

## Editorial: Athletic apparel industry is Tamara-land

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### Abstract (Article Summary)

An editorial notes people are witness to the metamorphosis of late capitalism, the interpenetration of post-industrialism with postmodern culture. The athletic apparel industry is a Tamara of stories.

### Full Text (7868 words)

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### [Headnote]

This issue of Tamara is about corporate predators. I will forego reciting the abstracts and contributions of the articles in the issue. Rather, I want to look at Tamara as a way to understand corporate predators in the Athletic Apparel Industry. It is exceedingly difficult to get crooked stories to straighten in a milieu of disinformation campaigning. And academics are becoming enlisted to accomplish junk social science-- in essence, to legitimize predatory corporate narratives. Such is Tamara--the story you assimilate depends upon the passage points you encounter; you never unravel all the mystery; and you cannot be in every factory all at once.

We are witness to the metamorphosis of late capitalism, the interpenetration of post-industrialism with postmodern culture. In this editorial, I adapt the play Tamara by John Krizanc (1981/1989) for my own use in efforts to look at Nike global subcontracting to third world factories, which distribute to first world consumers who seem to care little about sweatshop practices (Boje, 1995, 2001). My purpose is to show how an Athletic Apparel Industry is a Tamara of stories chasing each other, for I also pursue them from room to room. I concentrate on applying Tamara to the Apparel Industry.

I also edit Tamara: Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science, and, therefore, I seek to understand Tamara in its academic meaning: our complicity in production, distribution, and consumption of sweatshop labor (<http://www.zianet.com/boje/Tamara>). Our first issue (February, 2001) was printed and mailed to our subscribers, board members, and authors. In the Tamara Manifesto (Boje, 2001 a), I look at the interpenetration of postindustrialism and postmodern culture, the intertextuality of production, distribution, and consumption. Before applying Tamara to Athletic Apparel, it is important to say something about the remarkable play...

### The Play called Tamara

The play Tamara, written by John Krizanc, was first performed at Strachan House in Trinity-Bellwoods Park, Toronto, Ontario, Canada on May 8, 1981. The play was published as a book in 1981 (Krizanc, 1981/1989). The play, Tamara, entraps spectators in a maze of story and character choices where our own complicity in civic responsibility stares back at us. And, this is why John Krizanc included Tamara de Lempicka as one character among many who had the cultural preeminence to have a voice, but she elected not to use it. Like us, she sold her art to the highest bidder. Tamara did not bother to render spectacle commentary. For me, the struggle of art and commerce reflects my academic life; we are under the hegemony of the emergent corporate university, where my own choices constrain my academic freedom; we look the other way and we pretend that corporate public relations is the same thing as corporate history. In the

end, it is becoming so in the Business College, in the University that invites the corporation to write its curriculum. But, to see this, it requires a more grounded experience of the play.

I first attended the play Tamara when it was presented at il Vittoriale degli Itali;ni in Hollywood, California in 1992. I wrote about the complexity of Tamara in 1993 (with Robert Dennehy) and, again, in 1995 in an Academy of Management Journal article, but it is only recently that I came to understand that the content of the play was about our complicity as witness to fascism; we are witnesses, answerable for our silence to the spectacle in which we are complicit.

There is an important theatrical innovation that Krizanc constructs to move us out of modern into postmodern theatrics. The play Tamara is not the conventional modern theatrics spectacle with one space allotted to passive and seated spectators and another to performing actors upon a stage (BoLe. 1995). Manguel (1988: 1-2) gives us a starting definition of traditional theatrics:

Theater, the representation of events "as if they happened before your eyes" begins with the convention of all spectacle: a division of reality. One space allotted to the audience, the passive viewer, seated to observe; another to the play, the actors, moving to perform.

In "one space" theater, spectators and performers must follow the linear storyline of authorial authority and view the performance from the viewpoint the playwright has determined will be seen by the spectators.

In Tamara the barrier between spectator and actor spaces has been breached; the spaces co-mingle, and spectators become actors on many stages. Tamara is postmodern theater performed in a mansion with a dozen (or so) rooms as ten actors perform simultaneous scenes, sometimes in one or two rooms; other times there is simultaneous action in eleven rooms. The spectator is given choices in the play, to accompany whatever character and story they choose, masters or servants from room to room, knowing that there are simultaneous performances and they cannot be in two places at one time. The playwright provides the multiple stages, characters, and the content of the play; however, the members of the audience make a series of choices, and depending upon those choices, each spectator weaves together his/her own individual performance of the play; each spectator weaves their own chosen point of view. There are five choice points in the play:

1. Which performing character will you follow as they make an exit from one room to enter some other room?
2. Will you follow a character or wait to see who shows up in one or several rooms?
3. Will you follow the same character from one room to the next, or jump to a different character as each exits to different rooms?
4. If you came with friend (s) will you split up and follow different characters as they make their exit?
5. How will you respond when an actor asks you a question or directs you to move here or there on the stage (you become both spectator and actor, or spectator)?

