

Boje
**Boje Feminism:
Parallel Storyability of Male Vietnam Veteran and
Female Sweatshop Body Traumas**

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ABSTRACT:

Boje feminism is an alternative to *Foucault feminism*. One difference is Foucault feminism is *discursability formation*, whereas Boje feminism is *storyability formation* of the body, its discipline, and the power/knowledge relationship. A second difference is where as Foucault Feminism is about micropolitics of power/knowledge, Boje Feminism is far wider focus on macropolitics, even global sociopolitics of late modern capitalism. This parallel storytelling develops the differentiation between collective memory groups (gender, race, socioeconomic, class, etc) construct out of direct experience, and what Hirsch (1999) calls 'postmemory,' such as the trauma children of survivors of Holocaust live with. My feminism enters into investigation of trauma events women endure in sweatshops is possible for me, because of its resonance with my own trauma as a soldier in the Vietnam War. I explore here why this is so for me.

This article is presented in left and right column, my column and her columns. After a bit of standard introduction. the columns are meant to intervibrate, to resonate, to interpenetrate, one another, as two voices, as many voices within me and her.

STANDARD 2 column INTRODUCTION

As storyteller Catherine Conant put it, "David Boje discussing feminism? Is that a little like Donald Rumsfeld discussing life as a Quaker?" Conant continues:

As I understand it a feminist is someone who believes that there should be political, economic and social equality for men and women. Even though I haven't seen you in more than a decade, I'm happy to confer upon you the title of feminist and all the benefits inherent, including still only earning \$.76 for every dollar a man earns. But here, just when I'm sending you kudos for your insights and courage I see where you say you saw the *Virginia Monologues*.....oh dear, I'm sorry, your Freudian slip is showing and you're out of the game... -- Catherine Conant

This is all about women's work in sweatshop. It is post-memory, because I have not been allowed in sweatshops, and

have only interviewed women about *their* experience. Still I now have a certain amount of sweatshop trauma. It is how I seek to understand the trauma in sweatshops.

Conant worked with me to cultivate my personal story using certain rules (Feb 13, she gave me this advice):

- 1) Know why I am telling you the story of my PTSD
- 2) Know what the story means to me, so that I can tell it with balanced counterstories.
- 3) Understand the catalytic moment of my transformation, where I go on a new life adventure because as the bottom falls out of my life, I discover the macropower of exploitation.
- 4) Tell it in a way the personal respect for the public, so they do not want to rescue me the victim of war tragedy, but instead think reflectively of their own personal story.
- 5) Find my voice in the process of preparing my personal story for public telling.
- 6) Out of the whole ghastly horror of war and sweatshop collective memory and

postmemory story the redemptive quality, the moment where I dedicated myself to stop sending any young man or woman to war.

- 7) As I make myself vulnerable, and share a personal story that moves me, be a little kinder to the boy whose life was changes forever by Vietnam, who left as a soldier, and came back as a peace activist, and started becoming feminist.

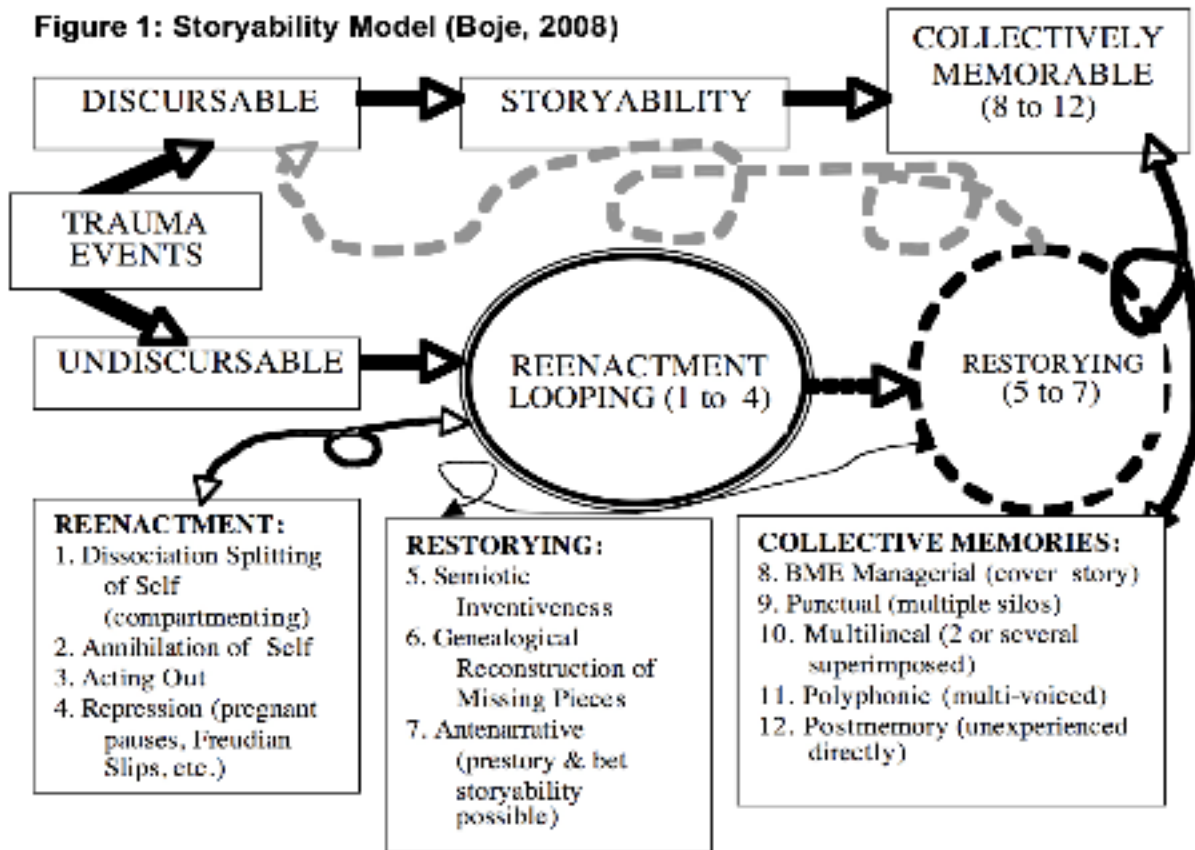
Sweatshop Feminism

Why am I telling you stories of women in sweatshops of Vietnam, China, and Mexico? I have only postmemory of women's work in sweatshop. It is post-memory, because I have not been allowed in sweatshops, and have only interviewed women about *their* experience. Still I now have a certain amount of sweatshop trauma. It is how I seek to understand the trauma in

sweatshops.

In my twenty years of studies of sweatshop feminism, the woman's body is an effect of modernist disciplinary power, a strategy that oppresses the female body, and often child's body, especially in the garment and sneek industry, in a pathological regulation, control, and discipline that is sadomasochistic corporeal reality. I have a feminist view of sweatshops. I am investigating events women (and men) in sweatshops recount that I have never experienced. I do not count a factory tour, even if Nike or Wal-Mart granted me access, as a direct experience. I would have to be a woman, work in the factories as a woman, and experience the oppression and resistance to have it count as direct experience. Mine is not direct collective memory. Perhaps a model will help.

Figure 1: Storyability Model (Boje, 2008)



According to *storyability theory* not every storyable into experience. event in complexity or in life trauma is

Boje

Reenactment Looping I argue that reenactment and storyability sensemaking are quite different. I reenact Vietnam events, but I don't have till now a storyable experience.

