

Budget Theatre: a Postdramaturgical Account of Municipal Budget Making

By

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Finally, to the many committee and board members and public administrators who had to endure my budget presentations over a 25-year career in finance: I am happy to report that I am nearly recovered from addiction to PowerPoint slides. You will likely get a kick out of the following cartoon which I offer as an ironic introduction to Budget Theatre.



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Abstract

This thesis adopts “performance” as a metaphor and participates with the dramatic by acknowledging the messiness of social interaction and by matching this with a proposed research method capable of dealing with heterogeneity. The thesis enters several conversations that are underway in the academic literature and claims four contributions:

1. (re)assembly of Goffman’s notion of dramaturgy. In so doing, I stimulate movement toward a critical version of dramaturgy with an amodern orientation. This reassembly of Goffman’s work grows from a proposed relationship among three schools of thought: dramaturgy, Actor-network Theory, and historiography.
2. engagement with ontological politics in municipal budget making;
3. demonstration of budget history as performance, an extension of engagement with ontological politics by seeing history as performance of those politics;
4. encouragement for public administrators to understand budget making as drama rather than uncritically seeing it as a mundane administrative practice.

The theoretical contributions are linked by their concern for performance. Following a dramaturgical framework, this dissertation uses as its exemplar the budget making processes of the Halifax Regional Municipality where structural legal boundaries between elected and appointed officials gives rise to more or less constant contests, and to a sense of diffused authority.

The introductory chapter proposes a new research methodology called postdramaturgy. The following three chapters rehearse the literatures of dramaturgy, actor-network theory, and historiography. Then a methodological rhizome is crafted to propose postdramaturgy. This is followed by multiple performances that use postdramaturgy to study empirical aspects of municipal budget making as well as further empirical study that considers the capacity of postdramaturgy for critique. Concluding thoughts are then provided which reflect upon postdramaturgy and its potential for application in future research work. I also attempt to take advantage of my previous experiences as a municipal manager (and budget maker) by proposing some implications of postdramaturgy for practice in the not-for-profit sector.

The value of my thesis will be in theorizing a coalition of research methods and in helping to illuminate the complex dynamics of municipal budget making.

April 17, 2015

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Chapter 1: Introduction

*Suit the action to the word, the word to the action;
with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature:
for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end,
both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature.
(Shakespeare, 1982, III. ii. 17-22. 288)*

Brief Overview and Contribution of the Thesis

Acceptance of the theatricality of organizing and adoption of “performance” as a metaphor has provided qualitative researchers with powerful methodological tools for exposing the social. Based on this idea, management and organization studies (MOS) have often followed either dramaturgy or dramatism. The tradition of dramaturgy is an *organizing-is-like-theatre* perspective, developed by Erving Goffman (1959), which is concerned with public social performances. Dramatism, which constructs its intellectual foundation on the writings of Kenneth Burke (1945), suggests that *organizing-is-theatre*, a claim that drama is an intrinsic element of social experience. I hold the view that there is ample reason to believe that organizing is both *like-theatre* and *is-theatre*. Accordingly, this dissertation participates with the dramatic by acknowledging the messiness of social interaction (Haraway, 1994; Law, 2004, 2007), and by matching this with a proposed research method capable of dealing with heterogeneity. The municipal budget can be seen as an “obligatory passage point” (Callon, 1986, p. 7). In budget theatre there is a suspension of disbelief of the *need* to construct a budget. The dramatis personae seem to enter the budget process believing it must unfold in a particular way; if one challenges this obligatory point of passage one runs the risk of being written out of the script.

This thesis enters several conversations that are underway in the MOS literature. Using the metaphor of theatre, I attempt to add a voice that takes these conversations in a different direction. I claim four main contributions as follows:

1. Assembly of a research methodology to be known as postdramaturgy

I set out to be more aggressive with the performance metaphor. The main contribution of my thesis is to (re)assemble Goffman's notion of dramaturgy by making a transition to territory beyond dramaturgy's long-standing theoretical stage settings. The main aim of this dissertation is to produce (and perform) a new qualitative research methodology called *postdramaturgy*. In so doing, I stimulate movement toward a more critical version of dramaturgy and, following Latour (1990) and Durepos (2015), an amodern theoretical position is taken that is prior to that of modernism and postmodernism. This reassembly of dramaturgy grows from a proposed relationship among three academic schools of thought: (i) the interpretive tradition of dramaturgy (Boje, Rosile, Durant, & Luhman, 2004; Goffman, 1959; Mangham & Overington, 1987); (ii) Actor-network Theory (henceforth "ANT", Callon, 1986; Latour, 2005), especially as ANT morphs toward a loose category of management thought that has become known as "ANT and After" (Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010; and for early contributions to the ANT and After literature, see the 12 papers in Law & Hassard, 1999); and (iii) an infusion of ideas related to amodern¹ historiography. I make the claim (see Chapter 5) that dramaturgy, ANT and historiography belong together. All three perspectives are devoted to the study of performance and together they provide

¹ The term *amodern* refers to modes of academic thinking that collapse epistemology into ontology, see the social as multiply presented, occurs in relations of actors, and relies on performance. Amodernism is more fully discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

complementary exposition of power relations. The outcome of melding the three literatures will be a useful addition to the toolbox that MOS scholars draw upon to undertake research.

2. Engagement with ontological politics in budget making

Postdramaturgy is proposed as a fruitful way to engage with ontological politics (Law, 2007) to explore assumptions about the essence of budget making. This second contribution expands my thesis beyond epistemological assumptions about the grounds for knowing. Realities are produced by municipal budget making practices, and since those practices differ so do the realities. As Mol (1999, p. 84) argues, realities are “more than one but less than many”. Realism suggests a world which can be known by social scientists – “once objectivist researchers find reality, they should all find the same thing” (Corrigan, 2014, p. 56). The nominalist stance in this dissertation promotes an understanding of realities that are socially constructed through dramaturgical resources. Postdramaturgy deepens the exploration of budget making realities by emphasizing discontinuity, complexity and randomness.

3. Seeing budget history as performance

The third contribution of this thesis is an extension of its engagement with ontological politics by seeing history as performance of those politics. That history is subject to ontological politics (and that this would contribute to what may come to be known as a *critical historiography*) is a contribution because history thus moves beyond the epistemological realm when describing history as knowledge of the past. Unraveling *ontological politics* and *history as performance* builds upon the preparatory foundations of ANTi-History (Durepos & Mills, 2012) in the early stages of this mode of thinking

about history. The rhizomatic nature of postdramaturgy (see page 17) also responds to the call for a “historic turn” in management and organization theory (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006, p. 6) by keeping in mind that this dissertation is *doing* history and that this research is historically situated.

4. Contributing to knowledge of budget making practices

The fourth contribution of this doctoral research is a by-product of the first three. This thesis is intended to help administrative practitioners and elected officials understand the budget making drama enacted by stakeholders involved with municipal management. This should be understood as a discussion to provide a clearer “knowledge” of contested, theatrical, historically based, and sometimes unfair budget processes, rather than in a positivist sense such as attempting to help administrators to better deal with the budget planning process. The budget (usually seen as a solitary object) and its various processes are often conceptualized narrowly by practitioners and elected officials as mundane, repetitive practices. This dissertation provides a more holistic view including insights into the theatricality of municipal budget making – a drama in which multiple actants (i.e., human and non-human actors with the agency of both taken seriously (see Chapters 3 and 5) compete for scarce resources, coming face to face with others to contend for public approval.

The above four claims of contribution are linked by their concern for performance. As emphasized by Bruno Latour, one of the sources of inspiration for the development of ANT, when you perform, you quickly learn that you are acting with a script and props that have not been brought there by you and that scenes may be improvised by other

participants without your permission (Latour, 2005). The development of postdramaturgy, my engagement with ontological politics, and seeing history as performance of those politics allows the budget process to be destabilized in a way that allows us to appreciate its multiple and contested status. Czarniawska (2006b, p. 1662) refers to “strange loops... that are often reproached in texts, but welcomed in mathematics, art and music” when she recognizes that the loops of organizations are never stable. The socially constructed nature of the idea of creating a budget presents an opportunity for a “loop” to go astray, and is at the heart of destabilizing the budget and its processes. This notion of destabilization includes tricky syntax that must also be problematized: sometimes my choice of words is adjective as in “budget communications”; sometimes as a noun as in “the capital budget”; and sometimes as a verb as in “budgeting departmental expenditures”. Since this study sets out to deliver on the four contributions indicated above, and given the messy processes of budget making, I strongly prefer the verb form with its implied dynamic properties. I encourage the readers of this dissertation to similarly understand the adjective and noun forms as open to analysis. Thus I look at the underlying philosophy of budget making through a lens that exposes a critical, amodern view, i.e., a lens that combines elements of dramaturgy, actor-network theory, and amodern historiography.

Exemplar of Municipal Budget Making

This dissertation is situated in budget making practices of city administration where corporate governance features many actors affecting decision making. Following a dramaturgical framework, this dissertation is entitled *Budget Theatre*. My research uses

as its exemplar the budget making processes of the Halifax Regional Municipality (hereafter abbreviated as Halifax) in Nova Scotia, Canada where structural legal boundaries between elected officials (the Mayor and Municipal Councillors) and appointed officials (the Chief Administrative Officer and Departmental Directors) gives rise to more or less constant contests, and to a sense of diffused authority (Reed, 2001). This sets the stage for organizational performances (Boje, 1989). Diffusion also has the potential to cause disorder, for example where the perceived roles of elected and appointed officials overlap, or if actors do not conform to the role expectations of other actors. ANT attentively follows the agency of humans (e.g., elected officials and budget officers) and non-humans (e.g., computer spreadsheets in the accounting department, civic flags displayed at Council meetings, budget texts, and decaying streets and sewers in need of costly reconstruction). The heterogeneous ANT network includes the concept of *actant* as any agent that can build or dismantle associations with other agents (Crawford, 2005). Actants contribute to the drama, attempting to enroll others into actor-networks (Latour, 1996).

In the United States and Canada, doctoral work related directly to city management is rather scarce. There was a flurry of activity in a 10-year period beginning in the late 1980's. Researchers were particularly interested in three main topic areas – leadership, power, and managerial role – uniformly from a positivist perspective (see for example, Giannatasio, 1997; Griesemer, 1988; Nwamu, 1997). In *Budget Theatre* I offer a postpositivist view (Prasad, 2005) which constitutes budget making as a struggle of many competing stories, with the audience not content to sit as passive observers of what might be happening on (multiple) stages. The significant gap in the doctoral literature is

manifest regarding Canadian municipal management, and seemingly absent within the context of smaller city units.

In the not-for-profit sector the annual budget, *inter alia*, is an important strategic planning process. Decisions of the Halifax Council affect many economic and social outcomes that are important to the people living and working within the municipality. Municipal corporations have considerable organizational scope, and Canadian cities all have multi-million dollar operating budgets. One measure of the pervasiveness of municipal enterprise is to recognize that expenditures resulting from Canadian municipal budgets total \$122.9 billion annually (Statistics Canada, 2008); for example, local activities include transportation and communication (\$15.9 billion), environment protection (\$12.8 billion), protection of persons and property (\$12.1 billion), recreation and culture (\$9.2 billion), and social services (\$6.7 billion). Smaller jurisdictions also generate much activity. For example, Nova Scotia municipalities spend \$2.5 billion each year (Statistics Canada, 2008), most this by Halifax. These very large dollar amounts seem impressive. Perhaps more impressive are the missing expenditures that amount to zero, for example where needed capital improvements are systematically avoided and particular citizens continue to be financially disadvantaged. Therefore, while the heart of my thesis involves the budget as drama (a surprising plot for those who believe accounting to be more in the realm of the mundane), the budget story will also include an element of critique infused with history (Munslow, 2010) and stigma (Goffman, 1963b). Specifically, Halifax has always allocated huge amounts of budget money each year to capital infrastructure expenditures, but the black community of Africville, which existed since the 1700's, was consistently excluded from receipt of capital funding. Their

cooking and washing of laundry was done by carrying water back to their homes from a central area. Lack of running water, along with absence of sewage and paved roads was cited as Halifax's reasons for forced evacuation of Africville in the 1960's. When Halifax evicted the residents, hosed-down garbage trucks were (ironically) used for the transfer of people and belongings. My thesis considers the case of Africville's budget deficit to demonstrate the capacity of postdramaturgy for critical management studies.

