

Wilda

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Prelude

As this is a journal about *Management Spirituality and Religion*, I will provide an exposition before doing the storying work. I intend a *critical spirituality*, not an either/or ‘critical theory’ or ‘spirituality,’ but an ‘and’ for both (Kierkegaard, 1845/1944). The first management part of the storying is to reinscribe transcendence-spirituality that became Disneyfied out of Hans Christian Andersen’s “*The Little Mermaid*,” and doing this, go beyond the good/evil duality. Secondly, I story a critique of capitalism that is rooted in Andersen’s (1974, 1990) diary and fairytales. I suggest the shifts in capitalism emerging during Andersen’s time (1830s) had a profound influence in his storytelling. I use my own spiritual journey as a lens to read Andersen. On purpose, I do not craft a tidy coherent narrative with linear presentation of beginning, middle, and end. Instead I create a web of fragmented antenarrated tales. An antenarrative (Boje, 2001) is a pre-story, and a bet that something transformative can happen with quite fragmented, out of ordered, incoherent telling. Antenarrating leaves gaps, holes, and an abyss for the reader to invoke their own experiences, spiritualities, and reflection. So now without further exposition, the storying begins.

PRE-STORY

“*DeAmericanize!* and I mean that in quite an appreciative, even positive way” (I said it in my deepest, most powerful voice; cannot do that in plucking keys on this keyboard, images appearing on the screen, as I look as well at the text of the talk I wrote out on the plane ride back to New Mexico).¹

I cannot story in writing the way I do in talking. So this is not quite the same version I shared orally at *sc'MOI* (Standing Conference for Management and Organization Inquiry; *sc'MOI* is pronounced ‘C’est Moi’).² It was the closing session on April 10, 2005 and our theme was ‘manufacturing identity (ies).’ I tried to tape the talk, so I could give that to my children and grandchildren, but my recorder battery had expired; we changed it, the recorder was full; somehow it had come on during the morning session, and recorded absolutely nothing, tucked away in my backpack. Dominique Besson put his recorder on the table and that one also would not record my storying that day. In the oral telling at *sc'MOI* (the conference where I am telling this tale), I cried, in between getting all intellectual. They told me after that it was like two people standing there, one enfolding his arms, and changing to an emotional voice with lots of pregnant pauses; the other an intellectual, with arms waving in all directions. I did not know I was doing it, or how to convey that emotion in this writing. What I will do, as a writing device is switch between then and now, and between quite cognitive/intellectual writing and my aesthetic of storytelling.

It is now April 13, and I am in a campsite in Aguirre Springs, New Mexico; it is wilderness and the only possible place to do rewriting. An inquisitive ant threatens to leap onto the key board, there are gnats and instead of hearing the wilderness, all I can hear are humans bickering over which site to select, and there are chirping insects, a lizard wanders across the granite boulder, and here I sit, with only 45 minutes of time on my laptop battery. Yet, I can only write this in the wilderness, or what passes for that here.

¹ To reassert my Danish roots, I am reading the diaries of Andersen (1990) and Kierkegaard (1960) who are Danes and wrote in the same era; I am also reading Andersen’s (1974) stories and fairytales and at the same time, the philosophical/religious works by Kierkegaard (1845/1944, 1846/1941). Andersen and Kierkegaard, have what I believe to be a ‘critical spirituality’; both struggle with melancholy, and differentiate between spirituality and the religious and both struggle with matters of personal faith; Andersen gives more credence to a natured or enchanted spirituality than does Kierkegaard.

² *scMOI* information can be found at <http://scmoi.org>

Story Interrupted – There is all kinds of commotion below my campsite. Tourists have driven up to a sign to decide their site, and talk to the volunteer ranger; I stop the storytelling, until they decide. They finally made their camping choice, and I am alone with what remains of this desert wilderness, in New Mexico.

Aguirre Springs is said to be a spiritual and aesthetic place. It is also for me a perfect place to write since the place has stories of times long ago when Native Americans were not a conquered people.

I was thinking about this, and just as I began to write, Tom Carroll came to my campsite in Aguirre Springs. Tom empties the trash, cleans the rest rooms and does not get paid all that much. I told him I came to write about my grandmother, and some Native American connections. Tom ran to his pickup and brought me a piece of paper the size of a flip chart sheet. On one side was geological history, and on the other excerpts from half a dozen history books about the colonizing of Aguirre, and the apaches who lived there.

One bit says that in 1598 Don Juan de Onate colonized New Mexico and began the genocide of the natives. This very campsite was an Apache hunting camp; At the base of the ‘Sierra de los Organs’ (now we just call them the ‘Organ Mountains’), as late as 1690s, a camp of hundreds of Apaches still existed. By the 1770s the Comanche, settlers, and the Spaniard military elbowed the Apaches southward. Jan 22 1778 a group of Apache families sought refuge in this site in which I am typing this text. The Spanish drove them onto the plain below, and bad luck, into a fierce Comanche war party, who killed all 300 families (every man, woman, and child) slaughter on the very spot I see below, where the White Sands Missile Range exists today.

End of the interruption; the noisy campers have made their selection and driven away; Tom moves along; I can return to my storied relation to such a place.

GRANDMOTHER STORY

I only learned her name a couple of years ago (Aug 8 2003). We only knew her as “grandmother;” to us she had no other name. I was interviewing my mother, actually interrogating her, as she is old and who knows how much longer she will live (her name is both Loraine and Cindy, I never could figure out why my mother had two names). “Mom, what is the actual name of my grandmother? I know about the one-eyed hermit

who as her husband, [his] name [Ray Eaton], but not her name. I even know the name of her second husband, Percy [Brown].” My mother was silent for a long time, a quite pregnant pause, as she stared into an abyss, and then spoke, “Percy was a mean man; it was all that cancer eating away at his body so slowly, maybe all his life. He was not a nice man to me, and not to my children.” I chided, “I know that part, I know he was a very mean man, but what is her first and last name?” And this was the very first time, she blurted out, “*Wilda!*”

“Wow!,” jumping out of my chair; “*Wilda* ” is it spelled, **W-I-L-D with an A**”; “Terrific name, how come I know nothing about her life?” Another very long pause, and I could see her body vibrate, and knew a story was coming forth from her soul.

Then, still staring at her abyss, not at me, she began “She lived in the wilderness; maybe that is why the Wilda name. Wilda [Shelton] was the eldest child and often was left alone. Her parents had to find work, they picked fruit or vegetables, herded some, and logged once in a while. They did anything they could, but never worried about the kids they left behind for months at a time, deep in the wilderness.” I nodded and pleaded with my eyes and my hands, that she continue, and she finally did. “She could drop a rabbit at 50 paces with a small rock, strike it squarely right between the eyes, every time. Wilda rode a horse better than any man, ever. Her father [William Shelton] was a blacksmith, when they finally moved into town; Wilda was a teen by then. She still knew the name of every herb, and which mushroom to eat, when a berry was poison, how to track an animal.” I told mom, “I never knew any of this and I am more than 50 years old; Why not?” I inquired.