In what I call 'reenactment looping' trauma victims dissociate (#1 in Figure 1) from the trauma-event by splitting of the self to compartmentalize, annihilates the self (#2), acts out (#3, such as reliving past events of trauma, triggered by resonance in the presence), and that repression (#4) of the events can leak into discourse in pregnant pauses, Freudian slips (as the unconscious struggles to break into consciousness).

Research into Holocaust, genocide, war, rape, child abuse, accident, loss of loved ones, and other severe trauma events suggests that trauma is initially just reenactment without storyability into experience or memory (Bal, 1999; Hirsch, 1999).

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) have a couple of types of memory types that extend Halbwachs' theory.

1. Punctual (#9) is also managerialist in its processes, with several center points connecting to social units, such as multiple silos extending from headquarters to branches in other places (Linda Mustachio Adoriso & I are studying this in Wells Fargo bank's punctual collective memory).

2. In multilineal (#10) two or more collective memories co-exist in the same social unit (such as in bank merger or acquisition).

3. The more complex case is more polyphonic collective memory (#11) where the collective memories are fully embodied by different actors (persons & their groups), and these interact to negotiate collective storyability, and the restorying, as well as antenarrating possibilities.

They were not all that polyphonic about collective memory in Vietnam.

Finally, in trauma research, there is what Hirsch (1999) terms 'postmemory' (#12).

Postmemory is definable as collective memory that was never directly experienced by the person having the memory. For example, going to work and hearing a founder's story, or historical saga, to which you never had any direct participation with the events.

Or, in the case of trauma, when you study War trauma, if you were not in a war zone, you don't have experience. You can hear about it, but it's not the same thing.

Events only become experience when one willfully stories them into experience. I theorize that women in sweatshops of Vietnam, China, Mexico and elsewhere are reenacting trauma events, and only in a few cases have they rendered them willfully into a story that reshapes their memory.

Boje feminism is a theory of unstoryability when postmemory of trauma of another, becomes the experience one has never had, but is equally traumatic. Foucault feminism focuses on female and male oppression being the product of patriarchal discourse that is historically situated for many millennia. Las Vegas, for example is male obsession with technologies of female body nudity, in wider macropower selling gambling, drinking, meals, and hotel rooms. This essay is not about that.

Bojean feminism is defined as an inquiry into wider antenarrative and narrative formations of power/knowledge, sex/desire and sadomasochistic of global socioeconomy and genealogy of late modern global capitalism. Bojean feminism differentiates itself from Foucault feminism (McNay, 1992: 25) is "formulated around the notion of discursive practice rather than around an ideology/material distinction."

In Marxism, ideology and class differences constitute the pre-existent truth. But in Foucault feminism it is the discursive

interplay of power and knowledge that is the archaeological or genealogical discovery of discursive operations in micropower of organizations, be they prisons, hospitals, universities, state, or business.

For Marxists, and Critical Theorists, oppression of the body, is economically driven, not a matter of patriarchal structure or discursive formation (with some exceptions such as Culture Industry work in 2nd phase CT, and Fromm's psychoanalytic work).

I can only hope that my exploration of Vietnam War PTSD is a way women coming out of sweatshop experience, can heal their own suffering. Conant (2007 Feb email, asks, "Do the stories of women in Southeast Asia speak to you ----- because you may have left much of your boyhood innocence there, or is there another reason?" Answer: the stories speak to me, because they are storyable about trauma, and I just reenact trauma without storyability. Yes, I lost boyhood innocence, as I watched the body bags stack up on the airfield, a short way from my barracks.

As Consant (Feb 2007 email) reminds me:

Both you and Ms. Lap do share a common experience, living (albeit in different times and circumstances) in a country that was torn by war, strife,

Boje's Story:

I stepped off the TWA flight into the oven of Vietnam. That night lizards crawled my bed. I coned a job as company clerk in Saigon (Ho Chi Ming City). I did payroll, personnel scheduling, like 'Radar' in the movie, M*A*S*H. I worked my workaholic pace for 6 months becoming Sergeant Boje.

I exhausted my body and mind, and broke down. Barracks buddies invited me out for a pizza. "Let's stop here, to pick up something. Come along!" one said. In the hospital room, they tackled me, bent me over, pulled down my pants, and a nurse shoved a needle, seemed a foot long, and I was out for several days.

corruption and exploitation. However, your story predates hers and hers is of a world that you cannot possibly know except through the telling of her story from which you can only extract that which fits your need to understand your own story of being in Vietnam. So I guess you could say that your stories are both apples, but two very distinct varieties with differing flavors, sizes, shapes and colors. One is not more delicious than the other, but they are not the same.

Please read the article in the style of Derrida's (1972) *Tympan*, with resonances and entanglements in Freudian Slips, and intertextual answering from the Left column (Vietnam War Story) and Right column (Sweatshop Story).

From here on out, Please read the article in style of Derrida's (1972) *Tympan*, with resonances and entanglements in Freudian Slips, and intertextual answering from the Left column (Vietnam War Story) and Right column (Sweatshop Story).

Nguyen Thi Lap's Story:

At right, I share stories that have become postmemory trauma for me. IThis one is about a Vietnamese woman, Nguyen Thi Lap:

The interview that follows is with Nguyen Thi Lap. It was conducted and translated by Mr. Thuyen Nguyen, Vietnamese/ American businessperson, and founder of *Vietnam Labor Watch*. Ms. Lap is a worker in a *House of Terror* (sweatshop factory) called Sam Yang, located in Cu Chi district of Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon). As you shall see, the interview in 2001 was not Ms. Lap's only interview.

Boje

BOJE: I have Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder (PTSD). I woke up more terrified than I ever recall. In beds around me were soldiers, with missing arms or legs, or bandaged heads. "When do I see the doctor?" I kept asking. None came. I tried to act sane, followed the sleep, keep quiet, and eat routines. After several days, a doctor appeared. "How are you feeling Sergeant Boje?"

"I'm ready to go back to work," I replied. And I was released. Back at work, I decided that the office needed to work fewer hours. Ms Cang (Vietnamese secretary) and I did a work slowdown. We worked for this Major, who was a rageaholic and super heavyweight lifter. He'd scream, "Cang get in here **now!**" and she would run out from her office, to hand him the phone ringing on his desk. If I was not typing, he'd thump the back of my head. So I typed, a million times, "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country!"

One day, when the power was out, I stopped working, so did Ms. Cang. Result: I was taken on another ride, another shot, several more days of forced sleep.

Inter-viewer. Does an interviewer inter-view? How many views are inter-viewed?

BOJE: Demand more pay, better hours. This time, no more company clerk job. "Choose any other," said the Major's replacement, a Colonel. "**Sir, I choose the job of Golf Pro!**" I replied.

LAP: She was interviewed by ESPN in Feb 1998, which is an event that led two months hence to her demotion and punishment. After a series of punishments, she became ill, tried to keep working under quite demoralizing conditions, and finally had no choice but to quit Sam Yang factory in May 1998 (numbers to left are from tape counter)

0 Lap Today I want to re-tell my experience at the Sam Yang Company (Translator's Note: shoe factory for Nike Corporation in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam). I started in October 1995.

Inter-viewer Please tell us your name?

LAP: My name is Nguyen Thi Lap., I worked for Sam Yang company, employee number 11204.