Research Process

At the outset, it is important to recognize that my dissertation is a qualitative work. The research is underpinned by a belief in the “tenuousness of organization and culture” (Bryman, Bell, Mills, & Yue, 2011, p. 64). Accordingly, I intend to focus on constructed meaning rather than quantification. This thesis does not discount quantification altogether; it recognizes that accounting reports and numbers have storytelling capacity, and allow the budget to be constituted as more than a single object (Brorstrom, 2012) and that accounting language can be seen as an agreed way of communicating and managing, rather than an image of reality (Oakes, Townley, & Cooper, 1998). However, my research is not intended to generalize to a statistical population. For example, there is no attempt to “objectively” categorize budget expenditures and no calculation of standard deviations to the mean, or attempts to survey the perceptions of elected or appointed officials. Instead, the research attempts to discover how various municipal actors (including non-human actants) engage in the social construction of multiple realities (Mol, 2002a). Management and elected officials have to evaluate municipal budget stories that make claims on the money resources

expected to be available. However, the Halifax budget cannot be understood as one story, “but instead is a multiplicity, a plurality of stories and story interpretations in struggle with one another” (Boje, 1995, p. 1001). Storytelling is a mode of sensemaking in the budget making milieu. “People in every organization are storytellers doing pragmatic storytelling. A short list: a small business, a huge corporation, a city council, a governmental agency, a school, a university...” (Boje, 2014, p. xvii, emphasis added). Because of the opportunity for interpretation, much of budget making is about production and judging of stories and storytellers.

Several data collection techniques were used for this thesis; a combination of observation, document review, and semiotic analyses provide the data for in-depth scrutiny. The data collection for the three-year period under investigation included video recordings of 170 Halifax Council meetings. The documentation for 108 of these meetings contained some mention of the word “budget” and 33 meetings featured the municipal budget as the main agenda item (I also consider reflexive implications of “watching” these videos). Formal agendas for the meetings and the official archived minutes prepared by the Clerk’s Office for each of the 170 Council meetings were collected (2,619 pages), as well as numerous Halifax budget documents, working papers and other texts (2,922 pages); and the following of discourse in media accounts. In this postdramaturgical research project the usage of a large body of data from a variety of publically-available sources produces a cacophony of voices (including the dominant and subdued ones, with the silent ones suspiciously absent) which brings with it methodological demands for a certain type of data. “In this context, data gathering is really drama gathering – it must support the discovery of communication, symbols,

gestures, facial expression, props, sentiment, documentation and other instruments of human interaction” (Corrigan & Beaubien, 2013, p. 309). The videos of Council budget meetings provide not only an abundant amount of content but they also perform the content and register as a history of budget making.

Data for this thesis were collected starting on January 1, 2010 (the beginning of the 2011/12 “budget theatre season”) and data collection continued until April 30, 2013 (the date of the final budget meeting of the Halifax Council for the 2013/14 fiscal period). It was difficult to decide when to start and stop collecting data for *Budget Theatre* especially since my thesis rebels against any claim of temporal boundaries. I took the October 2012 civic election as a temporal marker since it produced dramatis personae – the Halifax Council – which is the municipal stand-in for a corporate board of directors, i.e., the elected budget makers. The chosen time span covered three fiscal periods with budget performances taking place before, during and after the 2012 civic election of the Halifax Mayor and Councillors. All data were acquired from publically available sources. The videos of the Halifax Council meetings were purchased from EastLink Television and the remainder of the material was downloaded from the website of Halifax Regional Municipality or other internet sources. I discovered (through necessity) a method of making a “binder” of files using Adobe Acrobat. All of the meeting minutes were placed in a single searchable file, as were all the budget papers. I viewed the dissertation materials as an actor that I followed around, engaging with data, the literature, my own experience, and my thesis committee.

The more apparent part of the data collection for *Budget Theatre* relates to what happens in what Goffman refers to as the “front region” (1959, p. 109) of municipal

budget-making. Exploring municipal backstage is more of a challenge for the study of organizations through the lens of dramaturgy, both theoretically and empirically. Indeed, some performing regions such as “in camera” budget meetings of the Halifax Council can be problematized. Is this the front region or backstage or something in-between? My thesis ultimately involves a critique of Goffman’s theorizing of spaces where a more-or-less authentic self is performed. A destabilizing comment is briefly mentioned en passant in a note to Annemarie Mol’s paper, *Ontological Politics* (1999, p. 88): “Performance stories... rob [Goffman’s] notion of a back stage.” That idea was left hanging by Mol but provided an inspiration as I struggled with what to do about Goffman’s concept of backstage. In my view the notion of backstage does not seem to hold-up in a postdramaturgy mode. Perhaps a side-stage, or off-stage, or in-the-wings; but it seems to me (and apparently to Mol as well) that backstage just is not a useful metaphor. This will be explained further in the discussion of dramaturgy in Chapters 2 and 5. The research for this dissertation focused on public performances on whatever stages the players acted.

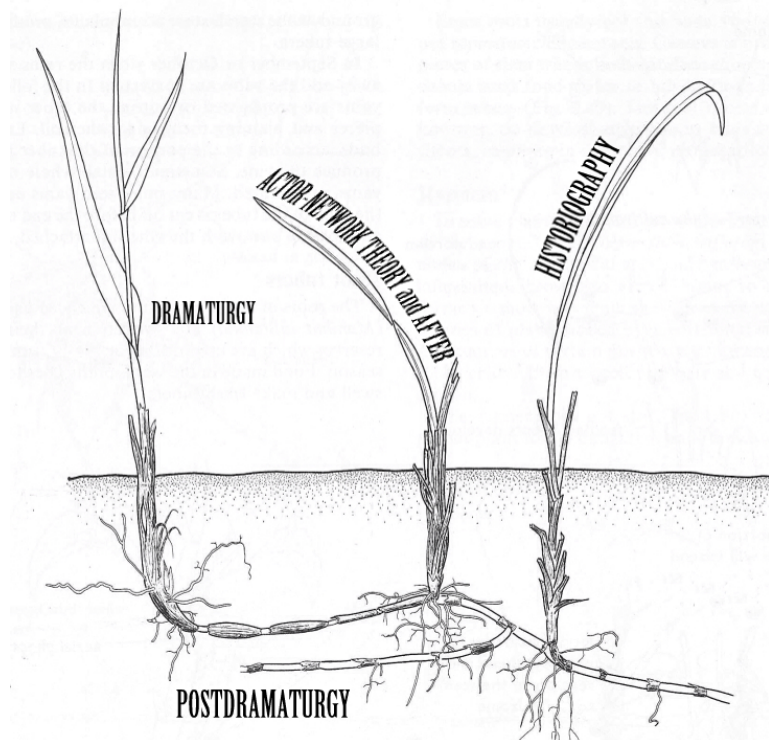
Rhizomatic Nature of Postdramaturgy

Methodologies that purport to be useful for social studies have to be capable of understanding randomness and messiness (Haraway, 1994; Law, 2004, 2007). Similarly, there is no prospect for a definitive or even generally accepted version of Goffman’s dramaturgical theory (Manning, 2008). I propose that dramaturgy consists of more than a single thing – even though most social theorists would acknowledge, and I agree, that Erving Goffman is the central figure in most academic conversations around dramaturgy (Baert, 1998; T. Clark & Mangham, 2004; Prasad, 2005). In postdramaturgy it is posited

that Goffmanian writings, and the numerous applications thereof over a 60-year period, seem to amount to a loose framework rather than a single prescriptive methodology – a performance that has been made artefact, and capable of being re-performed. Boje (1995, p. 999) endorses the rhizome metaphor as an organic means to “thwart unities and break dichotomies, and to spread out roots and branches, thereby pluralizing and disseminating, producing differences and multiplicities, making new connections”. The assemblage of the Imperata Rhizome (see Figure 1 below) captures the essence of the methodological contribution of *Budget Theatre*. I propose to link dramaturgy with postpositivist thinking and generally to engage in methodological pluralism (Mills & Helms Mills, 2009) in performing a budget making case study.

A botanical rhizome connects any point of the living being to any other point, becoming, in effect, an actor-network. The entwined elements of postdramaturgy are represented in Figure 1 using the rhizome as a metaphor for methodological pluralism.

Figure 1:
The Rhizomatic Nature
of Postdramaturgy



Permission to use (and adapt) the
Imperata Rhizome drawing
was obtained from D. G. Mackean,
www.biology-resources.com

Above the surface, dramaturgy, ANT&After, and historiography look like completely separate blades. However, since the substructure for each of these is a network of roots that are actually part of the same heterogeneous system, the metaphor of the imperata rhizome resonates strongly with postdramaturgy. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) draw to our attention, rhizome structures are abundant in the social; in the root systems of plants, and also in some animals which, for example, form packs, schools, colonies or swarms. Rhizomes also exist in a philosophical form in the human activity of organizing. For example, in municipal budgeting, a multitude of texts such as PowerPoint presentations, memoranda, reports, accounting spreadsheets, emails, news reports etc., constitute an administrative rhizome. Bakhtin's (1981) use of the concept of intertextuality (how texts reference other present and past texts, and signal future texts) points out that the rhizome of texts is a dynamic one.

As explained by Kaulinfreds and Warren (2010) the rhizome structure is unlike that of a tree; the rhizome is not stable and even when part of the plant structure is seriously ruptured, it is inclined to sprout-up unexpectedly along another path. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) discuss accounting and bureaucracy as more closely resembling a tree-root system. I believe the tree-root metaphor would be the traditional view of municipal budget making (a view contested by postdramaturgy). However, Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 15) allow that accounting and bureaucracy “can begin to burgeon nonetheless, throwing out rhizome stems, as in a Kafka novel. An intensive trait starts working for itself, a hallucinatory perception, synesthesia, perverse mutation, or play of images shakes loose, challenging the hegemony of the signifier.” Postdramaturgy

likewise places great emphasis on social instability and recognizes that ordering of the experiences of everyday life is a constant renewal process. As indicated above, this dissertation proposes an uneasy and unstable partnership of three scholarly research traditions. I intend the meaning of “traditions” in the sense of crafting as described by Prasad (2005, p. 8). The following outlines the contribution that each component brings to the coalition:

- 1) Dramaturgy: exposes the theatricality of municipal organizing.
 - 2) ANT&After: follows actors to source knowledges of “the budget” and to understand underlying processes in the creation and dissemination of knowledges.
 - 3) Amodern historiography: focuses on the “roots” of the budget process to encourage a more macro and situated viewpoint, increasing potential for critical management study.
- Each of these components is briefly discussed in the following three sections and further expounded in subsequent chapters.

Theoretical Framework (First Strand) – Dramaturgy

Dramaturgy, a research tradition which grew from Goffman’s (1959, 1963a, 1974) notion of public social performances, relies upon the metaphor of the theatre. Goffman’s ontological position is that the social is seen as prior to the self (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) with the individual person as a crafter of the self. In this respect Goffman stands-out among symbolic interactionists as one who leans toward a subjectivist orientation (although not all would agree with a categorization of Goffman as a symbolic interactionist, as discussed in Baert, 1998; Czarniawska, 2006b). Indeed, Goffman is difficult to situate paradigmatically (see Figure 4 in Chapter 5). In a practical move to explore whether or not researchers working in the symbolic interactionist field would

accept Goffman as one of their own, I did an electronic scan (as at November 30, 2013) of all issues of the SSSI Journal (Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction). A word search on “Goffman” turned-up 10,402 hits as well as a Special Issue devoted to his life and academic work. If Goffman was not a symbolic interactionist, he certainly created a substantial commotion there. This will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

The development of postdramaturgy requires a fundamental recognition of the theatricality of social life. To infuse this with a capacity for critical management study, postdramaturgy draws upon Goffman’s propensity to point-out efforts at impression management and his “suspicion of the prevailing social order and desire to unmask it with a view to uncovering hidden agendas, conflicts, and identity interests” (Prasad, 2005, p. 47). Halifax budget making is a useful case study in this respect since the financial resources that are either given or withheld intimately affect the daily life of people. However, my version of postdramaturgy will not be primarily applied as a “channel for indignation” (Czarniawska-Joerges & Jacobsson, 1995, p. 392). I am more interested in postdramaturgy as a methodology for theorizing social injustice and stigma.

To fulfil its promise, my research looks into the concept of the frontstage/backstage divide where there is potential for the actors to morph into other personae. I offer a contribution to the conceptualization of backstage by explaining that the ontology of the Halifax budget text should be understood as multiple enacted practices (Mol, 2002a), thus situating social actors as always being in the front region. Nonetheless, my careful observation at budget meetings of Halifax Council and subsequent review of meeting minutes would be insufficient to understand why certain

decisions get made (or not). I had to follow actors to multiple physical and non-corporeal stages.

ANT and a modern historiography (discussed in the next two sections) are also concerned with acting and stories. ANT helps with the following of actors and actants, and historiography helps me follow them into the past. Accordingly, my dissertation attempts to interpret data such as the following: budget talk from “professional” accountants, organizational symbols, gestures and facial expression of the participants; a large amount of budget documentation; and other instruments of interaction among the players. However, the *Budget Theatre* dissertation is not only *about* performance, it *is* a performance – albeit an implied selection of one of several possible performances – complete with its own audience (curious PhD students and family members), the use of props (a thesis book and inevitable PowerPoint slides) and performance critics (faculty members on the thesis committee). Hopefully my performance will not be in the category of tragedy, with the Supervisor playing a lead role as in Julius Caesar. Et tu, Brute?