She had such long pause in the telling, not an effective technique in public speaking, but in her doublewide trailer, John Donlon, her second husband about to die [dead as I told it at sc’MOI], her sister Val that she feuded with her entire life living in the single-wide a few feet away; her sister was the blood daughter of Percy; Val got all the extra privileges and could run free; Percy always kept a close eye on mom, on every part of her! Yes, it is appropriate to tell this story with many long pauses, and I did get permission.

It is that *kind* of story. Mom is a tough old woman; she never went to therapy, and never disclosed much to anyone, because she is one tough mother. She was known in her

youth when she played basketball in high school, as the “blonde bomber.” Other times she told me stories; how if another team’s player looked at her crossways *in the paint* and even if some had razor blades in their hair, there would be the most terrible brawl. Now she is in her seventies (will be 80 November 12th). I can learn her wisdom, if I can endure her pauses and what is between the lines.

“So they left Wilda alone in the woods of Idaho and Washington, can you tell me more about her?” More pauses. She finally continued and now unlike the Blond Bomber, she speaks so meekly, with a voice I can barely hear: “Wilda could start a fire by knocking her knife onto a stone, and with a bit of dry tree moss, get it to roar. She could bend a bit of bailing wire into a hook and catch a fish with a squirming worm. That is why her and Ray were perfect for each other; they both loved the wilderness, and he loved her most of all, and never remarried.”

My mom continues, but now in a different voice and a different time, “Your father used to go to visit Ray, and prospect for silver and Ray, even at 70 years of age, could out climb him in the mountains, and see better in the darkness of the mines, with just the one eye... Maybe that is why after three divorces your dad moved into the forest, and he too [like Ray] became a hermit, and returned to craft skills he knew on his dad’s farm; he had always wanted to leave that life behind, and just become a manager. It is funny when you think about it.” I could not see the humor then; he left his parents’ farm, and my mother could not talk about anything but him, since they were divorced in the early 1960s. Have to get her back on track: “Mom, you never answered my question. ‘Why did you not tell me about Wilda?’”

During this pause, maybe I should explain why I am called to inquiry about Native American connections to my ancestry. There are family secrets about native roots, on both sides. There is native blood on my Dad’s side; his father had a brother named Edward who married into the Puyallup Tribe. They had moved from Puyallup to a Cheyenne reservation in Montana. The Bøje clan was so prejudice, they decided never to speak to him or of him again. Edward moved onto the reservation with his wife [her name never spoken to me], and I only learned of her a few years ago; my sister Karen did the research and went out to meet the Bøjes on the Puyallup reservation; they have the Bøje name; Edward and his wife had descendents Glen, Ida, Alex and Fred Bøje. I do

not know the name of this or that plant, or what it does if you are ill, or need this or that healing; but Wilda knew it and my dad and my grandpa's brother's wife knew it as well; and long ago Bøjes from ancient Denmark and Eatons from Britain were indigenous, and agrarian; these are my native roots. I will tell you, I intend to demodernize, and start finding out.

On my mom's side, Wilda's brother had also married a Native American; at least we know her name. Wilda's brother [Gerald Shelton] married or lived common law with a Native American woman named Stella LaClaire. Gerald and Stella had a child named Georgie, and Wilda kept photos of them. Wilda and Gerald had been rodeo trick riders at a time when in the West, women just did not do that kind of thing. I think that Stella taught Wilda how to survive in the wilderness and perhaps her spirituality. Gerald was an alcoholic, and got drunk once too often; the sheriff and deputy of Goldendale beat him unto death.

Then there is Percy Brown [Wilda left Ray for Percy, lived common law]. Percy was left by his mother at an Indian Reservation [we think it is Yakima], and then his mother married a very rich man. Like some kind of novel, one brother raised by Indians, the other becoming an executive at Shell Oil. By the third grade, Percy leap out a school window, quit the reservation and never returned. He too became a wilderness person, rode horses, and became a forest ranger, among other things. So Percy has his native ways, and perhaps that was partly what attracted Wilda.

During the pause in my mom's telling, I also think back to when I knew Wilda. I recall visiting her when I was four, again at ten, for the last time at seventeen. Wilda never talked of her past, but she did sneak me cigarettes when I was ten, before I even thought of smoking, and told me about the spirits, and how to become one. I was a Catholic lad, and did not know she was New Age, actually Old Age animalistic spirituality, until, just now, as it all comes together, inside me, in this place, in New Mexico. I read about places where Wilda grew up, and the kind of Native spirituality she likely encountered.

I am trembling as I write this; I think any critical spirituality storytelling is a vibration of the body, mine through the fingers, as they strike the keys with definite emotion. I am a management scientist, not someone who waits on their animal spirit

guide. I have the pile of rocks beside me, and I am fasting. I am learning. For example, the fiber of the Yucca leaves of New Mexico was used by the Apache to make paint brushes, cordage, mats, sandals, and capes; the rope was used to tie up fire wood, and you can eat the flowers of the Yucca and use the roots for shampoo. Here-and-now, I can hear chipping sparrows and a Hermit Thrush singing; I feel the wind, and see its effect moving through each bush; when people are not about, I am alone with the scrub of dessert wilderness. Wilda knew dessert wilderness, as well as she knew mountains and forests, including the ones in Idaho that my grandfather Raymond loved. I suspect she learned her spirituality from the Nez Percé or was it Coeur D'Alene Indians?

I read about the Nez Percé [Northern Idaho Indians]; perhaps it was Stella's tribe. I think, "to find your Guardian Spirit animal, climb a mountain, make a stack of stones, and be sure not to eat or drink, and focus on your spiritual animal guide; that is how the Nez Percé [Northern Idaho Indians] do it." So I stack the stones beside me... Wilda, as I have storied her thus far, grew up in naturalism spirituality, living among what remained of Native American culture.

I have already given you a glimpse of Wilda, her wildness as a woman, and her naturalism spirituality. I can also tell you she never lied to me, was as peaceful as a blade of waving grass in the wind, and yet as hard as a rock when it came to survival and the love of her grandchildren and her children.

Story interrupters - Still in the campsite # 6, I hear two Harley's, riders call them Hawgs. I scamper over to ask permission to admire the aesthetics of the blue machines. I get my permission from the man, who is talking to Harlan the park ranger. I see that the Bikes are well maintained, but not many bugs on the windshield or fenders, must be new. No not new, because the one Bike is older than the other. The new Hawg is an Ultra-Eltroglide Trike, with surround sound, and it is an expensive job, probably \$50,000 at least. I walk back to the biker and the ranger. The biker tells me he trailers the bike, he and his wife, who approaches with a video camcorder. I knew then they were weekend warriors; no biker trailers their bike. The ranger tells his story, of coming here six years ago to start volunteering to keep the area preserved, and how then there was a herd of 25 deer in the mountain passes. "But now" he says, "there are too many darn mountain

lions.” “Is it dangerous, the paths,” asks the weekend warrior’s wife. “Could be” says the ranger (but I detect a wink in his eye).

More Interruption - Low Battery signals and I must go “you should change your battery or switch to outlet power immediately to keep from losing your work.” So it is time to pack up and go.

Thursday Apr 14, 2005 – I asked Harmon (the volunteer who keeps the wilderness sites), “What is a good site with good shade?” He sent me to site 20, where behind the site is a little valley.