Me in 1969:



GOLF PRO SHOP
DAVID MICHAEL BOJE,
Golf pro in Vietnam
1968-1969

Vitnam Factory



LAP: I joined the company in October 1995. In March 1996, I was promoted to section leader of Sewing Line No: 15. At the time, the company only has 15 sewing line. I was the leader for the sewing line number 15. Since then, I have contributed a lot to the company. I was given bonuses and awards.

David Boje - Vietnam War Vet:

As Golf Pro, I wore a name badge "GOLF PROSHOP DAVID M. BOJE, NCOIC."

BOJE: Oh I have stories, but they dance around the repressed events. For example, I can tell you that I was a golf pro who never played golf. I read a book the size of phone book by Arnold Palmer. When generals came for their green fees, they saw the Golf Pro nameplate. They would ask, "how to correct by hook?" I would reply, from memory, "No problem sir. Just interlock your fingers like this. Take the club, back of the head, and slowly bring it into position behind the ball. Pull back and let her go." That's how I knew I could teach. After all, what is a professor, but someone who instructs using someone else's knowledge?

175 For example, when the company started a program to encourage people to finish their quota faster, I was ranked the Number 1 worker for the year. I was given \$7 Million Dong (Translator Note: \$530 USD)

1150 The personnel manager Tran told me that if I don't want to work in different jobs, then I should quit But I did not want to quit and did not sign the paper that day. Two days later they keep punishing cruelly me to the point when I cannot take it any more. So I signed the paper to quit.

1175 Do you still wants to work at that place? Did they force you to quit?

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<http://cbae.nmsu.edu/~dboje/nike/vietnam.html>

Boje

BOJE: The Army is surreal. For example, then the U.S. military built and Olympic size pool, with champion diving boards and more lanes than the 405 Freeday in LA, they made a rule that no Vietnamese could use the pool. Of course, Koreans could use it, since they were mean. I pulled some lifeguard duty once in a while. And how do you tell the difference between a Vietnamese and a Korean, when they're standing there in their bathing trunks?

Beside, if we were there to train and help the South Vietnamese, why keep them out of the pool? I hate prejudice! General Westmoreland came to the opening of the new pool. OK, this is several collective memories in interplay (U.S. soldiers, Koreans, Vietnamese). Lot of times, we just let anyone with a bathing suit in that pool

My grandfather was a WWI soldier, my dad fought in Philippines in WWII, and then in the Korea War. It's in my blood. But Vietnam was not an honorable war. Indeed it was not declared a war at all, some kind of insurgency is what I was told.

Let tell you absurd. In our barracks was a guy with a Luger, his own jeep, and he got calls in the middle of night. He'd write something in his notebook, and off he'd go. He was a biker looking dude, taller and beefier than the rest of us. So I got asked to find you what he does. "Jerry, mind if I ask what it is you do?" "Why you wanna know?" "Just curious," I says. "Well, when the guys at the DMZ cannot get parts for their cannons, or cannot get a jeep, or other part through the supply requisitions route, I take their order and fill it." "Why?" I asked."Lot of times they put a requisition for a machine guy part, or some fencing, and they get sent something else like, toilet paper."

LAP: 273 When I became sick, I went to the clinic. The doctor said that I have fever of 37 degree C..

On the Sunday the 29th while working overtime, I was working very hard and being sick at the same time, so I got a really bad headache. So I put my hands on my head. The manager then hit me in the arm. After the manager hits me, I could not work so I went to the nurse to take the rest of day off. I took another day off the Monday. When I came back on Tuesday, the personnel manager Tran said that section leader cannot take sick day, and demoted me to become a sewer. But the plant manager did not let me sew. Some day they made me cut threads, some day they made me do pressing (?) and continued to move me around from one job to another.

1175 Do you still wants to work at that place? Did they force you to quit?

219 Today I want to talk about my current problem with the company, how it treated me, how the Korean manager treated me. I went to work sick one day. I asked for a sick leave. The manager told me that as a section leader I cannot take sick day. I know my responsibility as a section leader is to get the section to complete the quota, but there were just too much over time. In Feb & Mar (1998), I worked 113 hours of overtime. For several weeks in a row, I worked over 18 hours of overtime. In one month, I worked two Sundays overtime in a row.. (no day off for 3 weeks)

So I filed a complaint with the union and asked the union resolve the conflict. During the time while waiting for the union's action, they make me do very menial work.

BOJE: "So what to you do, exactly?" I asked. "Say they want a jeep, I go to the supply depot, break in, stencil the right numbers on it, fill it with whatever else they need, and drive it to the DMZ. I get a helicopter ride back." In return Jerry was getting into a special cooks' school. Go figure. That's a story I have told often. Its not really a reenactment.

Reenactment, is like when I hit the ground when a car backfires. Take me to a movie, I'm the one that jumps out of seat when I'm startled

When I got out of the hospital the 2nd time, I wanted to be sure my brain still worked. So I started reading a book a day, if it was something like History of the Beatles. A philosophy book took two days. I mean all I had to do was pass out green fees at 8 AM till 8:30, and take them back in, about 3PM or so. So I read books.

I noticed something. The officers ate different food than the rest of us. We ate 'shit on a shingle' (gravy with red lumps in it, over some kind bread). The officers ate steak. So I started to think. I had run personnel and most of the administration for a 15 companies organization, with about 35 full time and 85 part-time military, and Over 120 Vietnam employees.

There was even a U.S. ambassador's daughter that got hired. She was gorgeous, with blond hair, blue eyes, in her mid-twenties. What was she doing there? Beats me. Diplomatic privilege I guess. Anyway, when she got hired to work in our office, with Cang and I, all of a sudden the commander, and the top sergeant began to spend more time in the office. That meant, they wanted to actually manage things. That meant, I had to give them back things I was managing. For six months, while I was company clerk the first lieutenant (a ROTC, pronounced *Rot-See*) played with the service club ladies trying, but never scoring. The company commander lifted weights in the gym. Oh get this, he did not like blacks.

LAP: Let me tell you, I was a section leader overseeing 50 workers. Why do they have to punish me this way? Why don't they recognize my past contribution to the company?

There were times they make me mop the floor on the second floor. Because I was a section leader, I am too ashamed to carry a bucket of water and so I asked a friend to take the bucket up for me

451 While I was mopping the floor, I was crying.

458 Lap starts to cry [IN THE INTERVIEW!]

463 Inter-viewer Do you think the treatment was related to the interview (translator note: with ESPN)?

479 Lap When the union asked me to do the interview,... right before I did the interview, the manager told me that since I'm an employee of this company I should said nice thing about the company, that the company is currently facing problems. After the interview, the manager (Bak) called me up and asked me what I told the reporter. I told her that I only talked about wages. She asked me if I told the reporter whether the company still beats workers. As soon as she questioned me, she asked me to leave.

On April 2, 1998 ESPN's "Outside the Lines" ran an hour-long show on sweatshop abuses in Vietnam to coincide with their coverage of the Olympic Games.

Boje

BOJE: Can you believe it? So he transferred the guy who ran the craftshop and ran it exceptionally well to the gym to pass out jock straps. Guy was an E-5 (sergeant), like me. What a waste.

Restorying my experience, I can begin to see that when the blonde got hired, the place went to hell, at least for me. I remember walking with her when I came back from the hospital. "Oh Dave, we were all so worried about you." I think she was sincere, who knows. I was not hitting on her, and she seemed to hold her own against those that were.

The first sergeant (highest in rank), he had a Vietnamese girl on the side, and half-ownership in a bar downtown. So he did not come around much, till his girl got pregnant and was in the hospital.

