

DRAMATURGY AND POLITICAL MYSTIFICATION:
POLITICAL LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

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A Critical Dramaturgy of Politics

A major concern of political sociology is with the social processes by which political power is converted into authority. This general phenomenon can be viewed dramaturgically since authority is a form of impression management attempting to make rational and legitimate a society's distribution of political power, especially when the many are subjugated by the few. From a sociological standpoint, there exists no natural or necessary rights of a group of powerful individuals to control the lives of others, the transformation of power into authority is a social process which involves both political ideologies and a technology facilitating the mobilization of support and loyalty of a sector of the population which finds itself under the power of a regime. When the transformation of power into authority is attempted in hierarchical or class societies there often occurs the resistance of those whose domination is being made "legitimate." It is characteristic of such societies that the dramatization of authority, if confronted with the actuality of resistance or the threat of resistance, will rely heavily on processes of mystifying the social relations based upon class and power.

This paper presents an analysis of certain processes within the political system of the United States which aim at the transformation of power into authority and which do so with the added intention and consequence of mystifying the social relations of class and power. The paper thus presents a perspective which can be called a

critical dramaturgy in that it allows the reader to understand and challenge the fraudulent legitimations of political power. Particularly, the paper will present an examination of some of the processes through which the United States political system attempts to present itself as possessing structures of full participation and authentic democracy, while it excludes many categories of people from participating in the social construction of political and economic reality. Put most succinctly, this paper demonstrates that the United States political system's claim of democracy and full participation is not matched by the actuality of its performance. For the purposes of this analysis, the contradiction between the state's democratic presentation of itself and its processes of excluding categories from participation will be viewed as a technique of class domination. In societies with a democratic ethos and an elitist practice, the Hobbesian problem of order is exacerbated. The elite's problem of maintaining its domination can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Force will work -- for a while. Monetary inducements will work -- for a while. In the United States it is a dramaturgical technology which affords the state the ability to construct a fraudulent social reality in which the masses are conned into believing that they do effectively participate in the process of political reality construction, while the system militates against such participation at every turn.

The fraudulent conversion of power into authority as practiced by the dominant socio-political forces in the United States constitutes a mystification of the character of American political life in that the objective outcomes of the state's presentation of self as a system permitting democratic participation is not matched by its performance. The method of immanent critique will be employed as a means of exposing this contradiction. The argument will be supported by demonstrating the mystifying aspects of the dramatization of authority found in (1) the democratic ideology, (2) political debates, (3) the American cult of personality, (4) the state's current pseudo-critique of bureaucracy and (5) the symbolic generation of patriotism. The paper concludes by offering some comments about the conditions of political demystification in the United States and how

dramaturgical analysis can contribute to the creation of a more authentic politics.

The False Politics of the Capitalist State

Almost universally in utility. Some classical and contemporary sociological theorists venerate the state as a functional requisite for social order. Others regard the state as a necessary, though inefficient, means for the achievement of social goals. Others, such as Weber (1958) and Mannheim (1941), even regard the state as the apotheosis of society and the moving force behind the modernization process of developing societies. Critical perspectives in sociology, however, have not applauded the state's existence and operation but have tended to view it as an apparatus through which large segments of the population are controlled, pacified and exploited for the purposes of a privileged social class. At worst, even given the failures of the various socialist revolutions to overthrow alienated social life-worlds, some Marxist sociologists still see the seizure of state power by those categories excluded from full participation in the social construction of reality as only a transitional phase on the road to a fully participatory socialist life-world. In this writer's view, the state is to be viewed as alienated social power itself and must be dismantled simultaneously with the overthrow of elite control of the means of production and processes of communication, if the capacity to fully participate in the social construction of reality is to be returned to human agents. The extension of democratic participation to every realm of human activity does destroy the state in that the split between political freedoms and unfreedoms in other realms of life is repaired.

The critical view of the state as a social agent has emphasized that the state has always existed not for the benefit of the totality of society, but instead for the private gain of categories within society. Marx, for example, noted that not only did the state exist as alienated social power, but also served as an executive committee to direct the interests of the capitalist class. It must be made obvious that the American state, serving the interests of privileged social categories, has an interest in maintaining the impression of the

identity of state and society. If this impression can be successfully maintained the fewer the challenges to its role in directing the social processes of everyday life. The use of dramaturgy is particularly useful as the legitimacy of the state continues to decline in the U.S. More naked forms of political control are difficult to use in a putatively democratic society, although these exist as well. The identity of the state with society is a mystification of political life even in the so-called "democratic" societies and must be exposed as a practice of the sociology of fraud. If departures from the democratic presentation of the American state can be demonstrated by showing the exclusion of categories from participation in the process of American political life, the fraudulent character of American political life becomes apparent and a process of demystification has been initiated.