In this dramaturgical research on municipal budget making, a methodological complication arises in the data collection due to a large number of voices in the civic milieu. The play *Tamara* written by John Krizanc helps us understand the potential for multiple interpretations that “organizations collectively write as their histories” (Boje, 1995, p. 998). *Tamara* audiences literally follow their choice of actors about the various stages. No subsequent viewings of the play are ever the same. In a study of the accounting profession, co-author Louis Beaubien and I (Corrigan & Beaubien, 2013, p. 320) showed how fluid organizational dramas can be, and how performing stages are multiple: “Individual Canadian accountants have not been a submissive audience. They

bring props and scripts of their own, entering the merger drama with their Facebook pages, twitter accounts and general opposition or support”. The following dramaturgical tools employed in this dissertation help expose such fluidity:

- Performances: belief in the part one is playing, supported by front material such as costumes and settings, as well as the personal front such as language and gestures.
- Audience: performances compete for attention of audiences, who in the case of Halifax budget making, also participate in the performance.
- Teams: a definition of the situation is sustained by the cooperation of multiple actors.
- Regions: performances are given in particular places, including the front region which is the normal interface with the audience, and a more private backstage.
- Discrepant roles: vantage points which complicate interaction, such as the roles of informer, shill, mediator, or the non-person, for example, a servant role or perhaps the municipal clerk who, although she takes the minutes of budget meetings, is frequently constituted by the mayor and council as someone who isn't there.
- Communication out of character: performances given by a team require impromptu alignment, even with those who are currently absent from the performance.
- Impression management: the application of numerous techniques designed to maintain a given definition of the situation. This includes the concepts of dramaturgical loyalty and circumspection where teammates accept obligations to the team and cooperate to ensure their preferred theatrical show.

The above dramaturgical tools are more fully explored in Chapters 6 and 7 in the context of Halifax municipal budget making. I also pay close attention to Goffman's (1963b) concept of stigma which deals with the management of spoiled identities. In the budget-

making process, actors attempt to discount the views of those who have a competing claim to scarce budget resources. Stigma is often the tool of choice.

This dissertation explores the question of how actors perform their authority. Burke (2012) acknowledges that there is a political aspect to knowledge. For example, who has the authority to decide what is knowledge? Burke's (2012, p. 6) treatment of the "spread" of knowledge is useful. Demonstrating the performativity of organizations, he cautions that the word *spread* inappropriately implies that what moves does not change. Burke points-out that it is more realistic to think in terms of "active reception" in which the transferred knowledge may not meet the purposes of organizational actors. It might have to be re-scripted in order to meet with greater acceptance from those in the municipal observation gallery. The spread of knowledge is also contemplated in the ANT notion of *translation*, which is a process of binding and stabilizing things that were previously different (Callon, 1986). Networks are formed through translation when interests of actors become systematically aligned, for example where actors, texts and materials are forced through budget inscription processes to appear as a punctuated actor-network. The budget process of the Halifax Council becomes an "obligatory passage point" (Callon, 1986, p. 7) where interests of the actors are sustained only by submitting to staged performances in an organized dispute over resource allocation.

Budget Theatre pays attention to the performance of visual aids. These are important in the municipal budget making process. The background of elected officials often does not prepare them to undertake the management of a complex organization. In the case of Halifax, its 2012-13 budget of nearly \$1 billion (\$789 million operating budget plus \$132 million capital budget) is subject to debate by the Municipal Council –

an elected collection of career politicians, taxi drivers, school teachers, a librarian, a Boy Scout leader, an insurance sales consultant, and so on. One might wonder how much the officials actually read the deluge of written material that they are exposed to. Observation in the Municipal Council Chamber at weekly meetings of the Council shows that it is not unusual for Council members to arrive at the meeting with their information packets still sealed and obviously unread prior to the meeting. A related issue is the (over)dependence on experts. Postdramaturgy follows the attempt of elected officials to understand the budget tables, graphs, accounting schedules, and other financial exhibits masquerading as knowledge. All of these items would be considered by ANT as actants in municipal budget making.

Theoretical Framework (Second Strand) – Actor-network Theory & After

Postdramaturgy extends Goffman's theoretical vision beyond the individual to a less micro orientation. This is partly achieved by drawing upon a second strand of performance based literature known as Actor-network Theory. Actor-network theorists often make use of dramatic stories to situate discussion. There are various ANT schools of thought in the academic literature and they are underwritten by a variety of philosophical foundations (Durepos & Mills, 2012). *Budget Theatre* follows from the work of Bruno Latour (e.g., 2005) and Michel Callon (e.g., Callon, 1986), although my thesis recognizes and takes advantage of the contested and tentative boundaries of ANT. As previously indicated, this strand of discussion emphasizes the evolution of ANT into what has become known as "ANT&After" literature (see Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010; Law & Hassard, 1999a). This will better enable this dissertation to make a contribution

toward seeing the municipal budget as a collectively written (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992) and multiple object (Mol, 2002a).

ANT&After researchers tend to be more suspicious of organizing so this will also potentially help expose a dark side of municipal budgeting. Alcadipani and Hassard (2010, p. 419) argue that ANT appears to lack critique which is “particularly apparent in ANT’s translations in management and organization studies”. The potential for such critique seems to be more evident in the ANT&After literature, and this alternative direction for ANT is leveraged in this dissertation. Also important is a recently developed approach called ANTi-History (Durepos & Mills, 2012) which explains and demonstrates the critical potential of ANT in combination with historiography.

Postdramaturgy includes, to a much greater degree than dramaturgy, social actors other than humans (I propose that the ANT concept of actant is more dynamic than Goffman’s concept of the prop). In arguing that artifacts have gender, Berg and Lie (1995, p. 346) point-out that ANT produces artifacts as part of the “glue that keeps society together”. This type of ANT&After analysis has implications for budget practices since the idea of translation can be used by practitioners in thinking about the relationship of material objects and municipal networks. Thus, I develop a critical understanding of how budget artifacts reveal inequities within the municipal community. ANT&After is a valuable supporting component of postdramaturgy by emphasizing “the multiplications, heterogeneity, mutability and uncertainty that is involved in... identities, interests and power” (Hunter & Swan, 2007, p. 204).

A hallmark of ANT is that research has to “follow the actors” (Latour, 1996) and my dissertation intends to follow them into the past by looking for what Quattrone and

Hopper (2005, p. 697) call “trails in the field”. The social is seen as a process of assembly and reassembly. An actor is what is made to act by others and agency is also assigned to non-humans. For example, actants in a municipal budget making network may include the elected mayor and municipal councillors (as well as the electors), the operational managers of the city, decaying physical infrastructure that cannot be ignored, money, technology including microphones and television, public ceremony, organizational rites, special interest groups dealing behind the scenes, etc. ANT follows this loose collection of entities that attempt to enroll or ignore one another. Particularly important in this dissertation is the question of what actors are influential in the production of budget text.

ANT research methodology often consists of qualitative ethnographic studies focusing on daily working contexts. Science and Technology Studies scholar Donna Haraway (1994, pp. 69-70) uses the trope of the game of cat’s cradle that aptly describes performances that take place at Halifax City Hall – “It is a game that requires heterogeneous players... about patterns and knots; the game takes great skill and can result in some serious surprises... the cat's cradle figures can be passed back and forth on the hands of several players, who add new moves in the building of complex patterns.” This gets at a key requirement for my data gathering effort. The data had to cover a wide range, including mundane elements. This research discovered that, in budget making, the dramatic requires the ordinary.

Peter Burke (2010, p. 2) states that if his book has a single view, it is the importance of “equilibrium of antagonisms that tips over into disequilibrium from time to time”. His podcast discussion of the main themes of his book makes it clear that the components of the social must be considered as loose assemblages. In *Budget Theatre*,

this translates into a discussion of factors such as professionalization that act to create agreement as to what budget information constitutes the conditions for equilibrium. In the language of ANT (Latour, 1987, p. 227) such “immutable mobiles” enable forms of control-at-a-distance which is necessary to maintain control in large-scale budget operations.

The treatment of knowledge practices includes an examination of the idea of useful or usable knowledge, and Burke (2012, p. 113) proposes that “applied research is a cultural hybrid” that combines the utility of scholarly knowledge and practical knowledge. Burke refers to Latour’s article on the pasteurization of France as an example of interaction of the two types of knowledges. Think of Pasteur as a politician, constantly enrolling other actors into his network. He does this by mobilizing interests in the vernacular of those he wishes to enroll (the concept of translation). Eventually, “Pasteur” becomes a single-point actor. Pasteur becomes more than a person. Accordingly, I declare my intention to use ANT itself as part of the translation and enrollment process to produce a postdramaturgical actor-network.

Theoretical Framework (Third Strand) – Historiography

In performing research on budget making, it is important for me to be cautious about reliance on recorded history. The two concepts of “history” and “the past” are not the same, and assumptions about the essence of budget making phenomena have to be made clear since the past is not ontologically available (Jenkins, 1995; Munslow, 2010). Versions of the past are only understandable through traces that may be uncovered during the research (e.g., through direct observation of budget meetings and review of budget

texts) and interpretation of those traces. My thesis is influenced by the present, and the present's prevailing (but shifting and multiple) view of the past. In recognizing this influence, I avoid the common positivist understanding of the past, and posit that this research is "influenced by dominant versions of the past and interactions with those versions" (Corrigan & Mills, 2012a, p. 253). *Budget Theatre* attempts to answer the call for a *historic turn* in organization theory (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006) by paying attention to what entities have been successful in enrolling financial resources, and what has not been adequately funded in the municipal budget. Indeed, what fails to get funding is of great interest if one wishes to imagine history as a performance, and one which contributes to seeing *the budget* as a multiple object.

Burke (2012, p. 148) tells of the need to reconstruct a "vision of the vanquished" and of how Trotsky "consigned losers to the dustbin of history"; for example, successive editions of the Soviet Encyclopaedia that "left out people, ideas and things that came to be regarded by the Party as politically incorrect, including of course Trotsky himself after his break with Stalin." In his book, *The Art of Conversation* (1993), Burke tries to understand the way historical language is differently presented, depending on who is speaking, on what occasion and on what topic. Bakhtin's (1981, p. 417) concept of "heteroglossia" supports this view by positing the principle of context over text. "Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another. These mutual reflections determine their character. Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication... The utterance is

filled with dialogic overtones” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 91). From this, it seems evident that utterances of the past are closely connected to the processes of interaction between actors.

At various times there will be various conditions, such as social and historical conditions, that instill a diversity of voices in the interpretation of the past. This sentiment poses similar questions in the case of Halifax budget making where elected officials perform the budget while standing in front of a microphone with the television cameras running. I treat language as an integral part of Halifax’s budget history. The idea of the importance of language supports the ontological basis for adding ANT and a modern historiography as elements of postdramaturgy. For example, budget making is translated and inscribed through communication techniques of appointed managers and political oration of elected officials. There develops *centres of translation* where network elements are defined and organized, and strategies for translation are contemplated (Crawford, 2005; Wittgenstein, 1963). City managers use enrollment devices such as colourful graphs showing a history of city debt, charts that illustrate percentage increases in operating department budget allotments, and PowerPoint slides reminding the Councillors of legal restrictions placed on them by legislation as well as self-inflicted constraints. These devices purport to explain the effect of the municipal budget on the taxpayer, although there is no such unitary body that is “the taxpayer”. The communication tactics can be seen as “possible terrain for historians [but I interject that the term ‘historians’ is problematic, and this will be dealt with in Chapter 4] who are concerned with speaking and listening as well as with reading and writing” (Koenigsberger, 1996, p. 550).

In Peter Burke's public lecture at the University of London, on November 9, 2010, he said that in writing about the history of knowledge, it is "all too easy to adopt a triumphalistic tone". The Halifax budget and setting of the tax rate is often seen by the elected Municipal Council as a triumphant achievement, but really is just one combination of alternative plans in a historical milieu. My thesis suggests that performances which appear to be timeless – gathering knowledges, analysing, disseminating and employing knowledges – are in fact time-bound. Burke's (2012, p. 204) analogy of reading historical sources "against the grain", or what is basically a search for what he calls "voices from the edge" is used in *Budget Theatre* to search for multiple voices in the Halifax budget making drama. I looked for what may appear to be trivial actor involvement that nevertheless serves to establish the Halifax budget as being a black boxed entity (Latour, 1987), that is, how it has come to act as a single point actor, thus representing the complex relations which it has come to represent (Law, 1992). Durepos (2006) demonstrates that the unity of an organization breaks-down once a history is considered. However, history does not always break down a black box; sometimes its consideration strengthens it. The question is... whose history? Trivial involvement yet important dramatic consequences can be seen, for example, in the case of elected municipal councillors who are often the recipients of accolades or derision resulting from the tabling of the annual capital budget which may provoke civic constituents to be overjoyed at a capital plan to newly pave their street, or to be annoyed at having a solid waste treatment facility built near to their residence. Reading the capital budget against the grain revealed that the municipal councillors are often bit players in

the budget preparation, usually having no knowledge of the capital projects prior to public presentation by management. Their public performances suggest otherwise.

The inscribed text (the budget book) is prepared by collective staff writing² although authorship is often attributed to the Halifax Councillors who perhaps are directors but never write anything.

