The Theatrics Of Capitalism Of The Iraq War

Stream 4: Theatrics of Capitalism

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to apply critical dramaturgy to the Iraq War. The thesis is that Capitalism has taken a fascist turn in America's democracy which is being sustained through theatrics. The three main contributions are the concepts of Septet (seven elements of theatrics), Metatheatre (dialectic cycles of theatric-integration and disintegration), and Antenarrative (prestory). The three elements combine in Iraq War theatre in ways that enroll a cast of characters (including spectators) to willingly suspend disbelief that fascism has seized control of American democracy.

Introduction

Postmodern wars are fought with media. The theatre of war is a theatrical event, staged for the 'embedded' media to replay to world's spectators. "The American media has not given us a full picture of the human suffering caused by our bombing; for that, we need to read the foreign press"(Howard Zinn, 2003).1 Resisting spectacle is done through street and virtual carnival (Boje, 2001b). It is as Gore Vidal (2002) argues, "Since V-J Day 1945 . . . , we have been engaged in what historian Charles A. Beard called 'perpetual war [hot, cold, and tepid] for perpetual peace.'

The contribution of the paper is to develop a theory of critical dramaturgy. I distinguish between dramaturgy, an old an established field and critical dramaturgy which is a more recent innovation. *Critical dramaturgy* is deconstructing the specter of Metatheatre, especially its romantic *Poetics* (Aristotle, 350 B.C.E). Critical dramaturgy has roots in more critical-postmodern turns taken by Augusto Boal's (1979) *Theatre of the Oppressed* and Guy Debord's (1967) *Society of the Spectacle*. Boal (1979) and Freire (1970), for example, extend critical dramaturgy to a more neo-Marxist critical theory, while Burke (1937, 1945, 1972) uses his *Pentad* to say that Marx is too focused on grotesque and burlesque frames of rejection. Yet, it is the grotesque that is masked by the media spectacle of the Iraq War.

My first contribution is to invoke Boal (1979) and Debord (1967) to give Aristotle's (350 B.C.E.) *Poetics* a more critical (postmodern) dramaturgy turn, which I term the Septet (for seven elements).2 The seven elements are: (1) Frames, (2) Themes, (3) Dialogs, (4) Characters, (5) Rhythms, (6) Plots, and (7) Spectacles.

The second contribution is to apply antenarrative theory (Boje, 2001a, 2002a, b; Boje & Rosile, 2003a, b) to theatrics. *Antenarrative* is defined as a bet that a pre-story can be told and theatrically performed that will enroll stakeholders in intertextual ways that transform the world of action into theatrics; at the same time the antenarratives never quite get there. Used as an adverb, "ante" combined with "narrative" or "antenarrative" means earlier than narrative. Story is an account of incidents or events, but narrative comes after and adds, more "plot" and tighter "coherence" to the story line. I seek a more critical dramaturgy is to oppose narrative closure with an *antenarrative* theory that builds

upon Fairclough's intertextuality work, and Deleuze and Guattari's (1967) rhizome processes.

The third contribution is the concept of Metatheatre. *Metatheatre* is defined as the evolution and revolution in dialectic cycles of theatric-integration and disintegration, the networking of simultaneous stage-crafted performances seeking to instruct and control spectators and actors; these erupt into more fragmentation (Boje & Rosile, 2002, 2003b). Each integrating attempt of leaders and directors to evoke spectacular theatre, to control the center stage, to enroll a cast of characters, that will influence spectators, soon disintegrates as the pull of multiple scripts, plots, and characters spin Metatheatre out of control.