The extent to which the capitalist state represents and serves the interests of society must be considered variable. What is also variable is the extent to which the total population of a society is permitted to participate in the social construction of state policies. Systems of political control which have presented themselves as democratic, often with the "representative" or "parliamentary" appendage, claim to possess structures of full participation. When incidences of the exclusion of social categories from full participation occur these are viewed as historical or situational necessities, the personal failures or errors of role incumbents, or nonantagonistic contradictions which will be overcome by the continued and improved operation of the state apparatus. From the standpoint of a critical dramaturgy, political systems may be able to solve the problem of order in such circumstances through giving off expressions of full participation. Of course, the threat of force is still an extremely important means of maintaining state legitimacy and power, particularly in Eastern societies but certainly not limited to the East. In the Western capitalist democracies, the sociology of fraud has emerged as the primary means of maintaining state power and of the maintenance of its legitimacy. Thus, solving the legitimation crisis for the American state has become a struggle for the control of minds and the consciousness of the American people (Habermas, 1974;

Mueller, 1973; Elder and Cobb, 1983). The increase in technological sophistication in the means of communication, marketing and advertising, coupled with the centralization of media ownership and control, constitute the material base for the capitalist state's management of consciousness by symbolic means (Schiller, 1971; 1973; 1978).

Class societies have always entailed unequal power relations and have always developed ideologies which have functioned to mystify these power relations for the purposes of maintaining asymmetrical processes of the construction of social life-worlds. Capitalist societies, as they accumulated and concentrated wealth and power, developed elaborate mechanics by which unequal power relations would appear equal and which would appear to allow the maximum political participation of their citizens regardless of class status. Further, capitalist societies have always developed political practices which, in fact, favor certain social classes or categories at the expense of others and, again, have developed elaborate mechanics to make these practices appear to favor all social classes. Thus, in the capitalist states the fundamental political contradiction is that between their natures as class dominated societies and their presentation of self as instruments of democratic participation.

What is crucial in balancing this contradiction and thereby maintaining the asymmetrical social and political prerogatives, is the seizure by the superordinate social class or its agents in the state of the means of producing social knowledge. In seizing the processes of communication, symbolic interaction and reality construction, the superordinate social class is relatively assured of its ability to maintain its hegemony. In Capital Marx (1972) showed how the fetishism of commodities mystified labor's domination by capital and in his various political writings elaborated the mechanics of ideological control which were operative at the time to prevent full working class participation in the state. Gramsci (1971) and Lukacs (1971) also developed concepts aimed at explaining and demystifying the contradictions of the capitalist state. Of course, the theoretical and practical interest Marx, Gramsci and Lukacs had in political mystification was in

understanding and challenging the process by which the superordinate class preempts and controls the critique and challenge subordinate social categories tend to advance in opposition to unequal class and power relations. The political problem of the superordinate class is maintaining the impression of democratic participation in the face of a multitude of possible disruptions and penetrations of this presentation of self.

In attempting to further elaborate on these and other problems of the modern capitalist state, the relatively recent work of Marcuse (1964), Piccone (1978) and Luke (1978) have contributed to a dramaturgical critique of American political life. In his famous "one-dimensionality thesis," Marcuse describes the essentially totalitarian nature of advanced capitalism. Ideological controls are so effective that alternative political possibilities seem impossible and irrational even to those who would most benefit by them. Thus, capitalist society exists largely without internal opposition. However, the oppositional movements of the 1960s and early 1970s seemed to contradict and invalidate Marcuse's hypothesis. Upon reflection, Piccone has affirmed modern capitalism's totalitarian nature but has argued that it operates in a different way than that described by Marcuse.