Never before had a theatergoing audience had this kind of freedom. In this sense Tamara became the first democratic play (Alberto Manguel, 1988: 5).

There are several predecessors to the democratic Tamara-device of allowing the audience to fragment and choose which characters to follow from stage to stage. One is Kafka's *The Castle*

where the reader can add his or her own obstacle but where the hero never completes his quest. Another is Julie Cortazar's Hopsotch, where there are interchangeable chapters that allow readers to construct their own sequence of events. There is something about movement from a divided space in modern theater to the interpenetrating one of postmodern theater that makes Tamara a fit metaphor to analyze the Athletic Apparel Industry.

### Tamara and the Athletic Apparel Industry

Athletic Apparel Industry (hereafter, AAI) Tamara was formed and performed much earlier than the Tamara play. And in the AAI Tamara, it was not a democratic global theater; their corporate forte was to sustain the modernist barrier between spaces, as in contemporary theater. Spectators (consumers and investors) are given only narrative fragments to construct (worker) stories from the vantage points of entry authored by corporate hegemony. Here, hegemony refers to authorial-power taken for granted by spectators, as, plots are scripted in ways unseen. For example, hegemony exists when the locations of Third World factories-such as Nike, Reebok, Adidas, and New Balance-are being kept secret (except for a few model sites); yet they claim "transparency"; consumers or investors do not know factory locations. We rarely hear stories directly authored and voiced by workers; the corporations and their monitors, mostly paid consultants and publicists, speak for workers. The AA Industry stands as a gatekeeper, authoring ventriloquist stories on behalf of workers who remain voiceless.

### Into the Abyss

I want to share briefly how it is I tumbled headlong into the abyss and maze that is Athletic Apparel Industry (AAI) Tamara. I sought to invent a web site where spectators could choose which characters (corporations or workers) and which stories (from which space) to follow throughout the global stages of the AA Industry. I wanted to study storytelling in its globally staged theatrics. So, I began by chronicling the stories of the most visible AAI player, the Nike Corporation-a Prima Donna courting the spotlight on the global stage (See Nike In the News). But, chronology does not capture the dynamics of a Tamara because the important dynamics are a temporality that is multiple and non-linear; it is a contested terrain of narrative and anti-narrative; the grand narratives breakdown into local ones. Due to this, I began to situate the stories by country and began the "Globe Project" of identifying the secret factory locations, revealed here and there in the either corporate, journalist, or activist reporting.

Tracing just one character (a worker, corporation, monitor, or activist) was also, for me, not tapping the complexity dynamics of multiple storytellers giving accounts of the multiple AA Industry corporate players across some thirty countries. Somehow the AAI logo corporations, led by the Prima Donna performer Nike, kept up their storylines that made them entirely transparent (see Nike Transparency 101 <http://nikebiz.com/labor/index.shtml>). In my view, workers have no choice in how the corporation authors write and broadcast their stories.

Finally, I wanted to stay true to Cruzan's (1981/1989) Tamara project and follow the experiences of servants, not masters from room to room (Boje, 1995). By 1998, I began to branch out to read the performance narratives of the workers (Boje, 1998); I had made a choice to follow the stories of the workers and be more skeptical in my viewpoint of the corporately mediated stories.

In 2000, I began to take a serious look at the entire AA Industry and organized four study groups with a total of forty-five academic scholars who had some theory or empirical experience with the AA Industry, and I sent a proposal to the Nike Corporation in September, 2001, Shortly afterwards, I sent more proposals to Ford and other foundations (See Boje et. al. 2000).

Also on December 6, 1999, I began tracking the AAI stock market stories to see if the

complexity and chaos dynamics of the storytelling on this global stage could be explained as a Tamara or AAI Tamara. I wanted to understand both the storytelling and theatrical dynamics of a complexly adaptive system that, on occasion, became overwhelmed by a particular type of chaos.

In 1998, I began posting material and writing articles about the Athletic Apparel Industry (AAI) to see if I could understand the dynamics of divided theatrical spaces that were being increasingly interconnected and breached by wandering storytellers (See Academics Studying Nike). It was then I noticed the divided spaces of Tamara in this industry and the resistance movements of efforts such as United Students Against Sweatshops and the Workers Rights Consortium who penetrated those corporately authored barriers. As narrative barriers tumbled down, the AA Industry Tamara transformed into something different.