The Iraq War is dramaturgy that is accomplished in the Septet (7 dramatistic elements), by directing a cast of (1) characters in (2) plots, which create strategic and oppressive (3) themes. War and heroics is produced, distributed, and consumed in (4) dialogs (in talk, in stories, and in discourses). There are (5) rhythms (seasons, cycles, recurring patterns) in the war theatre in which some (6) frames (ideologies) are championed over others. And, the Iraq War is most of all the (7) spectacle theatrics (four types), a dynamic hybrid of (a) concentrated corporate culture theatre, (b) diffuse theatre on the global stage, the (c) integration concentrated and integrated, and the more and more frequent (d) megaspectacle of American political scandal turned by media frenzy and spectator appetite into mass entertainment (in the International press, but not in the U.S.).

The structure of the paper begins with a review of critical dramaturgy theory. This review is then applied to the theatrics of the Iraq War. The paper concludes with implications for organization studies.

Critical Dramaturgy Theory

Critical dramaturgy is rooted, for me, in critical postmodern philosophy. Critical postmodern is the nexus of critical theory, postcolonialism, critical pedagogy and postmodern theory (See Tamara, Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science at www.TamaraJournal.com). It is a growing field of study that is moving beyond the supposedly "radical postmodern" positions of Lyotard and Baudrillard by recognizing the interplay of grand narratives of modernity with the spectacularity of virtuality and hyper-competitiveness that is the basis of global predatory late modern and postmodern-capitalism, and the new forms transcorporate-empire, the postindustrial supply and distribution chains addicted to sweatshops, wedded to postmodern identity-formation through the age of virtuality and advertising, such that we no long discern real from phantasm. The postmodern world is often quite a violent one, and I am answerable to try to minimize it, and not participate in it, and find a more festive path. In a 'Critical Postmodern Manifesto' Boje, Fitzgibbons, and Steingard (1996: 90-1) argues that critical postmodern theory is about the "play of differences of micropolitical movements and impulses of ecology, feminism, multiculturalism, and spirituality without any unifying demand for theoretical integration or methodological consistency." Critical postmodernism is theorized as a mid-range theory exploring the middle between "epoch

postmodernism, epistemological postmodernism, and critical modernism" (p. 64). Critical postmodern theory is epochal in the sense that there is a postmodern turn (Best & Kellner, 1997) from modern to postmodern, but it is still in its infancy (Boje, Fitzgibbons, & Steingard, 1996: 64).

Antenarrative theory (Boje, 2001a) is closely tied to Kristeva (1980a: 36) and Bakhtin (1981), who suggest that each text has an intertextual "trajectory" that is historical and social (Boje, 2001a, O'Connor, 2002). And it relates to Fairclough's (1992) critical discourse analysis, i.e. his advancing the idea that the intertextual trajectory is embedded in hegemonic struggle. Antenarratives collect events and characters into their psychic economy. Antenarrative rhizomatic flight continues as long as there is context left to transform (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Antenarrative is about ontological ways of being in the world; it is not sensemaking, it is world making; antenarratives feed on new contexts, they consume contexts, they recontextualize.

We can demonstrate Burke's (1945) *Pentad* (act, scene, agents, agency, & purpose) and Aristotle's (3505 BCE) *Poetics*. Kenneth Burke (1937, 1945, 1972) uses his Pentad to say that Marx is too focused on grotesque and burlesque frames of rejection; Burke prefers Nietzsche's (1974/1887) more comedic fame of acceptance (Boje, Rosile, Durant & Luhman, 2002). Leaders, for example, (and followers) are characters (actors) in situations (scenes/spectacles) of organizing. The leaders (agents/characters) can enact revolutionary or bureaucratic behaviors (acts/plots) to seek changes in the situation (scene/spectacle), transforming it by their acts of dialog (agency) into either a liberatory or oppressive motivational milieu (purpose). Dialog in Burkean terms is the medium and the agency of transformation. Burke is always uncomfortable with Marx's dialectic, which only analyzes exploitation. Burke's proposal is dialectic of frames of acceptance against frames of rejection; in frames of acceptance we accept the tragic and comedic circumstances and our powerlessness to change the system; in frames of rejection actively resist what is considered grotesque or burlesque forms of domination. Aristotle (350 BCE: 1356a: 2) in *Rhetoric* also addresses the concept of Frame, but does not list it as one of the *Poetic* elements. For Aristotle frame is "putting the audience into a certain frame of mind" (Rhetoric, 1356a: 2). Burke (1937 *Attitudes Toward History*), on the other hand, views frame as a more macro viewpoint, as dialectic between "Frames of Acceptance" and "Frames of Rejection." The Septet, defined in Table 1, takes us on a more critical postmodern turn.