Marcuse argued that capitalism historically had opposition but managed to co-opt it and feed off it, becoming stronger and more ideologically impregnable in the process. After all, the phenomenal existence of social opposition is the first evidence of the state's benevolence, tolerance and accountability and it is an effective mask of an essentially totalitarian nature. Piccone argued that such a process, if continued indefinitely, causes problems for the capitalist state; the main problem being that without opposition the real totalitarian nature of advanced capitalism would become apparent to the general populace. The danger lies in the fact that the system's ethos of full participation, tolerated opposition and social negativity is blatantly contradicted by exclusion, repression and conformism, thus adumbrating a possible political cataclysm. Piccone argued that one-dimensional society has passed and that modern capitalism has entered an era of "artificial negativity." What has occurred is that the system needs

to absorb negativity and opposition, as well as socially dramatize them, in order to maintain ideological controls, but this opposition and negativity have been exhausted in the politically pacified late 1970s and 1980s. One-dimensional society was faced with a crisis. The solution: the system needed to create its own negativity. Consequently, the American state, utilizing the technologies of theater, media, marketing and even the stage of the United States Congress on several occasions, has attempted to create the impression that there does exist negativity and, thereby, participation. The Watergate episode, the consumer movement, the Congressional expose of the "excesses" of the FBI and the CIA and other dramatic exposures are examples of this artificial negativity. So, the dramaturgy of false negativity, opposition and participation serve the interests of the state and the ruling class by attempting to persuade the public to believe the thesis and reality of one dimensionality -- that modern capitalism exists without opposition. But once the process is viewed from the standpoint of a critical dramaturgy, the nonidentity between the public performance and public claim becomes obvious. Artificial negativity is a fraud on the part of the American State and media to convey impressions of participation, opposition and accountability, resulting in the management of the consciousness of the American populace.

The False Politics of Dramaturgy

Having laid the intellectual groundwork for a critical dramaturgical apprehension of the sociology of fraud of American politics, it is essential to demonstrate some of the concrete mechanics through which the political consciousness of the American populace is managed. The ethos of a democratic society is full and equal participation. In modern capitalist "democracies" political participation has been reduced largely to voting for candidates at various times so that the incumbents of political roles can represent the will of the people. Thus, the American state bases its democratic presentation of itself not on participation per se, but on the right of the adult to vote for a surrogate participant. Of course, Rousseau, Marx and the

anarchists unmasked the fraud of the externalization and alienation of the particular and general will in this form of representation. The alienation of direct self-participation adumbrates the complete loss of participation (Michels, 1959). Yet other problems remain. Even if the system concedes that it is not fully democratic, but representative, it can claim that participation is possible at the level of elections. The system vindicates itself on that basis. Whatever their theoretical and political limitations, the anarchists were the first to effectively unmask the democratic presentation of the state by attacking this argument. Put succinctly, an individual is nevertheless a slave even if s/he has the prerogative of choosing a master. By presenting itself as a "democracy" based on the representation due to voting of citizens (and thereby changing the historical meaning of democracy, which in this instance is an example of a process dramatists call an "aligning action," a behavior designed to evade the embarrassment of an unmasking) the state evades the issue of political power and its opposition to full participation. That one chooses a particular oppressor in great biennial spectacles is not a justification for oppression or the alienation of decision-making. Democracy, real democracy, must be based on the symbolic interaction, reciprocity, equality and good faith of social persons. It precludes the alienation of the particular and general will. "Representative democracy" is the political equivalent of abdicating one's prerogatives to contribute to the meaning of a socially significant policy. Voting, then, in a representative system must be understood as a significant departure from the historical meaning of democracy. Again, there exists a discrepancy between the public claim and the public performance.

However, the departures of the current meanings of democracy from its historical meaning is only a tip of the iceberg of political mystification. The mystification of voting as an instance of meaningful participation perpetuated by and for the state's maintenance and extension of class domination is made even more apparent when one considers the well-documented and well-reasoned studies of political processes and the structure of political power in the United States. Those researchers

who have not been blinded by the ideological fetters of the capitalist state have simply said farewell to conservative and pluralistic models of the empirical nature of American political life. The studies of Mills (1956), Oppenheimer (1982) and Hunter (1953) remain classic sociological works indicating the fraud in the American state's claim of democracy at both the community and societal levels. The more recent studies by Domhoff (1967, 1971, 1979, 1983), Baran and Sweezy (1966), McConnell (1966), Miliband (1978) and Parenti (1977, 1978) have also affirmed the existence of unequal political power relations and elite control which negate claims of democracy and pluralism. The concern of all of these studies as they relate to a critical dramaturgy of politics is with how the formal, official structures, putatively containing opportunity for real participation, relate to actual processes of containing opportunity for real participation and relate to actual processes of decision making and policy implementation. All of the mentioned studies demonstrated that the official structures serve as formal means through which power elites present policies which were actually made in secrecy and serving particular class interests as policies constructed openly in a participatory manner for the public good. The official structures "rubber stamp" decisions already made by the power elite. Voting and the spectacles in the House and Senate are dramaturgical presentations which create the impression of public agency in such analyses. Further, they function to generate loyalty and support for such policies regardless of their objective political consequences. The ultimate spectacle of the President signing bills into law masks the real, class politics of policy making and implementation.