What are the three divided spaces of AA Industry Tamara?

There are three divided spaces in the initial performances of AA Tamara:

1. Spectators, consumers, and investors are situated in a consumptive space;
2. A second distributive space is reserved for performing executives, PR managers, and consultants, who mediate stories performed to the first space on behalf of those in a third space;
3. In a third productive space, workers of the Third World (mostly young women) could not be seen or heard by those in the first space (and maybe not the second).

Complexity theory says that from a wide range of initial system conditions, a small fluctuation can push it into chaos where convolutions can tear a system apart. Hugo Letiche and I are working on a phenomenological complexity theory that explains the dynamic of storytelling and how small tales become major feeding fests in the media, and here and there prompt Nike, Reebok, Adidas, New Balance and the rest to craft codes of conduct, and after repeated exposes by activists, journalists, and one or two academics, move along to making fantasy become workplace reality.

This is the chaos that happens when too many people walk across a suspension bridge, and the offsetting rhythms release escalating vibrations and random fluctuations whose turbulence can throw everyone into the river and cause the bridge to collapse. The AAI bridge is not about to collapse, but people are aware of the vibrations.

Galloping Gertie - After its construction, everyone noticed harmless vertical motions of the roller coaster-like thrill of crossing "Galloping Gertie," the nickname given to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge (TNB). At 2,800 feet, it was the longest suspension bridge at that time (Koughan, 1996). On November 7, 1940, four months after it opened, a wind blowing over the bridge deck of 42 miles per hour produced torsional oscillations and undulations of the TNB that increased in amplitude until a support cable snapped at mid-span, producing an imbalance in stress loads on other bridge components that, ultimately, led to the bridge's collapse.

I reasoned the same thing must be happening with AAI Tamara, so many stories circulate among so many tellers and breach the boundaries. My hypothesis is that when these breeches set off patterns, which transnational corporations can no longer control, then investors become uncertain about the AA Industry stocks.

The problem of the second space is to construct and sustain a strong coherent corporate image to the first space. In an age of idols and icons, the corporation substitutes logo worship for the reflection of workers doing production. Activists seek to reassert the reflection of their repressed material and historical conditions. Most consumers are happy to live within the iconic hero's

journey of Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods, never seeing the havoc that AAI leaves in its wake (See poems by Acquenetta Taylor in this issue).

So, how did this come about? In the early era of AAI Tamara, the spectators were fed morsels of glossed accounts of events in the third world. Since these events were being corporately authored, the spectator had little choice as to what perspective to take to view the stories. This was the state of global AAI theatrics from the 1960s through the 1980s.

Activists in the late 1980s began invading the third space (especially in Indonesia) to tell stories from an anti-corporate perspective, laying the blame for the sweatshop conditions that they uncovered at the feet of the AA industry giants.

There were also notable first space journalistic invasions of the sacred third space, appearing since 1996 (Schanberg, June, 1966 Life Magazine). For example, in Life Magazine, photos were published showing children in Pakistan, as young as three years old, making Adidas and Nike soccer balls. "Silgi is only three. Her hands are so tiny she can't handle a scissors," says one caption (See Pakistan). This is one time when the three divided and bounded spaces were breeched, although it was not the first time nor the last one, for the Kathie Lee Gifford Wal-Mart sweatshop scandal prompted Gap and Nike to join the Clinton Apparel Partnership, See Boie. 2001b). The Life Magazine story, however, did signal the end of an era when the AA Industry was a triple divided space in which the first world knew nothing of factory conditions in the third world. It is also when postmodern consumers fixated on icon-logo sports stars and legends came into contact with the postindustrial capitalism supply chain, and the then invisible subcontract factory conditions of labor practice.

In the 1990s, the global stage fragmented, and the AA Industry could no longer control the boundary between the three spaces; the spaces became interconnected by traveling witnesses, virtual chronicles, and, what was hidden in the third space became more visible to the first space. The AA transnational corporations kept trying to keep the spaces divided. In the early 1990s, the corporate logo giants denied all responsibility for factory conditions, claiming they did not own them, and they were only subcontracting. Pressed further, they wrote codes of conduct, but enforcement lagged behind. They sought to control what could be seen in those subcontract sites, but eye witness stories shared experiences with the third space of the postindustrial supply chain, and these worked their way into the first space of postmodern consumer culture; consumers began to boycott stores and write to their congress representatives. Consumers submitted to the whim of the corporate authors, while the workers stayed silent beyond factory gates.