I liked my job as company clerk. I was drafted. I had no skills. Could not even type. So naturally the Army made me a typist. Well there's more to that story. I was doing so well on their tests, I was almost put into officer school. I put down on one of them, that I knew math. I knew some, went to class a (very) few times in what passed for high school. But I also held the school record (still stands) for most absences (over 80) and lateness (like everyday) and still graduated.

So here was the Army giving me responsibilities. Not that I need more. I was married, with a daughter born six months into the tour. I talked to the sergeant about pregnancy of my wife and his mistress. I think that is why the shit hit the fan. Or maybe it was officers wanting to show off to the blonde. Or was it just that I burned out. It depends how you story it, doesn't it?

I did not stop being creative when I went from company clerk to Golf Pro. I build a driving range, by swapping green fees for some netting.

LAP:

.530 After the interview, I was asked to lead another sewing line in a different plant. But the people the company staffed the line were not experienced sewers and they were trainees.

LAP: I told the manager that without experienced sewers, it's going to be hard to get the quota done. The manager told me that it would take time for people to gain experience. I told the manager that it would be hard for me to complete my quota with only trainees. The manager assured me that she understood the situation.

618 So it's hard for me to understand where I did not do a good job, I don't know how I could not do anything wrong as a section leader. I know that the company was watching me. They have people followed me around. The next person who supervised that same line, the one with trainees and the worst sewers did the same amount as I did. The line was staffed with only 40 sewers not 50, and most of the sewers are not experienced. They were from other sections: pressing, gluing and were definitely not sewers.

NOTE ABOUT THE INTERVIEW: Ms. Lap's story reconstructed by me and by others, and her own personal experience in story, after having left Nike's employment, being the victim not only of the House of Terror, but the terrorizing media, investigative journalist, documentary film/TV producers, and by a gaggle or academic and on-academic activists --- gives my own postmemory construction more weight.

BOJE: In fact, you ever watch that movie "Good Morning Vietnam!" I knew that guy, in exchange for greenfees (so he could sleep in, instead of line up), I got him to cover my golf tournaments and advertise the driving range on his radio show. He invited me to parties that the officers held.

Get this! They send a bomber to Hawaii, to load up lava rocks, palm leaves, and pigs. They draft the Hawaiian sergeants assigned around Saigon to dig a fire pit, get the lava rocks nice and hot, wrap pigs, and various vegetables in burlap, cover it over with palm leaves, and viola, party time.

I should say something nice about the Army. They paid for my education. I decided to go to college when I got stateside. America felt guilt for killing so many young men and women. So it was a great GI set of benefits. Just as I got my BA, they funded MBA fully. The year I got all but finished with that, they started funding the Ph.D. Still took out 40K in loans, but what the heck. Thanks to the Army I was to first one in my family tree who went to college, let alone graduate, and first one to get a Ph.D., as well.

I learned I could lead.

When I reflect on my own Vietnam trauma I am still unable to story much of it willfully. I reenact it. I have seen other men reenact their Vietnam trauma. I was teaching a class in organization behavior at UCLA, about 1980. I was doing an experiential exercise on storying and assertiveness. I ask students to think of an experience that has a subjective level of discomfort, that was about mid-level (not mild, not the worst). A young man did so, and wrote down his experience in a short paragraph (which I said I would not read). Everyone did the same. Out of nowhere, I see desks flying, hurled across the classroom, smashing into the wall. "What is going on?"

BACK TO THE LAP INTERVIEW

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LAP: So I signed the paper to quit.

1175 Do you still want to work at that place? Did they force you to quit?

1230 I just want my job as a sewer. I don't want them to punish me by making do menial works, switching me to different jobs. My hand were getting swollen from repairing the shoes and their punishment. So I asked the union to resolve the problem.

1254 [Lap is crying]

1268 (while crying) It's not like I did not work hard for the company. It's not like I just work and get my monthly paycheck. I have accomplished a lot as an employee there. I started in October and was promoted to section leader in March. I spent many days working overtime.

1315 On Sunday I was sick. On Monday I took the day off. Even though I was not well, I went back to work on Tuesday because I am afraid of losing my job. As soon as I entered the plant, the manager asked me "why I took the day off?". I told the manager that I was sick. He yelled at me and cursed at me, and said that he does not need me as a section leader. Then he made me sitting down to sew.

Boje

BOJE: I asked as I escorted the chair-hurler from the room, into the hallway, where we could be along. He says, "I was thinking of an event in Vietnam, when I was in the foxhole, and our position was being overrun." I told him, "OK take a few deep breaths. Calm it down.

I asked for a story of something mid-range. It's a class exercise not the battlefield." Now years latter Bal's theory of trauma types as reenactment, and Hirsh's concept of postmemory, gives me insight. The chair-hurler was doing reenactment, and not doing storytelling. He had not yet been able to story his trauma.

The Vietnamese conscripted soldiers. It was not like the draft. More like, you got pulled off your bicycle, if you looked old enough to fight. I saw them training sometimes. Hit the recruits in the back and on their bare legs with long metal rods. There was a lot of desperation in that. In my bootcamp, we got kicked around some, but metal rods, no way.

Ms. Lap worked in Ho Chi Minh City, the new name for Saigon, where I also worked, but not in the same decade. Our work is separated by several *alterity differences*:

1. Temporally, our time in the same city is separated by 30 years
2. Our gender gap is insurmountable.
3. She is Vietnamese and I come from the invading country, now a sweatshop-contracting country
4. I am much older, maybe almost twice her age
5. I live in economic privilege, but this was not always the case

BOJE: OK, I've told you a few stories, and some reenactments. I know why I am telling you the story. I think that storying is different than discursability. In storying there is willful reshaping of memory. I know what the story means to me, and I told some counterstories, to be appreciative.

LAP: 1590

The workers are mainly concerned with wages. We want to have the new contract to be based on floating US dollar rate and not on a fixed rate. In the previous contract, the wages was pegged to the US dollar on fixed rate and the dollar went up and we lost a lot of money. That contract was signed in 1997.

1629 In 1997, the company made every worker signed the contract individually and we were told to sign the contract or sign a letter or resignation. After many workers signed the contract, we realized what happened and went on a strike. The contract was eventually approved by the union but it was not done under fair conditions, it was done under a threatening condition.

MARX'S HOUSE OF TERROR TRAUMA

The second trauma is from the acts of random violence and humiliation. Marx (1867) describes how in the UK, the solution to poverty was imagined to be rounding up all the poor, and putting them into workhouses called 'Houses of Terror' which Marx says is the factory, the 'sweating' shop (or sweatshop) that he wrote about.

BOJE: When I got stateside, I served a few months at Fort Dix (NJ), then took an early out and enrolled in Burlington County College. With an early out, you get out four months early to attend college, under the GI bill. I got some money for books, and the tuition was paid. I worked weekends, breaks, and summers, but got through. I was initially just into business to take over my dad's multiple corporations. But by the time I was ready to graduate with a bachelor's he had lost them all, one worth well over a million. So I went on to get master and Ph.D.

I understand that the catalytic moment was waking up in that hospital and figuring out, you know what, the enemy is not the Vietnamese people. The greatest prejudice was in the general staff. The once's like the Good Morning Vietnam guy, and the protestors at home, keeping young men out of the death pit, they had it right. Somehow I became not only activist but feminist.