It has often been observed that writers of history are generally prejudiced in favour of winners and losers. This criticism has also been levelled at ANT (Corrigan & Mills, 2012a; Hunter & Swan, 2007). The telling of history may be overly focussed on impressive events and, in the case of Halifax budget making, the process often gives undeserved sole credit (or undeserved sole blame) to the City Manager or Mayor. This propensity toward the veneration of heroes – i.e., uncovering the network of the most powerful actor situated at the top of the hierarchy – seems to be inconsistent with poststructural foundations that attempt to describe actor-networks as the product of heterogeneous sources. However, this does not have to be the case. The variant of ANT used for the *Budget Theatre* must be concerned to show how both material and human agents enroll one another. Postdramaturgy extends the research gaze beyond those at the top of the municipal bureaucratic hierarchy. The less privileged human actors include the rest of the Council, taxpayers, teenagers who play hockey in the civic arenas, purveyors of history in the local museum, and criminals who are more likely to get caught when the police budget gets additional money resources.

² See (Callon & Latour, 1981, p. 278) who describe the Leviathan, an actor that links disparate other actors, and becomes the authorized voice, the “person who says what the others are, what they want and what they are worth, accountant of all debts... opinions, judgments and currency”. Also, see Ellingson’s (2005) discussion of team writing which constitutes a form of communication in the clinic, always forcing decisions as to what will be inscribed in patient files (the semi-permanent memory of the clinic).

History can be used by a postdramaturgical researcher to help consider private assemblages – an important aspect of dramaturgical circumspection and search for the backstage. The use of different kinds of language helps to reveal personal agendas and shed light on the dramaturgical loyalty of actors. Koenigsberg (1996, p. 550) states, “Even very elusive things deserve consideration; for the conversational pauses, vocal intonations and the identities of communicants who say little or nothing can be important... hidden things can be especially expressive. Historians even need to be aware... as actors have always known, the way that you speak something adds to the sense of what is spoken.” Although Goffman’s (1955) notion of face work and impression management sets out the behavioural materials (e.g., gestures, posture, clothing and verbal statements), postdramaturgy extends beyond the immediate face-to-face social interaction that is central to Goffman’s empirical work.

This dissertation includes a robust discussion of knowledge loss (see Chapter 4). Peter Burke’s (2010) public lecture at the University of London, entitled *Loss and Gain: The Social History of Knowledge*, focused on the loss of knowledges. I believe this concept informs ideas of the backstage where Goffman claims that a more authentic self is performed. Part of the motivation of activity in Halifax budget making is the need to engage in “facework” (Goffman, 1955), to deal with stigmatization or to erase inconvenient truths. For example, successive reports provided to the Municipal Council sometimes omit material previously deemed important. From time to time budget “bartering” takes place among Councillors in an offstage area – exchange transactions involving budget dollars. But knowledge loss may also be part of the activity in the front region; for example, a decision by the Mayor or Council to cut-off further speakers in a

public hearing process, or limiting speeches by Councillors to only three minutes, after which their microphones are automatically switched-off by the audio system's countdown timer. Also, lengthy Halifax budget meetings are condensed into just a couple pages of recorded minutes (the Municipal Clerk gets the leading role in determining what excerpts are deemed worthy to be recorded as archived history). Hiding knowledges includes the frequent practice of the Halifax Council to hold private "in camera" meetings. This issue is the source of controversy among individual Councillors and with the news media that is denied access to the most titillating stories. Censorship also takes modern-day forms such as the use of computer "firewalls" to block access to information technology networks for the sake of security. There is also the problematic departure of knowledgeable people who are not able to pass on everything they know to others. Tacit knowledge is particularly vulnerable to loss. It disappears with individuals who die, retire or when the Municipal Council loses its continuity as electoral displacement occurs when members are defeated by voters (or, rather, defeated by an extremely low proportion of eligible voters). At the *Loss and Gain* public lecture, Professor Simon Dawes conducted an interesting discussion with Peter Burke (podcast interview, 2010). The following exchange provides an inspiration for my dissertation, both in the question and answer:

Dawes: How possible is it to demonstrate what counts as knowledge or ignorance in any given context? Just because a state secret is officially hidden, for example, doesn't mean the public don't know about it.

Likewise, knowledge that is in the open can be interpreted in various ways, suggesting the possibility of multiple truths or knowledges.

Burke: The idea of hiding needs to be approached sociologically, to discuss what is hidden to whom. Rather than the dichotomy hidden/revealed, it is more illuminating to think in terms of what is more or less accessible, more or less widely-known.

This idea will be developed as a further contribution of this dissertation in the historiography discussion in Chapter 4. Postdramaturgy makes the assumption that processes of knowledge-losing (which includes hiding knowledges) is a central, albeit unstated, feature of budget making.

Prologue – the Story of a City Manager, and Motivation for Budget Theatre

As author of this thesis, it is important for me to declare my own subjectivity. Above I indicated that the research would use observation as a data collection method. Planning for the fieldwork called for detachment on my part as researcher but I have to explicitly recognize that I am in no way an innocent observer in this research project. As Bryman et al. (2011) explain, most researchers would take the view that ethnography minus the participation does not qualify for the label *participant observation*. Using Bryman's definition I did not actively "participate" in the field work, but still held a privileged view as a result of direct previous involvement in municipal administration. This included management positions at the City of Dartmouth (Deputy City Treasurer, Director of Corporate Planning, and Dartmouth City Manager) as well as performing in the role of chief financial officer of Halifax, a position known as Commissioner of Corporate Services. I also served on several municipal organizations including membership on the Dartmouth Library Board, the Dartmouth Board of Police

Commissioners and as Chair of the Halifax Pension Trustees. Advice given by me as Dartmouth City Manager to the elected City Council was often given in public session – a performance – with news media inscribing their interpretations of the exchange. Perhaps most important for my motivation to write a history to be known as *Budget Theatre*, I headed the Halifax budget process and was responsible for preparation and presentation of its \$650 million annual operating budget to the Halifax Council. Therefore, although I did not technically act as participant observer in this study, I have previously “gone native” (Prasad, 2005, p. 83). I ask my audience to accept me as both an insider and an outsider. As an insider, I attended (and stage managed) for 15 years every budget meeting of Halifax and one of its predecessor actors, the City of Dartmouth. As outsider, I continued to attend Halifax budget meetings in a researcher role (still stage managing?) for the three year period explored by this dissertation.

To be faithful to the tradition of dramaturgy, I believe the research itself has to exhibit a certain level of dramatic performance which my grounding as a past participant should facilitate. In any case, it might be difficult for me to be genuinely an unobtrusive observer. In addition to the previously mentioned high-profile positions in municipal administration, I have also served as Vice President, Finance of Saint Mary’s University, and was previously the President of the Certified General Accountants of Nova Scotia. Certainly I am a well-known character in the Halifax business community. No hiding in the wings would be possible for me at Halifax City Hall. As I immersed myself into this study of municipal actors I have to account for Mead’s (1934) theatre of the mind where the individual is also the audience of one’s own performance. Perhaps my situated position has added to the richness of the discoveries in *Budget Theatre* but in any case

has been a major motivator for the crafting of this dissertation. My experiences convince me as to the theatricality of municipal budget making.

Brief Outline of the Chapters

The following three chapters of this thesis rehearse a (necessarily) selective “sampling” of management thought (i.e., sampling as in the process of taking musical phrases from one recording and adapting them to another score; not sampling as in multivariate statistics) from the literatures dealing with dramaturgy (Chapter 2), Actor-network Theory & After (Chapter 3), and historiography (Chapter 4). These literatures are considered from the point of view of budget making of an exemplar organization, the Halifax Regional Municipality. Then a methodological coalition is proposed to produce a new research approach which I call postdramaturgy (Chapter 5). This is followed by multiple performances that use postdramaturgy to study empirical aspects of municipal budget making (Chapter 6) as well as further empirical study that considers the capacity of postdramaturgy for critique (Chapter 7). Concluding thoughts are then provided (Chapter 8) which reflect upon postdramaturgy and its potential for application in future research work. I also attempt to take advantage of my previous experiences as a city manager (and budget maker) by proposing some implications of postdramaturgy for practice in the not-for-profit sector.

Summary

In summary, this dissertation is a performance – one that suggests to its audience that an alternative method for studying organizations is possible. Postdramaturgy makes

several methodological contributions which respond to three academic calls that I believe to be mutually reinforcing: (1) the call to take more seriously the methodological underpinning of Goffman's dramaturgy; (2) the call to engage in ontological politics when applying Actor-network Theory; and (3) the call for a historic turn in management and organization studies. Overall, this qualitative doctoral research is inspired by the concept of theatre, played-out as internal dramas and public dramas. The research methodology entails an acceptance of the theatricality of organization. This thesis is also informed by ANT literature as well as a historiographic perspective. The data gathering methodology reveals dramatic performances in organizational contexts where individuals co-create their social reality. This dissertation also traces the assembly of networks and observes performance, including observations about the physical site and its actants.

Dramaturgical analysis as well as ANT analysis requires that research data be viewed with the same type of scepticism that organizational historians apply as they search for "truth" in texts purporting to describe the past. An important nuance related to my dissertation is that internet data may be particularly relevant since the internet itself is one of the live theatre stages of interest in my research. Observers of the social, and particularly of municipal organizations, can agree with at least some of the sentiment expressed by the melancholy Jaques in *Shakespeare's As You Like It* – "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players". The value of my thesis will be in theorizing a coalition of research methods, coined postdramaturgy, and in helping to explain the complex dynamics of municipal budget making – in a way that reveals the drama in what may otherwise be uncritically constituted as mundane administration.

Chapter 2: Dramaturgy

Introduction – Symbolic Resources

Erving Goffman is unquestionably the leading figure in the formation of the dramaturgical perspective. The words *Goffman* and *dramaturgy* seem to be interchangeable in the MOS literature. ANT scholars would be inclined to diagnose this as a black-boxed situation where one is able to stand-in for the other. Goffman is thus not just a (deceased) human being³ – but also a way of thinking about the social world.

Goffman has been promoted as “the most influential American^[4] sociologist of the twentieth century” (Fine & Manning, 2003, p. 34), although Baert (1998) claims that for an extended period of time social theorists have not given sufficient attention to Goffman's dramaturgical sociology. Baert believes that one of the reasons for this neglect includes a critique that “his work lacks a consistent theoretical frame of reference. His work is descriptive. At best, the theory is implicit in it; at worst, the theory is absent”. Manning notes that dramaturgical theory could benefit from a greater number of organizational theorists taking Goffman’s work seriously. Manning (2008, p. 677) states, “In my view, there has been little progress in Goffman-based work in the last 25 years because Goffman’s ideas have been instanced as illustrating this or that theory rather than a brilliant, unique and masterful evocation of the central dilemma – posed as a question – of modern life: what do we owe each other?”

³ In an actor-network sense, Goffman’s black-boxed stature can be compared to that of *Pasteur* who’s translation (and interpretation) of the anthrax disease in France was achieved and maintained by “dramatic proofs that Pasteur staged in his long career” (Latour, 1983, p. 151).

⁴ Goffman is frequently put in an “American” black box. This appropriation overlooks the inconvenient fact of his Canadian citizenship. Goffman was born in Alberta in 1922.

Dramaturgy, a research tradition which grew from Goffman's (1959, 1963a, 1974) notion of public social performances, relies upon the metaphor of the theatre. Dramaturgy accepts not only a fundamental belief in the theatricality of social life but also resonates with dramatic elements that are integral to management and organization. In employing this model, Goffman explicitly acknowledged that the symbols of theatre are used only in metaphor mode (1959). Goffman recognizes that the make-believe and well-rehearsed attributes of the theatre may be far removed from social interaction, especially considering the proclivities of an active audience. Notwithstanding technical limits, scholars have used dramaturgy to expose (and adjust for) weaknesses of strictly empirical and instrumental emphases so that we can learn from the symbolic resources that dramaturgy provides.

Contrary to what might have been expected, there was not an outpouring of support for Goffman's dramaturgical concepts after his death in 1982. A *Goffman School* has never developed and those using a dramaturgical approach (even though implicitly admitting to its influence) would probably not see their work as a contribution to, or continuation of, Goffman's work (Fine & Manning, 2003). However, Mangham and Overington (Mangham, 1990, 1996a; Mangham & Overington, 1987) kept the flame alive and during the past 10+ years an academic interest in the relationship between theatre and organizations has increased (e.g., Biehl-Missal, 2012; Boje, Luhman, & Cunliffe, 2003; Corvellec & O'Dell, 2012; Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010; Hajer, 2005; Paolucci & Richardson, 2006; Schreyägg & Häpfl, 2004). I agree with Czarniawska-Joerges and Jacobsson (1995, p. 378) that Goffman's body of work is "too rich and too ambiguous for anyone to give it an unequivocal interpretation". My commitment to the

heterogeneous nature of ANT and critical historiography will help me refrain from claiming anything that might be seen as unequivocal as I join the resurgence of interest in dramaturgy and offer my *postdramaturgy* thesis as a contribution toward progress on Goffman's ideas.