In the mid 1990s, there were frequent demands for independent monitoring of factory conditions. The second space attempts to mediate contact between the first and third space by avoiding all independent monitoring, and instead, it proposed its own corporate Codes of Conduct which would be monitored by corporate staff and by contract consulting firms, such as Ernst and Young (E&Y); then, Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), and more recently, Global Alliance (GA).

Monitoring the Sweaty Monitors - The clamor for independent monitoring continued as more reports of child and sweatshop labor circulated in the press and on activist web sites, such as Corporate Watch, Sweatshop Watch, Press for Change, Campaign for Labor Rights, Global Exchange, Thai Labor Campaign, and hundreds more. The WWW result of all these bandit sites was since the mid 1990s there are too many end runs by activists to the third space to control the story being told to the first space. For example, publications, like Mother Jones (MJ. September 8. 2000), say they are "uncovering the stories you have not heard." There is more democratic spectator freedom to follow characters and stories from country to country and from character to character as the omnipresent transnational corporate power of the AA Industry devolves. It is a devolution authored and storied in one catastrophe after another.

Now the AA Tamara spectators have some democratic choice in the matter and a few are no longer content to make obedient consumer purchases and investments without insuring that their garments (and toys) are not being made by children or young women in sweatshops. Can the spectators submitted to the whim of AA corporate authors ever be free enough to set against their "free market" consumer choices their ethical-answerability for their complicity in the conditions of work that permit their cheap purchases? Can spectators unlock their confinement in the first space and be critical of mediating corporate performances in the second space? Can they begin to understand how their consumer choices are affecting the third space of workers' working conditions?

Yet, in AAI Tamara, the public relations' machinery still overpowers spectator choices by effectively broadcasting the characters, stories, and viewpoint to corporate advantage. As web-activists, academic and news writers, corporate writers, and press agents craft story and counter-story, the spectators of the first space tend not to see the trees for the forest. Spectators cannot roam freely from country to country to enter a thousand factories and see for themselves. Spectators cannot be in a thousand factories, or even in the thirty countries, where factories co-locate to see the simultaneity of the performances. They can track a character here and there, comparing the scripts and viewpoints presented by corporate and activist authors, but rarely does one ever read an unmediated quote from the workers' voice. We cannot see these three (voices) in the forest that is a raging storm of so many other voices. Our democratic freedom to follow characters from room to room is also curtailed by the omnipresent transnational corporation who does have access to all the factories and can grant or deny access to other witnesses.

Freedom and its lack are expressed in stories (including this one). We are trapped in stories authored by corporate power and activist resistance. No matter which character or story we elect to follow each character is the words the stories we can access allow him or her to be. The AA Industry logo corporations, the contracted and independent monitors, and the first and third spaces are trapped in stories of stories and counter-stories of counter-stories (in infinite regress). This is the maze I call AAI Tamara. We spectators weave the web of story fragments and counter-stories and our only freedom is the choice of threads we knit together. Meanwhile the workers remain prisons somewhere deep within the Tamara maze. And ironically, it is the workers who given a voice could spin the largest number of possible escape routes out of it. The worker is like Cinderella, "condemned to the ashes of the hearth not only by her social standing by her sex, and triumphantly rising over the condemnation of both" (Manguel, 1988: 1-5). The Cinderella-worker is for me a better, wiser heroine than those in whose factory she serves.

The AAI Tamara is not just one global stage, nor is it one theater; it is a multitude of plays that must be read a number of times while we, as spectators, wander from country to country, finding one factory then another, hearing a call from one worker then two or three of millions, and in the midst of these fragmented scenes, we find ourselves knitting together the maze based on our choices in this complex and Protean Tamara. Depending upon our choice of characters and stories to follow, another play is knitted together each day in the eyes of each spectator, none of whom have access to the underbelly of the AAI Tamara-the factory floor and the dorm rooms where the workers perform day after day.

Since I have been denied access through the corporate gates, I concentrate on the texts produced and distributed by corporations and activists, and by academic and journalist writers. I immerse myself in the intertextuality-the weave of textual anticipations and responses to other texts. Sometimes, I choose to read a set of simultaneously constructed texts occurring in China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Mexico or El Salvador, and I read the different perspectives. Other times, I follow just one character from first factory employment, and I watch her star rise in the Tamara as her media interviews send her into cyberspace. As is usual, she falls flat on her belly, for her managers blame her for the growing public awareness of factory conditions.