Harmon’s wife came by later to give me a receipt for my season pass. I made my decision yesterday, to come here often. Her name is *Nelda* [King], a fine unusual name. She is old and gray, with that tough skin you get from being outdoors a lot; she reminds me of how Wilda looked, that last time I saw her. We got to talking and I told Nelda a bit about Wilda; how her first husband Ray the hermit, that my dad too became a hermit, and that they all knew the names of rocks, trees, bushes and berries. What is that tree I am sitting under? “It’s an Alligator Juniper. You see the bark looks like an alligator.” I asked about granite rocks, “Oh there are many kinds.” I replied, “Many kinds of granite, I did not know that.” She told me it all depends on what’s in them; these are the crumbly kind.

Nelda asked what I was doing, and I told her about Wilda and this journal essay. Nelda said she had something relevant to tell me. She began a story, she had obviously told before, “the number one complain in any campground is music” and then this story. “Harmon, with his bum leg, does not get around like he used to. So I had to confront five church groups about their music. No music is allowed here. And no singing! The church groups set up their microphones and amplifiers. Five different groups, all trying to out sing the other ones, and all at the same time. I told one pastor to turn it off. He told me ‘that’s fine for them down there, because we are the only ones playing God’s music.’ I told him, ‘turn the damn music off!’ He did, and I added, ‘if you want music listen to the crazy doves singing, to the birds, and the insects, that is God’s music and it is beautiful.’” I noticed the egg shells everywhere, from the Easter weekend, and I asked her, and I had guessed right.

I told her Wilda would have said the same thing. “What about mountain lions and the deer all gone, what do you think?” I asked. “Well” Nilda answered, “There is still

deer. Mountain lions go all the way down to the [Whitesands] missile base and get their deer. And to the other side of the mountains and get some stray dogs. We see mountain lions by the motor home. They are real shy. I think they are getting enough deer and dogs because they do not attack the young deer. They are so beautiful!” She showed me how to tell the difference between a Mountain Lion and a Bob Cat track. She held her fist and made a shadow on the ground. “This here would be a Bob Cat, a little paw, sort of a women’s fist. Make a man’s fist, and cast that shadow on the track; you know it’s a Mountain Lion.” I told her “I’m not worried about them.” She said that the construction workers had a real fright when they were running their big bull dozers to make more sites: “They would come back the next morning and find kitty tracks in the fresh dirt left by their bull dozers. I told them those were Bob Cats and few from a big Mountain Lion. You should have seen their faces; started looking all around. But you cannot see them. They are just watching you.” Nelda added, I told them, ‘they’ll see you, you won’t see them.’” She is right they are quite shy. Then she added, “Go towards them and they will run. Hold your ground and you will see eyeballs, maybe, and they just disappear. The Indians call em ‘ghost cats’.” Nelda told me she has the best job in the entire world; its volunteer work, but they get to live up here. I keep wondering if Mountain Lion is my Spiritual Guide.

I must break from my mother’s telling of Wilda, and Nelda’s tellings which seem to unfold Wilda to me. It is time to look at my dad’s side, at the Danish roots.

DENMARK

I am going to take you to Denmark. It is part of the antenarrating necessary to retell *The Little Mermaid* tale. It is my first time in Denmark, and I am 57 years old. It is July 2005.

Two Dane words, I need to define, and then we go to the museum. First is ‘hyggelig’ which means ‘cozy’ and ‘social warmth.’ Nelda has it, so does Wilda, and everywhere in the Old Danish Empire; people know what it means, and how to find it. I find it here, in the fire I made from the logs and twigs I brought with me, in the crystal rock on my notebook, and this boulder, that is really quite comfortable, below the shade tree that has the alligator skin.

The second word is ‘nedslagspunkt.’ Ned is down, *slaggs* are claps to the earth, and *punkt* is a moment. Like many Dane words, it has several meanings. One is piercing a moment in time, cracking the ground with a thunderclap. Another meaning is the keys I plunk on the laptop, strike images onto the screen (was a bit more fun to leave impressions on the vellum in the old mechanical typewriters, or to strike the page with a quill, and bleed black ink into the fabric, but this will do). Another meaning I am told is that words on a page hail you and you recognize the hail deep inside your soul (Althusser, 1969: 41). So I am Wilda’s grandson, the hermits grandson too, and my dad a hermit, and me here all alone with the Bob Cats and Mountain lions staring at me with their ghost’s eyes, until I look up and they disappear. I hope I see just one ghost cat before the writing is done.

The day before going to the museum, I was at a Summit Meeting of experts in *Organization Theatre*, in Denmark. I got up early and took a walk through the woods, to the sea. I met one of the summit participants, an actress now doing consulting. I asked her how to play a performance art scene, a way I imagined to communicate the architectonic theory of Bakhtin (1990) by becoming Thor.

As we walked towards the beach, the Danish actress began to instruct me in how to feel the energy of Thor’s three thunderbolts. I imagine three of them, and she says feel the energy of each, how they have their own vibration. What color are they? How do they behave in flight? So I did the performance art there on the bath to the sea. “This one is black a dark cognitive intellectual energy, and feels very firm. But, this one is yellow, like the sun, and it is all rays, aesthetic rays. This one is blue and it is an ethic thunderclap that is drawn toward what hails it and I cannot control it; it keeps wobbling in my hand, and wants to take its flight.” Keep these three energies, colors, and vibrations in mind, and how they interanimated one another; the three are what Bakhtin (1990) calls spheres of discourse in his architectonic dialogism; I cannot take time to explain it here, but it is a higher order than polyphonic dialogism, and one that is key to understanding “*The Little Mermaid*” and the museum.

I am standing outside the Museum of Natural History with my good friend Hans Hansen, and it is also his first time in Denmark. Yet, we are both of Danish ancestry and we enter this museum in search of what it means to DeAmericanize, to try to turn Danish.

Hans and I encounter an older couple who look a lot like my grandparents on my Dad's side, with the shocking full heads of white hair. But, unlike my stoic grandparents, these Danes are quite gregarious. I wonder about this, and strike up a conversation. "Hans and I are here to find out about our Danish roots, it is our first time in Denmark. I am a leader of PeaceAware.com in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Your images and photos are quite similar to what we display at our peace vigil."

As we warm up to each other, I ask, "I cannot figure out why I am Catholic by birth, when Denmark would have been so Lutheran at the time my great, greats, left to go to Ellis Island, and then out into the wild west." He ponders the question, then replies, "well there were still a few Catholics around the mid-1800s the Danes were more tolerant than other nations when it came to the Reformation."

Hans and I are practically running through the museum; there is 9,000 years of history and not much time; we are two Danes side-by-side hunting for a past we cannot possibly imagine. At 6,000 BCE, I spot a flint stone ax head. I tell Hans, "I can make that ax head out of flint; my father and grandfather, and Wilda could each make it; we have the skill." I know this in my gut, to be true. I know how to strike the flint rock with some hard granite and make the chip fly off, just the size I predicted, and even can make it land where that spider is crawling too close to my work. I know how to get the sand from the dessert and on a bowl stone, polish it so that the blade is sharp enough to cut anything I need. We Boje's and Eatons, know how to make a tool for any job, and we treat our tools with great respect, save them for many years, pass them along to the next generation.