Antecedent Influences

Trying to get a read on antecedent influences upon Goffman's dramaturgy is somewhat akin to trying to get a read on the body of work itself – the literary nature of the writing results in multiple possible readings. Goffman himself did not provide much assistance in this regard; he disliked categorization of authors, avoided overarching theories, preferred to not speak about his methods and seldom acknowledged a debt to predecessor influences, gave few interviews, did not write personal papers that may have provided clues, and he rejected paradigmatic labels that others would place on him (Baert, 1998; Fine & Manning, 2003; Pettit, 2011). Nevertheless, it seems possible to identify three important philosophical foundations leading to Goffman's dramaturgy outlined as Chart 1.

No doubt it would be possible to identify more than three foundations in the chart below. As I reflect upon my ability as author to select what traces count as being antecedent, it has to be said that such selections would always be problematic. I reach for "seminal" works that will be generally accepted but have to recognize that general acceptability is an elusive fantasy.

Chart 1

Philosophical foundations of dramaturgy

	Central concepts	Seminal published work
George Herbert Mead 1863-1931	The Self (Theatre of the mind)	Mind, Self and Society (1934)
Kenneth Burke 1897-1993	Dramatism (The pentad and ratios)	Permanence and Change (1935) Grammar of Motives (1945)
Herbert Blumer 1900-1987	Symbolic Interactionism (Role taking and identity)	Social Psychology (1937) Symbolic Interactionism (1969)
Erving Goffman 1922-1982	Dramaturgy (Presentation of self, spoiled identities, framing)	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959) Stigma (1963) Frame Analysis (1974)

George Herbert Mead

As indicated above, Goffman rarely gave intellectual credit to forerunners in the development of dramaturgy. George Herbert Mead was one of the exceptions. Goffman specifically mentions (though en passant, and immediately downplaying the relationship) that the concept of strategic interaction is “close to Meadian social psychology and to what has come to be called ‘symbolic interaction’ ... yet it is quite doubtful that there are significant historical connections between the two types of analysis” (Goffman, 1969, p. 171). Scholars of dramaturgy provide a convincing case that Mead indeed laid the foundation that Goffman built upon (Baert, 1998; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Manning, 2005; Mitchell, 1978). Mead’s seminal publication, *Mind, Self and Society* (1934) conceptualized the self and explicitly recognized the role-playing capacity of the self. Meadian roles that people play in society are “first rehearsed in the *theatre of the mind* and later performed in the *theatre of life*” (Czarniawska-Joerges & Jacobsson, 1995, p.

377). Manning (2005) argues that Goffman's dramaturgy helps make evident what is going on in the mind by focusing on observable face-to-face interaction.

Mead's concept of the self implies a duality which he called the "I" and the "me". The *I* is more in the form of impromptu performance. This included natural expression arising from Mead's propensity to refer to biologic drives, for example attacking prey to secure food, furious flight from danger, and engaging in sexual activities. Mead even refers to the *I* as the "biologic individual" (1934, p. 347). The biologic *I* would seem to have the capacity to wreak havoc on the social world. This is where the *me* comes in – what Mitchell (1978, p. 38) calls "the sum of a history of social responses to the expressions of the 'I'." As a social control device, the *me* helps the *I* experience the social, anticipate the experiences of other actors, and have "imaginative capacity... to move between multiple situationally variable 'me's' in what constitutes freedom and maneuverability in relation to established roles" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 988). Therefore, one can be the audience of one's own performance, and the self is a product of the performance in a necessarily social milieu rather than existing *prima facie*.

Goffman's reliance on G. H. Mead's concept of the self is strikingly evident in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman, 1959, p. 244), where two basic parts of the self are reported – the "all-too-human" self, and the "performer" which is concerned to manage impressions. The negotiation of Goffman's implied *I* and the implied *me*, a dynamic self, brings out the requirement for interaction in specific social situations that results in a conclusion (similar to Mead's thesis) that a multiplicity of selves exist (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Dramaturgical performance of the self further depends on Mead's insistence that the social situation will be a key determinate of the

self that is presented and perceived by others. Goffman refers to this extensively in *Frame Analysis* (1974) which posits that reality is determined by an individual's "definition of the situation" (p. 1-2). Although Goffman states that the individual may not create the definition of the situation, the individual is still seen as reflective and constantly interacting with surroundings. The unity of the self (being pushed and pulled by conflicting *I* and *me*) requires what Mead called the generalized other – being able to take the perspective of an overall social group. Baert (1998, p. 77) explains that Mead's generalized other "is indeed a sine qua non for the successful masking and presenting of the self". Thus, social actors require shared meaning to theatrically manage impressions.

Kenneth Burke

Goffman's dramaturgy as explained in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) also built upon ideas developed by Kenneth Burke (Fine & Manning, 2003; Mangham, 1996b; Merelman, 1969). Burke's "dramatistic⁵ model of human behaviour" suggested that people express themselves as do stage actors. Burke was concerned to show that mechanistic models are not adequate to explain the social which cannot be seen as absolute. Rather, behaviour is to be treated as dramatistic with actors taking roles in relation to each other (Merelman, 1969). Burke's major contribution was elaborated in *Permanence & Change* (1935) and *A Grammar of Motives* (1945) which highlight symbolic action as the essential activity of actors. Drama is used as a literal model, not analogically, to explore and describe details of the situation using two basic notions: (1) the pentad – five elements to analyze a specific situation. These include act, scene,

⁵ The nomenclature has resulted in similar-sounding names (dramatism and dramaturgy) with some fundamental differences. Both embrace the notion of drama and the performance of actors.

agent, agency and purpose. The five elements of the pentad are taken as the necessary foundation for any dramatic analysis of a social situation. The research interest in pentad analysis is often applied to an act constituted by a momentous event. This does not have to be the case. The pentad is also applicable to mundane transactions such as a budget reconciliation process or a meeting of a municipal finance committee.

(2) ratios – the relationship between the five pentadic elements is also crucial. The ratio (or relationship) must be explored to complete the dramatic analysis. As Prasad (2005, p. 54) explains, “dramatism shares with hermeneutics a deep concern for the wholeness of any situation”. This view of the theatricality of organizing informed Goffman’s dramaturgical perspective. Burke insisted that social communication is always done in context and this notion has been extended in dramaturgical analysis. Both Burke and Goffman focused on description rather than explanation and causation.

Although sharing an abiding concern for drama, the Burkian approach differs from that of Goffman. “Burke writes as a philosopher and a literary critic and Goffman writes as an ethnographer and social psychologist. One is concerned more with details of a method for analysis; the other builds the empirical basis for a social psychology” (Merelman, 1969, p. 89). The different orientation results in a significant difference relating to their knowledge claims. Burke was more universalistic in his claims (Merelman, 1969) while Goffman takes a more micro approach which always is replete with nuanced observations and at times bordering on carnivalesque attitude⁶.

⁶ Goffman had a propensity to string together seemingly disparate strands of thought and a carnival of illustrations. For example, in clarifying what he saw as a common conceptual confusion about abstract categorization, a single paragraph in *Stigma* refers to a host of marginalized individuals: the divorced, the aged, the obese, the physically handicapped, the colostomied, ex-addicts, criminals, prostitutes, homosexuals, alcoholics, and other shamed groups and tribally stigmatized persons (Goffman, 1963b, p. 34-35).

In contrast to Burke, Goffman was cautious against appearing to present drama as culture-free.

Herbert Blumer

As indicated in the introductory chapter, dramaturgy is often associated with symbolic interactionism⁷ and the foundational work of Herbert Blumer, especially as represented by the assembly of papers in *Symbolic Interactionism; perspective and method* (Blumer, 1969). The *interactionist dimension* refers to the human capacity to adopt the attitude of other people. The social self negotiates this interactionist dimension by leveraging symbols, including language and non-verbal signs. The *symbolic dimension* comes into play because of shared knowledge that allows for interactions to have meaning, going back to what Mead called *significant gestures* and *significant communication* (Mead, 1934). For example, municipal councillors are all able to make the same arithmetic calculations to determine that planned expenditures may exceed planned revenue (a deficit budget) and this sets the stage for debate and different conceptions about the merits of such a situation. Other elements of the philosophy of Mead are evident in Blumer's conceptual framework. This includes the dynamic characteristics of the theatre of the mind where individuals have selves that are capable of self-interaction for the purposes of strategically planning one's interactions with others.

There are different versions of symbolic interactionism, however that of Blumer is generally known for three central ideas (Snow, 2001, p. 367):

⁷ According to the Sage Handbook of Social Science Methodology, the term "Symbolic Interactionism" was coined by Herbert Blumer in 1937.

- (1) that people act toward things, including each other, on the basis of the meanings they have for them;
- (2) that these meanings are derived through social interaction with others;
- (3) that these meanings are managed and transformed through an interpretive process that people use to make sense of and handle the objects that constitute their social worlds.

The symbolic interactionist tradition has no single theory that defines it. Rather, it is a general attempt, like dramaturgy, to understand the social through the micro-analysis (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). For Blumer, objects are not imbued with meaning; he argued that the meaning of an object depends on how a self tends to act towards it. Thus, seeing the municipal budget as a future-oriented plan with various potential outcomes enables the municipal finance staff to be understood if they refer to the budget as “the estimates”. This tendency may be maintained by practices such as oft-repeated use of the word “estimate” in the working papers given to the Council. However, the practice may also be modified, for example, if others see the budget as a specific directive rather than an estimate and are prepared to seek penalties if the budget is not carried-out exactly as approved.

There are several justifications for linking Goffman's dramaturgy with symbolic interactionism. Both approaches avoid an appeal to environmental imperatives to predict the social. Both take the interaction pattern among selves to be the basic point of interest. In this, theatrical role-playing is required. Both Blumer and Goffman emphasize the ability of persons to rehearse their actions and manipulate their social situation. However,

there are also significant dissimilarities. Goffman declined to see himself as a symbolic interactionist. In comparison to Blumer's "ambitious claims" (Baert, 1998, p. 76), Goffman was very reluctant to assert any theoretical frame of reference – even though this has often been taken as a fundamental flaw in his sociology (a comment by Czarniawska (2006, p. 1667) is telling in this regard: "there are no traces of a 'grand narrative' in Goffman's work, neither progress nor decline"). Overall, Goffman's dramaturgy does seem to share some common attributes with symbolic interactionism but it also contains ingredients that give it a distinctive flavour. The ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin that distinction are discussed in the next section.

Philosophical Assumptions about the Nature of Dramaturgy

Goffman's dramaturgy does not seem to take an extreme ontological position. Dramaturgy implies a subjectively-based nominalism while in some ways also approaching an objective attitude toward realism. As indicated above, the tradition of dramaturgy draws from a concept of the self, derived from the philosophy of Mead in which society is theorized as being prior to self. However, the self is capable of creativity, with the self continually crafting performances. This allows dramaturgy to engage with the subjectivist problematic that would have reality as something that is symbolically constructed as human beings interact with each other (and with non-human objects, albeit without the objects having agency as they would in ANT). The emphasis of dramaturgy is on interpretation and impression management. Goffman seemed to be obsessed with interaction in situations. He avoided analysis that begins with a given set of multivariate-based hypotheses, statistical inferences, or anything that purports to shape

interaction a priori (Manning, 2008), for example, gender, religion, or a singular history. Mead's work laid the framework for challenging and moving away from a positivist epistemology (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). A more positivist view would have given priority to the methods of the natural sciences and from that would follow the idea that researchers of the social should seek to infer general laws from their observations. These laws would have to be concerned to both explain and predict. The analogy of the theatre, with stage-acting from a script, may lead to a such a realist picture of the social as predetermined but this does not seem to be the case in Goffman's dramaturgy. Actors often depart from their assigned lines, and even if they do follow a script they may also be the author of that script. Goffman did not make overarching truth claims. "His was a sociology based on the premise that world reality was fragile, changing, uncertain, vulnerable, and always, always mediated" (Lemert & Branaman, 1997, p. xxxvii). Therefore, Goffman was not as open as (other?) symbolic interactionists to objectivist assumptions that posit that reality is a concrete given, something that imposes itself on society as a powerful external force that results in observable and measurable effects. Since dramaturgy sees the social world as a delicate, changeable thing, researchers in that mode are less free to subscribe to realism.