Photo 1: <http://cbae.nmsu.edu/~dboje/images/factoryApparel Workers.gif>

This is women's work (photo 1). We see the photos brought out by Dara O'Rourke from a factory in Vietnam, then displayed on the Corporate Watch or Mother Jones web pages (see MJ, photo gallery). We see workers using toxic solvents without adequate protection (photo 2).

Photo 2: Factory in Vietnam - Worker with

Inadequate Protection <http://>

[www.corpwatch.org/trac/nike/photos4.html](http://www.corpwatch.org/trac/nike/photos4.html)

These are photos of nameless women, who are not speaking to anyone, just being photographed by another storyteller who has a voice. Yet, they are the ones who know the secrets of the underbelly of their social fabric.

If I follow one character through the AAI Tamara and read her stories, I become answerable for the out coming reality. For example, I traced the character, Nguyen Thi Lap, who started working for the Sam Yang (Korean owned) sneaker factory in Ku Chi, Vietnam. Her employee number was 11204. In March, 1996, she was promoted to section (team) leader of sewing line number 15 and that month she was one of 15 team leaders slapped about the head and shoulders with the sole of a sneaker by a Korean supervisor upset with poor quality performance of some team members.

The AAI Tamara did its thing, and a headline story in The Vietnam Worker newspaper on March 31, 1996 proclaimed, "Foreign Technician Strikes 15 Vietnamese Workers." On April 1, 1996, the same newspaper declared, "At Sam Yang Company, Cu Chi District, Ho Chi Minh City, Korean Technical Employee Strikes Many Vietnamese Female Workers." This slapping incident did not initially cause much uproar in the AAI Tamara, but soon, 970 workers went on strike to protest the mistreatment of their fellow workers, and reporters from the first space flew to the third one to interview those fifteen workers. Nguyen Thi Lap had her first fifteen minutes of Tamara stardom. On October 17, 1996, the CBS News 48 Hours reporter, Roberta Baskins was on site to give Nguyen Thi Lap her first interview, for Ms. Lap was a team leader that day, and one who was slapped by her Korean supervisor, Madame Baeck.

The story was re-authored on March 29, 1997, in a Vietnam Labor Watch Report, a 16-day fact finding tour of Vietnam factories, which included a study of the Sam Yang factory by Vietnamese-American businessman, Thuyen Nguyen. An apparel industry logo-corporation flew former Ambassador Andrew Young to this factory in Vietnam, several others in Indonesia, and China to assure the first space spectators that the AA Industry was under control and such incidents were exceptional or just misrepresented by an errant media (Young, Nguyen Thi Lap had had her fifteen minutes of fame, and she settled back to work as a team leader on line number 15. She had a new Korean supervisor-the other having been convicted in Vietnamese court, but who was allowed to leave the country without punishment. Work returned to its normal pace, until in February of 1988, ESPN arrived to do a follow-up visit and pushed her once again into the Tamara spotlight. On April 2, 1988, ESPN's "Outside the Lines" ran an hour-long show on sweatshop abuses in Vietnam to coincide with their coverage of the Olympic Games.

This time Ms. Lap was forced to quit her job. Ms. Lap was demoted several times after the April 1998 interviews with ESPN aired. She went from team leader with a spotless work record to a toilet scrubber. When she fell ill, she says she was denied medical leave, forced to quit her job, and then diagnosed with tuberculosis. Lap is currently unemployed.

In late 1998, I became a player in the AAI Tamara visible to one of its corporate giants. I published a journal article titled Nike Greek Goddess of Victory or Cruelty? Women's Stories of Asian Factory Life. In the Spring of 2000, a book editor and UK publisher asked to reprint the article in a book on Asian corporate strategy. The publisher then asked Nike Corporatists-Phil Knight and Dusty Kidd-that if they re-published my article, would Nike sue them? I was quickly informed that my article would not be appearing in the book. I challenged the decision, and I invited Nike to publish a response to the article. Dusty Kidd first promised to write a response to be published in the book. Meanwhile, subordinates threatened the publisher and editor with liability if my chapter was not withdrawn.

To make a long story of the many episodes, twists and turns in the maze, short and brief, Nike wrote a response in the summer, but they said if I ever quoted or reproduced it, the book publisher, editor, and me would be sued for liability. The publisher folded and decided not to include what was already published. I am barred from quoting the Nike response. I informed the journal I edit where the 1998 article on Ms. Lap had appeared that Nike had "rattled its saber." Their response was also decisive; no more articles on Nike will ever appear in the pages of Journal of Organizational Change Management. I tested this out with an article reviewed and accepted by a JOCM guest editor, which was then rejected by the MCB publishers and owners of JOCM.