Hans and I are marching side-by-side that is what two Danes do. We only know two Dane words and we think we have some impressions clapped onto our brain circuits. "That aesthetic way the plow bends, and it is such a trim use of wood, not a chunky design; it is a shape quite pleasing to me; is it the same for you?" It is. We are practically running, now, then stopping suddenly to read every plaque in the room, and deciphering every art piece as best we know how.

Suddenly Hans is shouting at me, "Bøje, you realize this Reformation, the page about Catholics being persecuted by the Lutherans, and then the Catholics become as Lutheran as anyone, and the Lutherans becoming quite Catholic." "Yes," I reply, but do

not know what all the fuss is all about. “Bøje, it is the story of your first and second marriage; how you gave up being Catholic, so you could marry into that Lutheran family, and then you were the only one of them who could set foot in the Catholic Church and go through the mass and view the dead grandfather.” It struck me like a yellow bolt, then black, and blue; I was ablaze with color and could not move. Then, I knew it, “it’s true, that is what happened. I relived the Reformation in my first and second marriage.”

Though born Catholic, my first mother-in-law hated her father that much that I was the only one of the family to attend the funeral service, to set foot across the threshold into the Catholic church; I took communion, me the priest, the dead grandfather, all alone in that church. The priest took pity on me, knew it had been a while and signaled me when to sit, stand, kneel, and step up to the alter to view the body and have communion. I took the host into my mouth, and the way I learned in first communion, did not let any part of it touch my teeth, stuck it firmly to the roof of my mouth, until it melted away of its own accord.

Huddled on the steps, they thanked me for representing the family; after all as my dad said, “once a Catholic, always a Catholic; and to the death.” The sky was blue, and not that dark violet flame of Mary’s Sacred Heart (or even the infamous Saint Germaine). And the sun was behind a cloud, and yet there was no blackness, just complete clarity of what was to come.

I got the divorce some 12 years later, and fell in love with the lovely Grace Ann, also raised Catholic, also married someone before who was not, and because of that loop hole, she and I got married in the Catholic Church. Well first there were a lot of classes, some counseling, and a seminar, but then we were qualified. The irony is that I had become Jain [an India religion], and we did the Catholic bit to please her Italian family (and if truth be known to please me; I was quite excited to return to my roots, and did not know my Wilda roots then).

There is no better way to learn deconstruction than through divorce. You think it will be over in an afternoon, a bit of paperwork, then, you find out, that you are intertwined so deeply, so scripted into one performance, that breaking up, as they say, is hard to do.

So I fell in love again, and instantly I became vegetarian, in a food line, having overheard the princess Grace Ann say, “if I date again, I will only date a vegetarian, no

more preparing a meal of meat for him, and a separate meal for me.” “Say,” I said, “I too am vegetarian,” and instantly I was one, and have been one ever since. Then I find out that this is a Goddess, a New Age woman who has a guru, and believes in Jain philosophy. Now to make it worse, she grew up Catholic, just like me, and says she can be both Catholic and Jain. “Wow, I did not know two were allowed.” And I like the idea of it, of having male and female godheads, of bowing down to all teachers, and not evangelizing, so I will stop that now. So we married in the Catholic Church, since neither of us had a spouse that was Catholic before, and as I told you (sorry to be redundant, but I am explaining about dialogism here)—the kids, they showed up for the wedding, and did step on Catholic ground for the first time in their life. You see, I hope that the various spiritualities and religious adventures have been in interactivity, and that Hans spotted it at the museum, and I did not.

Hans and I are Dane, but will soon leave. Barry got Hans and I some bicycles; if you have never ridden one, you are not a real biker. We are on the paths, and the lights are strange; A Yellow before the Green, instead of before the Red. Getting ready to go, is more important than getting ready to stop. Cars are respectful of bicycles; you could not do such a ride in the states; maybe on a Hawg, but not a bicycle. Danish bikes are highly aesthetic; the curve of the fork is functional and yet artistic, at least to a Dane, the handle bar shifter works so effortlessly, and unlike my old French bike, I do not have to take my hand off the grip and reach down some place in search of the shifter, and it never derails. Barry is stopping to tell us history, and explain why Danes leave some things unfinished, in their art, and we are off to see “*The Little Mermaid*.”

Hans’ *Lonely Planet Guidebook* says the statue in the sea is a national symbol, but she has been decapitated twice, had her arm sawed off, and was three years ago, the entire body toppled into the bay. We start to speculate why, and I think it is probably about Disney, the way the 1989 Disney version, and the 1984 Touchstone version are so different from the 1830s Hans Christian Andersen version. The guide book says tourists are often disappointed to find such a small statue, and naked; we suspect they want something bigger, like the Statue of Liberty.

I spy two young women taking photos of a male statue, about 30 feet away from *The Little Mermaid*. It is strange, because they have put a towel around his shoulders, and

some swimming goggles on his bronze head. “What are you up to? I ask trying not to frighten them, adding, “I don’t mind, I just wonder when you put the stuff on the statue, what it is for you?” They explain together and all at once, they are art students from a Copenhagen university. “He needs goggles because he has been swimming in the sea... and a towel to dry off after the swim” adds the other, then adds “it’s an art project, and we are doing no harm to the statue, just making it read differently.” I probed a bit, “not like what has happened to *The Little Mermaid*.”

We are professors, and two of us are Dane in heritage and trying to figure out what all the decapitation means.” They explain that, it was probably two artists; in fact one admitted it, but was cleared of the charges and let go. “That would never happen in the United States.” They explained, “in Denmark the beheadings are a call for dialogue, and us Danes do not like something to take on too much importance or become nationalistic about it. That is why we put an Iraqi scarf around *The Little Mermaid*, and took a photo, so that people would do dialogue. We want to draw attention to the prejudice against Arabs in Denmark since 911.” Their view is Blair imitates Bush, and their prime minister imitates Blair, and there are Dane troops in Iraq, which is not a popular thing. I got permission to tape record, and this is what occurred next.

Bøje: So why are you uncertain about this Little Mermaid?

Art Student 1: I am not uncertain about this Little Mermaid, I am uncertain about the Disney version//

Bøje: The Disney version?

Art Student 1: Yeah because I mean the story, the original story is so sad. I mean I cried like...

Bøje: From the original Hans Christian Andersen story//

Art Student 1: I cried when I heard that the first time, the second time, and the tenth time and then when I saw the Disney version with the happy ending; I think it’s a horrible thing. Actually I don’t know if Disney is horrible. And every Hollywood film ends the same. The bad guys always get what they should have, and the good guys always, ahhh, get married?

Bøje: Get married! (Laughter all around; by now the two other authors have joined us)

Art Student 1: And my - And you cannot do that with *The Little Mermaid*; I means it's, it's a great story. Oh, it's the greatest story; Oh it's not the greatest story in all the world, but it's close because it's sad

Hansen: It's a tragedy, right?

Art Student 2: She dies from love?

Art Student 1: He married the evil one; he married the evil one [in the Disney version, not in Andersen's], and he bounces her And She goes back to her origins, her original ahh place, and [in the Andersen version] she cannot because she's adapted to the land, she cannot breathe, so she [dissolves] becomes foam.

