban permaculture, the protection of regional biosystems and ‘living lightly,’ all with a mandate to ‘think globally, and act locally’” (Hull 1992, 123). As I noted, instead of confronting authority, they wanted to “work around’ it (Barbrook and Cameron 1995, 3-4; Pike 2004, 77).

Coming as they did out of the politically-active counterculture, the proselytizers for a net-based social order had begun their crusades strongly opposed to capitalism *per se*. After being incorporated into capitalist operations, their self-definition as renegades became more problematic. “Hackers” have mostly curtailed their earlier activity of vilifying capitalizers of computer and network technologies, as they formerly had; an example target is Microsoft founder and iconic former hacker, Bill Gates, in the early stages of commodification of their industry. They have had to acknowledge that the engine behind technological development is capitalism. In slightly cloaked language, in *The Hacker Ethic*, definer of hacker culture Himanen (2010) laments the difference between what many of the hackers, including Kelly, had hoped for, and what they settled on. The values of the hacker ethic according to Himanen are, now, passion for a project and the freedom to pursue it; the subordination of profit-seeking to the social worth of a project and its openness, defined as that which “helps” and impresses their peers; caring, defined as “complete freedom of expression in action;” privacy, to protect the creation of an individual lifestyle; a rejection of passive receptiveness in favor of active pursuit of one’s passion; and creativity (Himanen 2010, 139-141). Note that the “caring” refers to commitment to one’s own projects, not to others.

⁸⁵ Belief communities reach beyond the thinking of technophiles, postindustrialists, and alternate society activists as sources, to include also many postmodern communications theorists. They “uphold the emancipatory potential of this information transformation: liberation from grand narrative, from essentialist and authoritarian bodies of knowledge about the world” (Fisher 2010, 16).

Although his entire treatise can be seen as a rationalization of an abandoned political project, Himanen particularly stumbles over one element of hacker culture as he discusses it—that of profit- and copy-right-seeking. His awkward discussion reflects hackers’ lack of resolution of this issue. He notes that formerly-unpaid hackers are now accepting money for, patenting, and even getting very rich from their work. Now, the word “free” in the expression “free software” is not to be understood as meaning “without charge.” Himanen (2010, 59) explains that now, when Richard Stallman, “‘the spiritual father’ of open-source companies, uses the word ‘free,’ it is in the sense of ‘free speech,’ not ‘free beer.’”

I attribute Himanen’s ambivalence to the fact that hackers have actually abandoned their original, critical stance against capitalism and the privatization of information. Since hackers’ skills continue to drive economies, making them highly employable, they cannot insist upon their anti-privatization message. However, their self-identity depends on seeing themselves as dissident or anti-authoritarian. Accordingly, out of deference to this cultural heritage, they must continue some kind of critical posture, once substantially honed against capitalism in general. As a substitute, hostility has been deflected to something ancillary to capitalism itself, which are the Fordist modes of technology, organization and work. We saw in the last chapter that vitriol against Taylorism, a signal of the posthierarchy ethos, is shared by corporate managers far and wide. However, what we saw there as a management ideology also applies to software workers and their familiars. Hackers have taken up the posthierarchy ethos, too. It is not actually a politically dissident position, at least in the manifestations discussed in this dissertation, despite the pretensions of hackers to be so.

The practical common target that emerges from this discourse is distrust of government, which qualifies it as a pure neoliberal (although often presented as “anarchic”) code. Governmental surveillance and data-gathering are considered the chief threat. At the same time, the vast amounts of data collected and sold to advertisers by online companies are strategically elided from the discussion (Diebert, 2013). Yet, the aspirations of these companies are well-known. Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook, which towers in size over any competitor, is on record as pressing for Facebook to become *the* internet for most users worldwide (which would give him complete control over the market data generated). It is awareness of this project of completely commodifying the Internet that lead the Indian government to refuse Facebook’s offer of free “starter Internet” services for the entire nation, since they had to be set within Facebook. Indian activists who recognized the threat to an open Internet successfully blocked the deal. Meanwhile, worldwide, Google aspires to replace governmental programs almost entirely with cheap, computer-based private services, collectively known as the “sharing economy,” that bear only the marginal costs of keeping them running. (The losers are the ill-paid entrepreneurs who mount them and public infrastructure and service maintenance.) Branches of the Uber ride-sharing operation that Google sponsors regularly flout municipal

regulations whose purposes include city revenue and the protection of taxi-services. (Interview, Ira Basin, *The Current*, Feb 16, 2016, CBC Radio One).

It is typical for outsider groups to redefine themselves when they become insiders and to soften the ideological elements of their self-presentation that are most likely to offend. I argue here that hackers did this when they shifted their critical censure from the capitalist commodification of knowledge to Fordist bureaucratic structures. I do not suggest that Himanen is entirely reconciled to the dependency of software development on capitalist enterprise. For one, he includes a strong plea that employed hackers be allowed more choice over which products they develop, and such a concession (as unlikely as it is to be granted) could be considered a victory against their dictation by the dollar. Overall, however, the purpose of his treatise seems like an attempt to gain a more secure professional status for ITC workers. We can see this by virtue of his comparison of their work with university professors, agitating for their working conditions, such as peer reviews of their work and tenure in their jobs. A theme of this book is greater autonomy for these developers.

The early community of net activists exploring new digital communications tools shared the posthierarchical aspirations with the alternate communities and commonly participated in projects directed that way. The hacker community not only engaged in new alternate lifestyles and religious experiments, but used their skills to contribute to these lifestyles. As noted, they certainly agreed with the counterculture's judgement that prevailing industrial forms were unproductive. And "productivity," in a broad sense, has always been an interest of appropriate technologists. As much as peace (in relation to the Vietnam War, for example) this is what these experimenters sought. They believed that people who lived the Fordist lifestyle were unproductive, not only at their work, but in their lives in general. This unproductivity was thought to be an outcome of hierarchical decision-making processes in organizations.

As the "normal" computer changed from the mainframe housed in the corporate headquarters to the more accessible PC, and as more and more people sought creative and fulfilling jobs, computers promised to offer help in achieving these conditions. Although people continued to agree that industrial technology (though, less often, its capitalist use) was alienating, they hoped that the new technology might be otherwise. Therefore, a domesticated political activism intermingled with ideas of workplace transformation in early hacking communities (Pike 2004, 75-78).

Throughout these developments, as I have argued, the new digital worker community continued to refer back to the New Age and countercultural milieus it emerged from, responding to the idea of posthierarchy as a touchstone. Digital experimentation and development provided practical efficacy to the ideas of the counterculture, and New Age. Although over time some differentiation of these communities occurred, I

argue that it was not complete. We will see below that, in addition to the historical intermixing of New Age, new technology and work ideas, there are communities in which these influences are little distinguished, even after the formation of the software industries and the commodification of the personal computer and the Internet.

New Age and the Digital as the New Edge

The intermixture of psychedelic, New Age and new technology cultures did not end with the early days of Silicon-Valley industries. In *Techgnosis: Myth, Magic and Mysticism in the Age of Information* (1998), Erik Davis sees the mythologizing of digital technologies as an element in the pursuit of *techgnosis*, an integration of new technology and a new religiosity, which he calls “gnostic,” a process that occurred as counterculturalists made the transition from the strong condemnation of technology in its industrial form to celebration of the digital. Michael York (1995, 102, 322) would support Davis that the New Age sensibility is essentially “gnostic,” based on its belief in an individual spiritual self who exists prior to social institutions, organized religion, and, indeed, “creation.” As explained in Chapter Two, Hanegraaff (1996) would disagree with this assessment of the New Age as gnostic because, in its weak, this-worldly mysticism, the New Age values a level of societal engagement. However, even though Davis and York might have exaggerated its world-rejection, if we see the world they reject as the Fordist one, where social status and formal roles are very important (which is what they reject), the application of the gnostic label may be reasonably appropriate.

Davis explores the popular and religious versions of changing visions of technology, from its Fordist presentation as oppressive to its digital form, which is celebrated. In language reflecting the Romantic and de-materializing aspirations for this technology, he claims the change to be a fusion of the “Gnostic flight from the heaviness and torpor of the material earth [and] a transition from the laboring body into the symbol possessing mind” (Davis 1998, 115). He claims that digitized technology has left the dull earth and transformed into enlivening energy.

Davis tracks several paths in the intertwining of networked technologies and the New Age spirituality. He suggests that as the 1960s passed into the 1970s, the utopian imagination that had informed and provisionally united counterculturalisms of various kinds fragmented into a variety of disparate spheres, while retaining unlikely associations. Given its earlier beliefs, Davis expresses astonishment that the counterculture had picked up on computers, “Of all the cultural zones that wound up hosting lingering freak dreams, undoubtedly the most unexpected was the world of digital code, a world tucked inside miniaturized versions of the very machines that once epitomized blue-suited technocracy and military command and control” (Davis 1998, 164). However, Davis should have remembered that the New Age emerges from the

esoteric traditions that had interest in technical skills and processes (as, for example, in Freemasonry, which emerged from the sequestered knowledge of the masons who built cathedrals, but supported a mystical interest in transforming base metals into gold; it then became a privileged businessmen's club). Esotericism is embedded in a craft culture. Therefore, when computers married to telecommunications gave evidence that they could be "holistic," to use Franklin's term—that they could be primarily shaped by their users' values—their countercultural adoption is unsurprising.

The conjoining of these two cultures persists. Davis cites Marc Dery's 1997 account of a Northern Californian "cyberdalia"—"ravers, technopagan programmers and high tech hedonists who attempt to reconcile 'the transcendental impulses of sixties counterculture with the infomania of the nineties'" (Dery, in Davis 1998, 164). Generally, the prescriptive character of Fordist technology has not been read into the new tool-set. More accurately, with their digital incarnations machines lost their automatic association with hierarchy and identities as devices for the powerful. Tellingly, personally "acting like a machine" (surely a Fordist machine, in this reference) was explicitly condemned earlier last century in some esoteric religions, such as Gurdjieffianism. However, recent forms that emerged alongside the human potential movement, such as *est* and Scientology, use the computer as a model for *desirable* forms of consciousness. Davis also reviews how key American countercultural thinkers of the 1950s and 60s, such as Bateson (2000), John Lilly (1972) and Timothy Leary (1994) explored cybernetics to describe and analyze thought and learning, again indicating a new adoption of technology as a model. Their work has been interpreted to suggest that, instead of pursuing the Gurdjieffian aspiration to wake up from automatism, one should instead make oneself a better, more efficient automaton or "spiritual cyborg," capable of self-reprogramming.

Davis (1998, 180) devotes considerable attention to the relation of computers to paganism, where high-technology is a new variant of lore to be mastered—in the famous words of Arthur C. Clarke, "indistinguishable from magic." Davis points out that two major accounts of New Age Paganism, Margot Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon* (1986), a history of American Paganism, and T.M. Luhrman's 1989 study of modern witchcraft in England, *Persuasion of the Witch's Craft*, both find a high number of participants working in technical fields and the computer industry. Adler (1986, 385) claimed that "a striking number of Neo-Pagans work in scientific and technical fields" and notes that Gordon Melton found in 1980 that Neo-Pagans are "white-collar, middle-class professionals." In 1985, based on 195 questionnaires returned from the 400 she issued to Neo-Pagan participants "16 percent [of respondents] were either pro-

grammers, technical writers or scientists” (Adler 1986, 446-47).⁸⁶ Davis (1998, 181) identifies another “meeting ground [for] computer culture and the occult fringe [as] science fiction and fantasy fandom.” He also mentions key crossover figures such as Mark Pesce, a pioneer of “virtual reality” technologies and a practicing technopagan, who brought his spiritual and digital knowledge together in creating the graphic environment of on-line occult rituals.

Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron (1997, 58) suggest why Silicon Valley SAs are interested in neospirituality, a point I pursue in more detail below:

According to some visionaries, the search for the perfection of mind, body and spirit will inevitably lead to the emergence of the “post-human”: a bio-technological manifestation of the social privileges of the “virtual class.” While the hippies saw self-development as part of social liberation, the hi-tech artisans of contemporary California are more likely to seek individual self-fulfillment through therapy, spiritualism, exercise or other narcissistic pursuits. Their desire to escape into the gated suburb of the hyper-real is only one aspect of this deep self-obsession.

Reflecting this characterization of these SA neospiritual practitioners as self-obsessed, Davis (1998, 155) observes with disappointment that “New Age logic slides with unsettling ease into corporate management jargon and business success seminars [so that] New Agers often aim for goals barely distinguishable from the dominant logic of success that drives commercial culture, goals like efficiency, satisfaction, productivity, performance, and control, not to mention the prosperity gospel that holds the self is actualized through money.” He also points out that many information entrepreneurs, from Steve Jobs to Mitch Kapor, came to their fortunes after shorter or longer flirtations with New Age countercultures. As a consequence, and confirming the contents of the last chapter, Davis (1998, 169) notes that, “by taking controlled sips of California’s creative anarchy, its “go with the flow” Beat Taoism, the computer industry discovered new philosophies of management and productivity that were appropriate to the increasingly chaotic global market their products were helping to produce.” He clarifies that such management philosophies were “by no means limited to the computer industry.”

⁸⁶ Twenty-one were “computer programmers, system’s analysts or software developers.” This was followed by “student,” 16; “secretary,” 12; “psychotherapist or counsellor,” 10; “teacher, professor instructor,” 9, “writer,” 8 and “housewife,” 7; and so on. Most of the rest were a mix of professionals, and various kinds of service workers, low and high-skilled. There were a few “workers.”

Other authors have also tracked this transformation. A comprehensive account of the complex interactions between psychedelics, radical politics and computer culture around Stanford University, the key institutional incubator of Silicon Valley, where Brand first encountered hacker communities, can be found in John Markoff's *What the Dormouse Said: How the Sixties Counterculture Shaped the Personal Computer Industry* (2005). Indicating that the counterculture had "moved on," Mark Dery in his *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century* (1997) argues that the personal computer revolution could well be called "Counterculture 2.0." In many ways he anticipates Turner's thesis when he cites Brand's retrospective assessment that, "As it turned out... , psychedelic drugs, communes, and Buckminster Fuller domes were a dead end, but computers were an avenue to realms beyond our dreams" (Dery 1997, 27).

Hanegraaff (1996 11, 105) mentioned the term "New Edge" to indicate this cultural crossover, which he borrowed from the avant-garde cyber-culture journal *Mondo 2000* (Zandbergen 2010, 180-82). Though he did not elaborate on this category, Dorien Zandbergen fills in the details for us. In her account of the New Edge, Zandbergen (2010, 170) also sees Brand as of central importance to its emergence, and notes that at its origin, the *Whole Earth Catalogue* had a strong flavor of New Age spirituality. It contained regular sections on such topics as "meditation, trance dance, psychedelic drugs and self-hypnosis as techniques for dealing with social brainwashing and getting back in touch with the self."

However, other countercultural luminaries followed the same path. In his account of the "Evolution of a Counterculture," Timothy Leary distinguished the "anti-high tech" hippies of 1965-75 from a "super high-tech New Breed" that appeared in the 1990s, and declared that this transformation could be explained by the "inherent spiritual characteristics of digital technology" (Leary 1994, 81).⁸⁷ Zandbergen maps out a number of the other key sites besides Brand's enterprise where the New Edge was forged: the blend of psychedelic spirituality and technological experimentation of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters in the 1960s; early virtual reality ventures by cyber-scientists such as Jaron Lanier, who promoted digital technology as "the first medium that doesn't narrow the human spirit, [and which would] elevate people to a new plane of reality" (Zandbergen 2010, 171); and the bohemian blend of drugs, sex, art and hacking championed in the journal *Mondo 2000*, founded in the late 1980s by Ken Goffman (aka "R.U. Sirius"), and the source of the term "New Edge." Goffman also introduced the slogan "hack your own reality." Ultimately, Davis argues, this trajectory puts certain strains of New Age thought on an intersection with Extropian or Transhumanist thought that looks to a technological post-humanism.

⁸⁷ Cited in Zandbergen 2010, 162

“Transhumanism” is a cultural and intellectual movement whose participants believe that human biological norms, meaning our physical, intellectual, and psychological capabilities, should be expanded through integration with advanced technologies. One of its core concepts is life extension, including through genetic engineering, nanotech, cloning, and other emerging technologies.

<https://www.extremetech.com/extreme/152240-what-is-transhumanism-or-what-does-it-mean-to-be-human>). The philosophy of “extropy” has sparked multidisciplinary discussions about future technologies in terms of life extension and their social context. It is an “evolving framework of values and standards for continuously improving the human condition” through inquiry into the sciences and technologies of human enhancement. The term contrasts with “entropy,” and implies a challenge to the diffusion of powers that accompanies biological weakening and death. It is a “philosophy of the future” formally initiated in 1990 with the establishment of the Extropy Institute in California (which has since closed down, judging that its mission to initiate this discussion has been achieved). An organization that currently hosts discussions of these topics, Humanity+, was originally born as the World Transhumanist Association (WTA) in 1998, which rebranded itself as Humanity+ in 2008. (<https://lifeboat.com/ex/the.principles.of.extropy>)

While the Extropians reject the “pastel visions of the New Age,” both movements embrace similar “‘technologies of transformation:’ brain machines and visualizations, meditation regimes and cognitive enhancement drugs, computer networks and Neuro-Linguistic-programming” (Davis 1998, 120). This trend culminated in a vision of machinic liberation of mind from flesh, a technified version of perennial gnostic aspiration. We will see more of these themes below, but in the less dramatic, but more invasive form of Dataism.