Of course, the loss of democracy and the illusion of participation and accountability again constitute the sociology of fraud. While the entire political structure of the current phase of capitalist society is further compounded by the growth of bureaucracy and the technostructure, both of which are unelected and largely unaccountable, the primary point is that the state's democratic presentation of itself, the public claim, is not matched by its public performance, a mystification it is able to achieve through the fraudulent mechanics of

the electoral system. The reality of American political life, as clearly established by the conflict sociologists, the Marxists and the anarchists, is that political definitions of reality are elaborated in the name of the people by those at the apex of a pyramidal power structure. If the process of communication is two-way, the only sense in which this can be said to be the case is that the upward flow of communication, in the form of voting, public opinion polls, or letters are not effective input but are instead cues utilized by the elite for the purposes of the management of the consciousness of the people in order to maintain and extend the legitimacy of the state's power.

The False Politics of the Political Debate

An advertising poster of Simon and Schuster Books promoting its recently published political works calls politics America's "most exciting spectator sport." Unintentionally, this marketing slogan poses a trenchant critique of American political life. A spectator is not one who participates fully in reality construction but one who passively observes and consumes the constructed reality. One mechanism through which the spectator nature of American political life is maintained is the political debate. There was recently a process of presidential selection and the debate, as usual, was viewed as a means of (1) candidates transmitting information to the voters about their capabilities and qualifications for a particular office and (2) allowing the public to examine the candidates and their positions on the issues so that the voters can make intelligent choices for new administrations and, it is assumed, a new package of programs and policies. Viewing the political debate as dramatic action has been discussed by Hall (1975), Edelman (1964), Gusfield (1966) and Howsden et al. (1977). These analyses, for the most part, leave the critical dimensions of the dramaturgy of the political debate undeveloped. From the standpoint of a critical dramaturgy, the political debate is a mechanism which permits the state a democratic presentation of itself. In particular, debates give off expressions of negativity, opposition and choice, but actually function to mystify the one-dimensional character of the political

system. The preselection of candidates by corporate and political action committees' contributions institute the first great restraint on political debate.

Howsden et al. (1977), for example, discuss the roles of the debate participants and the role of the audience in the political process of the debate. Given the spectator nature of the debate audience one can wonder about the sociological sophistication of viewing passivity as a form of action and, thus, question whether the audience has any role in the process whatsoever. The critical dramaturgical analysis of the political debate focuses not solely on the limited role of the audience, but also on the process of fraud in the structure of the debate itself. Hall (1975) has suggested that the debate as a form of dramatic action permits the operation of two processes which have a direct bearing on the debate as a mystifying process of American political life. First, the debate is an excellent technology for the control of information. Certainly, the candidates as debate participants wish to control the format and content of the topics, and the questioning within the debate context for the purpose of providing a convincing performance to the audience that s/he is the more meritorious candidate. Howsden et al. suggest that this is done in four ways:

1. Controlling and preparing for specific questions asked by specifically invited individuals, which functions to assure the debators that they will not be surprised by questions to which they cannot provide accurate and rational answers. It also assures the absence of hecklers.
2. The prohibition of immediate audience participation, which serves to maintain the one-way flow of political directives and the asymmetrical prerogative to define political reality.
3. The exclusion or limitation of face-to-face interaction of the debators, which functions to minimize the element of surprise which continually looms as a threat to the debators' communication of rationality and accuracy.

4. Limited access to the backstage, which allows for strategy, structuring and rehearsing the performance.

Second, Hall has noted that the debate as political action serves to create the symbolic mobilization of support. The debator has the paradoxical problem of maintaining an impression of negativity or uniqueness for the other candidate(s) and of conveying a perspective which is sufficiently vague in order to maximize potential categories of supporters. Intentionally, room is left for the imputation by the audience as to what the candidate does or does not support. Hence, the political debate cannot be a forum for the addressing of serious public issues, it can only serve as a shopping mall for the presentations of selves or styles of particular candidates. Any claim to negativity, opposition or choice among substantial alternatives cannot be substantiated by the American form of political debate.