Table 1: Poetic, Pentad, and Septet Grammars of Dramatis Personae

Poetic (Aristotle)	Pentad (Burke)	Septet (Boje)
1. Plot (or Fable)	1. Act	1. **Plots** – have become inter-plots, interconnecting pre-plots in networks, in the middle of being worked out.
2. Character (or Agent)	2. Agent	2. **Characters** – the cast of characters are in the middle of being enrolled, and characters morph their persona in schizophrenic ways.
3. Theme (or Thought)	3. Purpose	3. **Themes** – themes of oppression fan out in rhizomatic weaves, and are met by themes of resistance.
4. Dialog (or Diction)	4. Agency	4. **Dialogs** – obfuscating language and double-speak mixed with euphoric testimonials and bland reassurances attain and shed meanings.
5. Rhythm (or Melody)		5. **Rhythms** – rhythmic resonances self-organize in chaotic patterns that refuse to freeze, and often disintegrate what was just integrated.
6. Spectacle	5. Scene	6. **Spectacles** – spectacles are intertextual to other spectacles; they embed in socio-economic contexts by decontextualizing and recontextualizing.
* Frame of Mind of spectator	* Frames of Acceptance/Rejection	7. **Frames** – Frames are ideologies that are in dialectic contest, resisting each other, and refusing to synthesize.

Key: * = Discussed, but not one of their main dramaturgical elements (Source of Table, Boje, 2002c). Appendix A offers re-readings of Aristotle, Burke, Boal, Freire, Debord, Best and Kellner, to set out the new Septet re-definitions.

Burke (1945: 231) aligns Aristotle's (350BCE) six *Poetics* elements with the five dramatistic terms of the *Pentad*. Burke's "*plot* would correspond *to act*," "*character* would correspond to *agent*," *theme* to purpose, *dialog* and *rhythm* combine in *agency*, and *spectacle* is classed under *scene*. Boal (1979) also bends Aristotle's *Poetics*, but takes it along a much more critical postmodern turn, while integrating Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* with *Poetics* into a *Poetics of the Oppressed*. Spectators can be invited to become actors on the stage, or actors can invade the audience. In Boal's (1991) terms spectators become actors critically reflecting upon their complicity in situations of oppression as spect-actors.

The Theatrics of the Iraq War

People across America are systematically mis-informed about (a) relation of Iraq to 9-11, (2) relation of Iraq to al Queda, and (3) the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Once the military was mobilized using such disinformation, the Bush campaign switched rhetoric to "support the troops." Everyone supports the troops, but the problem is this focus takes attention of the reasons for going to war. That reason is a fear campaign orchestrated by the Bush administration in a corporate controlled media. The fear and disinformation campaign set up yet another rhetoric shift. This was the shift from just "support the troops" to "support the President and the Troops."

The postmodern theatre production is used to create the illusion of victory, to construct a staged-event of liberation that seduces the public to recall the fall of the Berlin wall, the Iwo Jima flag raising, and the liberation of Paris in WWII (See Figure 1). The problem is that in the Iraqi theatrics, there is a reluctant crowd. The war is being played out in the 'theater of informatics' (Niman, 2003). As Niman (2003) puts it, "Welcome to the postmodern media war."