The Digital Mystique at Work

However, fascinating as such destinations are, they are probably less significant than the rarified domains believed to be achievable simply by doing post-Fordist work, which associates it, through a similar worldview, with the New Age vision. To consider this, I turn to Eran Fisher’s (2010) discussion of what he terms “the network cosmology.” Influenced by their millenarian New Age associations, cybercultural activists expected that with their new tools they could transform the world. However, as is typical in American cultural history, too much emphasis is put on the technology, and not enough on the nature of the society deploying it. Eran Fisher (2010) has termed the attribution of grandiose socially and economically transformative powers to digital technologies, the creation of a “network cosmology,” a cosmology that ironically, ultimately, supports the neoliberal ideology of contemporary capitalism.

Fisher (2010) itemizes the values he synthesized from network-cosmological expressions in the literature. These are:

- In the discourse of networks, individuals are construed as autonomous nodes and defined by their connections to other nodes in the network...
- The discourse embodies a new conception of the individual as network and cyborg. The blurring of the boundaries between humans and network technology allows for a more meaningful emancipatory and natural interaction of humans with the technology and unleashes the emancipatory potential of humans: their intellectual, psychological, and communicative abilities....
- Contrary to the Fordist human characterized by spatial and temporal bodily presence and physicality, the post-Fordist human is characterized by virtuality and disembodiment. The post-Fordist human--her body, mind and identity--are informational, hence flexible and multiple....
- The social is seen as a flat, decentralized sphere of ever-flowing, multiple, and ad hoc assemblages. This is a stark contrast to the Fordist conception of the social sphere as consisting of a hierarchized, stable, and category-defined arena....
- In the same vein, the central mode of social action in the discourse on networks is that of cooperation rather than struggle or competition, which characterizes the discourse on class....
- While the discourse of class stresses structural power relations, the discourse of networks is devoid of such forms of power (except, admittedly, the lack of power that results from being cut off from the network; i.e., on the dark side of the digital divide) and instead associates power with the characteristics of autonomous nodes (i.e., power resulting from ingenuity and entrepreneurship)...
- Network technology ... renders work--the work process, work relations, and the workplace--more humane and more liberating for the worker....
- Work is reconceptualized as an eroticized, playful activity of production and consumption, involving creativity, deep engagement, interactivity, and interpersonal communication.... a cooperative, agreeable, and inherently-inclusive model of networks (at least in the long run, once the digital divide is bridged) (Fisher 2010, 212-216).

Although the making of this cosmology draws on a wide variety of sources, Fisher identifies as a symptomatic figure Kevin Kelly, the Executive Editor of *Wired* from 1992 to 1999. In the late 1980s and 1990s, *Wired* became an important organ for diffusing digital enthusiasm throughout North American popular culture. As Turner confirms, its writers and editors had emerged from countercultural backgrounds into the astronomically-more profitable world of the computer business in the 1990s. They believed (or at least declared) that they were enacting a digitally-empowered version of their earlier radical beliefs: “they would

tear down hierarchies, undermine the sorts of corporations and governments that had spawned them” and replace them with a “peer-to peer ad-hocracy, a levelled marketplace and a more authentic self” (Turner 2006, 3). *Cyberculture* was to be the fulfillment of counterculture. It was also a turn from the overtly political to the “personal is political” ethos, following the lead of other social movements of the time, chiefly feminism. These maintained in common a turn away from political activity as the exclusive way to effect social change.

At its highest level, as Fisher presents it, the network cosmology is “a new tradeoff between personal emancipation and social emancipation” (Fisher 2010, 11). The dilemma is posed by the difficulty of resolving the desire for maximum personal freedom, with the somewhat inconsistent aspiration to work towards social justice (Fisher 2010, 225). This dilemma was first defined by French sociologists of labour, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005), as basic to the ethos of the young political activists in the 1960s as they moved into mainstream social positions (in France, the focus of the sociologists’ work). These new workers often found management positions, as many of them were children of the French bourgeoisie.

Reproducing the same trade-off that neospirituals also exercise as consumers (as Lau described; i.e., between individual and collective interests), the French youth, as young Western workers in general, opt for personal freedom, while imaginatively defining social justice as its outcome. They accepted the belief that their actions and engagement, as filtered through the operation of some holistic process (according to Fraser, network relations), could only bring about a better society.

We have seen that post-Fordist businesses are structured as networks. Therefore, the social impact of networks, as employed or realized in the post-Fordist world, includes how these networks act on the world in which they operate. Hence, taking into consideration post-Fordism’s tendency to advance structural unemployment and insecure working conditions, the network organizational form must be acknowledged as implicated in these deleterious social outcomes. The network form in workplaces degrades worker solidarity traditionally maintained through unions. Workers are required to negotiate and renegotiate as individuals for both their work and their working conditions in perpetual competition with others and under conditions of endemic insecurity. In other words, networked business operation in the context of the reduced governmental oversight that could countervail these tendencies provokes the social injustice intrinsic to post-Fordism. On their face, networks do not challenge these tendencies. While workers are employed they may receive a number of social goods, such as prestige, income, security and opportunities for sociality. However, if and when this ends, usually against their own will, these goods are withdrawn. Precarious workers are entitled to “a life” only at the will of the employer.

Taking the whole terrain of post-Fordist work into consideration, freedom and justice are at cross-purposes in the post-Fordist workplace. In this context, networks do not make the world a more democratic and collaborative place. With this dynamic in mind, Fisher challenges the equation of networks and social justice that proponents of a network cosmology assert. At best, social justice in the world of network relations is ignored if not actively frustrated. On the other hand, if justice is forgone (i.e., the personal longterm well-being and the fates of fellow workers are ignored) a certain freedom can be attained. However, the pursuit of this definition of personal freedom is perfectly fused with the system needs of capitalism (Fisher 2010, 7, 143). As the story goes, workers must embrace “the promise of the spirit of networks” if they are to achieve “increased individual emancipation and dealienation.” They gain this only through “the reorganization of social practices and social relations in accordance with networks.... Simply put, emancipation is constructed as demanding the further flexibilization and privatization of work” (Fisher 2010, 225).

Neural Nets as Society

Kelly and collaborators, such as writer Howard Rheingold (2003) were inspired by the open system model of artificial intelligence (AI) (premising that computers could learn) that regained scientific (and governmental) acceptance after the Cold War with the USSR dissolved. The closed-world system, “symbolic AI” (which was enlisted to create the American “Star Wars” military defence scenario of creating surveillance barriers in space, against advancing Soviet missiles), was at that time replaced by the concept of “neural nets.” According to the principles of symbolic AI, the “Star Wars” developers had to codify all potential threats in advance of meeting them, before the scheme could be expected to work.⁸⁸ They “first tried to formalize knowledge of the world, which could then be fed into computers predefined and predigested. Its operations would be based in processing that knowledge. [It was eventually judged as a flawed approach], because logic [i.e., predefined scenarios], not experience, defined the operations” (Edwards 1997, 255-56). The “top-down” approach to AI involved anticipating conditions, planning for particular outcomes, and encoding solutions prior to setup.

⁸⁸ Symbolic AI was understood as a “closed-world” system (Edwards 1997). Its “Star Wars” system was designed to respond to the Cold War vision of the US and its allies, to protect them from potential Soviet nuclear missile attack. The protection relied on the demarcation of a hard cordon between the two enemy camps, supported by an AI system that recognized and responded to violations of the geographical space of these countries. The Star Wars scenario culminated in a model of protection and intelligence whereby attacking missiles were to be met in the air by native fire-power well in advance of their reaching their targets. “The central metaphor of ‘containment’ combined the closures of cold war ideology and military global reach with computerized systems for total central defense” (Edwards 1997, 272). As noted, this closed approach to AI required that the protective systems be programmed for all eventualities, each of which could only be derived through analysis of empirical data. Since, by this process, the unanticipated threat could not, in theory, be met, this approach had to hold the assumption that all eventualities *could* be anticipated, and the challenge was to program responses to these in advance.

By contrast, neural nets “could recognize patterns and solve certain kinds of problems without explicitly encoded knowledge or procedures” (Edwards 1997, 356). Modelling software according to neural nets avoided the need to design solutions to all problems in advance. Neural nets were based on the idea that computers could learn.⁸⁹ The computer was seen as embodied, more a brain than a mind. “The brain-model approach relied intrinsically on interaction with the world; repeated experience, not formal analysis, was supposed to shape the weighted connections of neural elements into a functional system” (Edwards 1997, 255-56). Our brains create meaning and functionality in an ongoing and open-ended way as they integrate sensory data (the signals passing crossroads or “dumb nodes”) in application to situations. In sketchy terms, neurons (dumb nodes) are simply crossroads altered by signals whose very basic operations add up, in the aggregate, through their great number and complex patterning, to high-level transformations, or intelligence. In essence, network processes create complexity from a number of simple decisions made at every crossroad or node. More nodes interacting constitute greater density of exchanges within the system. Greater density of exchanges is equivalent to greater complexity, or “intelligence.” In short, as the number of transactions across nodes proliferates, “the system” as a whole (i.e., society) becomes more intelligent.

The embrace of open cybernetics systems provoked reflection on topics other than computer intelligence. The comparison of computers to organic brains inspired Kelly (1994) to make a different comparison, between “neural nets” and society. In his own jibe at the cold authoritarianism of the American military-industrial complex, and the “organization-man” ethos, he disparaged the closed form of AI (i.e.,

⁸⁹ Supporters of the containment approach had already discredited the preferred model of AI put forth by prestigious computer scientists Claude Shannon (1948), and AI researcher Marvin Minsky (1985) in the 1970s. Shannon’s information theory implied that, since computers could learn, every potential future event need not be anticipated beforehand for the computer to be effectively prepared for it (Edwards 1997, 255). Pushed aside during the cold war ‘closed world’ era, however, this early organic cybernetic theory was revived later, as the internet (shaped by “hacker values”) was being developed. Computers were newly seen as tools for people instead of monolithic control mechanisms (whose effectiveness was in any case questionable). Computers should not be expected to function autonomously and purely ‘symbolically,’ i.e., analytically, but must be designed to learn from experience (Edwards 1997, 268-69).

Symbolic AI was understood as a “closed-world” system (Edwards 1997). Its “Star Wars” system was designed to respond to the Cold War vision of the US and its allies, to protect them from potential Soviet nuclear missile attack. The protection relied on the demarcation of a hard cordon between the two enemy camps, supported by an AI system that recognized and responded to violations of the geographical space of these countries. The Star Wars scenario culminated in a model of protection and intelligence whereby attacking missiles were to be met in the air by native fire-power well in advance of their reaching their targets. “The central metaphor of ‘containment’ combined the closures of cold war ideology and military global reach with computerized systems for total central defense” (Edwards 1997, 272). As noted, this closed approach to AI required that the protective systems be programmed for all eventualities, each of which could only be derived through analysis of empirical data. Since, by this process, the unanticipated threat could not, in theory, be met, this approach had to hold the assumption that all eventualities *could* be anticipated, and the challenge was to program responses to these in advance.

symbolic AI) as oppressive and hierarchical too. In his view, symbolic AI was one more indication of the old-guard's bureaucratic top-down "interference" in creative work and autonomous living. He wanted a society without these. As he edited a publication for the software industry, he easily adopted the network as the model for ideal social interactions as well as a good way for computer-users and workers to communicate and do business.

Because the cybernetic theory of learning implies that interaction is the source of intelligence, he encouraged engagement in network dynamics. Reinforcing the reasoning of post-Fordist CEOs, who value networking (or "density of flows") because they think well-informed workers and a dynamic company result, Kelly's theorized that the "simple" participation of many people (i.e., as "dumb nodes") in network relations creates "social intelligence." In society, as with the corporation, *the fact* of its interaction rather than *the quality* of any one exchange is valued. We will review this idea in a more advanced condition, below, as "dataism."

Fisher argues that Kelly's confidence that robust social network use is necessarily good veers towards the utopian. "In such a history, network technology is seen as the teleological climax not simply of the history of technology but also of the history of the universe" (Fisher 2010, 185). Barbrook and Cameron (1997, 50) concur; they argue that, through networks, "existing social, political and legal power structures will wither away to be replaced by unfettered interactions between autonomous individuals and their software." The political agenda behind this model is, once again, neoliberal repression of government. Kelly and his collaborators, "recycled McLuhanites[,] vigorously argue that big government should stay off the backs of resourceful entrepreneurs, who are the only people cool and courageous enough to take risks" (Barbrook & Cameron 1997, 51). Social and business life should become a pure series of spontaneous relationships, more akin to how "nature" functions, reflecting "flexibility, self-regulation, individualization, communication, spontaneous order, and so forth...: a return to the very essence of nature and the universe. This is portrayed in stark contrast to industrial technology, which represents a breaking away from nature" (Fisher 2010, 9).⁹⁰ Barbrook and Cameron (1997, 52) agree with Fisher that, "according to [Kelly], the 'invisible hand of the marketplace and the blind forces of Darwinian evolution are actually one and the same thing.'"

⁹⁰ This thinking is akin to that of the Jesuit mystic, Teilhard de Chardin [1966], generally associated with New Age theology, who theorized that a greater amount of human knowledge solidified a "noosphere," like a level of atmosphere surrounding the world, whose "solidification," surpassing of a critical mass, not only transforms human intelligence but the substance of the earth. Gaia becomes sentient.

In the above we can see similarities to Swedenborgianism—the integration of a cyclical world with a linear, historical one—and sense the same negative implication: a closed world. Kelly’s critics argue that his is yet another teleology of technology—a particular technological determinist worldview for the post-Fordist era. With an apocalyptic tone, this worldview suggests “that technology offers a form of transcendence almost spiritual in nature” (Fisher 2010, 185). Kelly and others expect that this new form can extinguish the Weberian period of industry during which the “iron cage” of rationality disenchant the world. For Kelly, the “increased digitalization and networking of social life... does not entail a process of *disenchantment* (the hallmark of rationalization during industrial technology), but rather offers a road to transcendence” (Fisher 2010, 185).

As far as it applies to corporations, Fisher (2010, 4; following Boltanski and Chiapello 2005) labels it “the humanistic critique of organizations.” The humanistic critique “extols the value of technology in the name of individual authenticity and liberation as a private and apolitical (or postpolitical) enterprise.” Of course, Fisher is not arguing that all philosophical discourses on freedom are intrinsically anti-social, but that this particular one lays such ground. For, “not all types of critique are created equal[, but differ in terms of] the political space they allow” (Fisher 2010, 22). Harvey (2000, 223) also agrees that “the core of the humanistic critique is in conflict with the demand for equality and solidarity—the social critique.”

However, Fisher notes some ambiguity in Kelly’s supposed orientation to humanism. Recall that Carrette and King asserted a second privatization of religion, wherein the “self-realization” capacity of the New Age was transposed from individuals to corporations. In the same vein, Kelly’s writing includes suggestions that the partnership between people and technology is not equal. “Technology [becomes] the protagonist, [while] humans [must] recede to the background and occupy a supporting role” (Fisher 2010, 185). Schumacher’s and Franklin’s concerns over Fordist “prescriptive” technologies—representing human loss of control over their tools—is now manifest in a post-Fordist form. However, the critique is more easily nullified in this current regime because, as a recent rendition of a “network cosmology” illustrates, lack of human control over post-Fordist technologies is now felt to be their virtue. Whereas Kelly’s writing may have tentatively supported the technological domination, apologists for “dataism” positively celebrate this relationship.

Yuval Noa Harari, author of panoramic accounts of humanity’s past and future, writes in *Homo Deus* (2015) that the majority of the world’s scientists see algorithmic processes as fundamental to their objects of study, and so subscribe to a “dataprocessing” worldview that nullifies humanism. Algorithms are step-by-step procedures that, as has been discovered, describe change processes universally. Computer programs, too, follow algorithms, in many software languages. Algorithmic processes were first recognized

in the life sciences, as noted in the previous chapter, and they provided the first effective paradigms for computer science. As a result, “computer science and biology” became “the mother disciplines” of dataism (Harari 2015, 368). Now, the fact that the subject matter of many different kinds of science display algorithmic functioning leads many, including scientists, to think they are the fundamental “stuff” of life. In other words, everything is data-processing, including—as far as anyone can tell—human beings. On this basis, Harari concludes that scientists already practice a “data religion.” They understand human feelings as the outcomes of algorithmic processes of assessing risk and advantage, which then guide action. However, human risks cannot now be assessed by individuals because of environmental complexity. Harari explains that dataists recommend we let computers know us intimately so they can guide us—an idea roughly consistent with Kelly’s arguments for networks as a social model. Both Kelly and dataists would say: “The greatest sin is to block the data flow” (Harari 2015, 382).

Harari (2015, 392) asserts that dataist contemporary scientists no longer see a need for human subjectivity (including its reflexive moment, which reaches for self-understanding and personal dignity). With this supposedly sacred capacity of human beings rendered obsolete, remaining distinctions of the human (presumed, anyway, in relation to animals) may be many, but their data processing abilities do not distinguish them from machines. *Au contraire!* Harari predicts the emergence of dataism as a replacement for the humanism that has inflected collective values since the Enlightenment. Naturally, human beings will lose their special place in the cosmos as they are increasingly fit into the global data-processing matrix.

Of course, Harari (2015, 394) advances the obligatory caution at the end of his reflection on humanity’s future: “A critical examination of the Dataist dogma is likely to be... the twenty-first century[‘s] most urgent political and economic project. Scholars in the life sciences and social sciences should ask themselves whether we miss anything when we understand life as data-processing and decision-making. Is there perhaps something in the universe that cannot be reduced to data?” (394). I will pick up this reflection later as it relates to themes of this dissertation.

Autonomist Franco Berardi (2009) would also see consistencies between Kelly’s project and the worldview Harari describes decades later. First, like dataists, Kelly follows the *living organisms* model to represent the society formed via a high integration of online-networking, where “horizontal integration tends to replace hierarchical” decision-making (Berardi 2009, 193). Kelly, like the dataists, envisions a “global mind.” Furthermore, Kelly argues that networks should perform algorithmic decision-making to replace traditional political processes because Fordist social and political organization based on its “sequential model of mechanics and of rational and voluntary activity”—i.e., its mechanical metaphor—cannot keep up with the speed of change and so is “irreparably obsolete” (Berardi 2009, 193). Harari’s explanation (2015, 373-377)

of dataism with respect to these institutions is very similar. Also Harari (2015, 386) describes the dataist world in terms similar to Kelly's maxims, such as "Humans want to merge with the data flow."