While the preceding discussion casts Goffman in the role of subjectivist, it would be a mistake to ignore his objectivist leanings. As stated by Becker (2003, p. 668) "it is not often appreciated to what degree Goffman was a serious empiricist, even perhaps what might be called (in some meaning of the term) a positivist". Dramaturgy assumes an empirical reality somewhat akin to theatrical stage settings that constrain what occurs in various scenes, or as described in *Frame Analysis* (p. 566-567) where one can imagine a

large number of potential moves by the players in a chess match, but the rules of the game and the 64 squares on the chessboard environmentally constrict the reality of the interaction (the bishop will always move diagonally; the rook always in a straight line). Goffman's writings seem to exhibit a variety of managerialist tendencies, such as placing a high value on evidence, an intense interest with categorization and naming, exhibiting a suspicion of speculative claims, and believing that "all organisms... make use of information collected from the immediate environment so as to respond effectively to what is going on around them" (1969, p. 13). In a 1980 interview, Goffman said he was "a structural functionalist in the traditional sense" and "a positivist basically" (quoted in Verhoeven, 1993, p. 318 and 325). In the dramaturgical tradition this outlook manifests itself in the sense of being attached to some form of reality since "utterances – whether formal or informal – are anchored in the surrounding, ongoing world" (Goffman, 1974, p. 500). This notion of anchoring is extensively discussed in *Frame Analysis* where activities are anchored in the reality of their frame. Thus, to the accountant in Halifax's budget department, the approved 349-page budget book for the 2013/14 fiscal year can be "framed" as a professional accomplishment; whereas to the clerk in a nearby office, that same object (the budget book) may be an excellent doorstep to prevent the door from slamming shut when a window is open.

Above I have rehearsed contrary arguments that would designate a nominalist view of dramaturgy as well as arguments that describe a realist view. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 75) Mead's antecedent concept of the mind and self "drives mid-way between the idealist view of society as a subjectively constructed entity and a biological view which ignores the influence of the social aspects of human development".

Burrell and Morgan (1979) discuss dramaturgy as being located in the functionalist paradigm, although in the least objectivist fringe of the paradigm. Cunliffe (2011) similarly shows dramaturgy in a position mid-way along a subjectivist-objectivist continuum (but more generously toward subjectivism) of her topology or “knowledge problematic” (p. 655). The position of dramaturgy, in Cunliffe’s topology, leans toward interpretivism since human actors see reality as a territory of symbolic discourse.

The Tools of Dramaturgy

Goffman extensively used the jargon of theatre and called upon numerous dramaturgical terms and metaphors to expound on the presentation of self in everyday social situations. For purposes of this thesis the following dramaturgical tools are of importance: performance, audience, regions, teams, and impression management.

Performance may be thought of an enrollment activity, i.e., all acting which serves to influence other participants. Performances involve the efforts of individuals toward convincing others (and themselves) that their claims are genuine. Goffman (1959, p. 32) defines performance as “the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his [sic] continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers”. Components of the performance include several elements. *Dramatic realization* is the process whereby individuals infuse their activity during an interaction with signs to more convincingly, or overtly, convey “facts” that otherwise might remain ambiguous. For example, the Halifax Chief Administrative Officer and budget staff arrive at a public budget meeting with armloads of reports, computer printouts and calculators. These are mostly ignored during the actual budget

meeting but nevertheless demonstrate due diligence and painstaking work that must have produced that pile of documentation. Such activity can be considered a mobilization effort more explicitly treated in actor-network theory. For the budget team's recommendations to be implemented they must mobilize activity to support their performance. *Idealization* is the tendency of actors to present "officially accredited values" (Goffman, 1959, p. 45) for their audience to witness, perhaps involving a concealment of performance that may be inconsistent with the idealized standards. Goffman (1959, p. 29) speaks of his experience observing "sympathetic patients in mental wards [who] will sometimes feign bizarre symptoms so that student nurses will not be subjected to a disappointingly sane performance". The capacity for idealization can be seen as a ceremonial performance. This may be maintained by segregation of the audience or at least a lack of symmetry in the availability of information. Idealization is also enhanced by the use of status symbols. For example, the municipal budget process has an idealized standard for due process and a desire for oversight by elected officials. Therefore, the role of the elected officials is consistently celebrated through signatures on budget documentation, introductory speeches by the Mayor and the elected Chair of the Budget Committee (both of whom have very little to do with the writing of the accounts), and all-round congratulations for dutiful public service for the benefit of those at home watching the televised budget proceedings. Actors rely on *expressive control* to keep inconsistent understandings from disrupting the performance. As Goffman (1959, p. 59) puts it, "performers commonly attempt to exert a kind of synecdochic responsibility, making sure that as many as possible of the minor events in the performance... will occur in such a way as to convey either no impression or an impression that is compatible and

consistent with the over-all definition of the situation that is being fostered”. Because theatricality requires acceptance of performed cues, and because these are vulnerable to misuse, *misrepresentation* is possible. Goffman states, however, that the distinction between a true and a false performance concerns not only the actual performance but also whether or not the performer is authorized to give the performance. The importance of dramatic misrepresentation is that a false interaction sustained by an actor, if discovered or suspected by the audience, may be a threat to the whole performance of which the interaction is only one part. Finally, *mystification* involves the maintenance of rituals, and in the case of budget making, professionalization. These help create an appreciative audience in admiration of the performance. “Restrictions placed upon contact, the maintenance of social distance, provide a way in which awe can be generated and sustained in the audience – a way, as Kenneth Burke has said, in which the audience can be held in a state of mystification in regard to the performer” (Goffman, 1959, p. 74). The budget manager has impressive control of an awe-inspiring vernacular that includes imposing technical language such as debits, credits, deficits, discount rates, fixed overhead allocations, debentures and fiscal reserves. Furthermore, the budget manager at Halifax Regional Municipality is a “CMA” – Certified Management Accountant – which supports the impression of ideal qualifications for the role. Goffman (1959, p. 55) notes that there is a “rhetoric of training... whereby [accounting] licensing bodies require practitioners to absorb a mystical range and period of training... in part to foster the impression that the licensed practitioner is someone who has been reconstituted by his learning experience and is now set apart”. In budget making, the manufacturing of awe gives the budget presenters some room to manoeuvre (narrowing the social distance to

the “superior” status of the municipal councillors) so that the budget presenters can foster the impression that has been scripted.

Impressions are scripted for the benefit of an *audience*. Hatch et al. (2010, p. 15) posit that an early conception of theatre developed as an art practice from storytelling rituals, and they ask us to “keep in mind about storytelling is that it requires both a teller and listener; thus, like drama, both an audience and an actor are necessary”. The notion of audience sharply distinguishes Goffman’s on-stage dramaturgy from G. H. Mead’s more internally-focused theatre of the mind. Goffman explored numerous face to face situations where actors contend for the attention and ultimately for the approval of an audience.

Theatre atmosphere can be noisy. It includes mostly appreciative outward signals such as applause or shouts of bravo. However, booing and heckling is also possible, as is the neutral, albeit annoying, propensity of audience members to forget to turn off their cellphones. The audience in the Halifax Council Chamber on budget day is normally quiet (with the occasional catcall or a subtle note passed to a councillor). Protocol requires the audience to behave and a sergeant at arms is on hand at all times. Boje et al. (2004, p. 767) discuss behaviour clues that are administered with closure techniques such as “strong cultural norms that guide the behavior of theatre goers: pay for admission; dress up to see and be seen by the other patrons; do not interact at all with the events on the stage; [and] that all critical interaction was taboo”. But there is often a delayed response from the municipal audience sometime after the official budget day show is over. Individuals and groups begin to understand that the budget rhetoric often translates

into higher taxes and/or changed services. Also, various understandings of the budget surface through news media and social media.

Among qualitative researchers who are interested in applying Goffman's dramaturgy are those who have extended the boundary of the theatre metaphor to include the internet with its twitter verse, on-line video performances and other virtual platforms. For example, Hogan (2010) studied on-line presentation that departs from Goffman's situational approach (front and back stage) and instead focused on social media that frequently employs exhibitions (such as lists, statuses, photos, chat and blog commentary) and the moderating effects of virtual "curators" who amend and redistribute digital content. Lewis et al. (2008) explored on-line performances such as preserving privacy while presenting the self on Facebook. Internet activity is not restricted to simply watching; the self is available to the audience on demand and because of the reproducibility of content the original performer is not likely to ever see the audience. Hogan (2010, p. 379) provides a list of recent papers that use Goffman for investigating on-line interaction. It is evident that a lively academic conversation is underway about cyber drama and the potential contribution of dramaturgy. But Goffman's seminal dramaturgical concepts are problematic when applied to the new stage provided by the internet. For example, Goffman's audience is always a third party to the interaction enacted on the stage, i.e., if the performance were real, the audience would not actually be present (Goffman, 1959). On the internet stage, the audience is present, dynamic and interactive. The prominence of the concept of audience in Goffman's thinking is evident in the reading of any of his works. For example, the word "audience" is used 336 times in the 247 pages of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Postdramaturgy's audiences,

however, are not as submissive of Goffman's. Postdramaturgical audiences bring props and scripts of their own. The audience is able to use on-line tools to attract attention in the regions of social life.

According to Goffman the disposition of performances depends upon the segregation of social space into the *front region* and *backstage*. The front region is a physical space but also associated with personal fronts, or persona. The front region contains a variety of fixed equipment called a setting. The front region also features the fronts of human actors which include personal appearance, manner, clothing, badges, gender, race, age, gestures, voice, credentials, and a host of other insignia. Because team members cooperate before their audience (in the frontstage) they are primed as to how the performance is to be staged (Ellingson, 2005). Hence, the actors do not necessarily continue the same performance when away from the audience. The front region is the main theatre platform where the obvious performance is given and the script maintained. The back region is the place "where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course" (Goffman, 1959, p. 115). Dramaturgy has it that one's authentic self is usually found in the backstage of social life. The backstage is also a place where we hide a self that, if the audience witnessed it, may cause dramatic problems (Prasad, 2005). Goffman described several specific attributes of the backstage. It is a place where:

- illusions and impressions are openly constructed
- stage props and personal fronts can be stored away or repaired
- the cast can rehearse its performance, and fragile actors can be coached
- performers can step out of character since they are usually hidden from view

Even though there is a tendency for a territory to become identified as the front region or backstage, these spaces are sometimes overlapping or interchangeable. For example, at the Halifax municipal budget meetings, management needs to be vigilant as to whether the meeting room microphones are in fact turned off when the municipal councillors meet “in camera” (privately). Inadvertent audio feed to the media room would immediately spoil the budget performance promoted in the public forum. Goffman concedes that the metaphor of the front region and backstage is not a perfect fit for MOS. He adds a third region, a residual one named *the outside*, as all physical territory other than the front or back. One may wish to consider such spaces as in-the-wings or offstage.

The above discussion may appear highly individualistic. Goffman broadens involvement by introducing the concept of *team*. This refers to actors who co-operate to maintain a particular definition of a situation. According to Goffman, we are always playing one or more roles that are part of a team performance. The performances contribute to “organizational talk” (Thurlow & Helms Mills, 2009, p. 460) which may or may not become privileged and a player in the performance of organizational identity. A particular definition of a situation is dependent on a “bond of reciprocal dependence” (Goffman, 1959, p. 88) that enables the show to go on. Team characteristics include loyalty and competence by each of the actors involved, since a poor performance by one of them might have negative consequences for all (Baert, 1998). The intercession of teamwork creates a context in which communication in the front region and backstage are mutually reinforcing. Even if one of the actors knowingly gives the show away or forcing it toward a different direction, that actor is still part of the team such as would be the case if a municipal councillor breaks ranks, telling secrets learned in camera, or perhaps

reversing a private agreement to vote for an increase in taxes. When a team member makes such a blunder in the presence of an audience, the other team members often must suppress an instinct to punish or press to score a political point. Therefore, as in ANT, dramaturgical teams are loosely bound assemblages. The teams often have natural occurring boundaries (such as all councillors in the urban core of the municipality) that are somewhat stable but permeable. The municipal council also (re)forms its sub-teams depending on the issue. Thus, team members can suddenly (albeit temporarily) become hostile. Team formation may depend on existing hierarchy but actors at the lower end of the hierarchy may not be considered part of the team. The municipal clerk who is present for the entirety of every budget meeting is responsible for recording the proceedings. However, she is not considered part of the team or invited to speak; the Clerk is implicated in the team's performance, but generally ignored in the performance as if a non-person.

Goffman posited that the social may be usefully studied from the point of view of *impression management* where a team of performers collaborate to present to an audience a preferred definition of the situation. Goffman discusses the management of impressions in two streams: what we say and what we do. The former type of impression is information that we “give”, and is believed to be substantially under our control; those impressions that are communicated in what we do while we say things, i.e., the information that we “give off”, is believed to be less under control (Goffman, 1959, p. 16). Thus audiences have access to signs that the performer is unable to manage, and may use these signs as a check of expressive behaviour that is given from behind a mask. There is, therefore, “a fundamental asymmetry in the construction of situational

definitions which favours audiences; but since we are all audiences to each other's presentation, this becomes a balanced asymmetry upon which we can depend, in most circumstances, for mutual circumspection and charity. Such a circumstance, however, provides the opportunity not only for mutual support - team performances - but also for the conning and manipulation of others" (Mangham, 1996a, pp., p. 10). In municipal budget making, impression management involves balancing diverse demands and creating a "monopoly of credibility" (Neu & Wright, 1992, p. 645) with the municipal council, other institutional players such as the provincial government, and the general citizens. When impression management is successful, it exudes external legitimacy and allows the budget makers to maintain control over their claimed area of expertise. One example of impression management is the approved budget process voted on by the elected officials. When subsequent objections to budget allocations are inevitably raised by individual councillors or taxpayers, their suggestion and comments (even if primarily negative) draw-in the budget audience and create a dramaturgical loyalty (Benford & Hunt, 1992) to the budget process. In this case dramaturgical loyalty refers to allegiance to the budget process with its constructed definitions. Successful budget dramas require its performers to "act as if they have accepted certain moral obligations" i.e., they must display dramaturgical loyalty (Goffman 1959, p. 207). It requires commitment on the part of the actors to maintain confidentiality, to avoid criticisms of other team members so as to present an image of cohesiveness and if necessary to accept minor roles. However, municipal council members are notoriously uncommitted to dramaturgical loyalty – they prefer (and in Halifax the municipal by-laws support) an individualistic approach compared to provincial or federal politics.