I was given the option of submitting an article on any other corporation to make the same points; so, I removed the word "Nike" along with all of its examples and I substituted Disney and all its examples. Then, I wrote an article containing some of the original article examples, and it was published by Management Communication Quarterly. Hugo Letiche and I are collaborating on a follow-up piece on Nike and its censorship for Emergence: A Journal of Complexity Issues in Organizations and Management. In the summer of 2000 (August), I was chair of an All-Academy session, "Nike and Time," and I found myself face-to-face with Amanda Tucker-a Nike spokeswoman who reports to Dusty Kidd. I knew this confrontation was coming and I had prepared myself by transcribing a tape of her performance at an International Academy of Business and Society (IABS) conference earlier that year (Boje, 2001 c). I deconstructed each of the claims and posted it on the web to get ready for the Academy of Management event in August. A Nike spokesperson and I debated before a ballroom full of academics, and among other challenges I made a formal request that Ms. Lap be reinstated. I went on to ask that Phil Knight open the factory gates to any academics in the room that would like to study in these factories. I knew that none of the presenters' papers on Nike would ever appear in JOCM. I knew I could not quote the Nike rebuttal to the 1998 article in JOCM or I would be sued.

Finally, I decided to launch a journal called Tamara, Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science and wrote "Tamara Manifesto" (2001) in its first issue, an essay on the need to study the sweatshop and anti-sweatshop movements without corporate or publisher censorship. This is how complicit I have become in Nguyen Thi Lap's story and in the AA Industry Tamara. Consequently, I am deep in the underbelly of this Tamara.

As Ms. Lap reports in 2000, "When I went to the interview," says Lap (in the 2000 ESPN interview that aired in December about her forced resignation), "the Korean manager kept suggesting to me that as an employee of the company I always had to speak well for the company." Ms. Lap contends she did speak well of the company in the 1998 ESPN interviews, but she was intimidated to end her employment with the company.

By 1998, the AAI Tamara was in one of its more chaotic epochs, and something had to be done to quiet all the turbulence-especially after the ESPN interview had stirred up a bigger hornet's nest than the 48 Hours or Life Magazine events of 1996-a time frame well before independent monitoring was made mandatory, either by legislation or by consumer and investor protest. Earlier there had been the leak of the Ernst & Young audit of an AAI factory in Vietnam which

became frontpage news in November 1997(Hammond, 1997). That same year, a California class action suit was filed by Marc Kasky claiming that the AA Industry and Nike in particular was making false advertising claims in saying its workers were being well treated and there were no subcontracts with any sweatshops. Nike was claiming its right to "free speech" and its defense included a brief by the ACLU. The Supreme Court of California will soon decide the case (Richman, 2001).

From the mid-1990s to May 1998, the Nike Corporation had kept up a steady public relations counter-offensive against its critics. Adidas stayed silent, while Reebok continued to pass out annual Human Rights awards to reinvent its own character (See Boje, 1999). On May 12, 1998, a month after the ESPN report, Nike CEO, Phil Knight, took the stage at the National Press Club Luncheon in Washington D. C. and said: "One columnist said, 'Nike represents not only everything that's wrong with sports, but everything that's wrong with the world.' So I figured that I'd just come out and let you journalists have a look at the great Satan up close and personal."

I am increasingly responsible and answerable for the stories I read and especially the ones I circulate in the AAI Tamara. I have crossed over; I have become not just a by-stander spectator to the spectacle, but an active participant in performing its stories.

I think I understand the PAI Tamara enough to make some predictions. The AAI Tamara will become the exact antithesis of its current hegemony because the spaces are becoming interpenetrated, and the spectators are making democratic choices to move from passive to active witness. One day the AAI Tamara, the stories you experience from country to country in the post-industrial supply chain will no longer give those in the first space the slip. Witnesses will see the maze, and they will see the pattern of this forest. Hegemony is by definition, hidden power, and here it is becoming visible, as intersecting gazes of a thousand witnesses travel the globe.

Escape Routes From the Tamara Maze - Can AAI Tamara be restaged in such a way that spectators can exit with the workers and find routes out of the Tamara maze? Or can this maze metamorphose? I am less interested in pursuing the clever reports concocted by contract monitors, such as Ernst & Young, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Global Alliance (who pretends not to monitor, only consult), and these past two months when in January there was a strike, February negotiations took place with Nike and Reebok, and the new monitors, Verite, corporately contracted to write the workers' story).