Berardi finds problems with the network cosmology and would, like Harari, find them with dataism. He regards the social "data-processed" world not as a "natural," product of myriad human beings communicating with relatively equal capacities to do so, but as following the imperatives and interests of capital. As the computer industry and technology in general is captured by corporations, the "social data algorithm" is a highly "distorted" representation of the collective population of users. Of Kelly's "bioinformatics model," Berardi opines that there is, indeed, a "soul in this new machine," but it is not the combined hearts of citizens. The global mind "organizes and directs energies in the most functional way... through automatic mechanisms of global interactive decision-making. These mechanisms are basically economic in nature" (Berardi 2000, 194). This "soul" is made up of the continually-changing algorithms (i.e., online user profiles) constructed on the basis of myriad individual decisions shaped for ulterior objectives—i.e. corporate economic interests—only indirectly related to user or collective interests, preferences or needs. As has been explained, the profiling feedback mechanisms refine tastes to create a number of qualified and individualized consumers. Although there may be many human feelings dictating inputs into this system, they are shaped through feedback processes to be integrated into the economic calculus. They become irrelevant when only behaviour is measured. Following the implications of his argument, Berardi (2000, 194) avers, "The multitude can speak hundreds of thousands of languages, but the language that allows it to function as an integrated whole is that of the economic automatisms embodied in technology." Waxing poetic, Berardi declares: "The multitudes manifests its dark side and follows automatisms that turn wealth into misery, its power into anguish, and its creativity into dependency."

One might hear an echo of the Swedenborgian "death of nature" as pure commodity culture is instigated. Given the "restrictive language" that commodities speak, and that culture is now highly commodified, it is no surprise to find economic language dominating social situations. Dataism's dispensing with humanism suggests that Kelly may have bitten off more than he could chew with his network cosmology vision. To determine whether or not Kelly would welcome dataism as an outcome of his speculative work requires further research. Nonetheless, humanism is a strong element of his vision. However, Carette and King (2005, 44-45) argue that since "cultural forms [became] commodities... economics has begun to dictate the terms of expression for the rest of the social world[;] to take over the processes of socialization (such as the cultivation and disciplining of individual appetites) that have been traditionally carried out by religious and state institutions." Once social and cultural institutions have been integrated into the market, they must meet the standards and language of the market. To these factors, this dissertation adds the contribution of the cultural shaping and influence of iconic post-Fordist workers.

Politics of Network Relations

The adoption of a networking ethos has effects not only in discourse and ideals, but in practice, as well. The hacker culture, stemming as it did from the politically-dissident counterculture, could not escape the political conundrums that accompanied the gradual abandonment of its early ideals. In different language than Fisher's and Himanen's, and with a more precise focus on particular workers, Barbrook and Cameron (1997) provide their own version of the freedom/social justice reconciliation. Silicon Valley SAs make their "trade-off between personal emancipation and social emancipation" (Fisher 2010, 11) through "an uneasy resolution of New Left and New Right values" (Barbrook and Cameron 1997, 58) grounded in a pointed excoriation of governmental activity and, more generally, anything that operates as a bureaucracy. By analyzing the world-view of the "loose alliance of writers, hackers, capitalists and artists from the West Coast [who defined] a heterogenous orthodoxy for the coming information age[, an ideology that] promiscuously combines the free-wheeling spirit of the hippies and the entrepreneurial zeal of the yuppies" Barbrook and Cameron (1997, 44) developed a worldview they call "the Californian ideology."

This Silicon Valley political climate continues to expand globally from this site. It was established in the 1980s, with Reaganite neoliberal policies of corporate deregulation and privatization. These were welcomed within the west-coast culture of California, along with notions of horizontal systems, digital networking, and self-actualizing entrepreneurs. Barbrook and Cameron concur with Fisher, that these ingredients combine, as the "lived reality... of high-tech artisans," in a very contradictory way. "On the one hand, these core workers are a privileged part of the labour force. On the other hand, they are the heirs of the radical ideas of the community media activists" (1997, 58).

Spawned as young Americans turned against the Vietnam War and the American "military-industrial complex," the New Left uneasily maintains that (new) technologies can help elude dominating forces, with ex-hippies harbouring the idea that data can be "freed;" (i.e., information exchanged without cost). Spokesperson for this position, Howard Rheingold (2003, 55), hopes that, at some future time, "community activists will be able to use hypermedia to replace corporate capitalism and big government with a hi-tech 'gift economy.'" Alternatively, the New Right follows neoliberalism in anticipating a return to the "free market." This means that the left component of "West Coast ideologues have embraced the laissez faire ideology of their erstwhile conservative enemy" (Barbrook & Cameron 1997, 50). With this slippage, the left and right sentiments are clumsily conjoined, while neither is abandoned.

Despite the rightist component of the Californian ideology, Evgeny Morosov, author of many articles in the Western intellectual press,⁹¹ shows that the Silicon Valley vision of “creating socialism” is far from abandoned. “Digital socialism,” is, however, highly idiosyncratic—a purely consumerist model. Supposedly, by making its products and services cost next to nothing, the region can counter income inequality by offering *consumption equality*. Software and media products are such that, after a certain number of copies has been produced, the marginal cost of providing one more copy is effectively zero. This means that, in theory, almost everyone can have almost anything (hence, consumption equality). This would render unnecessary governmental interventions such as services, regulations, wealth transfers etc. to create a fair society.⁹²

Obvious problems with this thinking include that it ignores that resources, such as land and much organic material, are finite. Their increasing scarcity raises their prices, which ultimately determines that only rich people can have access to them (with “free” but insignificant, or ersatz, goods the options for the others—if those). Even more important, it ignores that consumer goods serve as social markers, and an important purpose of consumption in general is to establish social position. By definition, then, that which everyone has, or can have, has no value for this purpose. Arguably, these items will mark one as someone *without*. Overall, the digital socialism idea or fact does nothing to counter social inequality. Arguably, it exacerbates it by encouraging relatively-impooverished citizens to waste their (often debt) money while they also refrain from politically demanding a fairer world.

To top off these specific objections, the Californian ideology’s celebration of free markets while denigrating public services contradicts itself because

... the West Coast itself is a creation of a mixed economy. Government dollars were used to build the irrigation systems, highways, schools, universities and other infrastructural projects which make the good life possible in California. On top of these public subsidies, the West Coast hi-tech industrial complex has been feasting off the fattest pork barrel in history for decades. The US government has poured billions of tax dollars into buying planes, missiles, electronics and nuclear bombs from Cali-

⁹¹ Such as: “SiliconValley likes to promise ‘digital socialism,’ but it is selling a fairy tale.” *The Guardian*, March 1, 2015, and other articles appearing in the *New York Times* and the *New Left Review*

⁹² Similarly, when elected governments should wither away (as hoped for), democracy in vestigial form, as “direct democracy,” is expected to persist. This again follows the consumerist model, and is seen in nascent form as ballot questions, during elections, through which voters can make their specific policy preferences known and bind governments to their enactment. The State of California is an iconic user of these polls, reflecting the ideology that frames political attitudes there, strongly influenced by the culture we have been discussing.

fornian companies...; Americans have always had state planning; only, they call it the defence budget (Barbrook and Cameron 1997, 53).

As shown in Chapter Six, the key post-Fordist workers are not only software workers. SAs include a wide variety of communicators, analysts and developers. The California coast itself hosts two important and representative components of the entire SA population in the form of its media as well as hi-tech production. Therefore, in addition to the technical and analytical workers--engineers, computer and cognitive scientists--this community includes computer-based media producers and its historical population of participants in the (Hollywood) television and film industries (Barbrook and Cameron 1997, 46). These workers have similar conditions of employment and social status, as discussed in earlier chapters, and so are equally participants in the ideology that “simultaneously reflects the disciplines of market economics and the freedoms of hippie artisanship” (Barbrook and Cameron 1997, 49-50).

Barbrook and Cameron (1997, 50) claim that a technologically-determinist understanding of society is the only way for these people to reconcile the left- and right-wing components of their belief-system, which the authors call a “bizarre hybrid” ideology (Barbrook and Cameron 1997, 50). If this resolves the central conundrum of a life for the rich SAs of Hollywood and Silicon Valley, then we should pay particular attention to this resolution, on the assumption that their engagement with neospirituality has a similar function. Technological determinism as a belief system includes the conviction that technologies evolve autonomously, according to their own logic. An essential companion belief is that unhampered technological innovation progressively lays the groundwork for a better society. The logic is that, since innovation has its own spirit, and SAs believe that their model of work allows them to realize that spirit, the actualization of the good society can only be achieved through the release of their own creative spirit in the performance of their work, in their immersion in spirit of technology. In sum, the social good emerges as long as the conscientious digital craftsman is left free to creatively explore.⁹³

As noted in particular reference to the Californian infrastructure, these beliefs beg the question of the undeniable and deliberate technological shaping at sites of power. In general, technologies have been developed by government subsidy. Corporations often directly use this money to advance technologies that will offer them market advantages, with effectively no direct concern for public welfare. The computer industry has been far from an exception to these “rules.” Hence, “the sacred tenets of economic liberalism

⁹³ Himanen (2001, 55) claims that, for many, “being a hacker consists primarily of passionate action and the freedom to organize one’s time and that as long as this work ethic is realized there is no problem with making money permanently through traditional capitalism.”

are contradicted by the actual history of hypermedia” (Barbrook and Cameron 1997, 52). Furthermore, the software and media industries are tolerant of “market distortions” based on governmental funding when they are its recipients. Subsidies and corporate control of certain markets do, however, solidify “distortions.” The computer industry and the network relations through which it functions has a tendency to support the formation of monopolistic corporate power, as we have seen in Harvey’s, Liu’s, Stone’s and Rossiter’s analyses.

As noted above, Barbrook and Cameron (1997, 54) claim that technologically-determinist beliefs, coupled with the suppression of government, underlie the ease with which workers assimilate contradictory commitments; one from their cultural origins as counter to “the mainstream,” reinforced by their insecure status as contractors, and the other from their heightened social status and privileges. Hence: “Living within a contract culture..., they cannot challenge the primacy of the marketplace over their lives. On the other hand, they resent attempts by those in authority to encroach on their individual autonomy.” The organization of their work facilitates believing that the market, which is the vehicle for emancipatory technology, is benign in its direction of theirs and others lives. The reality is simply that its direction is not overt, as are the hated instructions of a Fordist manager.

The neat conclusion is that, with the “schizophrenic” Californian Ideology, Barbrook and Cameron show that both the left’s and the right’s different dilemmas are resolved with the same solution: Get rid of government. For the left-sympathizers, governments represent militaristic activity and domination, i.e., the posthierarchy prejudice; for those from the right, it represents intrusion in the natural order of meritocracy based on competency, the free-market prejudice. The left and right integration in the persons of these Californian SAs reveals the posthierarchy ethos to be a feature of neoliberal ideology. Barbrook and Cameron (1997, 69) assert that, “crucially, anti-statism provides the means to reconcile radical and reactionary ideas about technological progress.” The summary result is that “the hi-tech and media industries are a key element of the New Right electoral coalition” (Barbrook and Cameron 1997, 61), keeping taxes low and social services reduced to a minimum in California “for nearly a generation.” California is a hotbed of “racism, poverty and environmental degradation” (Barbrook and Cameron 1997, 46). After all, “white people in California remain dependent on their darker-skinned fellow humans to work in their factories, pick their crops, look after their children and tend their gardens” (Barbrook and Cameron 1997, 57).

However, maintaining a retinue of personal servants is inconsistent with viewing oneself as a proponent of posthierarchy. This contradiction may well motivate the SA adoption of wellness technologies and neospirituality. These allow some of the support functions that personal service workers might provide to be allocated to an impersonal facility—i.e. a technique or tool. With this interpretation, Barbrook and Cameron

compare the Californian workers' dilemma to that of Thomas Jefferson's, who wrote the American Declaration of Independence and "championed the rights of American peasants and artisans to determine their own destinies" while he, himself, owned slaves (Barbrook and Cameron 1997, 56). As part of his duties as Secretary of State from 1790 to 1793, Jefferson oversaw the US Patent Office. One application presented for his review was Eli Whitney's cotton ginny. It removed the seeds from the cotton, overriding the need to do this manually—a job for slaves at the time. Writing to Whitney, Jefferson called this dependency on slaves for this job "one of our greatest embarrassments" (Giordani 118, 2012). Additionally, Jefferson did not patent his own invention, the Moldboard Plough, and designed it to be easy-to-build on any plantation. He clearly wanted such inventions broadly distributed, so they could alleviate the need for slave labour on his and others plantations (Barbrook and Cameron 1997, 57). (As the Whitney invention made cotton-growing more profitable, it had the opposite effect.) Jefferson hoped that "slavery would eliminate itself" (Giordani 118, 2012).

Barbrook and Cameron liken the "virtual" class's engagement with "mind, body and spirit" (i.e., neospiritual) technologies as similarly motivated. The SA class wants to substitute for servants a technological solution to well-being.⁹⁴ Barbrook and Cameron (1997, 57) additionally judge that differential access to these technologies "reinforce[s] the difference between the masters and the slaves." This second reason perhaps slightly contradicts the first, however. For, one aspect of the substitution would be to effectively *minimize* the public difference between master and servant by banishing the servant from the master's immediate company. However, the first "Jeffersonian substitution" reason is particularly meaningful if we see SAs' personal service workers as providing physical comforts, emotional validation and human connection while their recipients incur unwanted moral obligations to, and establish odious dependencies on, their servants. As substitutes for the services, neospiritual practices provide the former goods without the latter costs. This substitution is the *raison d'être* for commodities in general according to political philosopher Teresa Brennan (2004), which makes "well-being technologies" their purest form. Validating Barbrook and Cameron's second reason, it is also true that in the context of very unequal Silicon Valley social order, the privileged access these SAs have to such commodities marks them as socially superior

⁹⁴ Political philosopher, Teresa Brennan (2000) analyses how commodities mask dynamics of dependency through how they function. She explains why consumer relations reduce conflict and streamline personal relations in society, although at some cost. Her discussion applies equally well to how privatized religion also accomplishes this condition. Although living a commodified lifestyle forces a sacrifice of influence over how social and economic resources are distributed, consumers are, nonetheless, relieved of direct conflict with each other where consumption prevails. In *buying* the satisfaction of their needs and desires, they neither directly contend with, nor rely on, each other for this satisfaction. They *pass by* each other in their self-absorbed, consumerist pursuits.

while shielding them from the need to perform blatant demonstration of power that having personal servants would require of them.

As noted above, the marriage of cybernetic and neospiritual visions has been widely discussed in religious studies scholarship. Zanbergen (2010, 163) claimed that by the 1990s cyberspace had become for many the “‘Platonic new home for the mind and the heart,’ (Heim 1993), a ‘New Jerusalem,’ (Benedikt 1992) or a ‘paradise’ (Stenger 1992).” However, as she points out, with such an abstract approach, there is a danger of reifying the Internet and essentializing the religious activity: Minus a sociological analysis of the use of the internet for religious purposes—relativizing that use by grounding it in social processes—the religious form inevitably collapses into the internet. This form of analysis is equivalent to the historical essentialization of religious traditions by identifying them with their texts and formal religious practices (McCutcheon 2003). “Being based on the assumption that digital technology and spirituality are mirrored into each other, such explanations don’t take up the question as to why certain people in certain socio-cultural contexts came to take this New Edge idea seriously” (Zanbergen 2010, 163). The arguments of Fisher and Himanen, Barbrook and Cameron, above, filtered through the Jeffersonian example, show that it helps the iconic representatives of this culture to reconcile themselves to market forces, neoliberalism and inequality in the context of an underlying cultural tradition of opposition to vested interests—a reconciliation they need to perform to function as high technology workers.

It is a complicated reconciliation to be sure, labelled differently by various scholars. Nevertheless, the Californian ideology, the hacker ethic, and the network cosmology, as I have shown, confront the same basic conundrum at their roots—the need to deny of the fact of social inequality while accommodating and even exploiting this condition. Others support this position. Cruz (2016, 61-62) notes that “Slavoj Zizek (2001) has observed how the Western appropriation of Buddhism has served to legitimize the competitive logic of capitalism.” “Mindfulness” is another luxury item that permits the few to ignore the impact of their behavior on the many (Cruz 2016, 62). I have also argued that even those who are not directly saddled with the need to resolve these contradictions may experience its pressures too. As SAs are influential (and for other reasons I described), their values and rationalization strategies (and some of their solutions, such as mindfulness meditation practices), may well be adopted by non-SA workers.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ For various well-known reasons, even strong victims of a social regime may vehemently support it—in the current situation, a neoliberal order advancing inequality while maintaining a discourse on democracy, equality and justice.

The tone-deafness of corporate neospirituality practitioners to inconvenient calls for social responsibility is illustrated by an incident at an annual promotion of neospiritual and wellness practices to this population—billed simply as a “Wisdom” fair. While Chade-Menge Tan was lecturing about Google’s mindfulness program, at “Wisdom 2.0,” Buddhist-led activists interrupted him to draw attention to San Francisco “Bay Area evictions linked to tech industry gentrification” (Cruz 2016, 72). After unfurling a banner and passing out pamphlets, they were removed. The audience and presenters reflected on how they should respond. The response was deemed completed when Google Well Being Manager Bill Duane departed from script for a small meditation that entailed not judging the intervenors, but reflecting on conflict. A participant reported that “what had felt like an emotionally jarring interruption was transformed into a moment of awareness and peace” (“Google Handles Protesters with Mindfulness and Compassion,” 2014). There could not be a better expression of social insulation—if not squeamishness—in the face of need. “The conference presents an evolution in consciousness of the wealthiest among us as the antidote to suffering rather than the redistribution of wealth and power” summarizes Ream (2014).⁹⁶

Conclusion

In Chapter Seven, I had traced the experimentation with posthierarchy by organizational consultants through many stages of the establishment of the post-Fordist workplace. This chapter completed the argument, in that it moved the discussion from specific efforts to institute posthierarchy in workplaces in the hope of promoting worker empowerment and a certain mode of collectivity, to a larger, and to some extent, prior, context. This context consisted of the communities responsible for the gestation and broader pursuit of these values. I also sketched out the specific form of the ideas and ideologies entertained by these workers as post-Fordism coalesced. This illustrated the positive imagery that inspires, guides, and promotes SA culture. I presented the most important features of this culture, i.e., network-related ethic, holism, organicism, teleology and technicism, as a more precise and technologized realization of the posthierarchical worldview.