Hansen: In the Disney version, a bunch of fish sing to her, and dance.

Art Students 1: That's good! That's good! Very good!

Hansen: Hah, (lots of group laughter from 3 authors and 2 art students)

Art Student 1: And I like the music in the Disney films always, very good!

While we have our dialogue, there is an event taking place in the background; a man (we think he is American) wades out to the boulders where *The Little Mermaid* statue is perched, and standing on the slippery, slimy rocks, precariously hoists his daughter up to the statute, where she clings for dear life; he is determined to give his wife a photo opportunity, their little daughter with '*The Little Mermaid*.' Would parents be so eager, if they knew the Andersen story?

If Disney can restory *The Little Mermaid*, perhaps I can tell you a version; mine will pick up what I storied about Wilda's spirituality.

WILDA AND THE LITTLE MERMAID

Wilda lives in the middle of the Polypi, deep beneath the sea. The Little Mermaid, swims past the animal/vegetable hydra (that is what people thought they were in Andersen's day). The tentacles try to grab her, and then would feed upon her, until the life was drained out of her. This is not evil, it is simply what hydra do; and to try to enter

a colony of hydra seems a silly idea to me. Yet, she has an overpowering desire, to be human and in love, then to have a chance at the gold ring, not just the wedding ring, but the chance at immortal life in the hereafter. This is a myriad of chronotopes (Bakhtin, 1981); somewhat the fool for her desire, somewhat a chivalric adventure, certainly idyllic, and all the way back to Greek Romantic adventure.³

The Polypi, just to remind the reader, is what I am describing as capitalism, one that is beyond any duality of good and evil. And to make the point, in the middle of this Polypi lives Wilda, the enchantress, who like the Polypi surrounding her, is beyond any such duality. Wilda is a business woman; she thinks the mermaid is a bit silly, to want to be human entails much suffering and is not the happy live ever after, that one sees in Disney movies. If the mermaid wants to have her heart's desire, then she must pay the price: one tongue to be sliced off by Wilda's knife. Wilda is using precious herbs, and secret concoction, that is quite rare, not to mention the spilling of enchantress blood, as part of this recipe. Wilda clearly explains the bargain, that the mermaid must get the prince to love her, be married by the priest, and if that occurs she can enter the hereafter. However, if prince marries another, then the mermaid will turn into sea foam. This dissolution of the mer-body happens eventually to all mermaids.

Like Andersen's story of the Wood Nymph, the mermaid is trading a long life, for a chance at fulfilling her desire. For the Wood Nymph, the desire is to see Paris and the World's Fair (a combination travel chronotope, and fairytale). Here, Andersen walks on the side of the grotesque, cutting out tongues, dissolving the body, and the agony of each step the mermaid takes as if a hundred swords cut into her feet.

The reader may find it odd, even strange that I am putting Wilda and capitalism in this folkloric tale. Yet, it is more than a fairy tale; it is an adventure (Romantic, Chivalric, Biographic, and the Fortuna of the Everyday gamble). It is such a clear exemplar of all nine chronotopes, and the polyphonic activity is also quite apparent. There is the voice of the mer-people, the voice of people, the voice of the air angles, and if one listens, there is Andersen's voice, working on the borderline between animalism and his sense of Christianity. Stylistically, there is the skaz (everyday speech used as something else), the dialogue between people from different words (some of this is non-verbal, especially

³ Chronotope is defined by Bakhtin (1981) as the relativity of time space.

after her tongue is sliced off), and there is I think the voice of emerging capitalism (the enchantress sells her goods, the mermaid is a customer, taking the buyer beware contract). Unlike the Disney version, there is much spirituality in this tale. Sure you can argue that the Disney version has the duality of Good mer-child versus the evil witch; but that is not how Andersen composes the architectonics of the storytelling; architectonically there is much that is cognitive discourse, and it is interanimates with the aesthetics of folktale writing, and with the ethics of a religious tale of how with transformation, there is always a good deal of suffering, especially if someone from one world (merfolk) wants to get to the human world, and then move along by chance to the eternal world hereafter. All these other worlds are forbidden to merfolk; she knows that her desire is out of bounds. Yet, she is unable to resist, and her gamble comes at a very high cost.

The Little Mermaid has seen the statue of the prince, and save the prince's life. Andersen does not paint this mermaid like Homer's Odyssey, like the sirens who sing so sweetly the sailors jump overboard and drown at sea.

Enchantress's in Andersen's stories are neither good nor evil; the one in the Snow Queen is a bit dizzy, but not evil. The one in 'The Little Mermaid' tale is just a business woman. The enchantress is Wilda, and she is as wild as they come. Yet, as I am discovering, Wilda is also quite spiritual. She knows all the birds, the animals of the forest, is able to mix-up a tea from a Dandy line leaf, to use as a diuretic. She can also make up a wilderness salad, and mix potions to help with an abscess.

"Silly mermaid, you think this is possible I can do it but there are no guarantees that this prince will give his heart to you. The process is not reversible, and you will suffer like never before"(not exact words, but more or less accurate). The mermaid takes the potion, and it is as the enchantress described it; her body feels like it has been cut in two; yet she cannot cry out, her tongue has been sliced off. But she can dance like no other, and that is enough she hopes to win his heart. You can guess the plot (or you may know it well). The other woman wins the prince's heart, and The Little Mermaid is asked by the prince to dance with joy at his wedding. She is further degraded by having to carry the veil as the bride walks down the aisle. The Little Mermaid hears them say "I do" and knows by sun's first light she will be sea foam.

Her mer-sisters are desperate. They heard the bad news about their sister. They are off to see Wilda, and to make their own contract. Wilda agrees to sell them a special dagger, one that when plunged into the prince's heart (killing him) will allow his blood to flow, and if it flows onto her feet, she can have her flipper back (what was thought irreversible chronotope is now reversible).

What does *The Little Mermaid* do? She grasps the knife, knowing full well what it will do. She enters the bedroom, and sees bride and groom asleep. She makes her decision, and leans down, and kisses him on the forehead. She tosses the knife into the sea, knowing full well her life is over as the first ray of sunlight strikes the water. Her body changes into the misty foam, and yet she can still think. She hears the voices of the air angels, who tell her she has won the right to a new bargain. This is the suddenly chronotope of everyday adventure, and it is all the other chronotopes, and is dialogic to the stylistics, the polypi, and the architectonics of this so-called "fairy-tale." And in that, it is as well, the Polypi (dialogism of the lower order dialogisms).⁴

The mermaid has felt the pain of human suffering, made her gambler's choices, and won the attention of the universe (or some higher power, you may name). The air angels explain her new bargain, to have 300 years more, but this time the chronotope is quite elastic; it is lessened when a child laughs; the sentence is lengthened when a child is naughty; so now it is the child, the reader who determines her fate.

THEORY

My thesis, lest you did not catch it, is that *Polypi* in this more Andersen-version of the tale is a new way to see capitalism. I imagine capitalism as neither good nor evil, though some Polypus aim to be one or the other. Yet, the colony is our concern.