Figure 1 – Staging of the Pulling Down the Saddam Statue Story 3

This is how the 'liberation footage" scene was constructed. On April 6th 2003, the Pentagon flew Ahmed Chalabi (Iraqi National Congress [INC] founder) with 700 of his "Free Iraqi" fighters were flown to Nasiriyah city in Iraq. The NeoCons have picked Chalabi and the INC to head up the post-war Iraqi government. The photo (Figure 1 – lower left) was taken of them as they arrived in Nasiriyah. Then on April 9th, the photo (upper half) of the statue of Saddam Hussein in Fardus Square being pulled down. One of Chalabi's INC "Free Iraqi" fighters appears to be in the photo, shown greeting the Marines. The photo is reproduced around the world, as proof of a massive uprising. The photo (Figure 1), is from Reuters, and shows the long-view of Fardus Square. The square is mostly empty, except of about 200 bystanders. Marines sealed off the square with tanks and then draped a U.S. flag over the statue and used a tank recovery vehicle and a block and tackle to pull it from its base.**4** The event is compared to the Berlin Wall falling. However, the Reuters extended photo suggests a staged event has been constructed for the embedded media's camera crews.

7

Figure 2: APTN Photo – typical of what appeared in mainstream media news coverage

The Western media spin on the photo (and video) portrays the event as "historic" and as a "spontaneous mass movement" of "thousands" of "happy Iraqis" cheering the "Liberation of Iraq" by U.S. troops.5 Prime Minister Tony Blair's mouthpiece, the London Daily Express, casually inflated the "dozens" to "thousands":

> "In historic scenes reminiscent of the fall of the Berlin Wall, thousands of civilians cheered as young men mounted the statue and tied a makeshift noose around Saddam's neck." (Daily Express, 10 April 2003)

In chorus, the Western media portrayed this staged event as "historic", as a spontaneous mass movement of "thousands" of "happy Iraqis", celebrating the "Liberation of Iraq" by American troops.

**Figure 3 – AFP photo showing a Marine tying a U.S. flag around the statue**

Pulling down of Saddam's statue to cheering Iraqis played a vital role in the Pentagon's propaganda campaign. First, it signalled the end of the war and the beginning of the end game. Second, the statue-toppling triggered "liberation euphoria" that disarmed critics and created divisions within the anti-war movement. "A segment of the anti-war movement now views as "positive" the demise of the Iraqi regime, thereby tacitly signifying their approval of the US military intervention in support of "regime change". **6** Third, the main cause of the war "finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq" tois no longer seen as a relevant cause for war. The rhetoric has shifted to "support President Bush and the Troops." It has shifted away from the anti-war movement's call for war crime trials for the Bush administration for violations of the UN charter, the Nuremberg charter, and the provisions of the Geneva Convention. 7 Finally, by declaring the 'war is over,' the peace movement here in Las Cruces was critically disarmed. I recall that since the scene was plastered on every TV screen and newspaper front page, motorists, would shout to us, "Go home, the war is over!" and some would then flip us off. Of course, we knew the war was not over; the body count was rising daily through the middle of May.

The peace movement lost the information war, a war fought with informatics, in a postmodern theatre that was the spectacle that Debord (1967) imagined. On the streets we countered the informatics with our carnivalesque theatre, with signs that showed pictures of the Iraqi children of war.

Figure 4 – Photo of Ali Ismail Abbas is 12-year old boy whose arms were blown off by the U.S. missile (Boje, 2003a).