In this chapter I provided a high-level history of the American counterculture, particularly centred on the West Coast, and its experiments with new technologies and new religious convictions beginning in the 1960s, revealing overlapping populations of new workers and New Age practitioners. I argued that the population of workers and would-be workers in the new industries, whose experiments with new technologies inflected with the countercultural and New Age values of their cohort, rendered a unique ethos

⁹⁶ Cited in Cruz 2016, 73

they carried into their new jobs and further developed there. This heritage of what were to become iconic post-Fordist workers—neospirituality intertwined with fantastic hopes for a computer-based society—seems to continue to influence the SA workforce, suggesting they have an elective affinity with neospirituality based on that history alone. Since then, the neospiritual ethos has been processed through SA conditions of work and social standing, particularly with respect the importance placed on technology. Some workers have combined their New Age and computer-hacker identities to advance related esoteric pursuits, such as Neopaganism and posthumanism. In general, many of them appear to be receptive to the evolved forms of New Age, which I call neospirituality, including practices such as mindfulness meditation, performed at the workplace.

To represent broad features of post-Fordist worker ideology, I analysed three representations of the worldview of this key SA-worker population. I claimed that each of these worldviews resolves a basic contradiction in these workers' day-to-day lives, which emerges from the discordance between the original anti-capitalist values of their cohort and their experiences and income as free-market workers. Each of these worldviews, in its own way, reflects this discordance and a common resolution in the idea that individual and collective interests can be collapsed, thereby leaving the worker free to pursue his or her self-interest (and career) while still feeling socially responsible. We saw that confidence in this position has led them to propagate their worldview, powerfully in the case of the network cosmology, beyond the confines of their workplaces.

In terms of the network cosmology, the greater good is achieved through a high rate of freely-chosen, technologically-aided connections or transactions between people (which happens to be a generalization of SA professional responsibilities). The hacker ethic promotes worker disinterest in personal profit, resistance to corporate direction by ignoring or (supposedly) circumventing it, while pursuing the free exercise of creativity. According to the ethic, “the good life” can be available to all through very cheap products. The Californian ideology proposes licence for technology companies to evolve without discipline or hindrance by taxes, regulations, and other governmental interventions, as a way of reconciling left and right political positions.

In total, these worldviews valorize or rely on the same process, technological innovation spearheaded by creative workers freely following the possibilities of the technology. The “moral good” they assume for their activities are based on the conviction that this particular technological development (or even technology in general) is an intrinsically socially integrating and will basically distribute “goods” broadly. Ignored in their formulations are the selection processes by owner of companies and the inevitable shaping of social life that market activity imposes. Additionally, as we have seen, while enjoying their exciting and

sometimes lucrative jobs, proponents of these creeds have had to overlook deleterious impacts on other workers, locally or globally. These include a pervasive debt culture; the extreme polarization of wealth; and the requirement to do dangerous, stultifying and poorly-paid industrial labour. Even within the SA class, rewards are distributed unevenly, work is insecure, and technology continues to eliminate jobs. Barbrook and Cameron revealed the contradictions the SA class endures are particularly acute amongst the elite software workers based in Silicon Valley.

Because Barbrook and Cameron's account goes beyond abstraction to locate the heart of the SA experience, they provide considerable insight as to the conundrum of SAs in general. There is a very specific dilemma that challenges Silicon Valley SAs (i.e., whether to support state taxes) as well as a specific way that incongruency between cultural heritage and social status can be resolved intellectually—as a rejection of government. The necessary completion of this emerges as a posthierarchical worldview. Barbrook and Cameron's explanation also guides us to understanding an important reason why this population (besides their cultural history) are avid users of wellness (i.e., neospiritual) technologies: as a way to deny dependency while also signalling superiority.

I introduced an update on the network cosmology, too. Dataism appears to extend the network cosmology to its logical conclusion of rejecting humanism. Harari makes a persuasive case for the dataist model of a world, where everything is reduced to data processing. In this world, human beings would be better to step back from their putative primary position on the planet and allow machines (i.e., algorithms) to assist them in making decisions, since the number of factors we now have to consider, and their interrelation, is simply beyond our current intelligence and sensing capacity. This judgment suggests the likelihood of a common adoption of transhumanism in the future.⁹⁷

In my discussions of the rationalization of knowledge systems and the second privatization of religion, in the context of Carrette and King's and others' commentary, I attempt to touch on some aspects of the loss to

⁹⁷ This raises obvious questions for scholars of religion. Are neospiritual practices consonant with dataism? It is most pertinent to understand what neospirituals—and perhaps particularly those in workplaces—accomplish by their activities in relation to the translation of all human activity as inputs to data-processing algorithms. For example, do all forms of meditation accomplish the same thing (considering, for example, that there are at least two basic approaches to it, the concentrative and receptive styles [Sarbacker 2005, Austin 2011])? Has there been a general selection amongst Western publics towards a form that meshes better with “data flow” than the other, if the differences in meditative approach are significant in this context? If so, what does it matter?

human beings if dataism (discussed as mathecization, streamlining, rationalization, and to an extent governance) were to become the religion Hariri claims is forming. However, neither my own consideration of these issues, nor Hariri's short review of dataism, engages with the many questions enough to provide adequate answers.

Consideration of these and related issues seen in earlier chapters and above, strongly suggest that a global universe of data processing will ever be substantially controlled and shaped by capitalism and that, with algorithmic identities based on our consumption patterns etc., elements of religion as we know it, such as mystery and incongruity to mention a few, will be repressed. However, these arguments may not tell the whole story, and subsequent research must explore this. The global dataist world may actually be larger than the economy. Despite its current capture by concentrated capitalist power, its reach and complexity may create dynamics that ultimately transcend or confound the economic domain. It is important to speculate as to how randomness is introduced into the system if, as Carrette and King, Berardi, Fisher and many others imply, capitalism has a significant lock-down on dissenting voices.

9 Conclusion

Introduction

In this chapter I tie together the many ideas I developed over the course of this dissertation. The work asserts that there are important parallels between new worker and neospiritual cultures and then speculates on the reasons for and significance of these parallels by looking at neospirituality's prevalence in post-Fordist workplaces. In other words, in addition to establishing that there is an elective affinity between key post-Fordist worker culture and neospirituality, I examined how this affinity emerged and how these compatible value systems were brought together in post-Fordist work sites. My conclusion was that, as part of the new workplace culture, neospirituality is an integral element of the mode of regulation of post-Fordist capitalism.

In this dissertation, I established a set of correspondences between post-Fordist, symbolic-analytic worker and neospiritual cultures, in terms of both their contents and structures, to suggest that these workers have an elective affinity with neospirituality. I established affinities at the ideological level by comparing the conceptual structure of neospiritual and workplace cultures, by showing their shared cosmology, and by matching their values and beliefs. I revealed the similarity of practices by comparing the practical contents of neospirituality and workplace culture, and by identifying similarities in organizational and communications patterns as well as in attitudes towards and use of skills and knowledge.

Moreover, I endeavoured to explain the transition of a minor popular-cultural ethos into the centres of global power by speculating about what the root of these parallels may be, i.e., about what brought work culture and neospirituality into this alignment. Towards this objective, I outlined reasons why, and the processes by which, neospiritual discourse and practices have been instituted and accepted in global corporations. I identified the common cultural heritage of neospirituals and SA workers (the transformation of the 60s-70s countercultural movements in the face of the ascendancy of neo-liberalism). I traced the material influences and genealogy of the introduction and securing of neospirituality as part of workplace culture. I also analysed how neospiritual beliefs, practices, values and institutional forms (such as they are) function in society in general and in SA workplaces in particular.

Finally I speculated on reasons for the value placed by both workers and managers in key post-Fordist workplaces on neospirituality in workplace culture, trying to explain why neospirituality persists and has a relatively prominent place there. As the result of the textual explorations of workplace culture and neospirituality documented in this dissertation, I conclude that any one of five such reasons may be in operation: Workers and managers (together or variously) welcome the presence of neospirituality because:

1. Neospirituality's posthierarchical premise supports an anti-government sentiment, and so reinforces a common alliance of workers and management; 2. Neospirituality's holism mutes a historical conflict between workers and management by accentuating cooperation and the idea that "all are working towards the same objectives;" 3. Use of neospiritual well-being commodities helps iconic workers, steeped in an ethos of egalitarianism, to avoid thinking about their relationship to the servant class and their superior class status; 4. As the mechanisms of spiritual prosumption (i.e., neospirituality), suggest that neospiritual practitioners are themselves the products of their spiritual efforts, so may workers influenced by this ethos more easily see their work efforts as accruing personal value above and beyond the extrinsic rewards of an income and social engagement; i.e., to themselves as "worker commodities;" and 5. The dematerializing thrust of neospirituality mirrors that of post-Fordism and the experience of its workers, as per post-Fordist industry's privileging of immaterial products, its celebration of virtual relations, its dissolution of organizations into ephemeral modules temporarily addressed to projects, and its streamlining of information to support the power of consolidated global capital (among other forms of dematerialization). This thrust also denies the reality of an unequal society because immaterial values are felt to rival, be superior to, or be substitutable for the material, and access to the immaterial is theoretically "equally-available." In other words, a dematerializing ethos downplays material needs and so justifies contemporary conditions (in general and of work) which substitute non-material for material rewards. I further clarify these explanations below.

I begin the body of this chapter by recapping the table from Chapter One that outlines affinities between new worker and neospiritual cultures in order to clarify several of the major terms of the comparison developed over the course of previous chapters, particularly the common streamlining or dematerialization seen in both post-Fordist economic and and neospiritual cultures, and the posthierarchy and holism they both espouse. Then, I synthesize the theoretical material around these themes and explain how they help constitute organizations as psytopias (i.e., products of the second privatization of religion)—the formulation of which I posit is neospirituality's ultimate contribution to new workplaces. From this synthesis I repeat and elaborate on the material directly above—the five reasons why we should expect neospirituality to be welcomed in post-Fordist workplaces. Following this, I assess the contribution of this dissertation relative to research in the field, consider the limitations of my analysis, and suggest future directions for study. I also consider where this dissertation falls short, both in terms of the goals set for it, and by other standards. The latter includes qualifications of my argument touched on but not thoroughly elaborated upon in this dissertation, as well as the lack of fieldwork to test its basic arguments.

The Elective Affinity of Workers for Neospirituality

Here, for the sake of reminding the reader, I restore, somewhat refined, one of the comparison tables provided in Chapter One, that reveals the similarity of SA worker and NAS beliefs. The concepts in this table have been developed over the course of this dissertation.

Table 4: Neospiritual vs. Post-Fordist workers beliefs

Neospiritual Beliefs	Post-Fordist Workers/SA Beliefs
Make your authentic self through spiritual practices;	Make your authentic self through work experience
The public self is false; only the essential self (as spirit or energy) is real and should guide us; roles- and rules-based (i.e., bureaucratic) action is stifling and inefficient to the point of being immoral	Not the rule- and status-oriented, but the passionate self is the true self. Thus, work choices and performance should be propelled by personal passion; roles- and rules-based (i.e., bureaucratic) action is stifling and inefficient to the point of being immoral
Your beliefs may change; it is the journey that counts	The career is not a vertical climb but a collection of experiences; Every element in your employment biography should say something important about you, make you more employable, and give you choices
Conventionally-framed religious thought is oppressive and keeps people in spiritual straight-jackets; go beyond these boundaries	Formal education is overrated and may even limit insight; experience of the world is often better than book learning
God does not dominate; is more of a internal force that inspires passion for life	Leaders should inspire and not oppress workers; special qualities, such as insight or charisma, not formal education or particular skills, make a good leader
Human beings can range in their insight and spiritual awareness from low to very high, putting some, in the extreme cases, in company with God or the divine	The contribution of one worker over another, regardless of similar training, years of work, etc., can be great, which justifies very differential remuneration between them
Spiritual growth is one's own responsibility	Career-success is one's own responsibility; do not expect sustained mentorship or support at work
Teach and learn from fellow seekers, whatever their, or your, credentials	Expect to learn from, instruct and help fellow-workers. Credentials do not screen you from any kind of work.

Neospiritual Beliefs	Post-Fordist Workers/SA Beliefs
Making contacts with others provides new directions for finding the self	New contacts/contracts render experience that adds to identity and enhances work contents and future prospects; always be open to new contacts
Participating in spiritual practices with others enhances one's own experience; spiritual energy crosses over amongst seekers	The synergy of the group is a source of creativity; individual passions energize all coworkers
Different religious paths are good, but within limits; seek common ground with others when together; respect their choices, and make them respect yours	Proper group behaviour requires suppressing inessential differences (such as "foreign" or parochial values or habits) unless they offer something needed by the team
Social disorientation and change create stress requiring continuous healing practices that involve spiritual energizing and guidance	Pressured work and constant organizational change require continuous therapy to restore energy and personal emotional balance
I should profit from my efforts. Through being spiritually advanced I can embody profit.	I should profit from my efforts. Through being deeply skilled, I can embody profit.
The universe also profits from my efforts; the "divine consciousness" recognizes my good intentions and transmits them broadly. My personal healing heals the world.	The world also profits from my efforts; better technology advances general well-being. My pursuit of power and wealth benefits all.

Overview of Arguments

Through a series of interrelated arguments, I have shown that neospirituality is consistent with the culture of post-Fordist workplaces. I have provided reasons why many new workers might accept, and managers and employers advance, neospirituality as an element in work culture. I suggested therefore that the responsiveness to neospirituality of these workers can be substantially accounted for on the basis of the personal qualities, beliefs and skills required of iconic workers in the contemporary, post-Fordist economy. Moreover, I established that there are specific parallels in terms of beliefs, habits and skills between neospiritual practitioners and iconic post-Fordist workers—symbolic analysts producing immaterial goods for a global economy. The parallels are broached initially in Chapter One, as Tables 1, 2, and 3. Tables 1 and 2 revealed the parallels between religious institutions and practices and business institutions and practices in the Fordist and post-Fordist eras respectively. Table 4, above, is a reorganization of and elaboration of Table 3 (again, from Chapter One), the beliefs of neospirituality practitioners as compared to those post-Fordist symbolic analysts.

Beyond establishing the relationships documented in the tables, in this dissertation I provided an account of how Western economies changed from the Fordist to post-Fordist model and contrasted work patterns in the two eras. I showed that, in response to the loss of profits attendant upon increasing scarcity and costs of resources as well as the saturation of the American consumer market, companies began to globalize, re-structure, and automate their operations. I recounted how these globalizing corporations took advantage of new technologies and their increasing power over governments to force reductions in regulatory oversight and labour protection, to minimize their own bureaucratic organizational structures, and to create flexible workers more adapted to precarious work and constantly changing employment conditions.

As manufacturing was transferred overseas, Western economies refocussed on finance, information, cultural products and services as the primary outputs. In this process, vanguard managers, advertisers and organizational consultants mirrored or preceded the New Age and countercultural reactions against the rigidity of blue-collar assembly line work and the unions that supported them as well as the organization-man mentality of office workers created by strict rule-orientation and hierarchies of authority. Vanguard corporate representatives realized that in the future they would need employees who could: a) think creatively, since novelty or uniqueness is an essential feature of cultural products; b) motivate themselves and support and discipline fellow employees, since managers who had done this in the past were to be dispensed with; c) learn to continuously upgrade knowledge of information technologies to compensate for the lack of organizational support staff, to satisfy personal data-processing needs and to perform more intensive and complex communications with fellow workers, clients and customers; d) be entrepreneurial in attitude, continually seeking more business opportunities for the company and work opportunities for themselves; e) be adventuresome in knowledge and skill-seeking, considering their formal training and education as only a beginning point of lifelong personal learning; and f) be flexible with regard to personal attachments—whether vocation, community or family-based—and adaptable in managing these non-work obligations or commitments.

In this dissertation, I suggested that neospirituality is a liberal religion pushed to its extremity under the humanistic critique of Fordist society—the basic component of the 1960s counterculture at a time when capital was initiating these major changes to its functioning. Along with the counterculture, New Age practitioners supported the humanist backlash against the regimentation of Fordism that vanguard organizational analysts also mounted. As Fordism wound down, many experienced a sense of oppression by large-scale technological projects, and distaste for hierarchy, bureaucracy and the reign of the expert. For new workers as well as New Agers, a rule-oriented, explicitly stratified, social order had no appeal. Nor could the newly-expanded capacities and aspirations of prospective post-Fordist workers be exercised

within these old working conditions. Additionally, as large pay-packets and security began to dwindle for assembly-line workers, they also found cause to object to the repressive nature of their work.

Initially, along with the countercultural and political activists they joined with, New Agers expressed antipathy towards capitalism per se. Over time, however, they became less involved in active political engagement in favour of more passive embrace of “alternate” lifestyles. Among New Agers were a significant number of young experimenters with technology. I contend that once this cohort, composed of these different populations of youth, acquired jobs in the new economy that satisfied some of their aspirations for creative work, their opposition to capitalism’s military-industrial complex and desires for democratic workplaces were transmuted into a posthierarchical worldview, which excoriated an ancillary aspect of capitalism—its Fordist bureaucratic organizational form. This is a view that now grounds the ideology of the post-Fordist corporation in many of its echelons. In other words, the radical impulse was coopted as material for a managerial reform of capitalism, intended to increase productivity.