My antenarrative bet was that I could tell you a fairytale that might give you the gift of 'critical spirituality' and be a novel understanding of contemporary capitalism. I call this gift, "Polypi." Its literal meaning is a colony of hydra, and was used by Hans Christian Andersen, almost two centuries ago, in "*The Little Mermaid*" first published in 1837. In Anderson's 1837/1974 preface, he gives this account:

⁴ Four dialogisms: polyphonic, stylistic, chronotopic, and architectonic.

While I was engaged in writing something larger and completely different, the idea and the plot of *The Little Mermaid* intruded and would not go away; so I had to write this fairy tale. I feared that if I published it alone it would seem too presumptuous, so I decided to place it among a group of tales that I had already begun. The others in the booklet are more children's stories than this one, whose deeper meaning only an adult can understand" (March 1837/1974: p. 1069).

Andersen wrote this tale for adults, at a time when mermaids and animal spirits were part of peasant reality, not what modernity has made unreal.

For Andersen (1974: 67-68), writing in 1837 about *The Little Mermaid*, the Polypi was thought to be on the borderline between vegetable and animal; that was the science then. Polypus is the name given to an individual hydra in the colony. Polypi colony will hunt when hungry by immobilizing prey with stinging cells at the tip of arms that feed its mouth; it will retreat when fearful, shrinking into the connective tissue of the colony.⁵ Polypi is asexual; it can bud and reproduce without sexual intercourse. Cut one up into fragments, and each part will grow into a full polypus. Here I mean Polypi to imply capitalism; polypus a given organization; I am not saying Andersen had the same meaning; that cannot be determined from his writing.

A polypi grows, hunts, and hides from danger in all directions. The colony must communicate, and it does so dialogically, in several orders of dialogic systemic complexity, as a whole entity. I inserted Wilda into a Polypi, because I think her spirituality gives capitalism a very different meaning. I hope that you will be able to understand this is my thesis, when I tell the story. I made the abductive proposition that Andersen's tale is a critique of the good versus evil model of capitalism, and that the enchantress that inhabits the Polypus is beyond such duality (Peirce, 1955: 155-156).⁶

If you go to see Disney Studio "*The Little Mermaid*" (released 1989) or the Touchstone Studio (released '*Splash*' in 1984) version, then I think you see that they have taken out *transcendence* as well as this polypi-image of capitalism, one that I contend Andersen concocted (either intentionally, unconsciously or accidentally).

⁵ In Greek mythology, Hercules was confronted by a nine-headed serpent-hydra

⁶ Abduction is Peirce's (1955) 'leap of faith' inference that is in between inductive and deductive method and reasoning.

You see the Disney version, of the tale, is about a very different sort of capitalism. Disney's Polypi, one might argue, has grasping tentacles in all directions, and is called 'synergy.' Disney's particular colony, a hydra, has the ability to bud anew, or when sliced by corporate desire, to fragment into two, each becomes its own Polypus.

I need to explain the dialogisms to you, for no one but Bakhtin has done so, but in so many notebooks, books, and essays that none has ever seen the grand theory, what I will call the Polypi of dialogic complexity, and it is quite relevant to system theory and to capitalism, as well as this essay on critical spirituality.

Up to this point you have realized, no doubt, that my journey through various spiritualities and religions (sometimes both are joined) has been panoply, and as well a polyphonic (multi-voiced) dialogism. Everyone who studies Bakhtin (1973, 1981) begins to look at dialogism as just the polyphonic variety. I think there are other versions.

Since Polypi is living and always on the prowl, yet concerned with survival, I like it better as a concept for capitalism than Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizomatics of the creeping tuber-vine; both are important models in the conceptualization of capitalism. I prefer the Polypi, how its tentacles embrace everything, and its mindless efficiency as it sucks the blood and marrow out of everything, while growing and moving in all directions (into any available niche); and it knows neither good nor evil. Polypi capitalists are neither good nor evil; they are predators and they retreat when afraid. I am not saying there is not goodness or evil in the individual Polypus (organization), but the Polypi capitalism as a whole I will engage as a morality that is beyond this duality. Polypi capitalism is beyond good and evil (Nietzsche, 1990).⁷ At the same time, Andersen gives it a plot of transformation, transcendences that comes through suffering, that I explored using personal experience narration enfolded in a retold fairytale.

⁷ To get at this thesis, I am relying on Kierkegaard's work. Kierkegaard according to Schacht (1975: 120) views Hegel "with contempt and ridicules him mercilessly (and often it might be added, unfairly)." Hegel is said to treat religion as a forerunner to philosophy, and is according to Kierkegaard, preoccupied with the objective, ignoring issues of faith (Schacht, 1975: 120). Kierkegaard (1845/1944) takes Hegel to task for focusing on objectivity over subjectivity; Kierkegaard states that "truth is subjectivity" and not Hegelian "objectivity," and this assertion is often misunderstood by readers. Kierkegaard is concerned with the philosophical and spiritual question, "what does it mean to be a human being?" My understanding is Kierkegaard is asserting that we become subjective (inwardly) in the self-activity of our spiritual being, in the search for our inwardness; his focus is not the objective or subjective metrics of scientific method

I have a theory in mind, one from Bakhtin (1990), called *architectonic dialogism*, written when he was in his twenties, and informs, I believe the other dialogisms, that came after, particularly, polyphonics (from the work on *Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 1973), stylistic (mix of speech act modes in 1981 *Dialogic Imagination*) therein is also the dialogism of the ten chronotopes, (see also his 1940 dissertation, published in English in 1968 on the work of Rabelais), and onto the fourth, the architectonics (the dialogism of ethical, aesthetic, & cognitive discourses), that I think belongs at this order of higher order of system-complexity (Boulding, 1956). I use the word “systemicity” to denote the top three levels of system-complexity (symbol-processing, multi-cephalous, & transcendent).

Bakhtin did not give a name to the dialogism of the dialogisms (polyphony, stylistics, chronotopes, & architectonics) nor did he use the term systemicity; he did argue that there is something beyond mechanistic and organic, and that this has to do with language (Bakhtin, 1990: 1). I name it here, this highest level of systemicity, the “Polypi.” I define Polypi-systematicity, as the dialogism of the dialogisms of lower order complexity (Boulding, 1956). Capitalist system, as defined here, is a whole with an unmergedness of parts, and unfinalizedness to it; this I call the third cybernetics.⁸ In late 1930s Bakhtin (1973: 4) explored how Dostoyevsky’s novels were marked by “the plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses and the genuine polyphony of full-valued voices,” a *systemicity* that is “unfinalizedness [in] its open-endedness and indeterminacy” (p. 43) and gives rise to “the polyphonic manner of the story” (p.60).

Bakhtin (1973) foresaw what we now call ‘open system’ wanting to move beyond closed “systemitized monological philosophical finalizedness” (p. 26), and looked beyond polyphonic “unfinalizability” (p. 38)” of “unmerged voices and consciousnesses” (p. 4).

Bakhtin (1990) writes about an aesthetic sphere of discourse and its relation to an ethical (as well as cognitive) discourse. One could also read this Bakhtin book for its

⁸ First cybernetics is a deviation-counteracting feedback loop system; Second cybernetic admitted a second deviation-counteraction loop; Third cybernetics builds on Bakhtin’s work by using polyphonic languaged perspectives, a plurality of time-space conceptions (i.e. chronotopes), and includes more than a cognitive appreciation of systemics, but also the interanimation with aesthetic and ethic discourses. This is what I demonstrate in the essay.

exploration of spirituality, a daring adventure and quite dangerous, given the crack down against it where he lived.