The feminist transition would take decades. I was ready to be a peace activist immediately. Yes, the bottom fell out, but I had resources. I could pick up the pieces, and get on with it. And I now saw that the macropower issues of exploitation were where the resistance needs to be placed.

I've reflected on my personal story. Don't rescue me. I want to work this through, come out of the repression and dissociation. I want to find my voice as activist and writer. I'm ready for the public telling. You bet.

War is a ghastly horror. Vietnam was not the war to end all wars. I hit the streets to protest the Afghanistan, the Iraq war, and I hear we're headed for Iran. The whole ghastly horror just keeps repeating itself.

I found something important in the peace movement. The rage of war is not the way to win peace. After getting flipped off enough times, I let it get to me, and had to take a break. A peaceful heart is needed in the peace movement. Sounds simple. Try it.

MARX HOUSE OF TERROR: The random acts of violence that the workers experience in the 1990s and that still seems to continue is random acts of physical abuse (most famous is women slapped about the face with a Nike sneaker by their supervisor), sexual abuse (rape is quite frequent), verbal abuse (names derogatory to women are quite common practice). These acts of violence in the House of Terror, the sweatshop are a form of trauma. Again, Marx has no direct experience of House of Terror trauma, he is engaging postmemory.

It turns out very few workers experiencing these two traumas can tell their story, can compose story, while they are still embedded in performativity and the 'House of Terror' trauma. The reason for this is stated in a book by Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Pspitzer (1999) called *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*. The assemblage of articles is mainly about Holocaust trauma, its unstoryability into memory. Until trauma is storyable, the person reenacts the trauma, but has not mastered it in story to be able to make sense of it, to willfully control it, and to shape it into their collective memory (collective in that it is from the group experience).

Boje

BOJE: Redemptive quality. It's no accident that I look at macro issues of global sweatshop oppression.

When Ms. Luc's story came my way in 1996. It was like a strange attractor in complexity theory. I was hooked. She was Vietnamese. She probably worked in the barracks or supply buildings I was in. I began a war on sweatshops. Took me a decade before I got the point. Don't make war to gain peace. As feminist I want to do something to help. But the problems are global. I focus on deconstructing the ads, the rhetoric, the stories told by corporations.

To keep myself peaceful, I make myself vulnerable, when I tell my personal tales. I share a personal story that moves me. When it doesn't move me anymore, I stop telling it. Actually, I story partly, and reenact bits partly, trying to investigate, tease out the repression. That's why I prefer impromptu, improvisation, here and there, so I can see what shows up. I dig out the repression and dissociation a bit at a time. It's amazing to me, that each time there is more, and maybe its just endless.

1996, I was still wearing Nike shoes. Great style, real comfortable. I began teaching a critical management class to MBAs. Decided to start investigating stories I was hearing about Vietnam. I was amazed at the militaristic way the Nike contract factories owned by the Taiwanese and Koreans were being run. I thought about this, perhaps the U.S. military in Vietnam trained most of the ones using that military technique, but now on young women.

When I started the research there were lots of stories about child labor, women slapped, lots of stories about piles of lady fingers, from running machines all day without rest or safety gear, and getting them stitched off.

MARX HOUSE OF TERROR: If this is true of Holocaust, rape, child abuse, and other extreme trauma victims it could also be the situation faced by sweatshop workers.

There are two implications. First, when corporate sponsored monitors such as Accounting firms or the Fair Labor Association (FLA) send in a monitor to interview women workers (I saw women because garment and shoe production is 85% women's work) --- those women are not yet able to disengage, attain some distance, and tell their story. They can only reenact the trauma, not story it. In the recall of trauma, instead of storying, there are two results. One is repression, to drive out the trauma from consciousness (it is called ellipsis, the omission of important elements in narrating experience). Second is dissociation, which "doubles the strand of the narrative series of events by splitting of a sideline" (Bal, 1999: ix; see also Bal, 1985).

Dissociation is also called *paralepsis* (disrupting the follow of narrative that shapes memory of experience). In dissociation, its as if one stories a pseudo story that splits off as a side line or cover story and the trauma is put into a separate part of the brain, where when it is recalled it is only reenacted, and remains not yet storyable. That means in repression the reenactment is dramatic in a Freudian slip (or pregnant pause or gaffe), and in dissociation the trauma is not healed, since it reenacts by is not storyable by the person.

BOJE: All that marching to and from meals, all that military rule. Seemed like a worthy project for a Vietnam veteran to engage. Living in New Mexico, I recalled the heat of the sun in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, I got a day off. So I put on some shorts, and grabbed a few beers and sat outside. Big mistake. I had major burns, and the skin was peeled to the flexh. I could not imagine anyone being so inhumane as to sun-dry employees in the Vietnam sun.

I started investigations, recruited colleagues to write articles, sought out activists around the world. I wanted to see what could be done.

When I talked about the global sweatshop epidemic, students in 1996 through 1998 did not care much. A few did. For most, it was about Asian women, or women in Mexico, who were from the villages. Shop at NikeTown and Wal-Mart, what did sweatshop exploitation matter to most college students? Not much. Students would carp, "I have a right to shop at Wal-Mart!" Sure shop away.

That changed with Kukdong. New Mexico State is close to Mexico. 42% of our students are Hispanic. Others have grown up with Hispanic females, and they did not like what they ere hearing about Kukdong. Most did not care. But, a sizeable portion did care. As I got into it, I decided to go to see first-hand, to stop playing in second-hand, postmemory work. I wanted first-hand experience of sweatshops. I wanted to see first hand if women were being treated with such disrespect.

Believe me I know that there's a lot worse in store for women than sweatshops. But, there was something about helping Asian women, if I could, lend a helping hand, then that was what I wanted to do.

LAP: What is heroic about Lap is coming through her trauma reenactment to be able to story it, to will it into a shape that does not torture her. She is still crying about the events, but she is able to sort up which events to focus upon, which to emphasize.

This is what makes Ms Nguyen Thi Lap's storytelling so remarkable. She has attained enough distance to deal with repression and dissociation. She is telling a sympathetic Vietnamese-American business person her story. He flew to Vietnam, and did his own investigation. It impacted me.

Nguyen Thi Lap had her first 15 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 scene speaks directly to the issue of violence trauma in the House of Terror, the factory. The story was reauthored March 29, 1997 in a *Vietnam Labor Watch Report*, a 16-day fact finding tour of Vietnam factories, that 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, 1997).

Boje

BOJE: There came a point where I became as interested in the plight of all women in sweatshops, as I was in the Vietnam sweatshops.

I think I broke through my own reenactment of Vietnam post-traumatic stress disorder, in 2001. It seems to be a time of intense Nike writing activity. I decided to actually go to a sweatshop, to interview women directly. I traveled with my wife Grace Ann and good friend Miguel Alcantara-Carrillo to Mexico to interview women workers (Boje, Rosile, & Alcantara-Carrillo, 2001).

Kukdong is one of 300 Korean owned maquiladora factories. Working women who were brutalized on January 12th, 2001 in the Kukdong Gauntlet were kept away from the media for about 15 days.

A nightmare I keep reliving called the gauntlet. A gauntlet is two parallel lines of men swinging clubs and shields, through which the panicked women must run to achieve their exit from the factory. The gauntlet was organized and administered on the evening of January 12th. As the women negotiated and tried to set up their own independent union (SITEKIM, finally named SITEMEX) they were confronted with the violence and force of not only the Police in riot gear, but a goon squad of FROC-CROC state union men.