In the Mexico update I just received about the workers' action (mostly young women) to create an independent union at Kukdong, a Nike and Reebok plant in Puebla, Mexico, these women are writing their own story:

Update from Kuk Dong struggle in Atlixco de Puebla, Mexico Friday, February 23rd - 7 pm EST

The fact is that as of February 13th, the FROC CROC had filed all of the legal papers with the local arbitration and reconciliation board that the Nike and Reebok factories were striking at Kuk Dong. This becomes a constant source of intimidation that hangs over the heads of all of the workers, especially when a union with such a brutal history-both at Kuk Dong and in past struggles-is involved. When there are constant rumors running through the factory that the FROC CROC is about to initiate a violent raid, they are taken very seriously. Any pressure that helps to avert violence is worth it.

The movement has so far won tremendous and unprecedented gains, and we should celebrate these victories. So, let's pause a minute and do so.

Hundreds of workers and the leadership of the independent union effort have all been or are soon to be reinstated with their previous benefits and seniority. Charges have been dropped against the leaders of the struggle. Nike and Reebok have had to accept the demands placed before them to direct Kuk Dong to take these actions, and they have each had to publicly commit to retaining their production in Atlixco de Puebla. We have made a huge step forward.

We went to Puebla and spoke to workers at the Kukdong factory (Boje, Rosile & Carrillo, 2001). We transcribed the stories told by two sisters, and we know that this is just one scene, one room in the mansion, in a torrent of stories and counter-stories. Yet, we believe these sisters far more than the consultant's reports, or the gloss of the PR releases.

This is a global Tamara, and I trace the stories of the workers, the courageous women and men in Vietnam, Indonesia, China, Thailand, Cambodia, Mexico, El Salvador, and other countries around the world. The action in Mexico is happening as I type in an Athletic Apparel Industry that is the epitome of corporate-driven globalization.

It is happening in an economic context where more investment in the region is currently based on the premise that workers will never rise up and demand more respect, better wages, and decent working conditions. It is happening in one of the most conservative regions in all of Mexico, with a state and local government that is intricately tied to the corruption and brutality of the FROC CROC...

Update from Kukdong struggle in Atlixco de Puebla, Mexico Friday, February 23rd - 7 pm EST

And after rising at 4 or 5 in the morning and not returning until late in the evening every day of the work week, they give up their nights for meetings and their weekends to travel to one of 200 pueblos to tell more of their [companions] that they may return safely to the factory, that the movement still lives, that it is getting stronger. It is these people, women like Josefina Hernandez Ponce and Marcela Munoz, who are the heroes of this struggle.

The courage and persistence of (mostly) young Mexican women workers, who risk everything to create a voice for themselves, who drop a line here or there and return into the factory gate, and who shoulder the battle against corporate PR teams, do so to create their independent union. In May, two of the five workers who were fired for taking leadership in the strike successfully reentered the factory and their story was broadcast live on local radio. They did not play their docile character roles of looking the other way and pretending nothing happened. The question is how will this story play and be retold as it circulates in the AA Industry Tamara?

We, as academics, struggle with our own clash of civic and scientific responsibility, and with the boundary of consumer and postindustrial culture. But it is the young women of Mexico and other countries that face the risks of violence, resist the tactics of corporate intimidation, and do the night meetings after work to author their own destiny.

The stories of Kuk Dong are reverberating through the AA Industry Tamara. The themes of these women's stories are heard in country after country, just off stage of the AAI Tamara. Once in a while, they become today's frontpage headlines. There is a flurry of press releases, denials, promises of reform, and counter-strategies of disinformation. At issue in the editorials, releases, and articles is this question: do the transnational logo corporations bringing their investments to the third space also have the obligation to pay living wages, recognize bargaining rights, and provide safe working conditions free of threat and intimidation?

Update from Kuk Dong struggle in Atlixco de Puebla, Mexico Friday, February 23rd - 7 pm EST; See <http://cbae.nmsu.edu/~dhoje/nike/mexico.html> for listing of additional updates.

Solidarity is happening everywhere. It is not only the other human rights groups, women's groups, and labor unions in Mexico supporting in various ways the struggles of the workers. It is the students in Connecticut who hand out leaflets at college basketball games in sub-freezing temperatures, or those in New Orleans who endlessly raise money to support the workers, or those in San Francisco who hold a demonstration in the pouring rain, or those in Chicago who take arrests inside a NikeTown to bring the level of intensity to another level. It is also the students from throughout the country who stop their lives for weeks on end to go to Atlixco, to accompany workers as they make their house visits and provide an international presence to ensure that violence is not carried out against them. It is those in Toronto, or London, or Madrid, or Australia who picket and protest in support of the struggle. It is those workers at Nike factories in Thailand and Indonesia who have offered their support. It is the members of the Korean House of International Solidarity who, after years of holding Korean companies accountable for their practices in East and Southeast Asia, made their first foray into Mexico last week to support the Kuk Dong struggle and maintained a crucial presence as independent observers while the two leaders and many more workers successfully negotiated their reinstatement to the factory. It is the myriad (too many to count) of labor and human rights groups in the U.S., Canada, and Europe-- locally and nationally-who give strategy, publicity, and grassroots mobilization to the struggle. The movement for an independent union extends a long way, and when it started on the first day of the strike it did so not only out of a sense of solidarity, but because of the knowledge that in doing so something better would come, not only for Kuk Dong workers but for our children and our future.