Critical Theory (Frankfurt School: Benjamin, Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, & Fromm) rejects metaphysics, and classifies it as mere ideology, as part of the consumer culture industry. Adorno (1951/1974: 231), for example, says “Metaphysical categories are not merely an ideology concealing the social system; at the same time they express its nature, the truth about it, and in their changes are precipitated those in its most central experiences.”

Here, I storied spirituality, included metaphysics of transcendence, and yet at the same time not invoking the good versus evil duality for capitalism; admittedly a new step for me. This good/evil duality is superimposed on the Disney versions of “*The Little Mermaid*” tale I will analyze and story, and supplants quite a different sense of spirituality that Andersen (1974) wrote about.

Time to go; they say the dessert is not pretty if you grew up among tall trees. But, I see the newts leaping between rocks, playing hide and go seek. A swarm of gnats is just there in the shade of the Alligator Juniper tree. The wind is making sounds that are better than any music. The birds are chirping and some kind of animal is whopping not far off. I feel the wind on my face and arms, and I see the purple flowers, white ones, and some yellow ones. The volcanic mountains jut out of the earth, the plug keeps it from turning the whole place into molten lava once again. On the motorcycle ride home, the yellow fields of flowers drew my attention to the point that I would have driven off the road, had not an insect sacrificed himself on my helmet.

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COMMENTARIES ON BOJE'S WILDA ESSAY

The Reenchantment of David Boje: Postmodern Spiritualities in the Wild "Wilda" West.

Eduardo Barrera. The University of Texas at El Paso/ Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez.

David Boje is the male embodiment of what feminist epistemologists would call "standpoint" theory: he is a situated knower who specifies the conditions of his epistemic perspective and his mode of access to that knowledge. More importantly, David does so with an open heart, revealing not only his logic-in-use, but his spirit-in-use. Having said that, where to start a discussion of his anti-narrative: Wilda, the Little Mermaid or Bakhtin? Rather than deliberate the weight of each, I'll just start with the first utterance: "DeAmericanize!" Powerful first word which leads David to explore (a) his ancestry and the connection to Native American roots, (b) his Danish roots and his reading of Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*, and (c) an effort to make sense of both, in synthesis with the questions that have occupied him regarding a reading of the capitalist system under the light of Bakhtinian dialogical theory. What would I have done? I was born in Mexico and De-mexicanized by Mexicanizing myself. The social formation that we know as "Mexico" was invented only after the Criollos (Creoles from Spanish ancestry but born in the New World) decided to break from Spain because of the high taxes and being second-class citizens, above Mestizos and Indians, but below their relatives born in the Old World. This prevented them from having access to the highest positions in both the clergy and public administration. Mexiko is a Nahuatl term means "the place (co) of the belly button (xictli) of the moon (meztili)," important to me for two reasons: my father gave me the Nahuatl name Xikotenkatl when I was eight, which has the same root word. Anahuak was a close second choice for this new country and referred to a confederations of First Nations that is said to cover from Nicaragua up to the Great Lakes. Although I do not trace my family origins to the Aztecs or Mexikas, who lived in that particular city on the lake where Mexico City stands today, but to the Kickapoos, who have migrated from Wisconsin, to Kansas, to Texas, and finally to Mexico after defeating the Texas army at Dove Creek in 1865. It is only fitting that the name Kickapoo, unlike the name of most tribes which mean The People or people of the Earth, is translated as "he moves about." Eight years later, the Fourth Cavalry lead by Col. Ranald Mackenzie invaded Mexico to raid the Kickapoo settlement with the orders of "annihilation, obliteration and complete destruction" while the men were away hunting. It was around that time when many Kickapoo women, children and elders were massacred by the U.S. army in Remolinos, Mexico that my Great Grandmother Virginia was born.

The two-pronged strategy by David was to de-Americanize by Amerikanizing himself. Behind the common knowledge that the name America was given by cartographer Martin Wardseemüller in 1507, who claimed that Amerigo Vespucci reached the new continent before Columbus. However, the continental indigenous movement points out that Amerrikua was the Mayan name for this landmass, translating as Land of the High Winds. Wilda is a child of this Amerrikua or Turtle Island, living in touch with Mother Earth, the elements, and, most importantly, with the spirits and numenon of the site she would dwell. I had a chance to talk to David at the time he was going to Aguirre Springs when we bumped at a Thai restaurant

in Las Cruces. We had a chance to share our experiences, talking about fasting and how tobacco was used all throughout Amerriku as an offering to acknowledge the Great Spirit and the spirits who might pity us. It is not a question of power like the Indigenous branch of the New Age literature a la Castaneda posits, a mere psychological process of individuation, or dealing with ever vague "energies," but with spirits with volition.

The second prongue of the strategy was to go to Denmark to explore his roots. His first step in this path was to examine a national cultural landmark: The Little Mermaid. This is hardly surprising for anybody who has followed David's trajectory and his critical interest in the different syneric areas of Disney. In that first step David has compared the literary work with the Disneyfied cinematic version which marked the reemergence of that company with the arrival of Michael Eisner. His examination of the literary and cinematic versions synergize with his connection to the flint stone ax head and seem to shout at David: Go back! Go back where? Back to the First Nations of Jutland: Celts, Juts, Norse. Back to those who shared so many things with the First Nations who inhabit what Norse used to call Vatland before Columbus and Vespucci. Back to Jutland's First Nations who used to have a folktale of a sea urchin who wanted to be human and was turned by Andersen into a story of self-sacrifice. The difference between oral folktales and their literary versions are as distant as the latter are to the Disneyfied versions. Zipes (1995) points out how the oral folktale explained natural cycles and events, and the genre was subsumed into new literary genre in the seventeenth century. This shift violated the communal aspects of the folk tale and excluded the majority of the population who was illiterate, and also privileged aristocratic characters. It is the oral folk tale and the overall culture of the First Nations of Vatland that are echoed in Bakhtin. Going back doesn't mean leave the Harley, the laptop and the digital recorder and drop out. It means that spiritual practices from those First Nations must be articulated with the practices of our everyday lives in a very careful way that is respectful of the peoples and context in which those practices developed. It is easier to read Castaneda, hang out with a neotribe (Maffesoli, 2002), or pay a few hundred dollars for a weekend workshop about Lakota or Huichol shamanism than it is to fast alone with the fire and the spirits. Perhaps the trickiest issue is the articulation between politics and spirituality, as well as its theorization. Adorno's quote does not stand alone and theorists closer to David's position. Debord (1969) remarks:

The remains of religion and of the family (the principal relic of the heritage of class power) and the moral repression they assure, merge whenever the enjoyment of this world is affirmed--this world being nothing other than repressive pseudo-enjoyment. The smug acceptance of what exists can also merge with purely spectacular rebellion; this reflects the simple fact that dissatisfaction itself became a commodity as soon as economic abundance could extend production to the processing of such raw materials (NA).