Successful impression management in budget making also requires *dramaturgical circumspection*, the ability to prepare for performances in advance – building an agreed upon script (Goffman 1959). It is also important to be able to improvise an ongoing performance when unforeseen circumstances arise. Thus rather than strictly adhering to every detail of budget making scripts, municipal actors must be “adept at fashioning new performances out of the emergent scene” (Benford & Hunt, 1992, p. 46).

The dramaturgical tools of performance, audience, regions, teams and impression management are accomplished in relation to *frames*, which Goffman defined as social systems which govern the subjective meaning attributed to performances (Goffman, 1974). The way actors relate to others in a face to face interaction depends upon the way the interaction is framed. Goffman’s view, however, is that framing is often not securely attached to objective reality. Although the notion of framing implies an environment that is real, Goffman suggests that a genuine self is not one who performs one’s true inner reality, but rather one who performs “in such a way as to convince others that the apparent frame is in fact the actual one” (Goffman, 1974, p. 487) and he argues that the reality against which we judge unreality is itself a construction. In postdramaturgy the concept of impression management has the capability of helping us to understand construction of the self as an input to processes of enrollment that are central to ANT.

Actors are faced with a variety of potential inaccuracies and deceptions with regard to frames. It is assumed that these can be reconciled. But Goffman suggests that the selection and maintenance of frames is also subject to politics. Social power can be gathered through persistent misframing. Actors with a deficit of social power have little ability to counter frames applied to them. Such was the case in Halifax when the social

movement Occupy Nova Scotia (see Corrigan & Mills, 2012b) necessitated unbudgeted municipal expenditures as the social movement attempted territorialize a municipal park called the Grand Parade. Framing was used by the Mayor to render Occupy Nova Scotia unfit to occupy space in the Grand Parade. For example, in interviews on both of the major Canadian television networks, the Mayor used stigma to frame a story to explain the threat that the Movement presented. He framed the need for eviction with accusations of law-breaking; he referred to the camping by-law (which prevents tenting in municipal parks) nine times in a brief three-minute interview; Kelly told the reporter that he supports protest, but only “law abiding protest” (CBC News, November 11, 2011). This set the stage for the Mayor to mention, in the same interview, “the \$40,000 cost to taxpayers”.

The mayor also directly appealed to the demands of invisible *dramatis personae*, i.e., the public. Apparently, this entity (the public) had requested that the occupied space be given back. The public does not want it to be owned by one group over another, especially where the street-performance uses of the space are much different from what may be considered customary. Thus, the framing of the Occupy Nova Scotia situation undermined the performance and organizers of the Movement had to limit the intensity of its discreditable acts and disassociate the organization from embarrassing actions such as Occupiers urinating on the sidewalk. Such activities are liable to be framed as law-breaking and unfriendly to the municipal budget. Once the organization is judged to be incompetent or negligent, its arguments carry little weight in combating the judgment. The protests can be discounted and events can even be submitted as further evidence of the appropriateness of the frame. This vulnerability in social interaction makes it possible

for individuals and organizations to be contained in a “frame trap” (Goffman, 1974, p. 480).

Toward a Critical Dramaturgy

Earlier in this chapter a claim was made that few theorists have made an effort to reimagine dramaturgy and that there has not been much of a call to do so. The persistence of Goffman’s concepts may be a contributing factor to a dramaturgical tradition that seems less fragmented than some others such as phenomenology or feminism. However, applications of dramaturgy are still able to cover considerable ground (an ontological point that I count on in helping to extend the tradition toward an amodern form). Oswick, Keenoy, and Grant (2001, p. 220) note that an “apparently perplexing feature of organizational dramaturgy is that it seems capable of serving instrumental and managerialist ends while simultaneously lending itself to critical and postmodern modes of inquiry”. I position dramaturgy as breaching boundaries. Goffman’s dramaturgy can thus be seen in a bi-polar sense as being somewhat anti-structural and structural (using the vernacular of Hassard & Wolfram Cox, 2013) or as being somewhat interpretivist and functionalist (using the vernacular of Burrell & Morgan, 1979). I also see potential for a more critical amodern version of dramaturgy. In my view, Goffman has laid the foundation for this with his concepts of *stigma* and *total institutions* as well as a style of writing that can often make a reader feel uncomfortable with the status quo – for example describing in great detail a variety of interactions where people are “reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one” (Goffman, 1963b, p. 12). Postdramaturgy goes beyond description to a more critical stance by following the actors

through text and other improvised histories to surface power relations on a more problematic basis, one that sees reality as multi-layered and subject to question and destabilization.

Several attributes of municipal budget making make it ripe for spurious usage of play acting. For example, asymmetrical access to information of management compared to individual citizens, technical communication tools that purport to facilitate democratic participation while they actually coerce or restrain, as well as “dramaturgical society role performances [that are] often short, episodic, ahistorical, and seldom bear a permanent relationship to one's own self-structure” (Young & Massey, 1978, p. 86). Judgment of a presented self is particularly subject to critique because framing renders performances of the self unstable (Lemert & Branaman, 1997). The self is a product of performance but also a product of its association with what others perceive as hard reality. Goffman suggests that there is a great deal of interpretation in the selection of frames in this regard. Thus, the “moral career of the mental patient” (Goffman, 1962, p. 127-169) begins with a self being framed as insane, something that seems to require institutional approval of a professional certified to recognize it. Previous insanity of the newly certified insane person is excluded from the category.

Goffman shows that some social actors are underprivileged by persistent misframing. As indicated above, people with minimal power also have few opportunities to frame events or to combat attributes applied to them. The treatment of the citizens of Africville is a specific example of persistent and harmful framing that resulted in a sustained deficit of budget resources (see Chapter 7). Critical/modern engagement with drama seeks to avoid “a singular positive dominant reality” (Oswick et al., 2001, p. 221).

Postdramaturgy draws attention to a multiplicity of realities and allows for the roles of the privileged and the Other. In this chapter the philosophical positioning of postdramaturgy is foreshadowed (to be further developed in Chapter 5). The intention of this dissertation is to reposition Goffman's dramaturgy as an amodern, critical attitude. As can be seen from the discussion in this section, the transformation is an ontological and epistemological leap.

Chapter 3: Actor-network Theory

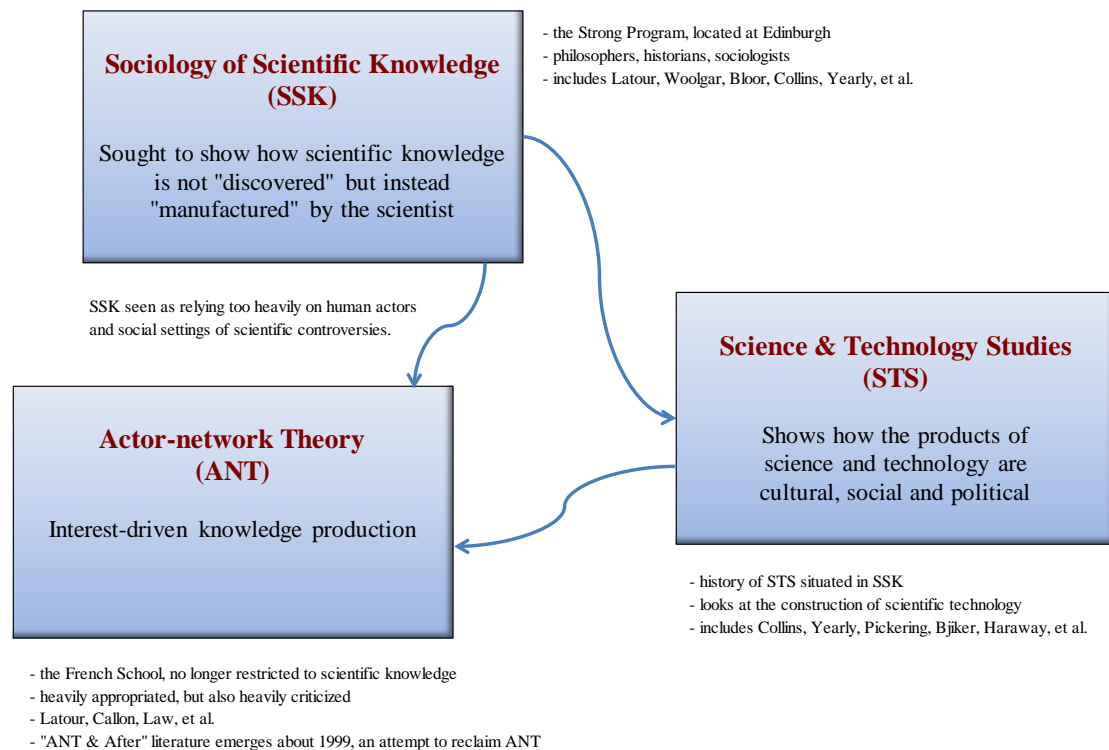
Introduction

If the notion of dramaturgy was somewhat amenable to a comfortable explanation in the previous chapter, this introduction to Actor-network Theory is decidedly not so. The inherent challenge in proposing a “definition” of ANT is to enroll my audience into thinking that the essence of ANT can be captured and tied-up. But how to do this when ANT is fluid (Law, 2009), multiple (Mol, 2002a), heterogeneous (Durepos & Mills, 2012), and performed in many different versions (McLean & Hassard, 2004). On the other hand, these qualities are just what I am looking for since ANT will help to put the post in postdramaturgy. ANT may be thought of as a framework that shifts the research focus away from positivist conceptions of knowledge generation and functionalist modes of thinking. The moves of ANT support the study of practices and processes that build (or dismantle) networks of relations. Researchers working in the ANT tradition are concerned to describe social performances of “materially and discursively heterogeneous relations that produce and reshuffle all kinds of actors” (Law, 2009, p. 141) that in the drama of municipal budget-making would include bureaucrats, taxpayers, citizen groups, computers, money, fairness and injustice, television audiences, administrative policies, physical infrastructure, politics, and a host of other human and non-human entities.

There are a large number of references to ANT in the MOS literature and the popularity of the approach has been growing since its introduction in the 1980’s (Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010; Bloomfield & Vurdubakis, 1999). However, it is important to note that there have been differences in philosophical underpinnings and styles of approach in what has been labelled as ANT; some variants are more realist in tone while

others are more amodern. Durepos (2010) provides a robust discussion of the antecedents and foundations of ANT – and I borrow from that discussion to summarize in the following figure the early development of ANT.

Figure 2
The development of Actor-network Theory



In this thesis I subscribe to the root established by Bruno Latour (1983, 1987, 2005), Michel Callon (1986, 1999; Callon & Law, 1982), as well as the after-ANT development provided by John Law (2002, 2007, 2012) and other postmodern writers as discussed in the *Actor-network Theory & After* section in this chapter. ANT investigates how disparate people, objects and ideas come to act as one, then continues to “follow the actors” (Latour, 2005, p. 61) as their relations are reconfigured and further assembled.

ANT case studies tend to emphasize local types of enquiry that take into account a reading of historical context while systematically avoiding grand narratives and generalized cause-and-effect conclusions. How the social performs in practice is the preoccupation of ANT and it is best demonstrated in situated case studies rather than explained in the abstract. Both dramaturgy and ANT posit that the social is made by actors in situ. Postdramaturgy is also better explained in case study mode, and this dissertation performs postdramaturgical methodology in Chapters 6 and 7.