In figure 4, this Iraqi boy suffered more than 35 per cent burns to his body. The missile took his father & pregnant mother, his brothers and sisters. Dr Najada says, 'Ali will need his prosthetic arms changed every few months until he reaches puberty.' In sanitized war, presented by corporate media to rally U.S. support, we do not see images of what war is like. War is the killing of women and children (see www.PeaceAware.com Slideshow). 8
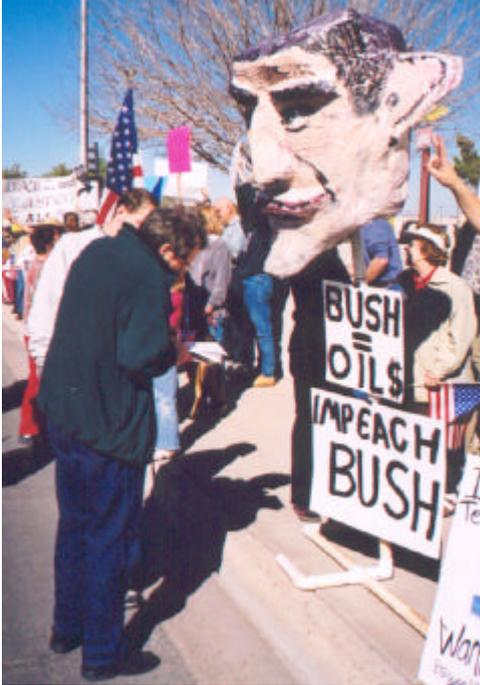
Figure 5 – Photo of Bush Puppet Head at Las Cruces New Mexico PeaceAware Vigil.

Despite our carnivalesque puppets, our signs, and all our theatrics, we did not prevent the Iraq War, and once the war was declared as officially over, the movement began to decline. Our informatics was no match for the U.S. media machine. Here is a sample of the press coverage in mainstream media:

> "the number of Iraqi civilians accidentally killed has been far, far less than the number that would have been killed by Saddam Hussein's evil regime in the normal scheme of things" (Daily Telegraph, Sydney, 8 April 2003).

> "I'm sure there will be more casualties, but it is one of the prices we have to pay" (Washington Post, 10 April 2003)

> "'one day' the mothers of children killed or maimed by British cluster bombs will thank Britain for their use (British Defense Minister Geoffrey Hoon quoted in the Independent, 5 April 2003)

> Wall Street "applauded images of a statue of Saddam...[which] sent sent stocks surging..." (UPI, 9 April 2003).

Next, I trace the theatric aspects of the Iraq War using the Septet elements introduced in Table 1.

Characters – The cast includes George Bush Sr., Richard Cheney, Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and many supporting players. "We live in the time where we have fictitious election results that elect a fictitious president," Moore said. "We live in a time where we have a man who's sending us to war for fictitious reasons, whether it's the fiction of duct tape or the fiction of orange alerts." (Moore, April 7, 2003). Characters are recruited to play valued roles. Or as Vidal (2003) writes, "Once Afghanistan looked to be within the fold," Videl (2003) writes the administration "abruptly replaced Osama, the personification of evil, with Saddam Hussein. This has been hard to explain since there is nothing to connect Iraq with 9/11. Happily, 'evidence' is now being invented." Characters also includes oil and weapon companies.

Plots – Iraq War plots are multiple and inter-connected. A plot is defined as "link[ing] events together into a narrative structure" (Boje, 2001a: 108). Ricoeur (1984) in *Time and Narrative*, refers to "*emPLOTment*" the grasping together of some events from chronology and some time episodes with some Characters crafted into a meaningful storyline that (re)configures chronological time into fictive story (See Boje, 2001a: 114). Plots are revised with each new situation and are intertextual to competing plots (Boje & Rosile, 2002b). One plot is we no longer live in a democracy, we live in a homeland. Another is corporate American puts a president in place who is not elected by the people. We must include the doctrine of preemption which has replaced the traditional foreign policy of containment.

Dialogs – We live It is a form of postmodern theatre, the theatre of symbol manipulation, the substitution of simulation for the horror of war, the selling of heroism in place of the war crimes. We live in the Cheney-Bush junta, in a web of media lies. "The Central Intelligence Agency owns everyone of any significance in the major media." — William Colby, former Director of the CIA. The enormous gap between what US leaders do in the world and what Americans think their leaders are doing is one of the great propaganda accomplishments of the dominate political mythology" - Michael Parenti.9 "The US military has invaded the US media. I would like tonight to call for an immediate removal of all US troops from CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox, CNN, all of them. US troops come home!" from Michael Moore's intended Oscar speech - delivered at the Riverside Church, March 27, 2003.10