Writing now, in 2007 I am using the concepts of postmemory, collective memory, ellipsis, paralipsis, and living story that I did not have in 2001. I was just wrestling in 2001 with antenarrative. After 2001, I wrote few pieces about Nike, Reebok, and the other sweatshop contracting corporations. However, I have begun to write of it again. I stopped writing about women in sweatshops because it was just too dark, depressing, hitting too close to home. Now I am writing differently. I think this is because I am not, as much, filtering the writing through Vietnam reenactment. But I am not sure of this.

LAP CHRONOLOGY:

Table 2: Time Line for Lap Nguyen and Nike and all the interviewers: What is the Answerability here?

For complete time line of events See Nike In The News; For items relevant to Nike's Stock Prices, see Nike stock stories. See year by year Nike chronology.

1995 - October - Nguyen Thi Lap starts working for Sam Yang (Korean owned) sneaker factory in Ku Chi, Vietnam. Her employee number is 11204. March, 1996 she was promoted to section (team) leader of sewing line number 15.

1996 - March 31 - The headline story in The Vietnam Worker newspaper on March 31, 1996 proclaimed, "Foreign Technician Strikes 15 Vietnamese Workers." The same newspaper, on April 1, 1996, proclaimed: At Sam Yang Company, Cu Chi District, Ho Chi Minh City, Korean Technical Employee Strikes Many Vietnamese Female Workers. It went on to say that immediately after the incident took place, 970 workers on strike to protest the mistreatment of their fellow workers (See Vietnam Labor Watch Report). **That incident occurred on March 8, International Women's Day** - when most companies in Vietnam give women workers flowers.

1996 - October 17 - CBS News 48 Hours transcript, October 17, 1996. CBS News. (c) MCMXCVI, CBS, Inc. Transcript of Roberta Baskins on site visit to Nike in Vietnam This was the first interview with Nguyen Thi Lap a team leader in Nike's Sam Yang (Korean owned) sneaker factory in Ku Chi, Vietnam.

BOJE: There is a new area I am exploring called 'cover story.' A cover story is a kind of paralipsis, but instead of fitted to a trauma victim of violence, I am retrofitting it to the corporation. It is a spin-off storyline, one told to cover over some scandal, to spin it in a way of damage control. I find my own career quite alarming. I once was a corporate advocate, defending the free enterprise system against all critics. I recall doing this throughout college, until I became concerned with oppression. Bob Dennehy remembers the textbook we wrote, how full it was of concern over oppression, the cover of the book had a huge pyramid, crushing down on workers (Boje, & Dennehy, 1991). it was during that time, I began to questing the cover story of corporations, looking at greenwashing, and phallogocentrism, and taking feminism very seriously. It was in 1996 with my move to New Mexico State University, that I began to hear stories about how Vietnamese women were treated in sweatshops contracting to Nike and to Disney. It got me into a spiral, a swirl of currents crisscrossing between my Vietnam experience, and the experience of women in Vietnam. It expanded into concern for women in sweatshops in UK during Marx's time, then into Mexico, where I could see and hear for myself, whether I had been embellishing my storytelling about corporations.

LAP:

o Nguyen Thi Lap's Her basic wage, even as a sewing team leader, still doesn't amount to the minimum wage, \$42 a month for working six days a week. Lap puts in more overtime than the annual Vietnam legal limit of 200 hours.

o Lap " and 14 other team leaders were singled out and punished by their Korean supervisor, Madame Baeck, seen here sitting at a table with the Nike shoe she used to hit the women. It was in retaliation for some poor sewing. " Two were later sent to the hospital (Nguyen, Vietnam Labor Watch Report March 29, 1997). Madame Baeck was convicted, but was allowed to leave the country after the incident, despite conviction (source).

1997, March 29 Vietnam Labor Watch Report is released that includes study of the Sam Yang factory.

1997, March and April, former Ambassador Andrew Young makes a whistle stop tour of 12 Nike factories, in China, Indonesia, and Vietnam. One of the factories toured, was Sam Yang, and one of the photos in Young's album, is the women who were slapped, which would include Lap (See Good Works International Report, note photo link is being mysteriously diverted).

1998 - April 2, ESPN's "Outside the Lines" ran an hour-long show on Nike and Reebok sweatshop abuses in Vietnam (Sweatshop Watch). This was based on ESPN's visit to Vietnam factories in February, 1998 (See Globe Project, Vietnam).

Boje

BOJE:

Boje is Anti-Corporate I told you this is what deans and colleagues say about me. In my new rendition of cover story theory I put it this way. Corporations experience trauma (quite the mild form) when immersed in scandal. They formulate cover story, which is in part the strategy story (logo, motto, plot, mission, vision, & founding story). That is where the larger-than-life monumentalism occurs. The CEO, the dead founders become larger-than-life, forming what we call the ghosts of dead leaders (Boje & Rhodes, 2005 a, b). The dead CEOs and a few lives one constitute for the employees, and sometimes the customers, a postmemory. But, there is a parceling out of what is nat storyable, not speakable, all the goings on in the contract world of sweatshop capitalism. I don't mean to sound anti-corporate. I just retain the trauma of my own welfare experience, my time in the Army in Vietnam, being dismissed by UCLA (untenured is the word), which is not a corporation, but universities are being corporatized. Add to this list being beheaded as President of International academy of Business Disciplines (not a corporation, but its all they talk about). I need to mourn all of this before I can overcome my anti-corporateness.

Why get anti-corporate over stories of women sweatshop workers? i think it fits with a pattern of trying to support the corporate cover story, trying to celebrate larger-than-life entrepreneurs (easy to do my dad is one). If I don't deal with my anti-corporate feelings I won't heal my experience of sweatshops, and what organizations do as well to me, and keep doing to workers. I know I should care more about the trauma corporations experience. I am told that there are most good-hearted people in them, even at Nike, Disney, and Wal-Mart that just contract to sweatshops, but try to make the conditions bearable. feminism?

LAP:

- o Thi Lieu was a 22-year-old worker in Reebok's Powyen (Pou Chen?) factory. Lieu was fired after the ESPN report aired in April, 1998, then rehired after ESPN protests to Reebok.

- o In Spring 2000 (before August), Thi Lieu was let go along with 3000 other employees, "When their contracts expired so they could be replaced by minimum wage workers, a common practice.

- o In February, 1998, ESPN interviewed Nguyen Thi Lap, a senior worker with an exemplary history at Nike's Samyang plant in Ku Chi "When I went to the interview" says Lap (in 2000 ESPN Interview aired in December), " the Korean manager kept suggesting to me that as an employee of the company I always had to speak well for the company."

- o In February and March, 1998 Lap worked 113 hours of overtime.

- o Lap was demoted several times after the April, 1998 interviews with ESPN aired. When she fell ill, she says she was denied medical leave, eventually forced to quit her job, and then diagnosed with tuberculosis. Lap is currently unemployed.

1998 - May 12 - Knight spoke May 12th, 1998 to the National Press Club Luncheon.

BOJE: I wonder if they know about the trauma of performativity, or the accumulated effects of acts of violence.

Some days, the more I self-reflect, the more anti-corporate I become. Yet, where am I? In the Business College. Where do I present and publish? Audiences who want to know how to run corporations. And dare I write about feminism.