It is also significant to note that not only does the debate erect obstacles to negativity and opposition on the level of the positions of candidates, it disallows questions of the legitimacy of the system itself. Never in a significant public forum will one encounter the serious consideration of a question of whether the system is functioning as it claims or whether the system should be dismantled. Oblations to the system are many, but questions concerning the legitimacy of the system are defined as being outside the realm of rationality and possibility. Obviously, it is rational to assume that the system is really participatory and really allows negativity. After all, the state permits voting and "free speech," doesn't it? Suggestions that voting is structurally meaningless and that speech is corporately controlled seem outside the realm of rational political discourse. Any argument publicly advanced suggesting a political sociology of fraud seems to those who are taken captive by the captains of political consciousness as simply the ravings of a "lunatic fringe."

The Cults of Corrupt Personality

When the political process of American life is examined from the critical dramaturgical viewpoint, one

can begin to see some of the contradictions of the system's democratic presentation of itself and its proclivity for repressing or evading reciprocity, negativity, participation, and questions of legitimacy. Yet, the consideration of voting and political debates as obstacles to an authentic politics and its social construction is merely a beginning. It is important to continue to examine the political system's sociology of fraud by next addressing processes of how the state recovers from penetrations or unmaskings of its democratic presentation of itself.

Goffman (1959:141) noted that, "A basic problem for many performances ... is that of information control; the audience must not acquire destructive information about the situation that is being defined for them." If the political problem of the American state is the maintenance of the impressions of democracy, participation, negativity, accountability, etc., the unmaskings of the mystifications pose a problem of order and control. The system must, therefore, possess technologies to which it can resort to recapture its "face" or reestablish its democratic impressions. Force is always a possibility for maintaining order and is certainly in the repertoire of the American state's responses to unmasking of its democratic presentation of self. Attica, Chicago 1968, Kent State, and Jackson State are a few examples of only the recent flexing of the American state's muscle on segments of its own population. Other examples include the Miami riots in the early 1980s and the police violence directed against American socialists and communists who parade on May Day. However, the state's use of violence is discriminate and seems to be restricted to situations which are not likely to unmask further its democratic and tolerant presentation of self.

More significant in terms of efficacy of maintaining a benevolent, democratic presentation of self is the attribution of system failures or unmaskings of the benevolent, democratic presentation of self to the personal qualities of the public officials involved. This technique of symbolic management can be appropriately called the American version of the "cult of personality." The conservative dramaturgical analysts have noted that the personification of issues is a part of the American political system, but they have failed to

see the sociology of fraud in such. When the state's democratic, accountable presentation of itself is unmasked, equilibrium is reestablished through the attribution of the contradiction to the flaws of the individual role incumbents. What results is that the political system or the state structure itself is exonerated of all blame. Norman Birnbaum (1971:41) noted that Krushchev's denunciation of Stalin maintained the Soviet "cult of personality" by blaming the terror on the personality of Stalin rather than on the socio-political structure of the Soviet Union. The Soviet cult of personality was thus a technology through which the system's failures were spared scrutiny by those who suffered them. The United States, however, utilizes this same technique of keeping the system safe from the occasional unmaskings of its democratic, accountable presentation of itself.

The historical and social reality of Watergate is a perfect example of the dramaturgy and sociology of fraud of the American "cult of corrupt personality." Without exonerating the man, a critical dramaturgical approach to the events of Watergate views Richard Nixon as something of a scapegoat or fall guy. The Watergate unmasking has become socially defined as not a failure of the system, but merely the criminal activities of a nefarious man and a few of his nefarious friends. The question of the accountability of the system in its totality has not been raised except, again, by the "lunatic fringe." Yet, from the standpoint of a critical dramaturgy it must be asked: What sort of socio-historical formation produces events like Watergate and the totality of unashamed Machiavellian machinations surrounding it? It is poor sociology, at the very least, to think that the events of Watergate were somehow unconnected to the broader political events in the United States. Except for the sociology of fraud, the individuals in charge of the political processes of the American state are poor sociologists (not that this bothers them) because this separation has been successfully accomplished.