Themes - Themes of oppression fan out in rhizomatic weaves, and are met by themes of resistance. If we assume that the Iraq invasion is an act of oppression, then the themes of resistance intertwine in the worldwide peace and anti-war movement. In Las Cruces, we resist with two vigils a week, marches, teach-ins and our list serve and web site (www.PeaceAware.com). During the height of the war many asked us not to hold our street theatre, to wait till the troops came home. And after the war, the motorists ask us to "just go home." Just this week we canceled the Saturday vigil, and some of our PeaceAware group are asking if we need the Wednesday vigil. Meanwhile the themes in the media debate the heroics of the returning soldiers. The editor today (May 13) in the El Paso Time, said that POWs who got lost or couldn't read a map are not heroes; only the dead or those those fought bravely in battles are; the media hyped the return of some of these hapless soldier.11

Rhythms - To understand rhythms is to trace the inter-weave of necessary, contributory, sufficient, remote, proximate, psychological, successionist, and antenarrative causal strands (Boje, 2001a). An example is how we adjust the types of signs and the conduct of our vigils. We put up a billboard using American Flag and Yellow Ribbon symbols because we were being attacked verbally and by speeding vehicles when the Iraq war began.

Figure 6 – Support our Troops – Bring Them Home Billboard in Las Cruces – Month of April, 2003

Frederick Nietzsche says it may be we have an effect and set out in search of the cause (See Boje, 2001a: 99). McLeary, (2002) in commenting on Vidal's (2002) book, writes, "The trouble, fellow citizens, is that it is beginning to appear increasingly certain that the mainstream media seem only able to understand the effect part of the equation, which means that the causes apparently are left to float in some sort of a-historical ether." A look at the different type of causes can help to sort out the controversy.

1. **Necessary causes** - must be present for an effect to occur. I.e. Weapons of Mass Destruction are necessary cause of the war.
2. **Contributory causes** - may lead to an effect but not produce it by this strand alone. I.e. Saddam is said to be an evil man. Another example is the media is controlled by conglomerates.
3. **Sufficient cause** - a strand that can produce an effect all by itself. I.e. Saddam is said to be the mastermind behind the 9-11 hijacking and attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Or, "Al Queda is written off as the creation of an 'axis of evil'" (Vidal, 2002b).
4. **Remote causes** - a rhythm quite distant from an effect. In chaos on complexity called Butterfly Effect. Oil dependency leads to search for oil, and to adopting invasion scenarios for the Middle East.
5. **Proximate causes** - located close in time and space to the effect. Saddam is given 48 hours to surrender or war is automatic.

6. **Psychological causes** – Bush Jr. for example, is said to be working out Freudian father issues, in that he is completing his daddy's failed capture of Saddam.
7. **Successionist causes** - Rhythms that are not 'real' phenomenon, but somewhere between a fiction of the theatre of the mind and a coincidence of occurrences (e.g. illusory correlations). There is a succession of rhetoric switching, the move from one set of causes (search for weapons of mass destruction), but when none are found, the new cause is "support our troops" and then "support President Bush and our troops."
8. **Antenarrative causes** - in the Whirlwind theory of antenarrating, tracing the trajectories of narrative constructing, and the recovering the storied circumstances of causal maps is highly difficult. The challenge is to trace the situated assertions as they traverse and construct relationships in an interpersonal [or inter-institutional] network" (Boje, 2001a: 107). I.e. there is a bet that people will hate France and this will take focus off the lack of weapons of mass destruction, war crimes (from invading a country without UN sanction) and failing domestic economy.

A variety of narrative and antenarrative causal assertions and attributions connect Metatheatre to the economic plots of the Iraq War.