NEXT STORY: **Mexico Sweatshops**

The Short Version of the Kukdong Story - The Kuk Dong story is about how mostly young women workers struggled against a national union called FROC-CROC, Korean maquiladora owners and managers, and Nike and Reebok corporate PR teams so they might exercise collective bargaining rights guaranteed to them in corporate, FLA, and WRC codes of conduct as well as by Mexican law.

From January 9 to 11 the young women took over the factory and locked themselves inside. They tried to talk to the Korean managers inside the factory, but some brick-laying workmen entered and secured the escape of the Korean managers, shortly after the factory takeover had begun. Family members and friends of the women holding the factory, like it was the Alamo, brought them food and blankets. They also brought the children to be with their working and now protesting mothers. On January 12th, Melquiades Morales Flores, the governor of the state of Puebla, sent 200 Mexican police dressed in full riot gear.

LAP:

o One month after the ESPN report aired, A CA class action suit was filed, and the Ernst and Young audit was front page news, Phil Knight, CEO of Nike announced major reforms.

o Phil Knight 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" (May, 1998).

2000 - Thuyen Nguyen's interview with Nguyen Thi Lap (a second copy is on the Clean Clothes Campaign Web site, and what happened to Lap). Thuyen Nguyen is a Vietnamese-American business man who has traveled to Vietnam to verify working conditions first hand. Thuyen issued the Vietnam Labor Watch Report on March 29, 1997, after he returned from 16-day Fact-Finding Tour of Vietnam Factories in Vietnam.

2000- Chairman Phil Knight withdrew a \$30 million contribution to the University of Oregon, which is Knight's alma matter. It is one of 45 universities that have joined Worker's Right Consortium (WRC), a student-backed anti-sweatshop group (See New York Times, "Sweatshop King: Nike Exec Reneges On \$30 Million Pledge" by Steven Greenhouse, April 25, 2000). See also Knight, P. H. 2000, 'Statement from Nike Founder & CEO Philip H. Knight Regarding the University of Oregon', Nike's web site , Portland.

Boje

BOJE: The police force was led by Renee Sánchez Juárez, FROC-CROC secretary-general for the state of Puebla. The riot police were led by hired FROC-CROC construction workers, and this group did brutally attack 300, mostly female workers, beating those they could catch, with clubs, and sending 15 to the hospital. In our interviews with two workers and a local labor lawyer who were there, we found out that at least two of the women were pregnant, and two lost their babies as a result of the violent and cruel attack.

I assembled the material into a time line. David Tobey and I in 2007 are working up a piece for the *Journal of Management Spirituality and Religion*. I will tell you the timeline and then say what I see different in 2007 as compared to 2001 in my postmemory.

LAP:

2000- December - ESPN's Monthly Outside the Lines 10th Anniversary show which aired in December, 2000. This was their 10th Anniversary show. (See Globe Project, Vietnam).

2001- Nike blames the story of Nguyen Lap (whose name they reverse) on Tim Connor, noting the Vietnam court ruled in Nike's, not Lap's favor (See Nike Biz).

Table 3: More Stories of House of Terror

- o In 1996, a supervisor at the Korean Sam Yang Co. factory, a Nike sub-contractor, was convicted for hitting 15 Vietnamese women team leaders over the head with the upper sole of a Nike shoe (Nguyen, VLW Report, 1997b). On September 16, 1996, Phil Knight in his stockholder's speech rewrote the incident by saying one woman was struck on the arm by her supervisor (Nike Web documents, 1998).

- o In 1996 CBS News filmed a *48 Hours* segment on the 15 workers who were beaten with a Nike upper sole. The women also accused their factory bosses of sexual harassment (*CBS News 48 Hours*, 1996).

- o A supervisor at the Taiwanese factory Pou Chen Corp. found himself before a Vietnamese tribunal at the end of March for forcing 56 women workers to run 4km around the factory for not wearing regulation work shoes. Twelve of the women workers had to be taken to hospital (ICFTU, 1997).

CONCLUSION

I juxtaposed my story of Vietnam with Ms. Lap's story of Vietnam sweatshops, with Karl Marx's story of 19th century sweatshops, and my interviews with two women who worked in a Mexico sweatshop. I found some parallels, and mostly lots of differences. I think the exploration of postmemory feminism gives me compassion for how workers are treated in sweatshops. I am sure that for many readers, they prefer the stories told about sweatshops by überathletes, getting megabucks to tell much more Pollyanna stories, or just deflect the spotlight of scandal onto their adventures on the golf course, the soccer field, or in the paint of the basketball court. Still I do feel answerable, ethically, to explore these stories. I also benefit, I admit, but understanding my own trauma.

In sum, experience is mediated by the act of story that reshapes personal event reenactment into personal memory, and as group member, into collective memory, into history. Story and discourse mediate collective memory, taking it out of the sphere of reenactment, repression, and dissociation into willed story. I invented two concepts to explain this. First is antenarrative (a pre-story and a bet that a story can happen that is transformational) [see Boje, 2001d]. Antenarrative is the bet, in this application, that reenactment of trauma can be pre-storied, and then storied, to become a willed reshaping, that shapes collective memory. The second is what I call living story (Boje, 2006a). Living story is the story that shapes our life. A reenactment of trauma shapes a life, a living story either gets it into willful shape, or the story lived shapes the person. Both are possible. In other words, stories are more than textuality, they are living.

LAP:

- o ·On International Day, March 8, 1997, 56 women at the Nike factory, Pouchen, were forced to run around the factory grounds: 12 of them fainted and were taken to the hospital by their friends. This was particularly painful to the Vietnamese because it occurred on International Women's Day, an important holiday when Vietnam honors women (<http://www.boycottnike.com>).

- o ·Forty-five women were forced by their supervisors to kneel down with their hands up in the air for 25 minutes (<http://www.boycottnike.com>).

- o ·In the case of Ms Taska, her supervisor gave her nine cuts with a knife because she planned to participate in a strike for better safety conditions.

- o ·On November 26, 1996, 100 workers at the Pouchen factory, a Nike site in Dong Nai, were forced to stand in the sun for half an hour for spilling a tray of fruit on an altar which three Taiwanese supervisors were using. One employee (Nguyen Minh Tri) walked out after 18 minutes, and was then formally fired. Mr Nguyen Minh Tri was reinstated after intervention by local labor federation officials. Mr Tri, however, has declined to work for Pouchen (<http://www.boycottnike.com>).

- o ·In Vietnamese, *phoi nang* means sun-drying. Employees deemed in need of a bit of discipline are forced to stand in the tropical sun, which packs a wallop unfamiliar to those from more temperate climates (Manning, 1997).

Boje

BOJE: My contribution in this essay is performativity trauma, terror trauma, and the hypothesis that in the middle of trauma, and until it stops being reenactment, the person being interviewed by the monitor auditors, reporters, activists, or researchers simply can not story, not yet, perhaps, not ever.

A Tamara Journal Reviewer asked:

“Now you have written this article, these story columns. You have storied some of the trauma. Stepping outside the theory and under your skin, what is the reflexive effect on *you*? How did it feel when you were writing this? And how do you feel now that it is written? We see the process and the result and feel it colliding with our own stories, slipping under and around them, pushing on them, sometimes coaxing our stories and sometimes shoving like a playground bully. We get our feelings and your analysis - that you now understand your own trauma better, but I want to know about the influence of the storying process on you, on your heart, on *your feelings*. To me, it is the only thing that feels missing from the piece.”