An examination of the worldviews these workers expressed through their spokespeople as well as more specific practices and beliefs showed that effective work in a global world connected by these technologies requires a cosmology akin to that of neospirituality. In particular, neospiritual holism adduces to a teleological worldview that compares favourably to the network cosmology espoused explicitly in workplaces, while both validate the ethos of contemporary, post-Fordist, global capitalism.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that spirituality practices and language are particularly promoted in the workplaces of a broad category of post-Fordist workers, symbolic analysts. SAs most commonly experience the innovative structures of the new working conditions. They provide information products and services. Although their material conditions vary considerably based on the continually-changing fortunes and foci of the enterprises in which they are typically precariously employed, as well as the progressive automation of their jobs, they represent, in general, the more successful arm of the Western middle class, even while the fortunes of the middle class have fallen in the half-century since post-Fordism began. Their skill with technology ensures their enduring value to corporations.

Although succeeding in any work setting normally requires adopting certain attitudes and a particular worldview, such attitudes and vision tend to be adopted unconsciously by workers. As with any ideology, whatever element of this belief-structure that comes to consciousness is construed by its believers not entirely as a pragmatic orientation that helps them succeed materially, but as embodying values of intrinsic merit. In other words, from within even the most constrained social situations, people endeavour to clear a small space which they deem to be “free” of discipline and endow choices within these spaces as virtuous. Therefore, to the extent that it is consciously entertained, a workplace ideology would not be understood by

its believers simply as derived from the necessities of one's work life but to have been more-or-less freely chosen because of its intrinsic value—as a set of good beliefs and commitments. And because they are good, one wants to promote them to others. Therefore, like any other worker who believes they have some choice in what they do, SAs would tend to cast the necessities of their lives with an aura of virtue. In their case, they have the capacity to propagate their belief structure beyond the boundaries of their workplaces. I speculated that they did this to a considerable degree through promoting a network cosmology.

Despite the concentration of neospiritual discourses and programs in SA workplaces, many scholarly models of workplace culture that I explored neglect the spiritual component of workers' subjective experience. Worker worldviews in this literature tend to orient around workers' skill and identification with technology. However, as defined by Fisher, the network cosmology steps beyond a purely secular representation and suggests that workers have spiritual aspirations. Fisher demonstrated that in the 1990s, Kevin Kelly, the former editor of the world's most prestigious high-tech and cultural journal at the time, *Wired*, took on the task of idealizing network relations as a paradigm for the good society. Kelly argued that within the net-cultural worldview a society operated through computer-based networks could take on a mystical character. Through their belief in a network cosmology, SA workers have developed a vision of life that integrates spiritual beliefs and technological enablement, a vision with structural similarities to the neospiritual—or New Age *sensu lato*—worldview.

Furthermore, supported by corporate advertising for their industries, SAs continue to disseminate this worldview with some degree of success. SA jobs are highly communications-oriented, so these workers are in a natural position to idealize and promulgate the values that they find advantageous to help them do their work, promote their industry and reconcile themselves to their social status. With little effort or intention, SAs serve as mouthpieces for the values they hold and refine in their own interests.

The public responds to these suggestions. Essentially by valorizing internet participation and romanticizing the software-worker's life, popular culture engenders in those at a considerable remove from the centres of software production, an increasingly enthusiastic embrace of the network model *of society*—of the worldview that Kelly promoted. The ability of those (well) outside the SA employment pool to personally identify with SAs is posited as based on product advertising, on the impact of the mythologizing efforts of industry spokespeople such as Kelly, and on the similarity of skills non-SAs develop via prosumption processes—rendering experiences of immaterial labour as consumers, if not producers. I have argued that along with this technology-embracing ethos, the neospiritual impulse intertwined with it has also been spread broadly by SAs.

Throughout this text, I scrutinized features of both neospirituality beliefs and practices, and those associated with post-Fordist work, to find their underlying parallels and possible relations to each other. For example, for the work-culture terms, I raised and reflected on a number of elements of work contents and organization. I explored and interpreted the significance of affect labour, the integration of analysis and intuition in the skill-set of the SA, and team organization as a construction for euphoric engagement, a rationalizer of personal difference, and a structure to eliminate collective bargaining of workers, to name some of the themes.

I also argued that believers in posthierarchy (though with different configurations of the belief structure) reject a dualistic vision of social life. New Agers express their holism by celebrating a unitive consciousness, by rejecting overt structures of authority, by denying the distinction between the private and public self, and opposing the dualisms they consider intrinsic to “mainstream” culture. Neospirituality marks a move “from materialistic dualism to metaphysical monism” (Campbell 2007, 327). As a result, its adherents also have an exaggerated belief in their autonomy as individuals, while underrating the potential power they have as citizens within a polity. Correspondingly, on the basis of the worker worldview defined by their spokespeople, we can infer that SA workers deny that they exercise their skills at the sole behest of their employers. Research suggests they experience a high degree of belief in their autonomy in, and passion for, their work. These workers report that they are working for pleasure and their own convictions, not merely for their own and the company’s profit.

New workers and neospirituals are very strongly tied together through their common belief in the supersession of social class and their convictions that “government” (read “bureaucracy,” and “formal power structure”) is obsolete while in the “network social order,” one’s “true self” can emerge—obviating the need for a persona. Effectively this exhibits a tendency to believe that the Fordist social order has been replaced by “no social order,” since any social order requires public selves or personae different from private selves. Acknowledging both a public and private self requires making a dualistic distinction, something both new workers and neospirituals avoid. Of course, since post-Fordism is indeed a social order, the dynamics of the “roles” or “faces” that people must present to the world (in the New Age parlance, their “false selves”) may operate differently, but they are not eliminated. The Regulation School theory that a mode of regulation develops in order to support a particular regime of accumulation specifically indicates that (at least) one particular type of sociality or social persona matches every form of social order—in the case considered here, of post-Fordism. Appropriately, scholarly analysis of new work culture in this regime, both in the disciplines of economics and labour analysis as well as religious studies, provide evidence and argument that new forms of sociality have developed and that workplaces discipline workers to behave in particular ways.

New workers and neospirituals oppose explicit markers of hierarchy in society and at work. Instead, power and influence are believed to be fluid and achieved through “horizontal interactions.” This belief is reflected in the characteristics of each cosmology. On the neospiritual side, the holistic worldview— supported by a vision of deity so impersonal as often to be seen as pure “energy”—leads to the belief that individuals can influence the world body psychically or mystically, as it were—and vice versa. There is no need, they contend, to specifically organize into mundane human communities consulting the crude organizational paraphernalia of yesteryear in the process. One’s own desire and energy, supported by actions that may superficially appear to be weak gestures towards a specific social objective might spark a meme in the larger human community (like triggering a virus) and bring about the objective through a subtle process. In the work milieu, on the other hand, several organizational structures are expected to “automatically” strengthen equal relations among people and countervail the traditional power structures of corporations. These are, as noted, the network patterns of worker interactions, both within and between companies, the norm of working in cooperative teams, the allocation of certain managerial responsibilities (such as evaluating the work of colleagues) and managerial privileges (such as a degree of autonomy over work patterns) to these non-managers and, finally, the blurring of worker responsibilities across “professional identities” to equalize all (team) workers.

I have argued that the posthierarchy ethos shared both by neospirituality practitioners and new workers (rendering worker rejection of overt authority structures in favour of submerged forms of supervision) plays into post-Fordist capitalism’s rationalization of life, information, and work-patterns. Post-Fordism works towards a monoculture by subjecting all domains of social life to market forces. I have recounted many instances in which the dynamics of this system tends to streamline or rationalize complex personal, sociological and epistemological dynamics. I systematize these instances below under the theme of “dematerialization.” I also discussed the tendency towards a monoculture in neospirituality that is related to its precursor form, the New Age’s basic rejection of science and history in favour of a teleological and mythopoeic view of reality.

Post-Fordist workplaces are sites of an evolving monoculture, which the neospiritual worldview supports on the basis of its non-dualistic, imaginative structure. In short, I assert that, on this basis if no other, neospiritual values and behaviours reflect the ideal culture within post-Fordist global companies. Additionally, I considered together a number of models of workplace culture that illustrated a similar holism in their outlook, although with different emphases. I have argued that major elements of the network cosmology, the most complete of the worker cultural representations I reviewed, correlate well with basic neospiritual beliefs and practices.

To put these observations of affinities into perspective, I provided analyses by Carette and King and others of the evolution of New Age spirituality's values and practices in relation to capitalist consumer and producer operations. The thesis of the second privatization of religion appears to account for the affinities that these workers and New Agers exhibit, both as the two groups established themselves and up to contemporary times. That global corporations may be sites for *psytopiae*, a thesis I also explore, lends greater specificity and more credibility to the second privatization theory.

In short, the arguments I made in this dissertation are that New Age spirituality, and especially, now neospirituality, is an important theme of corporate training and pursuit for company culture, particularly in the post-Fordist information industries. Furthermore, there are good reasons why this relationship should exist, related to the new immaterial products and to the nature of corporate organization to produce them. The population of workers in these industries is drawn from the cohort, initially, and from the class, that also embraced and continues to embrace New Age spirituality and its subsequent forms. The work they do and their social status allows them to disseminate their values. SA work practices and organizational structures parallel neospiritual practices and organizational structures. Different representations of the workplace worldview, following the general spirit of posthierarchy, such as the network cosmology, tend to reproduce the holism of neospirituality in their structures. For all of them their main function, as far as they are ideological, appears to be to resolve both the inconsistency of a privileged workforce having populist political leanings as well as the contradiction of extreme individualists honing to company directives. As they appear to support these resolutions, neospirituality discourses and practices seem to validate the theses of the second privatization of religion and characterization of workplaces as *psytopiae*.

However, these workplace worldviews as well as neospirituality depend on a broader culture *geist*—the reverence for the “immaterial” in contrast to impure, crude materiality. This reverence is obviously an endorsement, no doubt mostly unconscious, of post-Fordism's economic engine—the production of immaterial goods over the material. I would also propose it to be a rebuff or expression of disdain for the Fordist working class, which, as with all of the lower classes throughout history, had to grapple with the stubborn resistance of the tightly-bonded atoms of material “stuff” in their day-to-day lives. Such broad social disdain for material and the class who worked it no doubt helps to exonerate governments, political parties and corporations who conspired to destroy the labour unions that supported the class.

Dematerialization is underlain by “financialization,” which is the real trajectory of the immaterial economy. A financialized economy downplays the production of goods, as capitalists' profits are increasingly made via their manipulation of money, an abstraction. Indeed, the ultimate immaterial product is money, and, even beyond the software and electronic devices that an “immaterial economy” is understood to rely on as

its chief driver, the production of money is increasingly the engine of the economy.⁹⁸ Typically, the consultant-directed corporate “mergers and acquisitions” frenzy of the 1980s aimed at running up, or deflating, the stock prices of the involved companies so that corporate CEOs and high-level investors could benefit through their strategic investments. In addition to these practices, “financial instruments”—i.e., derivatives, options etc.—were devised as investment strategies directed to helping money make money without requiring the inconvenient and unpredictable detour of providing goods of any kind for the consuming public.

Dematerialization, Holism and the Creation of the Psytopia

In this section, I synthesize the material on two broad themes that have appeared throughout this dissertation and that strongly unite neospirituality and new work environments. These are the process of dematerialization and the idea of holism. I then connect these to the concept of psytopia, showing its relation to the other themes and implications for the goals of this dissertation. I argue that testing the validity of the psytopia construct is the proper direction for future research.

I have discussed holism at considerable length so far in this dissertation. However, although specific dematerializing processes have been explored in many places in this dissertation—sometimes called “streamlining,” “mathecization,” and “rationalization”—I have not explicitly drawn together these analyses under the underlying theme of dematerialization, as I do below. An important reason that I call neospirituality an appropriate ethos for SA workers is on the basis of the many forms of dematerialization seen in the economic structure and workplaces. This process is also recognizable in broader cultural processes. Below, I list and recap these modalities of dematerialization, including of work, of the corporation, of society, of information, of history etc. I show that dematerialization has occurred in the economy, in culture, and in religion (i.e., as neospirituality).

I argue that all of these forms have the effect of sacralising the ephemeral and abstract, resulting in a popular ideology that professes the relative unimportance of material structures and supports to quality of life. This disregard for such structures and supports extends to discounting the modalities and realities of materiality—history and geography—which recount and retain the integrity of discrete times and places respectively. However, in terms of popular culture and the culture of work, I concentrate on the effects of dematerialization as an ideology that discredits the importance of human material need-satisfaction by contrasting it to

⁹⁸ see

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/mikecollins/2015/02/04/wall-street-and-the-financialization-of-the-economy/#5e1398852c1b>; and <http://washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/novdec-2014/frenzied-financialization/>

the immaterial, and so effectively underplays the impact of human material deprivation, as it also fails to censure material glut—as if there were no limit to the material supports an individual human body can accommodate. Because of their trade in immaterial commodities and services, and because consolidated global corporate power can only be sustained virtually through data-processing and communications technologies, agents of the global information and communications industries—SAs, their managers, and corporate CEOs—celebrate if not sacralise the dematerialization process which, integrated with a holistic worldview, allows them to turn a blind eye to the ever-growing material inequality that the global hegemony of consolidated corporate capital is imposing on the world.

In addition to providing an account of SA work's value that makes these workers complicit in this system, the celebration of dematerialization, interpreted through holism, also turns the tables on the workers themselves, by deflating their potential demands for better (as in more stable) and, possibly, more remunerative work. When immaterial rewards (e.g., in particular, the joy of creative accomplishment) are held in high regard, an SA's possible demand for better material rewards or more opportunities for rest and recreation may appear to be trivial. Hence a dematerialization ethos enhances the likelihood of worker exploitation, as workers dutifully ignore that their mobile and precarious employment means they lack the material markers of a settled life that has historically been a prerequisite for a happy and enriched life—even a spiritually-enriched life. In essence, in terms of the worker, the dematerialization ideology has the effects of conditioning workers to low material rewards or, in the case of workers who are overcompensated materially, to ignore the deprivation of their would-be colleagues.

Furthermore, it would seem that a company can only become a psytopia, which transfers worker spiritual growth to the corporate entity, if the value of dematerialization is added to those of holism and posthierarchy in company ideology. They all contribute to an understanding of the corporation not as a social group but as an amalgam of people with psyches—precondition for the psytopia. Posthierarchy beliefs reject the signs and symbols of hierarchy, specialization, and class status. This is equivalent to rejecting that human groups are made up of *social* beings with different roles and degrees of influence. Rather than accept the corollary that groups are composed of essentially similar units, interchangeable in any position, neospirituals must posit that people are distinguishable on different grounds, which can only be personal. Without status or position markers, distinctions can only be made about individuals on psychological grounds. This leads to asking how psyches without society interact. The dematerialistic celebration of emotive, psychic and energetic effects allows for the hypothesis the people relate through sympathy and identification. If we then ask how these mutually-sympathetic people can work together (without individual responsibilities or rules of interaction) the holistic ethos can be consulted. This leads to the idea that unity emerges organically, informally, or mysteriously. Finally, in terms of post-Fordist workplaces, as Leinberger and Tucker

argue, under their special history and conditions, one identity concentrates and becomes the repository of the others' subjectivity—the corporation. Hence, posthierarchy, holism and dematerialization are aspects of the same phenomenon. They interrelate and, together, enable psytopias.⁹⁹

Below, I gather the material appearing in various chapters throughout the dissertation on the themes of dematerialization, holism and psytopia. I begin with the dematerialization theme. I describe the various forms of dematerialization that the post-Fordist regime of accumulation creates, which manifest in the larger world as well as workplaces, as I also itemize the tendencies towards dematerialization seen in the neospirituality ethos. All told, the many forms of dematerialization I list extend to the economic, the cultural and the spiritual spheres of life.

Dematerialization

Dematerialization is seen in post-Fordist worker culture, and the post-Fordist regime at large. Other terms for dematerialization, used in various places in the text, are streamlining, mathecization, and rationalization. As we have seen, dematerialization is a key element of the neospirituality ethos. Forms of dematerialization are discussed below, beginning with neospirituality as religious dematerialization.

Religious Dematerialization

Traditional religious communities are physical communities, attached to localities. Furthermore, in their weighty presence—as the material bases of their traditions—churches, synagogues, mosques, etc., impose on communities. Physical buildings symbolize the community's religious obligations and delineate part of community space as not fully universally deployable, but sacred. They reflect the distinctions between different kinds of space common to traditional communities. By contrast, the material culture of neospirituality is very lightly worn. Religion as spirituality is partly dematerialized through its decoupling from the purpose-built physical structures of the traditions. By eschewing these imposing physical manifestations, neospirituals show that they do not respect the parochial prejudices, convention or encrustations of tradition. Spirituality is freed of, or extracted from, the weightiness of historical, institutional and community obligation.

⁹⁹ Close scrutiny of these connections offers a more expanded definition of psytopias than has heretofore been suggested, because the analysis shows that psytopias now exist beyond the confines of workplaces, such as, crucially, social media feeds—they represent any social structure subsumed by a corporate identity in which action amongst participants (transactions), although ostensibly simply purposeful, in the process necessarily pay honour or tithe to the hosting entity, identified by the corporate brand. Essential to this definition is that identity-development within the psytopia is a motivating element of the action of participants and contained by that psytopia.