An elder once told me "don't mix your tobacco with politics." That is, don't mess up your relationship with the Great Spirit and other Spirits that pity you by degrading them to play Western politics. Did First Nations mix them? They didn't have to because they were not separated in the first place. Spirituality was

not compartmentalized like it has been in the West, it was always imbricated with every other aspect of production and communal life. Living in a "second orality" we must be very careful how we put up Humpty-Dumpty together again and not end up with what the controversial Ward Churchill (1994) calls:

...ritual potluck is to debase all spiritual traditions, voiding their internal coherence and leaving nothing useably sacrosanct as a cultural anchor for the peoples who conceived and developed them, and who have consequently organized their societies around them (p. 213).

Hopi and Mexika prophecies talk about a time when the peoples of the four directions will come together and fuse in what the latter calls a Nahui Ollin (four movement). But there's a right way to do it, that's why the real teachings are absent from those weekend workshops and New Age bookstores. Tears cover my eyes as they do every time I read the last words by Kuauhtemok, the last Mexika Taotlani, as he was about to be executed by the Spanish invaders in 1521:

Our sun has gone and left us in darkness.
We know that it will rise again.
Once again it will come to illuminate us.
It will be with us in the mansion of death.
We will reunite valiantly.
We must shield and hide away those things in our hearts
we know are the treasures.
We will destroy our temples,
our places of meditation,
our houses of song and dance,
our ball courts,
our schools for our children,
our universities.
We will close the doors and leave the streets deserted.
We will stay hidden until our sun comes out.
Our homes will become our temples;
they will become our meditation places;
they will become our houses of song and dance,
our ceremonial ballcourts,
our schools,
our universities.
We will wait until our new sun comes.
Parents are obliged to teach the culture,

the man with his sons,
the woman with her daughters.
And they will tell the children of their children
of their children what our beloved culture has done.
They will pass on the lamp of our destiny and our traditions
which our ancestors, with love, have given to us.
Do not forget to tell your children,
that they may tell the children of their children of their children,
with proper respect.
Tell them how it was...
how it will be...how we will rise again...
how to gain strength
and how our culture will fulfill its great destiny
on our beloved Mother Anahuak.

Once I was crying as I read that message with my then pre-teen son, and he scolded me: "You must be strong!"

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COMMENTARY: Going Back: David Bøje's 'Wilda'

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Stranger

Jack Cohen has an interesting view of so-called *coincidences*. Recently, on a visit to Essex he recounted several examples of such events. He told me that sometimes coincidences happen “because the story calls for them”. Then, as if to illustrate his story a colleague began to tell how one day, reading the journal *Nature* as he was walking down a London street, he read “on one side there is a synagogue and on the other a post box”. My colleague looked up at this point and there on one side of the road was a post box and on the other a synagogue. “It was very strange” he commented. As this point, Jack Cohen smiled. “I can tell you something stranger”, he said, “I wrote that piece”.

New Mexico

And, so it is with David Boje's journey into his past. There are at least two links which connect me with his story. The first, and more personal one, relates to the excitement of the quest with which David began his trip to Europe in Spring 2005. The second, more abstract, connection is the fact that when he emailed me his piece for this journal I was in the middle of reading DH Lawrence's account of his trip to New Mexico in the 1920s. New Mexico is, of course, where David lives. Although Lawrence was much travelled and had spent time in Italy, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Australia it was his time in New Mexico which was to have a lasting effect on his life. In a posthumously published article he wrote, “I had no permanent feeling of religion till I came to New Mexico and penetrated into the old human race-experience there..... (and found) a dark sort of joy.... it is the religion which precedes the god-concept, and is therefore greater and deeper than any god-religion” (Lawrence, 1931). His recollections of his journey appear under the title *Mornings in Mexico* which was published in 1927.

Mornings in Middlesbrough

Another morning: cold and wet. It is the 25th February and I am standing on Thornaby railway station just outside Stockton on Tees waiting for David at the start of his visit. When he left home, the temperature in Las Cruces was upward of 23 degrees C. Here in Stockton the temperature is struggling to get above zero. It is a penetrating cold that reaches to the bone and I drive quickly back to the house to get warmed up. As I drive up over the River Tees the chemical works of Middlesbrough throw out an eerie yellow light. A fog moves over the river. We travel into a darker world. Back in Las Cruces, Grace Ann is ill and David is anxious, as are we, for news of her. It is as if he has already travelled back into an earlier, less optimistic time.

Rosehill House

The oldest parts of our cold, damp and draughty house have been on this site since at least 1600. David is staying in a room from about 1750. Over his bed is the protection of Our Lady of Guardaloupe, another echo of Mexico and its famous shrine, and also an echo of David's own Catholic past. Our Lady of Guardaloupe, *Ora Pro Nobis*. DH Lawrence says of the Mexican Indians that they "accept Jesus on the Cross amid all the rest of the wonders..... The brave comes home with a scalp. In the morning he goes to Mass. Two mysteries! The soul of man is the theatre in which every mystery is enacted. Jesus, Mary, the snake-dance, red blood on the knife: it is all the rippling of this untellable flood of creation, which, in a narrow sense, we call Nature", (Lawrence, [1927] 1986: 60). David is journeying towards his own mystery: a quest to recover his past. Here and now in England, it seems dark path to take. We are in the spaces that precede the story and which, at the same time, come after. There are some fragments and endings but, so far, no beginning. David is moving back towards his roots so perhaps we can start, "once upon a time".....

The Danelaw

In Northallerton market we buy a hat. Unneeded in arid New Mexico, here in the North East of England it is unthinkable to be without a hat in the winter. David says he is

shedding his American identity but from the curious looks he gets from people we meet he has not yet shed his American accent. He is a Boje: a misplaced Dane. Here in the north of England, it is some time since we thought of ourselves as Danes. Yet, we live in a part of England which, 1200 years ago, was under Danish administration: the so-called Danelaw. York, (Jorvik, Eboracum) is just 40 minutes away by car. The name recalling its own history and multiple identities: established by the Romans, settled by the Danes, conquered by the Normans. The names of many of our towns and cities date from this time.

Early the following week we make the long journey to Colchester where my husband Harro and I both work. David is to give a series of workshops and talks at the University of Essex. Colchester (with its Roman name Camulodunum) is the oldest recorded town in England and we are following a route south which is at least 2000 years old. In Colchester David goes to visit a large McDonalds with two undergraduate students. It seems that he is not to be allowed to discard his American identity that quickly. We talk about American cultural imperialism and I feel that I should add the USA to the list of conquerors.

Bøje at Lisegaarden

Then he leaves on the next leg of his journey to France but our stories are about to intersect again because we are both going to a workshop on Organisational Theatre in Copenhagen. Sure enough, David flies into Copenhagen and meets the rest of us under the clock at Central Station for our short journey up the coast to Lisegaarden where the workshop is being held. By now David is closing in on a European strand to his identity. He introduces himself now as “David Bøje” pronounced in the Danish way, “Bo – ye”. It is fascinating to watch this stripping away. He is stripping away his surfaces like the many layers of wallpaper that cover our landing walls: moving into a new place where the securities of the day-to-day no longer prevail. Now that he has written his reflections on these experiences, it seems very clear that this was much more than a search for his past it was also a spiritual journey.