There have been no major structural changes within or even challenges to the state itself as a result of the unmasking of the Watergate events. Again, the system can reassert its democratic presentation of self by attributing responsibility for criminal activities to

individual role incumbents within the state, in this case Nixon and Company, and not to the structure of the system itself. If anything, the events of Watergate have resulted in an effacious vindication of the state, since it managed to police itself so effectively that it could even dispose of a criminal president. Yet, this mystification prevents questioning the criminality of the State itself. In essence, the same process operated with regard to the engagement in Vietnam, the "loss" of Vietnam, the Iranian revolution, the recent hostage crisis and the tragedies in Lebanon. Failures, contradictions, unmaskings are attributed to poor decisions on the part of technocrats or advisors, and not to the contradictions and structures of the state itself as it attempts to protect its democracy and the continuation of capitalist and imperialist exploitation.

The False Politics of Bureaucratic Self-Criticism

In the current series of crises encountered by the American state, the contradiction between bureaucracy and democracy as competing forms of social organization looms as a primary issue in the departure of American society from a fully participatory paradigm of reality construction. Of course, the state has attempted to intervene in order to reestablish the equilibrium this particular crisis has threatened. However, again the state has utilized a dramaturgical technology in order to con the populace into believing it is attempting to resolve the crisis in favor of accountability and democracy, while its constitution of the crisis has had the opposite effect: that of reinforcing bureaucracy and destroying democracy. In mass societies, of course, the bureau is the primary unit of social organization. The bureau is an effective technology by which an elite can control and manipulate the behavior of the mass of people utilizing the technical and epistemological superiority of an administrative cadre. The contradiction between bureaucracy and democracy, again may be reduced to the question of the exclusion of categories of people from participation in the processes of reality construction.

Mainly due to rumblings from below, in the forms of "tax revolts" and an apprehension of the emergence of an unhappy consciousness on the part of the subject

populace, various agents at the apex of the power structure of the state have initiated a pseudocritique of bureaucracy. A concerted symbolic effort has been made by presidential aspirants, governors, senators, corporate leaders and even military leaders to convey a concern with the growth of the "bureaucracy" of the state. "Bureaucratic excesses" have generally been blamed for what is in reality a fiscal crisis of the state (O'Connor, 1973) and the state wishes to convey to the populace a desire to debureaucratize the operations or functions of the state apparatus. The political presentments of the Republicans and Democrats both have attempted to convey the impression of a desire to reduce the state's interference with the private lives of individuals and create a sort of capitalism with a human face. In fact, the current attempt at "debureaucratization" is not debureaucratization but an effort to reduce the federal deficit and hopefully avoid both a continuing crisis of capital accumulation and underconsumption. Reagan seems most serious in limiting the capacity of federal bureaus to control the predations and excesses of corporate capital.

There exists a false politics in the critique of bureaucracy by agents within the capitalist state. It is not a real critique but a pseudocritique. In the first place, the bureaucratic self-criticism has been engendered by those at the apex of the bureaus and has been aimed at those lower level functionaries in the operation of the everyday reality of state power. It is interesting to note that the critique of bureaucracy places the blame for the contradiction between bureaucracy and democracy/accountability on those who do not control the bureaus and who cannot respond or fight back. Yet, what is crucial is that the bureaucratic self-critique completely ignores the whole question of hierarchy, one of the requisite rules of bureaucratic organization. The basis of the contradiction between democracy and bureaucracy is that the bureau possesses a greater ability to create social reality because of its control of the processes of communication and legitimation. Democracy demands the full participation which the bureau and its hierarchial structure negates.

The fraudulent character of the bureaucratic pseudo-self-criticism becomes readily apparent when it is made

clear that completely external to the critique is the issue of hierarchy itself. The state has attempted again to utilize a technique of symbolic management in order to reestablish a democratic, participatory and accountable presentation of self. Actually, the bureaucratic self-critique fuels what it purports to negate. While the public prophecy of the critique of bureaucracy is an affirmation of accountability and increased citizen participation in the affairs of state, the bureaucratic self-critique's public performance is based on increased centralization, increased efficiency, increased technical rationality and increased competence or merit on the part of the power structure's role incumbent. All of these are bureaucratic values and have served historically to negate the values of participation, accountability and democracy. Apparently, promises to cut taxes by catching welfare cheaters and reducing the number of "parasitic" lower level functionaries involved mainly in programs of social assistance and protecting the environment are intended to convey the impression that the citizen will then move out of the surplus population and truly become a participant in the construction of political reality. While the public prophecy and the public performance of the bureaucratic self-critique is certainly disjointed, the state's fraudulent machination will probably work if it can deliver the goods and cut the taxes of a critical sector of the population. But this is hardly identical to a process of debureaucratization.