As Vincent Miller (2005) makes clear, religious traditions embody at some basic level, precisely, histories and geographies of groups of people. The particular circumstances of the production and use of religious ideas, symbols, or structure, help compose them. Therefore, neospirituality's selection of elements from different religious traditions for redeployment destroys their relation to those particular circumstances, with a partial loss of significance. The elements are streamlined because they become cellular and can be recomposed in relation to any other elements. With the loss of their historical and geographical references, as they are redeployed or recomposed, they also lose their imposing character. From a narrative point of view, they become, effectively, interchangeable. When traditional religious symbols are deployed as "floating, shallow, post-modern signifiers unrelated to one another or to particular communities and practices, interpretation and syntheses, [they] will have little practical impact... [and] no cultural friction" (Miller 2005, 66). The weight of their cultural accretion is alleviated in the streamlined flow of neospirituality.

Even traditional church congregations now mirror the practices of businesses which formerly sought to own much of their material infrastructure, but have since sold much of it. Struggling with costs, congregations have divested themselves of their buildings and land, to share spaces with other, different traditions or to move into more anonymous structures (if the communities still exist). From the point of view of "sunk costs" of a community *grounded* in its investments, even traditional religious institutions have been ephemeralized.

In terms of neospirituality, this thrust has manifested in the rejection of the church institution and its rituals and authority structures, which are felt to impose a "deadening potential" on one's religious growth. Individualistic seeking for a personal religious reality, the emphasis on feeling to identify it, and the pragmatism inherent in the seeking process all stem from the rejection of external authority as a source of religious direction. This anti-institutional conviction continues to play out and is quite dispersed throughout the North American and European populations—who regularly admit that they are "spiritual but not religious."

Networked relations, the largely ephemeral relationships we found in the post-Fordist workplace, are another sign of dematerialization, and networking is also the most prevalent form of neospiritual social relations. Through networks neospirituals realize their continuing pursuit of training courses, events, and techniques that might further establish or re-establish the connection to the (inner) self. The flat social world of networks, which produces a "decentralized sphere of ever-flowing, multiple, and ad hoc assemblages" (Fisher 2010) seems like a perfect expression of the "client and audience cults" of neospirituality (L. Dawson 2006). Along with workers, neospiritual practitioners are "autonomous nodes" and defined by their connections to other nodes in the network" (Fisher 2010, 212).

Dematerialization is also seen in neospirituality's emphasis on the interchangeability of matter and energy, its demands for energetic effects from its practices, and its tendency to describe the world and people in terms of energy. Interest in the transhuman who, as explained earlier, is integral to the technology-celebrating culture of SAs, converges with neospiritual values with respect to the latter's denigration of the material in contrast to the energetic form. Indeed, belief in energetic connection is the ground for neospirituality's holism. All is interconnected, so that what the individual does, and wills, influences the wider world, whilst the latter also affects individuals at the subtle level.

It follows that consciousness must be conceived as not discrete and separated, but rather as blending, to varying degrees and unevenly, into an environmental entity of some sort. A network model is a formulation of a "whole" structure, and one of the unresolved questions of this dissertation is about the degree to which these two models cohere. However, the network model of sociality complements well the "weak, this worldly-mystical" belief-structure of neospirituality. Weak-this-worldly mysticism also suggests a dematerializing tendency. New Agers are ambivalent about the value of material existence. They want to commit neither to full engagement in the self-evidently-material world, as Pagans do (York 1995), nor to the unseen, discrete and coherent world of transcendentalism.

The emphasis on transactions or relationships is another aspect of dematerialization. In a world of energetic flows, fluid identities, and weak loyalties, the moments of transaction with others offer tentative identities. Where identity is continually forming and dissolving, staving off the worst effects of anomie is achieved by "being in the game." In this world, to "move," to invoke and revoke connection, helps maintain meaning. In his definition of spiritual prosumption, A. Dawson" (2013, 138) features the "transition" as an essential dynamic of the neospiritual ethos. According to his thesis, the spiritual good is "obtained as the outcome (product) of a transitional process through which the individual has moved from point *a* to point *b*. Whereas the self is the producer and consumer, the product of spiritual prosumption is, in his model, the transition itself.

Post-Fordist Dematerialization

In this dissertation, I showed many ways in which post-Fordism dematerializes. In many contexts, corporations appropriate and streamline the lifeways of embodied humanity by enabling, with and through this dematerialization, a continuous stream of exchange. I have also used the concept of streamlining in the text to describe these processes. Some authors—following Weber (1978)—would call it "rationalization." In the immaterial economy, the dead weight of matter is replaced by the vivacity of energy and information. Indeed, as per the financialization of the economy through post-Fordism discussed above, the most fluid or "vivacious" form is that of money itself. In the transnational, insecure, project-driven work-world, preju-

dices and habits, the comfort of familiar space and aesthetics, and earth-bound ties to communities and histories are given up. The rhythmic character of life based in organic realities, the diurnal and secular patterns, and the slow building up and clearing away that are features of heavy, Fordist materiality, becomes muted. Through dematerialization, differences are abstracted and trivialized.

Because it moves to close off possibilities of human life that cannot be monetized, capitalism has been opposed, to some degree or another, throughout its history. Post-Fordism has accelerated this process of closing off possibilities that cannot be monetized or may activate opposition to capitalism. The dematerializing elements of neospirituality suggest that it, too, is tied up in this process. Indeed, Carrette and King (2005, 135) relate spirituality to capitalism, as “an extension of the economic rationality of the marketplace into the realm of fundamental human beliefs.”

I have shown examples of capitalist dematerialization or rationalization throughout the dissertation—particularly, of course, in workplaces. These include:

- promotion of the therapeutic self, which depends on an identity defined by a personal discourse with limited choices of narrative structures;
- commodification of information that threatens to degrade scholarly autonomy and the incommensurate nature of scholarly standards for different disciplines—as well as close off the “public” nature of the internet;
- “pure business culture” demanded in corporate teams, which suppresses the expressions of diversity of members unless their non-universal values and habits can contribute towards products;
- recent neoliberal suppression of governmental authority formerly found in a negotiated relationships with economic interests (as part of traditional Fordism, which had enabled dynamic tension between different modalities of social decision-making through democratically-structured discourses);
- reduction of modes of apprehension and thought, to a supposed binary of only two mutually-exclusive alternatives, rationality and irrationality (precluding judgement, which integrates the two). “Irrationality” appears as desire (to consume), and the “rational” as the cost-benefit analysis exerted in the process of executing consumption acts;
- increasing provision of social goods through markets and accompanying exclusion of non-commodifiable options;
- interpretation of the workplace as the home by supplying its typical amenities, coupled with intensive work schedules that have employees “living” at workplaces—thereby sub-

ordinating to the point of extinction personal lives that focus on interests and objectives other than work lives. In other words: the degradation of boundaries between work-life and non-work-life forced on workers, ruling out retention of time and energy for genuinely personal development and social connection;

- capitalism's reduction of citizens to either producers, consumers, or managed outsiders with no essential authority in the world community;
- and, finally, through exclusion, the attack on selves who seek to protect a private self or an identity not defined in terms of productivity.

Below, I organize these points into various types of dematerializations.

Of the self. Integrated into networks, the post-Fordist self is virtual and disembodied. Furthermore, human consciousness is conceived not as discrete and separated from that of others but, through the technology of networks, as blending into a collective brain. Persons see themselves as partly absorbed into networks. Identity is therefore ephemeral, and achieved only tenuously and temporarily by forging connections and advancing intellectual and affective flows. By these standards, existence can be snuffed out, once connection to the network is lost, making existence itself precarious.

Of products. Dematerialization of products is clearly the thrust of the emphasis on services, information, and cultural products as the main drivers of the economy. Above I clarified that this pushed to its extreme is financialization, which is a major thrust to the contemporary economy. The transformation of record-keeping and communications technologies to digital formats is another aspect of this process.

Of businesses. Post-Fordist business processes also aim at dematerializing the corporation itself. The ideal corporation is represented as a pure transmitter of information. Vertical disintegration of formerly-Fordist companies in favour of small, self-employed units continuously serving each other in network relations on a just-in-time basis (but overseen by and dominated by corporate near-monopolies) all increase the speed of circulation of commodities, and reduce "bottle-necks." Another bottleneck of the past, which obstructed easy "flow" in business relations, was the Fordist-era tripartite agreement between corporations, governments and unions to maintain healthy communities and a generally equal and high standard of living (as discussed in Chapter Five). Under this rubric, corporations were subjected to more laws and regulations in their operations, as well as informal standards, which forced them to meet other criteria in their operations besides the purely economic and also restrained them from monopolization and price-fixing, which are not in the public interest. As noted, eliminating these restrictions was a paramount goal of the emerging post-Fordist global corporations, achieved with Thatcherism and Reaganism.

Of the work process. The suppression of cultural differences within “pure business culture” is a form of dematerialization. Except for those that can provide content for products or serve to increase productivity, suppressed differences include habitual loyalties to ethnicity, locality, and family, rooted in geography and history. The flat organizational form is also another way to streamline operations. For example, the “broadbanding” of job descriptions and consequent diversity of skills and practices expected of team-players reduces the inefficiency of employing underutilized specialists. Reliance on temporary labour forces and the team work structure allows organizations to dispense with forms of costly and cumbersome managerial oversight. For example, the regulatory structure of formal employee performance reviews is weakened. Instead, employee supervision and evaluation become part of the production process. As much as possible, regulation is avoided and “decisions” are made automatically. Worker surveillance is knitted into the work process by such means as managerial insistence on peer reviewing, and programming worker productivity analysis into the workplace tools of employees. Alternatively (or additionally), team leaders may make informal judgements of a team-member’s performance, which may impact whether he or she is given the all-important referral to future work (the “employability card”). Such decisions can prevail without the right of challenge or rebuttal.

The emphasis on transactions as the basic structure of SA business relations is another aspect of dematerialization, also seen in neospirituality. In the business world, a highly-interactive work style is lauded as creative, ingenious and/or entrepreneurial.

Of information. The commodification of knowledge into a massive, rationalized set of databases (by no means completed) provides the richest corporations with unassailable positions of dominance within all contests that require that knowledge for success. Harvey (1989) made clear that, since wealth and political power are the definitive criteria for gaining access to data, powerful global corporations have undisputable control of “big data” and provide themselves with the best economic and political opportunities as a result. Additionally, post-Fordist authorities have also been eager to eliminate materially-encoded information (i.e., paper documentation) as it has a certain weight and limitation on accessibility and assimilability that thwarts global capital’s control over its contents. This materially-encoded information also maintains legacy connections to social subgroups, such as self-managing professional groups, whose power also threatens global capital. Associated with its material encodement, and either by chance or design—i.e., due to complexity, specialized language, or gatekeeping functions, as well as lack of reproducibility—access to knowledge has been generally restricted in the past (Innis 1971).

Also, traditional knowledge bases have different standards of validity and different discursive languages, an understanding of which is required for intelligibility. In an environment of commodification of knowledge

these are “bottlenecks” that have to be “cleared up” by the digitization of knowledge. Reducing the differences within mutually-incongruent discourses makes its various components more easily priced and traded. Lui (2004, 6-7) argues that this has been achieved:

Networked IT crossed a threshold of scale in the mid-1990s beyond which... competitive models of knowledge work, once rooted semi-autonomously in academic, business, media, health-industry, government, and other sectors, suddenly seemed to fuse into a single, parsimonious continuum—so-called, worldwide—able to afford just one global understanding of understanding.

Carrette and King reiterate this concern for the narrowing of diversity in the study of human beings that is based on the growing elimination of discordant or incommensurable discourses through the suppression of the humanities and social sciences, the hegemony of economic discourse, and the subjugation of data-collection in general to security concerns (Diebert 2013). Because of narrowing objectives, these models are “established through an ever-reducing horizon for framing the individual and an increase in forms of measurement” Carrette (2007, 55).

Furthermore, traditional knowledge is often embodied in the activities of craftspeople, guild-members, homemakers—all kinds of locally-connected and engaged citizens. Therefore, the computerization of skill—its conversion to a digital format—is, correspondingly, a “knowledge streamlining” strategy. Before work can be automated, the conventional ways of doing it must be explicated through interviews and work-study. “Useless,” idiosyncratic or local methods are dropped and the traditional ways are reformulated or rationalized, as procedures to be automated. This process results in the elimination of local novelty as well as workers’ private skill-sets (Huws 2003).

Of society. Relocating the power to define social needs from public institutions to the market is a form of dematerialization of society, as far as possible eliminating the inefficiency of accommodating a debating, deciding and voting citizenry. The general satisfaction of needs through markets, instead of through public institutions developed, guided and funded by governments, eliminates the resource-depleting slowness of the public debate often required before decisions can be made. With the market the primary mode of social interaction, debates about the form and models of delivery of a particular social good can be cut short. Providing opportunities for the public’s reflection and consensus-building, which participatory institutions require, is circumvented.

Although obligations now assigned to the market that were once governmental responsibilities (for example, highways) are assuredly related to materiality, when these are privatized, the discourses about ways to provide for such social needs are reduced or eliminated. Commercialized services tend to build on what

exists (such as by charging tolls on already existing, but privatized, highways). Significant changes in direction (such as, say, developing more elaborate rail services and reducing road service), are generally only undertaken by governmental bodies that have attained a degree of public endorsement on the basis of political debates. Such debates get preempted by commodification. As I have noted, Teresa Brennan (2000), shows us that a major function of commodities is precisely to avoid debate and have things and services appear to us “impersonally” or “automatically,” as it were. Because markets are assumed to effectively satisfy social goods, such as equality (or rather, equal access), they circumvent reflection on the value of such goods. Therefore, commercialization connotes a streamlining of debate about the provision of services (and the nature of the social goods they confer). The viewpoints on such issues by the institutions of religion, government, and the judiciary have been increasingly appropriated by finance capital itself (Carette and King 2005, 29).¹⁰⁰ In short, the parochial, the sources of meaning developed through conferring community members expressing their interests, is suppressed (Sandel 2012). These are circumventions of discourse grounded in political localities that I call the “dematerialization of discourse.”

Neoliberal governmentality, as discussed in Chapter Three, perhaps represents the ultimate dematerialization of society. If neither society in general, nor the subgroups that compose it are considered the source of good or goods, but rather, the individual must procure all goods for him/herself, both “social value” and social capacity are theoretically condensed into the qualities and capacities of individuals. According to this model, society changes organically as individuals autonomously enter and depart the flurry of activity organized as networks (i.e., the neoliberal collectivity). This is streamlining because it refuses to recognize affinity groups with boundary conditions, and the fact that governments can support (or suppress) individuals indirectly, through support (or suppression) of such groups. Instead, they operate through “the institutionalization of individuality” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). If no “collectives” or demographic groups need to be publicly acknowledged and considered in governmental policies, this eliminates the

¹⁰⁰ Meanwhile, and especially over time, the restriction of possible alternative ways to satisfy a social need, instituted through consumerism, is not readily apparent to consumers as they consume, and so is not raised to the level of reflection. Within the domain of the market, obligations stemming from different affiliations are allowed to lapse and be forgotten, leaving only the hidden obligation to market standards. Social dynamics are embedded, but hidden, within the commodity, as Marx’s theory of commodity fetishism (1985) explains. Chiefly, workplace conflicts endemic to production are not revealed in the product. Altogether, the hegemony over social life claimed by neoliberal post-Fordist economic relations should be seen, through its streamlining of those relations, as a dematerialization of that life.

complications and public costs of social management that have to do with balancing interests—a traditional role of (at least) Fordist governments.

Of history. Our discussions of teleological worldviews, especially as expressed by the network cosmology, show that in post-Fordism, history is “rationalized” by being effectively eliminated. I reiterate Fisher’s argument: “According to the digital discourse, network technology constitutes the teleological climax of the history of not only technological progress but also information, binarism, and indeed the universe. [These processes] represent a technological (and, in turn, social) revolution in the original sense of the word: a return to the very essence of nature and the universe” (Fisher 2010, 216).

The network cosmology mirrors the neoliberal worldview in terms of this dynamic. The neoliberal ethos, which undergirds post-Fordism, proffers that a perfect world is on the horizon, but achievable only when certain obstructive forces (such as “socialist” governments, labour unions, and other market distortions) have been vanquished. The nature of the perfect world is assumed. Debates about the good of society and actions to intervene to actively bring about novel outcomes that are deemed desirable based on those debates only get in the way of the “natural” process of evolution towards a market society. Hence, citizens are not required to *act historically* (i.e., to develop new ways to create the common good as their potential is made apparent over time and as unpredicted new conditions arise). On the contrary, citizens should just be foot-soldiers in the struggle to oppose such debates and actions—except as far as they free the market. That history is evolutionary and a “pure spirit” works through it is the historicist viewpoint. Although “change” can be recognized, its ultimate trajectory is known. Given this, one’s proper actions are also fore-ordained—to press in the predictable direction.

Hence, neoliberalism and neospirituality pattern history and humanity’s relation to it in the same way—all we can do, and what we must do, is assist the Universal Spirit in realizing itself. Neoliberalism’s proponents insist that the inevitable must nevertheless be pursued and so conflate the “is” and “ought” in the same way as do believers in neospiritual holism. At the same time, neoliberal conviction that good outcomes are embedded in present realities—except that the requisite ingredients have not been added or that the necessary evolution has not yet occurred—displays the magical thinking also found in the holistic worldview. Purportedly, there is a reality “more true” than present conditions (no matter how brutish may be the life-conditions of the average citizen, now) rendering these conditions illusory. As the economy wends its way to perfect freedom there may, in fact, have to be casualties. So, present outcomes are justified and in a sense *as good as* the projected perfect future because they mark the desired progress.