Spectacles –Spectacles are produced, distributed and consumed. Clear Channel uses its 1,200 local radio stations and corporate website to promote pro-war rallies. Clear Channel also owns a radio research company, 36 television stations, a number of radio trade magazines and over 770,000 outdoor billboards. "Rupert Murdoch's [Net worth is $5.3 Billion] Fox network is among the US media giants accused of tailoring its war coverage to curry favor with Michael Powell, the George Bush-appointed chairman of America's media regulator who is facing mounting pressure to scrap media ownership rules... Disney, which owns the ABC network, is calling for the relaxation of all broadcast ownership rules and is vehemently against a proposal to open network prime time to independent producers."12 Best and Kellner (2001) differentiate four kinds of spectacles: bureaucratic, diffuse, integrated (of bureaucratic & diffuse), and the megaspectacle.

> "The concentrated spectacle" says Debord, "belongs essentially to bureaucratic capitalism" (#64). The concentrated spectacle is where both production and consumption are constructed in a totalizing self-portrait of power that masks its fragmentation. The corporate media coverage of the war is a case in point. It is the "vast institutional and technical apparatus of contemporary capitalism… all the means and methods power employs, outside of direct force… while obscuring the nature and effects of capitalism's power and deprivations" (Best & Kellner, 1997: 84).

> The "diffuse spectacle" says Debord, "accompanies the abundance of commodities, the undisturbed development of modern capitalism" as it reaches into every nook and cranny (#64). Spectacle illusions overtake and cover over the reality of material conditions, the world backstage in the Iraq war footage.

Evangelicalism and capitalism combine into evangelical capitalism, an undeclared holy war.

The third form of spectacle is the "integrated spectacle" that combines aspects of the concentrated and diffuse forms in the fatalism of global capitalism, where resistance if futile (Best & Kellner, 1997: 118). On Feb 15th over we joined 11 million anti-war protestors and took to our theatre to the streets; we did not stop the war. We did delay it, and forced the Bush administration to take their case before the UN.

Finally, Megaspectacles sensationalize scandal in media extravaganzas such as Watergate, the Rodney King video tapes, the O.J. Simpson chase and trial, Clinton sex scandals, the Gulf War, the funeral of Princess Diana, the Elian Gonzalez sage, Enron, the collapse of the World Trade Center, the War on Terror, and now the Iraq War. The alternative press (e.g. the Guardian, Indymedia, Truthout, and locally PeaceAware.com) provided coverage of the megaspectacle. But, unlike Watergate, this one, as yet, has not put the president into scandal.

Frames – Frames are defined as ideologies that are in dialectic contest, resisting each other, and refusing to synthesize. Clearly the ideologies of war and anti-war are in dialectic contest. And within the peace movement (here in Las Cruces, as well as nationally), there were divisions between those who wanted to focus on civil liberties, and others who wanted to go after the administration for war crimes.

Frame is for Burke (1937) an element which he later (1972: 23) wanted to include in his Pentad (1972: 23) was one he said that he always wanted to append to his *Pentad* (1945). However Aristotle (350 BCE) also wrote about frames, the "frames of mind" of the spectators, who must be persuaded through dialog and rhythm (or melody), and the proper poet must frame theatrics in ways that persuades them that a tragic flaw (e.g. hubris or greed) in the hero will ultimately bring about their reversals of fortune (Rhetoric, 1356a: 2).

On April 12th, I was arrested by university police for refusing to move our Peace Vigil off the New Mexico State University property. It seems that we had positioned ourselves in front of a sorority house. Three sisters and their house mother were hopping mad, when they told me to move and I said, "No." Then I repeated my 'No' to a police sergeant and was handcuffed and taken to the police HQ, where I was put into leg irons. Needless to say, putting faculty in leg irons was not good PR for the university.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTHONY ORTIZ

Figure 7 – Boje under Arrest

By April 14th the university administration apologized for my arrest. Yet over the next month, I was recharacterized by the media, from hero who stands up for my 1st and 4th amendment rights to a peace activist who is a bit too provocative and should have just obeyed the officer. My story is sill unfolding. Two years ago the university did away with its free speech zones, making our PeaceAware Vigil completely within the new guidelines. Presently I am working with the ACLU, who is negotiating with the university to get training for the residence managers and the police.13

Implications to Organization Studies

Few academic journals will publish articles that link the invasion of Iraq to corporate power.   Journals will not want to confront U.S. empire head-on. Nevertheless, the contribution of Septet to critical dramaturgy is to analyze the theatrics of capitalism and the Metatheatre of the Iraq War by tracing its antenarrative complexity, networking, hegemonic-complicity, and resistance across multiple and simultaneous stages.