It must be made visible that the state's critique of its bureaucracy is a fraud intended to symbolically manage the consciousness of the subjected American populace, and thus co-opting its commonsense critique of politics and politicians. To this point, however, the fraud is by no means being publicly demystified. National political figures use the term "bureaucracy" as a symbol with negative connotations in order to present themselves as publicly accountable. The particular incumbents of the roles in the state's power structure use the symbol to evade responsibility for policy and program failures, while political aspirants symbolically assault the incumbents for their extension of the bureaucratic apparatus. Lacking from the politics or the debate over bureaucracy are the relative socio-historical origins or bases of its emergence and extension, and the

real, human consequences of how it has helped to perpetuate an alienated social life-world which functions to reduce large segments of the population to the status of mere things to be managed for the purposes of profit and control.

The False Politics of Patriotism

Periodically the legitimacy of a crisis-ridden state can be renewed by military adventures and by resort to patriotic panics. Appealing to vital interests of the nation can curb the self-critical process. Argentina can invade the Falkland Islands and Britain can respond: both win short term bursts of patriotic loyalty. The Reagan administration won considerable unthinking loyalty by its invasion of Granada. The U.S.S.R., scarcely likely to invade the United States, is presented continuously as a clear and present danger. Opportunist and jealous of its own safety, the U.S.S.R. has been very careful to challenge only political opposition in countries close to and far weaker than itself. The U.S.S.R. uses the "Great Patriotic War" to replenish legitimacy for a crisis-ridden economy.

The United States has been constantly involved in military adventures since World War II. U.S. troops are deployed globally. U.S. troops are sent to every place where capitalist peace is threatened. The displays of military technology and firepower in Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon and Central America continue to bemuse and entertain viewers in the evening news. The secret maneuvers of the C.I.A. produce newsworthy events around the world. These escapades compromise Democratic and Republican opposition alike.

Great patriotic spectacles in the United States generate still more patriotism. Campaigns, Fourth of July parades, Olympic victories (and heart-breaking defeats), as well as state and national centennials or bicentennials refresh the fading flower of patriotic loyalty. Loyalty oaths, loyalty investigations, foreign spies caught and displayed in handcuffs, songs and anthems sung at sports events as well as pledges of allegiance every morning in every classroom teach an uncritical patriotism. Crime is also a great restorative of state authority.

Such supplies of loyalty are tested mightily as disemployment increases, corporate concentration continues, inflation persists, health costs soar, education systems deteriorate and cities decay. All these are masked by patriotic spectacles. Patriotic politics obscures class antagonisms and domestic failures. The public dramaturgy of military ventures eclipses the private tragedies of crime, poverty, illness and despair. In a class society, dependent upon state coercion and fraudulent political dramaturgy, patriotism is a mechanism of ideological social control. It encourages the abandonment of critical thinking and it collapses the antagonism between state and society, class and class.

Demystification and the Prospects for an Authentic Politics

The political system of the United States, which protects the interests of a privileged social class, has been faced with a crisis of legitimation which it manages through the adoption of a dramaturgical technology. The dramaturgical technology of the American state is geared toward conveying the impressions and appearance of democracy, equity, accountability and participation, while its objective operation, when viewed from the standpoint of a critical dramaturgy, is contrary to these public presentations of self. The attempt has been made to demonstrate some of the specific techniques in the current political milieu the state uses to convey these fraudulent presentations of self. A few concluding remarks on these attempts may be in order to formalize their relationship to a critical dramaturgical analysis.

While states have undoubtedly always made appeals to their populations for in-group solidarity and/or patriotism, the dramaturgical technology of the American state is a marked departure from these appeals at previous historical junctures. Perhaps the state is inherently an oppressive institution. Perhaps oppression and its maintenance through fraud have always existed as concomitants of state power. Even so, the critical dramaturgical perspective insists that the advanced capitalist societies, particularly the United States, have developed this technology to such a sophisticated degree that it bears little resemblance to earlier

political attempts at the sociology of fraud. Consider, as an example, the time, money and effort that not only the state, but the large corporations, military and foundations expend in marketing the system itself. Today this is a 3 billion dollar sector of the advertising industry. The ideology of marketing is that a need must be created in individuals through the technology of dramaturgy. Since these "false needs," as Marcuse (1964) calls them, are created not through processes of symbolic interaction but through the manipulation of symbolic management, they are manifestations of the sociology of fraud.