With this way of thinking, any accounting for the quality of the neoliberal model is continually deferred. Because its free play is always struggling to emerge in the context of perverse restraints (i.e., the market

distortions, i.e., citizen-activists and governments trying to gain some control over capital) the failure to witness perfect conditions in the present is endlessly attributable to these negative intrusions or lapses (parallel to how magicians explain magic's failures). Since it projects the realization of a perfect system with no anomalous elements, this perfect future is a prophecy with no more reliability than one claiming "God will appear in his (sic) fully glory" at such and such a time or under certain conditions, a millennialist prediction of many traditional religions in one form or another. Universal perfection is endlessly deferred; in the meantime we should all have faith and accept our suffering as the cost of that future paradise, when certain "internal" or systemic principles are allowed to operate freely. In neoliberal language this is the market. In that of the network cosmology, it is unimpeded network transactions—which only the free market allows. In neospiritual language, this is submission to the evolving (but determined) "whole."

Holism: Resolving the Individual-Group Contradiction

I described New Age holism in Chapter Two. While holistic beliefs construe a strong connection between oneself and one's environment, this connection is essentially an energetic one. Neospirituality rejects the idea of the enlightened autonomous individual whose actions are directed purely by rational judgements. Feeling is considered at least as valid as reason as a guide for action or an indicator of truth. The influence of the individual and the whole is mutual. Because it is signals from the environment, registered as energetic effects and feeling, that influence popular understanding and actions, so also do personal feelings and actions have a subtle effect on the world beyond the immediate purview of the person. Following a systemic model, neospiritual believers contend that apparently small interactions with others can, by mysterious processes, have powerful effects on the whole social order.

In neospirituality, the notion of vested power, supported by class structures that dictate greater impact from some sources over others, is played down. Granted, it is understood that some human actions have greater impact than others, but this difference is not definable in advance by any rationally-developed conceptual structure, such as class analysis. The nature and degree of influence of individual acts (including communications acts) depend on a variety of unknowable factors. In any case, neospirituality adopts the idea that one is unavoidably connected with the whole, such that even small actions may have strong impacts on the whole universe. In fact, one's very existence influences the course of history in unpredictable ways. With good intentions, everyone can be a participant in a creative (i.e., positive) evolution of the universe. This belief alludes to the millenarianism of New Age spirituality.

Holistic worldviews basically minimize power and social-structural contradictions. Such worldviews also seem to ignore that actions can be intentionally and strategically chosen to have large impacts based on an understanding of power dynamics. In short, the holistic model precludes political analysis and strategies

designed to intentionally muster public support and pressure to shape the management of common resources in certain ways, i.e., to influence public policy. Holistic believers prefer to overlook the fact that self-conscious and delineated collectivities can act to resist change or press for genuine disruptions.

The emphasis on the corporation as a setting for information flows discussed earlier in this chapter is one of the key indicators that post-Fordist workplaces are seen as holistic operations. The teamwork structure found in them is another. Recognizing the specifics of the cosmologies of new workplaces, as defined in this and the preceding chapter, allows us to sharpen our focus on this topic. In Chapter Seven, we discussed the importance and pervasiveness of the concept of posthierarchy. In Chapter Eight, I highlighted three inter-related models of worker worldviews that display varying degrees of holism. These were the network cosmology, the hacker ethic, and the Californian Ideology.

In Chapter Seven, we saw that the concept of posthierarchy was not only a guiding principle of job redesigners motivated to empower employees in flat organizations during the 1970s and 80s, but a value still espoused by managers and workers in post-Fordist corporations today. This is chiefly seen in the pervasive criticism in management literature and workplaces of its supposed alternative, the hierarchical, bureaucratic organizational form of Fordist corporations and governmental structures. Critics deride classical bureaucratic organizational charts, which delineate levels of authority and responsibilities, as following a mechanistic model. Such models are typically associated with old sciences such as Newtonian physics or Linnean taxonomies. In Fordist companies, with their hierarchical organizational structures, managers with greater power dictate to lower-level employees, while no recursion allows the reverse. Lines of authority define who gives instructions to whom.

The three positive expressions of worker worldviews have significant similarities to one another. The analysis in this dissertation has shown that the major contradiction of the post-Fordist economy today is radical inequality, seen first and foremost in the astronomical elevation of CEO, high-level management, and corporate-owner profits, but also with the different life-prospects of an elevated segment of the former middle class as compared to a larger proportion of its members subjected to structural unemployment and economic marginalization. Awareness of this inequality is naturally suppressed in a class-organized social structure with democratic pretensions—and those who benefit by it naturally facilitate this suppression. Having an affinity with the excluded through proscription processes, the successful high-tech and other SA workers can be efficient agents of this suppression. I have argued that the three SA worldviews highlighted appear to be trying to deny that structural inequality grounds SA social privilege. Each worldview evinces different concerns on the surface. The Californian ideology compares the importance of Fordist (Keynesian) governmental economic intervention with market direction. The hacker ethic deliberates over whether

software workers are social visionaries with an unprecedented emancipatory tool at their disposal or simply workers with valuable skills to sell. The network cosmology addresses the proper priority in social life of personal freedom as compared to social justice.

As these worldviews posit an organic connection between the individual and the whole (and pass over the class-structure and inequality narratives), they can be called holistic. The latter point is particularly true of the network cosmology. It is also the most comprehensive of the three worldviews. The network cosmology draws from the image of the open, learning, AI system, itself a cybernetic model influenced by the theory of biological processes. Networks are understood to realize collective preferences for social organization by way of an unintentional, systemic summation or synthesis of all of the interactions of their myriad participants. Density of transactions creates social intelligence, which creates a good society. Almost mystically, network dynamics create a world of freedom and a measure of social justice. The network cosmology appears to mirror the New Age holistic model most strongly.

Although each of the cosmologies is limited by its own terms, these cosmologies are, indeed, descriptions of the same world, the SA workplace. It is presumed that some loose combination or synthesis of them contributes towards an SA worker worldview, if, together, they do not fully define it.

In general, these cosmologies point at a concern for the collective good in the context of personal interests. Post-Fordism certainly did not create this dilemma. Grappling with this fundamental conflict of interest underscores all socioethical discourse. In the case of privileged members of society, the debate gains salience. Indeed, the progenitors of these workers, early hackers and counterculturalists, as well as New Agers, pursued a vision of the greater good, in the vein of post-millenarianism. Accordingly, I argue that an idealistic worldview was an inheritance of early post-Fordist worker culture from the beginning. I have further argued that privileged high-tech workers have adapted the culture from which they emerged, the culture of equality and inclusion. They must now reconcile themselves to the unequal society from by which they benefit. They must rationalize individual self-interest as a contribution to collective good. Since they reject the idea of collective bargaining or any other form of collective behaviour, they accomplish this by believing in some form of a holistic worldview.

The Psytopic Resolution

According to the characteristics of the religious holism that neospirituality inherited from New Age spirituality, it also follows that the neospiritual belief system is also concerned to resolve the individual- versus group-interest contradiction. However, as I have argued, holistic worldviews largely resolve the debate by dismissing it. Those in privileged positions collapse the contradiction by arguing that their own good constitutes or serves the good of others. Adopting the concept of “trickle-down economics,” which describes a

basic trope of neoliberalism (i.e., that even those at the economic bottom of a free-market regime benefit by the wealth of those at the top), these workers adapt their cosmologies to neoliberalism and, hence, post-Fordism. Finally, on the same bases, neospirituality itself is highly congruent with the post-Fordist order. As an ingredient of culture and so an element of the post-Fordist mode of regulation, it supports the post-Fordist regime of accumulation.

If, however, those workplace cosmologies, such as the network cosmology, have ideals embedded in them, why is the additional layer of spiritual meaning required in workplaces? If these ideologies are so effective, why is neospirituality a common element of workplace culture? Can there be other contradictions in workplaces that these worldviews do not address, or does neospirituality simply reinforces the other cosmologies by helping mystify them and so make them more effective, by covering up their contradictions in a vague but reassuring discourse? Alternatively stated, neospirituality must have a different role than resolving the contradictions that the other three worldviews address, or it must do so in a different and more meaningful way. Or, it may address a different workplace contradiction entirely.

In the following section I argue that neospirituality does indeed help mystify the collapse of the distinction between the collective and individual interests, but it does this primarily for a different collapse than the workplace cosmologies address. Shifting focus to this different collapse foregrounds a deep irony in the experience of SAs—that the collapse of interests that neospirituality glosses over or masks is that between the corporation and the worker—as both the theories of the second privatization of religion and corporate psytopiae suggest. These two theses” explain different aspects of the dynamics of the transfer of agency from the worker to the corporation wherein the corporation comes to be seen less as a social world and more of a collective “soul,” allegiance to which must be managed through elaborate mystification of the individual worker psyches, so that this translation of agency is hidden.

The theories of the second privatization of religion and corporate psytopiae, which I elaborated upon in Chapter Three, address the processes of the collapse of individual worker and corporate interests in the latter’s favour as well as the dedication of worker effort and subjectivity to “the corporation’s soul.” According to Leinberger and Tucker (2010), a psytopia is an organizational culture that results from the elaborate process that encourages the assimilation of personal goals to company goals, while still maintaining a mystique of employee autonomy. It is a hybrid of the humanism introduced into organizational ideology in the early post-Fordist period and traditional HR strategies, as they support accountancy or

management “by the numbers.”¹⁰¹ The psytopia’s resolution of worker and company goals is achieved by converting worker interest in self-actualization into the desire to make the employing company a living, soulful agent. In a psytopia, striving to reach deep repositories of personal energy and self-understanding to achieve spiritual and objective goals has become essential for vitalizing the corporation. A holistic way of thinking is necessary for this transposition to work. “Holistic, in this place, means a complete campaign—not just body and mind, but feeling too, to get compliance” (Leinberger and Tucker 2010, 189).

Contemporary workplaces become psytopiae to address the contradiction between work as self-actualizing and work as devoted to the corporation’s bottom line. The solution is to upload and encapsulate the supposed personal objectives of workers, and redefine them according to a broader goal—the self-realization of the corporation. In a sense, we could call this the “return of the repressed.” In pre-modern societies individual self-actualization was subsumed to the actualization of the group (e.g., family, clan, tribe, community, or church). Now, the collective identity is provided by the corporation. Individual self-actualization is realized under the more general term of the corporation.¹⁰²

Descriptions of this process have used other language. I have reviewed commentary by Driver, Lazzarato, Berardi and Goldschmidt-Salamon, among others. It amounts to the well-established charge that the capitalist company drains the worker of their life-force. One way or another, all powerful assertions, these authors argue that the worker’s interest gets assimilated to that of the corporation in this era. However, the

¹⁰¹ Managing by economic objectives has been the standard in companies in one form or another throughout capitalism’s history. It was interrupted briefly and incompletely by the philosophy of managing by “quality” standards, during which the ethos of employee self-actualization through work (emerging from humanism) was given particular attention. Some practices that emerged at this time persist, and ground—arguably to an exaggerated degree—the belief in corporate posthierarchy, a basic trope of post-Fordist ideology.

¹⁰² Crucially, then, one of the highest levels of the dematerialization (or streamlining) of post-Fordism—neoliberal governance—supports the development of psytopias, because neoliberal governance construes society as an association of individuals (Margaret Thatcher: “There is no such thing as ‘society.’”) Those individuals “belong” to some “social entity” only by virtue of active membership—of their transactions within it. At the same time, they can abandon membership by simple disassociation. They are therefore constituted as “social” by virtue of marginal inclusion in entities larger than themselves which neither demand much of them nor change their shape due to the individual’s membership. The social self is then an amalgam of changing associations, and the form of relation is identification (literally and emotionally) with a corporate persona. Recall that a psytopia operates in corporations when the latter is seen not as a sociological entity, but as a psyche—an identity that all members construct. With this analysis, we can see how individuals can become very minor if not anonymous contributors to the general energy of “the whole,” not only through their personal expenditures of energy but also by identifying with it at the same time: hence a psytopia. By this reckoning, then, we see that psytopias are potentially set up not only within corporations, but also through the large number of platforms for ephemeral associations in virtual communications networks, such as all forms of social media.

psytopia concept provides an account of the specifics of the process and how and why this process can occur. It also suggests why the spirituality discourse in corporations could be important. If so, it offers us a profound insight into the current nature of neospirituality and its future development. This thesis also strongly supports Carrette and King's conviction that religion has undergone a second privatization. According to them, whereas religion was first privatized by promising the individual's self-actualization, the focus has now been redirected, in a second privatization, to the corporation's self-actualization.

I interpreted the network cosmology, the hacker ethic, and the Californian ideology as different ruminations on the relationship of the individual (i.e., the SA worker) and the collective (i.e., non-SAs who, in most cases, are not rewarded as well as are SAs by their work, or are entirely excluded from work). The common concern of all three was that SAs' lives had obvious privilege, whereas their efforts were not necessarily directed towards the good of society. These reflections commonly justify SAs' strong focus on their personal work (and rewards) to the exclusion of much else by concluding that SA work is intrinsically socially-valuable—i.e., that it is “good work”—by proposing worldviews wherein this is the case. However, as I move in my account from considering these three worldviews to the models of the second privatization and the psytopia, I point out that a different individual/collective opposition is under consideration: that between the individual within the corporation and the corporation as the collective. However, if the “second privatization” and “psytopia” formulations are valid, in their case, a holistic merging of individual and collective interests seems also to be operating, but with individual in a *weaker*, not a *stronger* position relative to the collective. Hence, rather than soul-searching on their contributions to the larger society, perhaps SAs' greater preoccupation should be whether they indeed have the degree of autonomy they assume for themselves. They should ask: “Are even my interests (as a privileged post-Fordist worker) being realized through this particular workplace arrangement? Given that my managers seek to empower me even to the extent of indulging my spiritual aspirations and well-being by hosting various body-mind-spirit workshops and training programs, by funding my creativity, and by supporting my relations with co-workers (and pays me too), is my job working for me?”

We have heard Carrette and King's (2005, 45) answer to this question: “With the emergence of capitalist spirituality, the freedom of the individual to express their inner natures through spirituality becomes subordinated to the demands of business culture and the needs of a flexible and competitive economy.” According to these scholars, spirituality resolves the individual/collective contradiction in the collective's favour, and masks that resolution in the process. However, as noted, the collective referred to here is not the broader community in which the workplace is set, whose imagined interests the other cosmologies struggle over, but the corporation itself. The argument is that once religion is lodged in the individual psyche, as a

personal spirituality, corporations can become the beneficiaries of the “spiritual” commitment, both as a brand they can adopt, and as a source of worker motivation and discipline.

This suggests that “spirituality for workers” is an interim term whose discourse, once commonplace in corporate worksites, helps to construct the psytopia, the holistic world in which the corporation is tacitly acknowledged as the spiritual entity. Under the proper ideological conditions, workers may believe they are self-realizing when in fact their own wellbeing is being sacrificed for the corporation. They may believe that the energy they are expending is for their own emancipation, even though it is being systematically redirected to the company, so that their own subjectivity is not being merely compromised, but actually sacrificed to this goal. This is the thrust of Leinberger and Tucker’s (1991) and Nadeson’s (1999) analyses. Their collective work explaining the creation of a psytopia elaborates on Carrette and King’s (2005) second privatization thesis. However, they have articulated the dynamic through which the ideology functions. As we have seen, theorists of the psytopia claim that, through it, the corporation is “endowed with a psyche.” In this vision, the corporation’s “life force” derives “from its entrepreneurial-like employees.... A critical reading of this discourse reveals a tendency for individuals to be seen as ‘soft,’ ‘corporate assets...,’ ready to be engineered to enhance ‘corporate soul’” (Nadesan 1999, 17).

In the three worker cosmologies discussed above, workers are active participants in the debates that shape them. To varying degrees, and with their somewhat different emphases, each is also part of the self-understanding of these workers. The hacker ethic and the network cosmology have been, after all, consciously presented to workers themselves. Elements of the Californian ideology, such as the idea of “digital socialism” (see Chapter Eight) are rationalizations offered by Silicon Valley workers themselves to explain their privilege. However, the psytopia is an analytical construct posed by scholars, and it is not widely known. Like all ideologies, a psytopia as workplace culture has value to a company partly to the extent that its dynamics are not fully understood by those who sustain its existence. This could include all HR professionals, consultants, workers and managers. Indeed, that managers and industry analysts may largely be unaware of the psytopic dynamics is indicated by *their* evident soul-searching over whether the worker or the corporation itself primarily benefits from the propagation of in-house spirituality. Many observers doubt that we can separate the interest of workers from that of the corporation. With an understanding of the psytopia’s construction, this doubt seems to be valid, given that, according to the psytopic model, the purpose of spirituality is to marry the interests of the two constituencies.

Neospiritual Resolutions

In the above I have outlined two basic contradictions in self-understanding to which post-Fordist SA workers are subjected as they perform their work and situate themselves socially. These are the contradic-

tions of worker and community interests and worker and corporate interests. I have explained in detail how elements of neospirituality help resolve these. I have shown that the worker cosmologies manifest holistic worldviews, and that these posit the interests of the group and the larger collective—society—as aligned. I then explained that the impact of holistic ways of thinking has more significance for the worker in terms of encouraging a tendency to collapse individual interests into that of the corporate collectivity. However, to be effective, the second privatization of religion and psytopiae require that the participants, the workers, are unconscious of the psychic dynamic in which they participate. I suggest that neospirituality practices may function to shroud these dynamics from worker consciousness—that neospirituality helps provide a superficial resolution of the tension between worker interests and identities and corporate demands and goals. I suggest below five ways that this may occur.

As I have argued, SAs struggle under an existential contradiction (or political conundrum)—their history of dissidence and anti-capitalist collectivism, stemming from their historical emergence from the counter-, left-liberal and computer-hacker cultures—creates cognitive dissonance when placed against their current social positions of relative prominence and privilege, positions they hold as long as they preserve their relationship with their corporate employers. Related to this reconciliation, and equally important, they must maintain a balance between contradictory corporate demands on them: to work autonomously and independently, based on the company’s need for creativity at low cost (which their past history and ethical legacy also supports) while also repressing action beyond the boundaries of corporation’s objectives and interests (which their past history and ethical legacy does not support).