To me the columns vibrate into one another. And so do the traumas. Lap got under my skin and so did the Vietnam events. It has taken 30 years to be able to story just the surface aspects of the Vietnam events. Each time I speak or write the Vietnam stories, I move bit by bit from reenactment to storyability. Not everything is storyable, and certainly not all at once. It takes time to get perspective, to step outside the theory.

Time Line for Kukdong Scandal Turned Media Spectacle

- o March 2000 Kuk Dong, owned by Hyu Su Byun of Korea, began to manufacture for Nike and since December 2000 for Reebok.

- o March 2000, there were approximately 1,800 workers at Kuk Dong producing one million sweatshirts for Nike and 40,000 for Reebok

- o As labor conditions worsened at Kukdong International, the number of workers dwindled from 1,800 to fewer than 900 by January 2001 when the strike and factory take-over by the workers began

- o March 6-12, 2000, Martin Austermuhle of Penn State University accompanies PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) monitor on an inspection of three Nike factories in Puebla, including the Korean managed and owned, Kuk Dong factory. A brief report is posted on the NikeBiz web site. The longer report (Kepne, 2000) lists several violations and documents that Nike knew through PWC what was going on in Puebla.

- o Dec 13 2000 The Kukdong general manager confirmed that a supervisor had struck a worker with what he described as a “small hammer” on December 13, 2000, and that that the company had not disciplined the supervisor at that time (See WRC Report # 2, June 2001).

- o Dec 15, 2000 - Workers refused to eat factory food to protest its poor quality; then five worker-representatives are written up by management.

BOJE: For me there is these interesting difference between narrative and story. IN narrative, the aim is to get at some kind of form, some kind of abstraction, and these are said to be universal. But in story, as I see it, there is a reflexivity process taking place. And it is at that moment that story is most different from narrative. For me when I am able to story, I can move out of reenactment of trauma, and get a grip on story. I can turn events into experience, and here and there, wisdom tries to creep in. When I story, I master the events. When I reenact, the events master me.

In this way, I think you are spot on, the story is bidding me, coaxing me, egging me on, to get to some deeper reflexive level of awareness and understanding.

I can only get there by seeing my story emerge in relation to so many other stories I am encountering. In this way the stories of my times in Vietnam and Lap's times in sweatshops, and Marx's time in UK sweatshops, are informing one another, and I am being coaxed into some new relationship with my own living story.

And sometimes, living story is like that playground bully, pushing me to a point where I either reenact or withdraw.

TIME LINE CONTINUES:

o Jan 3, 2001 - five worker-supervisors were fired: The five fired worker-representatives are: Marco Santiago Perez Mesa, Marcela Muñoz Tepepa, Josefin Hernandez Ponce, Mario Nicanor Sefina, and Eduardo Sanchez Velasquez (Labor Bulletin, 2001; Alcalde, 2001). This dismissal was a result of the workers' refusal to eat the factory food on December 15, 2000. Only one of the five worker-supervisors signed a letter of resignation. 20-30 other workers were forced to sign letters of resignation.

o Jan 23, 2001 the Fair Labor Association (FLA) announced that it had approved seven major brand-name apparel and sports shoe companies to participate in its monitoring program, that included Nike and Reebok. Those companies now (August, 2001) include: Nike, Reebok (for footwear only), Adidas-Salomon AG, GEAR For Sports, Levi Strauss & Co., Liz Claiborne, & Patagonia, Phillips-Van Heusen, Eddie Bauer, Gear for Sports, and Polo Ralph Lauren.

o Jan 30, 2001 a Verité observer reported seeing 30 unarmed factory security personnel in civilian clothing patrolling work areas and production lines. 30 armed factory security guards were stationed at the factory gates.

Boje

BOJE: It is interesting that you ask about the impact on storying on my heart, on my feelings. I feel sad about Vietnam, about sweatshops. I feel that here is this woman named Lap, who is totally courageous, standing up against a major corporation and its supply chain, and all the prejudices that cut across race and gender. And standing up to it, she is beaten down, humiliated.

I feel somehow complicit in the process of Lap's humiliation. I feel complicit as a researcher. The times when ESPN and the Vietnamese businessman, and every academic, including me, are writing about Lap, we are either adding to her misery, drawing attention to her misery, or both.

So I feel there is this thread running between the theory, the empirical work, the interviewing --- and what is happening step by step to Lap. And it is why Kukdong is also important to story about. Did you know that when Sept 11 2001 happened to the U.S., Nike took that moment to back out of the SITEMEX worker;s union the young women at Kukdong had started?

Here I am in Mexico, and if I interview a worker still employed by Kukdong, then she will certainly be punished once the managers find out. She will be abused, most likely fired. And it is the research that is complicit in that process. We only interviewed the workers who had already left Kukdong employment.

JUST A BIT MORE TIMELINE:

- o Mar 2001, the factory employed only 600 workers, 585 in production and 85% are women, between the ages of 16 and 23 (Verité, 2001). A significant portion had lied about their age, and were less than 16. However, all records of employees less than 18 years of age were no longer in the files by the time the monitors did their inspection
- o Mar 26- Mar 31 2001 - Boje, Rosile & Alcantra-Carrillo go to Atlixco, Mexico to Kukdong factory (780 workers there; we interviewed only ones who had left)
- o Sept 11 - 2001 Terrorism
- o Sept 21st - SITEMEX workers' union was officially recognized
- o Oct 17, 2001 Vada Manager of Nike Corporation sent Dr. Boje a letter informing him that Nike would not be renewing orders at the Kukdong factory for the time being.
- o July 7 2001 - Rosile, Best, & Boje (2001) do their presentation in Heather Hopfl session in the theatre track at EGOS in Lyon France.

A professor jumps up. He is angry. Why do you try to make me feel guilty? Research should not be about emotions.

I started to explain. You have the power to change all this. You only have to become informed, to dig a bit deeper than the advertising hype.

BOJE LEFT COLUMN: I went back to New Mexico State, to my university. I organized some students to start up a United Students Against Sweatshops club. We went to our bookstore, where sweatshirts are sold, to see where they were made, and under what conditions.

So my feelings about Lap, about Kukdong, about Marx's work on sweatshop, and about myself, all mingled together. And my living story took a turn. I moved from writing about it, to doing something about it where I work and live.

I was shocked by the response. I was shocked that many students could be less than who makes their clothes, and even if severely abused will not change their purchasing practices. I was also amazed that when we went to the bookstore and to the buyers, these women cried when I told them stories of Lap and of the Kukdong women, and what had happened to them. All of a sudden, they were concerned. They wanted to help. "What can we do they asked?"

I told them, 'Keep buying the products. These women need the jobs. But demand that the factories pay a living wage, respect women's bodies, stop the abusive language.' Use your purchasing power as leverage to improve conditions. And they started doing just that.

I hope that answers the reviewer's questions.

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RIGHT COLUMN:

Let me remind you this is a presentation in Lyon France on theatre, on dramaturgy. And there is a lot of theatre going on. There is front-stage spectacle, and behind the scenes there are plays of power.

I realized that as I told living stories, that they were not his stories. I realized that this man was being very unsettled by stories I was sharing. Why? I think it may be that I was being in-the-moment, reenacting some trauma, and telling a story that had some distance from it. So now I must amend my theory. It seems the trauma still lingers, and is part of the performance, and so is the story. And my living story is still being worked out.

This returns me to the question posed at the outset. Is a story that is not distant from its events, from its pain, is that a story that one should tell?

I hope this answers the professor in Lyon concerns about me telling sweatshop stories.

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