The AA Industry Tamara is in metamorphosis; the spaces once cordoned off from one another and interpenetrating, and the voice of women workers is reverberating through out the globe. The new Tamara gives the stories and characters new context as we follow the leadership of these courageous women (See <http://cbae.nmsu.edu/~dboje/nike/mexico.html> for listing of additional updates).

Studying the AA Industry Tamara-Method and Theory Recommendations.

The complexity dynamics of Tamara occurs at the micro event level and that macro event horizon. If we approach the AA Industry as Tamara then we can look at how as each act occurs, the stories get told on one or more simultaneous rooms (countries, shareholder meetings, university demonstrations). The greater the number of stories, characters, rooms, media circulation of the stories, and the level of disagreements among the players constitute the complexity dynamics of Tamara. This complexity can be approximated with five measures:

1. S - The number of stories per event horizon.
2. C - The number of characters performing in the stories.
3. M - The number of media publications circulating and re-circulating a story at  $t + 1$ .
4. R - Number of rooms active within an event horizon.
5. D - Disagreement among storytellers about facts, plot, and implications.

The idea I have is to track the event horizon over time looking for nexus points where multiple stories are taking flight all at the same time, such as in different countries. As I write, I believe the AA Industry is in just such a horizon, with the Nike and Adidas situation in the factories in Puebla, Mexico (the Kukdong Apparel Factory outside Mexico City), the recent BBC expose of child labor in a factory in Cambodia (Nike and Gap)-followed by the inevitable denial, the release this week of the Global Alliance (GA) study of Nike with sexual harassment and other serious charges, along with the promised reforms. Incidentally, the Nike Corporation paid \$7.8 million for two

Global Alliance studies. What kind of salary increase would \$7.8 million mean to 115,000 Nike workers in thirty factories assuming an average daily wage of \$1.25 per day? The press pulsates...

Jakarta Post, Editorial- Postcard From a Factory - Monday, February 26, 2001.

The workers complained of verbal and physical abuse, including sexual harassment against female workers, forced overtime and deprivation of their rights, including access to health care. Their salaries, while above the official minimum wage level, hardly cover basic physical needs, the report says...

For decades, this country has compromised too many of its principles to protect workers for the sake of economic growth and business profits. Now, it's time for a new and more humane approach. The Global Alliance report is not only an eye-opener, it is also a wake-up call for this country to get its act together for the protection of workers' rights.

Go to Nike's web site <http://www.nikebiz.com/labor/index.shtml> and you will see how complex it is for them this week (February 23, 2001). This is an event horizon where Nike is putting out fires in several countries-all at the same time. It will take more than PR to take the next step. And with the release of questionable practices by its contracted monitors, Nike and the entire AA Industry cannot stay in denial that there are widespread and serious stories coming to the surface all around the world. The AAI Tamara is about to change in a major way. The three spaces are being interpenetrated; the barriers cannot be sustained.

The propositions I want to explore, should anyone care to join me, are that as the connectivity of Tamara storytelling increases, the level of complexity also rises. The industry can handle one, maybe two catastrophes at a time. As the level of disagreement rises, this can be registered as noise or a time to reassess stock prices (See AA Athletic Apparel, 2001 stock market site).

## Conclusions

Many academics first create the understanding of corporate hegemony, and then submit to its conventions by choosing to remain silent. Others voice their concerns and their voices get lost in the Tamara-maze of story and counter-story. Whoever we are, investor or consumer, owner or worker, professor or student-we move in and out of our complicity with globalization and its predation, some say salvation, of the third world. We are addicted to sweatshops. Even as we seek to deconstruct corporate tales, we become caught in the Tamara web. In this essay I have suggested that the web was part of the life of Tamara de Lempicka, the playwright John Krizanc, and now, ironically I am among its prey.

The question is this: Is the Athletic Apparel Industry Tamara going through some evolution, a metamorphosis to something beyond itself? As we move in and out of belief and disbelief in corporate promises of Athletic

Apparel Industry sweatshop reform, is this one for real?

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