There are several specific contributions. First, theatrical methods should not ignore antenarrative dynamics. It is important to not only compare narratives but also to see how antenarratives form, reform and transform. Second, analyses that refer to a unitary universal spectacle (e.g. "The story of Iraq War is the story of heroism and liberation" is popular in the media, but a reductionistic tag line, that misses the morphing of spectacle types (bureaucratic, diffuse, megaspectacle) and complex rhizomatic antenarrative practices. Third, each spectacle conveys an ideological framing that is quickly opposed by counter-frames (e.g. the anti-war theatrics). Finally, it is important to recover postmodern versions of rhythm, plot, theme, and character in a more critical dramaturgical analyses of empire.

15

Conclusions

Critical postmodern theory is a rich variety of perspectives that do not accept the total rejection of the grand narrative such as in the work of Lyotard, nor do they abandon the material condition by being seduced into the vortex of hyper-real as in the work of Baudrillard. Rather, as Best and Kellner (1991, 1997, 2001) explore in critical postmodern philosophy, we are looking at a critical postmodern theory that is up to the task of exploring the postmodern turn that never transcends modern, and the postmodern adventure that in its darker manifestation protects predatory transnational corporations that pursue empire at the expense of human life and environment.

Without a critical dramaturgy perspective, a one-sided dramaturgy is likely to end in the kinds of mega-scandal that Best and Kellner (2001) call "megaspectacle" (Rosile, Best, & Boje, 2001).

At present it appears that spectacle of corporate and state power has triumphed over the more carnivalesque theatrics of the peace movement. Yet, I hope that the worldwide peace movement will produce more transformative theatre that creates its regime change at home. For with the close alignment of state and corporate power, America is a democratic façade, masking fascism, kept from public view.

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1 This piece called "Victory" by Howard Zinn, was sent to me by Philosopher Steven Best, March 13 2003.
2 I began to articulate a Critical Postmodern approach in Boje, Fitzgibbon and Thatchenkery (1996); See Alvesson & Deetz (1996) who discuss advantages of integrating critical theory with postmodern theory; and See Best and Kellner (1997, 2001) who have always done critical postmodern theory.

3 Source for Pulling Down the Statue Photo – Indy Media New York April 2003
http://globalresearch.ca/articles/NYI304A.html For more commentary see, Killing the "Unembedded
Truth" by Michel Chossudovsky 11 April 2003 http://globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO304B.html
4 Source for Pulling Down the Statue Photo – Indy Media New York April 2003
http://globalresearch.ca/articles/NYI304A.html
5 Killing the "Unembedded Truth" by Michel Chossudovsky 11 April 2003
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6 Source for Pulling Down the Statue Photo – Indy Media New York April 2003
http://globalresearch.ca/articles/NYI304A .html
7 See http://peaceaware.com FactAware sheets on Geneva convention and JusticeAware feature page for
the War Crimes listing
8 PeaceAware.com slideshow is at http://peaceaware.com/slideshow/slideshowWAR.htm For more on Ali,
see Boje (2003a).
9 michaelparenti.org
10 CounterPunch
11 Email May 13th summarizing the editorial in El Paso Times – from Steve Best
12 The Guardian http://media.guardian.co.uk/broadcast/story/0,7493,935101,00.html
13 For the arrest report, my side of the story, university apology and various news accounts, see
www.PeaceAware.com and go to http://peaceaware.com/DemocracyAware.shtml