While political science and conservative political sociology have always been concerned with marketing the necessity of elitist state control within the academic sphere, the marketing process has emerged through mass communications to present the image of the "beneficent" content and character of the American state, an obvious attempt at presenting itself to the mass society which goes beyond the traditional methods of political socialization. Marketing the system has the distinct intention of making certain that the people believe that the state, despite an occasional unmasking, really does permit negativity, participation and accountability. Political loyalty in such a society is thus a tenuous, precarious, even false loyalty as it is not the spontaneous expression of patriotism of the public but is instead staged and magnified through advertising, marketing and public relations technologies by the state, the corporations, the military and foundations which package political reality for the unreflexive consumption by the masses.

The concluding argument of this paper is that if an authentic political reality can be created it must begin with a process of demystification; the democratic, accountable, negative and participatory "expressions given off" by the American state must be unmasked and somehow this unmasking must be a participatory project itself involving those social groups who are excluded from participation in the social construction of political reality. The task of a politically critical dramaturgy is to point to a process of reality construction that is fully human, social and participatory. It is obvious to the critical dramaturgist that the

technology employed by the American state to maintain its equilibrium in the face of its legitimation crisis is dependent upon definite socio-historical circumstances. An effective process of demystification, therefore, will necessarily have something to say about the social bases of the dramaturgical society, particularly the processes of capitalism, statist bureaucracy and the centralization of the means of communication.

It is the political task of a critical dramaturgy to work out the concrete political actions through which participatory, authentic social life-worlds can emerge and be maintained. If inauthenticity in the political sphere is defined by feigned participation, then an authentic politics can be created and maintained only by full, real participation. Concretely, then, the critical dramaturgist must doubt that a fully participatory social reality can be obtained through the acquisition and use of state power, or through the pseudocommunication of the mass media, particularly its electronic forms.

Critique and challenge must be directed at the instruments of political mystification, but the errors of the Luddites (Thomas, 1970) must be avoided. An excellent example of a neo-Luddite critique of political mystification is Jerry Mander's Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television (1978). Mander believes that the fraudulent politics of contemporary America can be overcome by the simple abolition of television. It is clear that television has served as an instrument of political mystification and that it perhaps can only distort the process of social and political knowledge. However, the overthrow of fraudulent dramaturgy requires not merely the abolition of certain instruments of mystification but the transformation of the social relations of communication, property and power. Until these are accomplished simplistic critiques such as Mander's will remain reactionary utopias.

The politics of a critical dramaturgy aims at a fundamental social transformation and emphasizes that revolutionary opposition must entail the full participation of individuals using free, undistorted and nonrepressive communication if a qualitatively better society is to be created. All obstacles to self, society, praxis, community and knowledge must be overcome by the reciprocal exchange of significant symbols in the

social construction of everyday life. At base, the revolutionary who wishes to utilize a critical dramaturgy to dismantle fraudulent social life-worlds and their processes of construction can do nothing more than lend expertise to those who seek it and to encourage the struggle through symbolic interaction and drama. Ultimately, the revolutionary project must be of the spontaneist and exemplary forms, as advanced by Bakunin (1971), Fanon (1963) and Cohn-Bendit (1968). Without the critical dramaturgical analysis of American political life and its axiological consequences for revolutionaries, politics will continue to be a "spectator sport."

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HOME-AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES:
ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAM ADEQUACY*

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Considering the adequacy of federally authorized and state implemented community-based long-term care programs, this research examines the characteristics of these programs most conducive to elderly persons living in the least restrictive environment that their health will allow. Results suggest that service availability and population explain a significant proportion of the adequacy of the Home- and Community-Based Services program in Kansas.

This study investigates the relationship of governmental decentralization to state-implemented and administrated health and social service programs and furnishes a detailed analysis of such a program. The decentralization of Medicaid has occurred in response to two factors, the rising costs of health care and the increase in the elderly population. The result was the creation of the Home- and

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