To summarize the material and conclude this section, I propose five ways in which neospirituality facilitates these resolutions —five ways its practices and belief-structure helps workers gloss over the contradictions of worker and community interests and worker and corporate interests, both of which, as I have argued, assail SA workers. Together these arguments construct a persuasive account of why neospirituality is an integral part of contemporary post-Fordist (particularly SA) workplace cultures.

1. The posthierarchical spirit of neospirituality bridges neoliberal corporate managerial and worker ideologies in the form of a common alliance against government, regulation, and bureaucracy. Managers seek the flat, posthierarchical organization because it reduces the need for labour and facilitates “just-in-time” access to it. As for workers, “posthierarchy” suggests that power structures are obsolete, allowing workers to acknowledge an alliance with management while denying its possible basis in similar class status—by positing a third term, which both oppose, but which has no reference to class. Equally, workers can deny their submission to labour market forces through the pretension that their form of work (in flat organizational structures) intrinsically opposes authority, as per the Californian ideology. Any social

obligations to respond to the concentrations of power within the industries in which they work, increasing structural unemployment due to automation, and other forms of inequality in which their industry has a hand can be overlooked because the posthierarchical managerial style is held to be intrinsically democratizing. Supposedly, SAs working with their maximum effort and skills to advance technological products and innovations, unimpeded by supervisors, rules, procedures and other limitations that only bureaucracies (especially governments) impose, creates a responsive (i.e., “democratic”) society (as per the network cosmology) and “consumer-equal” (i.e., commonly-wealthy) social order (as per the hacker ethic).

2. Neospirituality defines the holistic collapse of the individual and collective that neoliberalism relies on for its sense and that SA-employing corporations require for their operation. The holism of neospirituality imaginatively collapses the modernist self/other distinction into a unitary world where such a distinction is illusory—where apparent responses of the self to the self or others are only moments in the overall ebb-and-flow of the one cosmos in which all participate, willingly or otherwise. As we have seen, the holism allows workers to suppress their awareness of the contradictory position they hold with respect to the wider and less advantaged society—when placed against their egalitarian cultural heritage. Additionally, in an ironic twist, the holism also helps mask the very real challenge to the personal autonomy and self-actualization in which they are indoctrinated for instrumental reasons in their workplaces. This challenge comes from SAs’ subordination to the market and company goals, by virtue of their insecure work patterns in the first place, and the operation of psytopia in the second. The holism of neospirituality assists in an imaginative transposition of spiritual subjecthood from their own selves to the corporation—the psytopic resolution. As important as the individual-society resolution, under the conditions of post-Fordist labour, the identification of the “whole” in the holism is also transposed from the cosmos to the corporation, resulting in the conviction that performance in the corporation’s interest is also in one’s own.

3. Iconic workers’ use of neospiritual well-being commodities allows them to reduce dependency on broad community relations as well as on direct service by other classes—i.e., the service worker class that indeed forms around symbolic analysts. As the West-coast American software- production area epitomizes, symbolic analysts and marked social inequality coincide. However, symbolic analysts do not welcome awareness of their superior class status because they are steeped in an ethos of egalitarianism. The reality of this class relation may be partially evaded by symbolic analysts through their resort to neospiritual practices instead of the direct personal service of others or community support. Symbolic analysts use neospiritual “technical solutions” to what might be judged as social needs (such as by seeking meditative solace in favour of the comfort of personal relations or the ministrations of servants). This helps mask the inequalitarian social order they benefit by, and their superior class status;

4. Through its character as spiritual prosumption, neospirituality encourages the idea that workforce participation offers more than direct material and social rewards—something “on the side,” as it were. This idea, which derives from spiritual prosumption’s view that value can be embedded in the self, can enhance allegiance to employers. Although practically speaking, due to further “experience” and skill-development, what labour offers is more labour (enhanced employability). However, according to the spiritual prosumption model, meeting the challenges of work accrues as intrinsic value to the worker (which can also be traded in for profit at a future date). As neospirituals are enriched as they seek, hard work in “creative” work environments also enriches the worker (at least in terms of deferred reward).

Since SAs have little control over their working conditions, and even rewarded with stock options do not significantly own the means of their production, they are largely excluded from the power-broker status that is a necessary component of the autonomy that crucially defines their identity. Spiritual prosumption changes this equation slightly, as it posits the self as resource as well as the labour to work it. In these terms, workers do own some of the means of production—themselves. This interpretation can of course only apply in contexts of predominantly immaterial production, since the feelings, cultural memes, values and “insights” that are its inputs are “stored” and must always be “sourced” in individual memories and psyches—i.e., those of SAs.

According to this theory, as symbolic analysts work for the company, they also exploit their relationship to it—symbiotically, as it were— as they operate their own “factory”—the factory of the self—to which all profits accrue. Furthermore, they never need “stop the line,” even when they are at home, because personal or life experiences in almost any circumstances can go into the store for later reference. This is why “experience” *per se* has high value for this group. Similarly, the dedication to “learning” as the near-sacred pursuit of SAs seems to be rooted in this rationalization and adjudication of company and personal interests.

5. The dematerializing thrust of neospirituality mirrors that of post-Fordism and the experience of its workers, as per post-Fordist industry’s privileging of immaterial products, its celebration of virtual relations, its dissolution of organizations into ephemeral modules temporarily addressed to projects, and its streamlining of information to support the power of consolidated global capital. Since the neospiritual ethos devalues materiality (for example, by privileging the energetic moment of matter-energy dichotomy), the entire post-Fordist dematerializing thrust becomes valorized. This can only be very effective in validating the SA work form as well as the globalized monopoly-capital industrial structure that hosts it. This devaluation must also have a major role to play in validating SAs’ superior social status, as discussed above, relative to the members of the vestigial middle class and the deposed working class (some of whom are new service workers)—i.e., emiserated workers and citizens in general, those around them or at a distance who

are either directly materially-deprived or, more commonly, live their lives with ersatz goods, including food, that fail to meet the needs they are posed to satisfy. In short, the privileged status of SA workers is mystified through the denial of the importance of the material.

More profoundly, deemphasizing the material's importance allows the elite to downplay the significance of material deprivation in general. The immaterial economy reifies this dismissal by positing that immaterial goods are as or more valuable than, or can substitute, for material goods.

By valorizing “energy,” the ephemeral or “spiritual,” personal psychic “growth,” etc., neospirituality urges rich and poor alike to focus on personal experience and goals, emotions, feelings, and subjective development rather than on conditions of justice and material development (ie, what people need to live a decent life). It translates the concept of “rewards” and “value” from the material to the spiritual realm (“work should first be spiritually rewarding, don’t think too much about remuneration”), and it hides economic power and privilege because *everyone* has the (allegedly equal) power and opportunity to develop themselves, experience life deeply, practice mindfulness, and generally just be as awesome as they were meant to be. In sum, neospirituality in the workplace encourages people to focus on themselves and their inward experience, ignore conditions of material inequality and injustice, accept subjective rewards in the place of fair material compensation, and believe that the workplace is egalitarian because everyone can access the rewards of spirituality equally. It thus reconciles workers, marginal or otherwise, to the post-Fordist workplace and allows them to ignore the conflict between their interests and that of the corporation.

Concluding Remarks

Limitations of Study

Throughout this dissertation, I have shown different ways in which the beliefs and practices of neospirituality and SA workers mirror, and possibly even reproduce, each other. Also in this dissertation, I performed more abstract or higher-level comparisons between the two cultures, showing that at the level of worldviews they shared holistic, dematerializing and posthierarchical orientations. I argued that post-Fordist workplaces are sites of an evolving monoculture, which neospirituality supports by promoting a worldview that encourages workers to ignore material conditions of justice and development, inequality in social status and opportunity, become hostile to government-sponsored programs of regulation and wealth-redistribution, and focus mostly on themselves and their subjective development. In short, I assert that, on this basis, neospiritual values and skills reflect the desirable culture within post-Fordist global companies, which is why corporations are so dedicated to promoting them.

That being said, many of the connections I have tried to make in this dissertation require further collaboration. An important argument that needs more scrutiny is the claim that neospirituality in workplaces does not serve to liberate workers. For many industry insiders and supporters of workplace spirituality, neospirituality frees workers to be authentically themselves and humanizes the work experience by unleashing creativity, energy, and personal satisfaction. I have argued that neospirituality, in fact, accommodates workers to their sometimes exploitative work environment, an environment that includes them only in as much as they can contribute to the corporations goals. I observe that there is little evidence in the literature that neospirituality in workplaces promotes a dissident or “disruptive” orientation to the power relations therein. However, Bell, suggests that that Critical Management Studies (CMS) scholars look for evidence of this culture of resistance and cited “historical workplace interventions by Marxist worker-priests, who emerged from the prophetic and ‘liberation-theological’ traditions of Christianity” (122) as models for CMS scholars to consider. More recently Edwin Ng (2016, 139) pointed out that the defenders of Mindfulness argue for a form of “Trojan Horse” agitation. They contend that, once subtly embedded in workplace culture, mindfulness can disrupt normal exploitative workplace practices. Like Ng, I do not find this argument credible. While corporate mindfulness practices have multiplied in recent decades, workplaces have not seen a concomitant rise in political or labour activism.

While many of these limitations on the side of theory are real, my purpose has been to develop theory that can be tested in field research. If I have overstated my case in places, it is because I believe that a strong but nuanced thesis provides the best basis for powerful empirical work. To this end, I have, in this dissertation, addressed a large number of issues relative to neospirituality and work and integrated the most salient into a thesis to be tested. I have additionally explored anomalous or alternative points of view. Although I have drawn tentative conclusions after these explorations, I have nevertheless left a number of threads of relatively unintegrated theory that an attentive reader can recognize and explore to challenge the main conclusions of this thesis.

Normally, the proper context for resolving theoretical debates is field study. Theoretical assessment is an important ingredient in identifying what might be the case in a certain situation, but it can never verify what is the case. Theory is a necessary but not sufficient ingredient to understanding. The grounded research that could bring confident, rather than speculative, answers to many questions posed in this dissertation remains to be completed. Stated frankly, the debate around the issue of the relationship of neospirituality to human agency and self-realization needs further pursuit through more extensive empirical research. This dissertation outlines possible relationships and connections between neospirituality, the culture of iconic post-Fordist workers, and the conditions of labour in the new economy. While grounded in extensive

scholarly research, many of the conclusions I make are suggestive. My goal was to provide a robust theory that could subject to empirical study in the future.

For example, through field study, I could test the adequacy of the worker category of symbolic analysts as the population that has most fulsomely adopted neospiritual practices in workplaces. The types of answers missing are twofold. One is the lack of data on which workers in particular (e.g., SAs versus, for example, workers in Fordist-style manufacturing or service in a post-Fordist economy) are offered and follow neospiritual practices within workplaces. We should also find out what kinds of companies, especially among global corporations, are most likely to promote neospiritual practices. Much of the argumentation in this dissertation assumes on the basis of anecdotal evidence that the iconic global purveyors of immaterial products (i.e., the large internet and information and communications technology service companies like Google, Apple and Amazon) lead other more traditional companies in integrating neospirituality. For this dissertation to assume its full potential in defining the roles of neospirituality in corporations and suggesting future directions of this relationship, these lacunae in knowledge must be addressed.

Neospirituality, Social Change, and the Culture of the Post-Fordist Workplace

In this dissertation, I showed there to be important parallels between the basic beliefs and practices of the neospiritual practitioners and the culture, skill-set and worldview of a particular segment of the post-Fordist workforce, the symbolic analysts in immaterial production sites. I also showed how neospiritual beliefs, practices, values and institutional forms function in symbolic analyst workplaces and society in general.

In speculating on possible reasons for neospirituality's presence in the post-Fordist workplace and neospirituality's parallels to its culture, I presented several histories from the earliest to more contemporary stages of post-Fordism—of changes in workplace design philosophy, in relation to problematics that concerned the larger society which emerged from capitalist globalization and computerization, and of ideas about society, organization and ethics explored by popular-cultural spokespeople as post-Fordist globalization advanced, including those proponents of a network-technology-based model of society. Additionally, I connected theoretical work on changing social and work structures contingent on post-Fordism's advance that had implications for culture (particularly work culture) from a variety of scholarly disciplines. The most important of these were critical economic analyses in the Marxian and Foucauldian traditions as well as the work of selected scholars of religion who write about neospirituality in relation to both consumption and production.

Through the interrelation of these ideas and in company with detailed analysis of the work processes of those post-Fordist workers I claimed to be iconic for post-Fordist work in general (i.e., symbolic analysts), I outlined various ways in which neospirituality appears to significantly contribute to and help make sense

of “post-Fordist work culture.” The critical scholars of religion I consulted raise the spectre that neospirituality is being shaped most definitively by global corporations—especially those that concentrate on immaterial production—as neospirituality gains a more assured place in the panoply of human resource practices in these companies. This development supports Carrette and King’s argument that religion is being privatized a second time to serve corporate needs.

Neoliberal entrepreneurship of the self is the basis of both symbolic analytic and neospiritual identities. These two identities can easily be found in single individuals because of their common practices and beliefs. I argued that although this entrepreneurship of the self is not restricted to workers in general or to symbolic analysts in particular, it is in the context of immaterial labour in global corporations that this form of subjectivity makes the most sense or is best realized.

According to theorists, entrepreneurs of the self—a category that includes neospirituals or spiritual prosumers—are most broadly constituted via the neoliberal governance of post-Fordism. Neospirituality follows the model of dematerialization or streamlining, which I showed is a fundamental feature of neoliberal culture. In the neoliberal world, where governance now eclipses government, “society” as a concept, and its articulated character based on its composition by social types with differing levels of power emerging from the functionally-differentiated spheres of social management of liberal modernity along with their specialized languages, becomes anathematic. By endorsing a holistic worldview, neospirituality both mirrors and supports this reduction of complex and incompatible discourses into a unitary language as well as the reduction of public identities to individual self-articulation. Expressing an eagerness to embrace the entire collectivity as part of the self by discursively reducing difference and opposition, neospiritual holism sidesteps the entire modernist project, which privileges language and analytical contestation in order to ferret out truths, however provisionally. As “spiritual prosumption” or “the entrepreneurship of the self,” neospirituality seems to support the neoliberal reduction of society to a mass of contesting individuals because it recognizes in its universe only the individuals and the mass (the globe, the divine, energy, Gaia, etc)—not intermediate (or any, liberally-constructed) political bodies.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ As it turns out, internet technology, which is the host and motif of contemporary popular culture, at least moderately supports this sidestepping in favour, theoretically, of the development of identities through multifaceted connection with others and layered identities based on those connections. This is a theoretical model, however, which overlooks the advancing commoditized nature of these interactions, whose operation potentially suggests a form of balkanization of all individuals—each his own separate “country”—as profiling operations direct individuals into niches that may in the end simply constitute isolation from other, essentially-incompatible voices.

From all of these observations, I must draw the tentative conclusion that although neospirituality might be considered an ethos that is only contingently found in worksites and contributes to their cultures only by happenstance, the better part of logic and evidence suggests it is being shaped by post-Fordist capitalism so as to make that contribution. All told, the parallel character of the working conditions and culture of the symbolic analysts and of neospirituals, added to evidence of neospirituality's embrace by the managers within these sites, considering also the generic similarity of workplace cosmologies and that of neospirituality, supported by a range of theoretical material that points in this direction, contributes to the argument that through their patronage, these corporate managers have already and will continue in the future to shape neospirituality to bolster the culture, and justify the conditions, of new workplaces.

By providing this complex hypothesis as to why neospirituality practices are welcomed into corporate worksites—particularly of global corporations—I believe I have presented a challenge to scholars who assert that the connection between neospirituality and corporations is only apparent, marginal, unfortunately corrupting, or accidental.

Finally, I have substantially reproduced Weber's project of suggesting a relationship between a religious ethos and an economic system—but in a different era, in relation to a different form of capitalism, and with respect to a different class. I have done this by arguing that an important, if not iconic, institutional site for the perpetuation of neospiritual culture is the workplace of post-Fordist immaterial production and its key carriers, symbolic analysts. Weber argued that the Protestant ethic is a form of rationality, bridging religion and economics, found amongst the expanding bourgeoisie in key European nations, as capitalism emerged. In his particular representation of the relation of religious culture and an economic form, members of a specific social stratum of society promoted a worldview that reinforced their own abilities to cope with, and flourish within, the material conditions they were faced with based on their particular class position. In the process, and because they were successful economically, they propagated a specific form of "rationality," one embedded in Calvinist Protestantism, as a norm beyond the boundaries of their class.

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1985), Weber contended that the Calvinists were pursuing a strictly religious agenda and set of motivations, that then accidentally aligned with certain changing social and economic conditions (establishing the "elective affinity") which fostered the motivation for capitalism (i.e., the ascetic ethic of vocation and drive to re-invest, and not spend, profits). This interpretation tends to stress the mere alignment of a fully-formed religious commitment with a particular class position within an emerging economic structure; when they became embodied in the persons of capitalists, both flourished. For my account to be an exact parallel to Weber's account in this text, symbolic analysts would have to be driven by aspirations and goals that are extrinsic to their professional or eco-

conomic activity that just happen to have significant reinforcing or legitimating effect on a new state of economic/working conditions. To the extent that I have tried to account for the parallel character of the neospiritual religious attitude and the SA class ethos, I have generally presented both as evolving together—making the relationship I proffer somewhat different from what Weber proposes in that text. However, a key aspect of Weber's argument in his later work, such as the essay “The Social-Psychology of the World Religions” (1967), is the emphasis on the role of social strata that act as carriers of “practical ethics” that are often reflective of specific religious orientations. This emphasis can be explored while leaving somewhat moot the question of how this relationship developed (i.e., how the social strata became the carrier of the “practical ethics”). As such, this view of the religious-class relations very strongly mirrors the arguments of my dissertation. Hence, I hope that, by following a strategy that is a close analogy to Weber’s approach, this dissertation contributes to the underexplored area of religion and economics.

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