Before proceeding to provide some details of the ANT *French School* and the subsequent literature known as *ANT&After*, an important, albeit provoking, caveat is in order: although the “T” in ANT stands for “Theory”, ANT is not a theory of anything. Numerous writers have made this observation (for example, Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010; Callon, 1999; Czarniawska-Joerges & Hernes, 2005; Durepos & Mills, 2012; Latour, 1999; Law, 2009)⁸. The important point for this dissertation is that the lack of theory in ANT is seen either as an analytical strength or fatal flaw, depending on the ontological and epistemological commitments of the researcher. Chess players will not like ANT’s lack of theory and its hostility toward explanation – “there is no such thing as a checkmate, and a draw is just as unlikely – only tense and tentative strategic positions. Nothing is exempt from rearrangement – even the pieces of the theory label (actor, hyphen, network, theory) have to be enrolled and re-enrolled” (Corrigan & Mills, 2012a,

⁸ It is noteworthy that three of the “originators” of ANT (Latour, Callon and Law) have all at one time or another disowned the claim that ANT is a theory, yet the “T” continues to take its place in the lexicon of this tradition. Above I say that this notion of the “T” in ANT is “provoking”. By this I mean that one may not buy-in to the idea that ANT is not a theory. ANT researchers claim to be using a lens to investigate the social. They suggest that by using this lens, they are able to suggest insights into why something has occurred as it did. This can be described as a theory. A useful way to conceptualize this is Beaubien’s (2012, p. 51) categorization of ANT as a “theory of practice... an analytical tool that draws attention to the micro-level individual activity as well as shared practices, values and norms”. I reference the debate here not because I want to become entangled in the debate over a definition of “theory”, but rather to indicate that ANT work is pliable and open to interpretation.

p. 255). Bruno Latour (2005, p. 9) sums this up with the following outrageous statement “Alas, the historical name is ‘actor-network-theory’, a name that is so awkward, so confusing, so meaningless that it deserves to be kept... I have to apologize for taking the exact opposite position here as... the time I criticized all the elements of his horrendous expression, including the hyphen, I will now defend all of them, including the hyphen!” Indeed, ANT has been tolerant to a variety of competing terms and use – so much so that ANT naturally rebels against specifications as to “the correct” way to go about its application. As such, the methods of ANT seem pliable and open to heterogeneity and hybrids, much like an amodern view of social studies.

Actor-network Theory à la French School

Beginning approximately in 1980⁹, the “French School” inspired by Latour and Callon created much of the scholarship and stylistic vocabulary associated with ANT¹⁰. “An actor in ANT is a semiotic definition – an actant – that is something that acts or to which activity is granted by another... an actant can literally be anything provided it is granted to be the source of action” (Latour, 1996, p. 5). The central project for researchers using an actor-network approach is to gain an understanding as to how actants mobilize and stabilize the heterogeneous social materials out of which actor-networks are composed. The relational materiality of ANT promotes an aura of

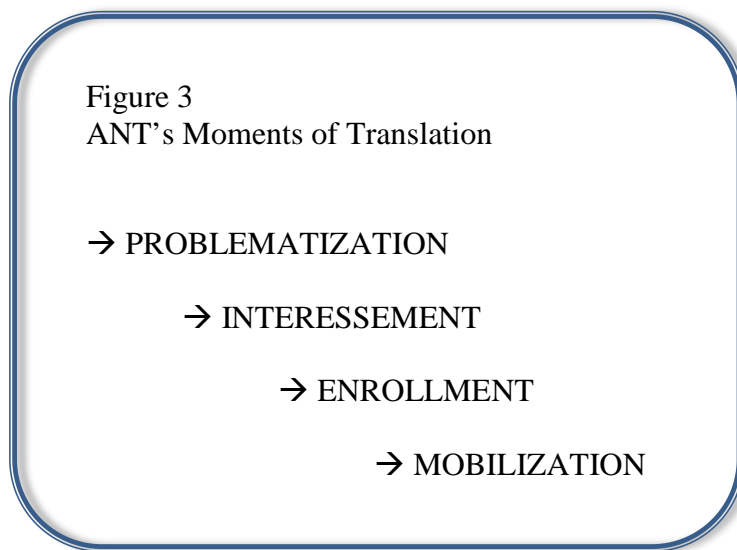
⁹ John Law (2009) claims that if ANT can be said to have been born at a specific time and place, then this would have been in Paris in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s.

¹⁰ From its beginning at the French School, ANT has also been known by several other names, including the Sociology of Translation (Callon, 1986) and Actant-Rhizome Ontology (Latour, 1999). The naming of the tradition is actually seen as problematic from the point of view of ANT, implying as it does “the easy transportability of ‘ANT’ [that] surely also sets alarm bells ringing. For the act of naming suggests that its centre has been ... rendered definite” (Law & Hassard, 1999b, p. 2).

generalized symmetry regarding both human and non-human actants, giving ANT much of its unique flavour (and controversial epistemology – see next section). What counts as an actant depends on the research situation but in every case potential actants of interest would be numerous. Let's consider the Halifax capital budget and assume there is a local movement to spend \$25 million to construct a paved road in one of the sparsely populated rural districts. The human actants in this situation could include the earnest councillor for the district, angry citizens and truck drivers who are fed-up with the existing potholes, paving contractors craving a lucrative government contract, municipal staff, news media, other councillors with their own wish list for pavement, and many other humans. Artefacts also get into the action: a flood of emails to the Mayor, the road itself and the potholes which have found a home there, money in the bank, debts on the balance sheet, the budget process, newspaper stories, and a new website (halifaxpotholes.com) that collects stories, rants and a facility to "submit a hole". A researcher has to look for traces of non-human actants in the municipal budget making story. These may include exceptionally light snowfall in the previous few winters (that wreak havoc with snow-clearing budgets based on average snowfall patterns), or bursting underground water mains that have to undergo costly repairs immediately. While the Municipal Engineer is in the office busily preparing a budget, repair crews are already on the scene of the water eruption making repairs that render the Engineer's budget calculations obsolete.

Actants can be found everywhere. Researchers attempt to give every appearance of having the expertise to select among actants. But how did this expertise come about, and how is it exercised? One has to be careful to consider what is hidden from view as

actors attempt to use power plays to enroll others into an actor-network. Power and influence are an apparent outcome that is performed by other actors. As Latour (1986, p. 286) explains, “Power is always the illusion people get when that are obeyed... people who are ‘obeyed’ discover what their power is really made of when they start to lose it. They realize, but too late, that it was ‘made of’ the wills of all the others”. Callon (1986) uses the St. Brieuc Bay scallop fishery to elucidate the ANT concept of *translation* – the mechanics of power in the formation of an actor-network – which he describes in “four moments” (p. 6). Figure 3 outlines the four moments during which the actors are identified and interactions and movements are negotiated. There is a certain linearity implied in the phasing, although Callon cautions that these phases overlap.



Problematization involves persuading other actors that a common interest is shared in a social situation. An actant seeks to define a problem such that others can recognize the problem as their own. This problematization is presented by the agent in a process that

comes along with a packaged solution that convincingly belongs to the agent alone. However, resistance is possible (in municipal budget making, perhaps likely) and successful problematization is only accomplished when the actors accept roles defined for them by the agent (Doolin & Lowe, 2002). In the case of St. Brieuc Bay, marine researchers identified a problem of declining stocks of scallops. The fishers were helped to recognize the researchers' problem as their problem too. The researchers also proposed a solution – a device for domesticating the breeding of scallops. Acceptance of the researchers' technological claims (problem and solution) would result in the researchers becoming an *obligatory point of passage*, i.e., they would become indispensable and powerful (Fox, 2000).

Interessement is the process of convincing others what dramatic roles they should want to have. Allies are “locked into place” (Callon, 1986, p. 8). However the allies are also interposed by their role which is situated in-between (inter-esse) competing interests. Since reality-making in ANT is a process, there is bound to be competition in stabilizing, as Goffman would say in his Frame Analysis, the definition of the situation. It is in this sense that interessement calls for actions and devices (some more aggressive than others) that can go in-between a problematized actor and all other competitors seeking to define the situation otherwise. The scallop researchers locked their allies into place by a joint commitment to actions proposed by the researchers. The fishers agreed to an experiment to manage scallop inventory; in effect the researchers had become an obligatory point of passage in the management of this fishery.

If all goes well in the first two stages of translation, associations begin to build and become somewhat stabilized. *Enrollment* takes place – the alliances are defined, co-

ordinated and the bits and pieces start to dissolve into what appears to be a durable whole entity. A cause becomes stronger when actors and their interests have been translated. Their interests become aligned by means of one actor becoming the director of the drama – with a capacity to assign roles to other actors. Hunter and Swan (2007) characterize enrollment as a granting of obedience by the enrolled actor's own consent. However, consent is obtained by a variety of techniques including forcefulness, temptation, contracts, trickery, expert skill, etc. Because the forces of enrollment can be undermined, translation should be considered tentative. Thus, ANT follows around *loose assemblages* (Hunter & Swan, 2007, p. 405) of things that are not bound to each other yet become allies – thus, organizational wholeness must be perceived as unfinished and precarious.

In using the term enrollment, the French School “is not resorting to a functionalist or culturalist sociology which defines society as an entity made up of roles and holders of roles. Enrollment does not imply, nor does it exclude, pre-established roles. It designates the device by which a set of interrelated roles is defined and attributed to actors who accept them” (Callon, 1986, p. 10). Recall that actants capable of enrollment include non-human beings. The scallops of St. Brieuc Bay are thus implicated, and for their enrollment to occur they must first be willing to submit to capture. Callon declared that “negotiations” with the scallops were the most difficult and time consuming negotiations that the researchers faced. Social scientists not familiar with, or opposed to, ANT found this propensity of the French School to anthropomorphize actants to be too problematic a suggestion to accept. The more sympathetic of these were prepared to concede that such agency claims were not intended to be taken literally and “translation issues [i.e.,

translation of Callon's manuscript from French to English]" have been noted "as a warning to literal-minded Anglophone readers" (Elder-Vass, 2008, p. 469).

The important (albeit uncertain) consequence of the preceding phases of the translation process (problematization → intersement → enrollment) is that a successful actor grows with the enlistment of all kinds of heterogeneous links, i.e., *mobilization* can occur. Action becomes intense. Technical artifacts are produced and performed (*inscription*) to protect and project the interests of the actor-network. Communication channels take a markedly different shape as few or perhaps only one actor speaks for the entity (*single point actor*). The numerous components that comprise the actor-network are rendered unseen and are collapsed into tools such as charts, graphs or information pamphlets (*immutable mobiles*) that are designed to simplify messaging and gain political advantage. When (and if) the effects of the actor-network come to be taken for granted (*punctuated*), the actor-network puts a provisional end to controversy and makes the political cost of alternatives too high (Latour & Woolgar, 1986). At this point the actor-network is said to be *black-boxed*.¹¹ The scallop researchers of Briec Bay reduced the fishers to a small number of representatives so that as the action developed they could explain their version of reality with the aid of a few diagrams. Playing their self-scripted part, the researchers began to speak for many (including the scallops). They had translated the interests of others into their own and thus temporarily gained obedience of the cast of characters.

¹¹ The term "black box" is frequently used in MOS. Whether operating in quantitative mode (for example, explaining moderating effects among variables) or in qualitative mode (for example, questioning the source of tacit power), researchers are concerned to reveal components or effects of interesting or perplexing black boxes. ANT conceptualizes a black box as an extreme alignment to an overarching cause where the actors begin to act as one with an air of permanence. ANT's black box is otherwise referred-to as a single-point actor or punctuated actor.

In summary, the basic idea of the French School version of ANT is to describe how actants mobilize and hold together an actor-network. The process of translation works to keep heterogeneous “bits and pieces from following their own inclinations and making off on their own” (Law, 1992, p. 386). If the interests of the bits and pieces come to be accepted as extremely integrated (a punctuated actor) then the actor-network can be thought of as one – with its power vested, however tentatively, in a single point actor. For ANT then, the role of the researcher is to open the black box by following the actors and tracing their associations. The following of actors – not starting with what we wish to explain – is necessary to understand the mechanics of power in the actor-network. This may be more difficult than it sounds in a milieu of organizational change. For example, in my budget-making case study “the organization” consists of two former cities, one town, one county municipality, metro transit, and a regional shared services authority. At least a dozen legally-authorized political entities claim to have management status affecting the organization. However, as Czarniawska (2006a) notes, researchers need not be dismayed when the entity they set out to study no longer exists; they “simply follow an actor and note in their field notebook the name used for the location they arrive at. It is not groups that need to be studied, but the work of group-making and unmaking” (p. 1554).

Theoretical Limitations of Actor-network Theory

It is not unusual for research methods to attract academic critics and ANT is no exception. Three streams of criticism of ANT seem particularly relevant for the consideration of postdramaturgy in this dissertation:

- 1) analytical symmetry – treating humans and non-humans alike

- 2) privileging heroes – deciding which actors to follow around
- 3) capacity for critique – moving beyond description

Symmetry in the actor-network involves treating humans and non-human objects with the same level of analysis and narrative. For example, the budget accountant, the system of internal financial control, the ledger accounts, and the meeting transcription machine – all are endowed with agency. Early versions of ANT were committed to viewing the relative power of humans and non-human as something that cannot be determined a priori (Callon, 1986). Thus the *actor-network*, which is described by Law (1999a, p. 1) as “intentionally oxymoronic”, is an enrollment of human and non-human actors into a web. This relies on the researcher taking care that no singular viewpoint is privileged to the extent that other interpretations become disqualified (Callon, 1986). Latour similarly describes the need to “make a list, no matter how long and heterogeneous, of those who do the work” (1987, p. 258). With its long lists of actants, the French School has been thoroughly criticised for promoting non-human agency – such as the ability of objects to enroll and to react to (and sometimes repel) enrollment attempts of other actors. In a classic debate, Collins and Yearly (1992) characterized this epistemological stance taken by ANT as a game of chicken – a game in which Collins and Yearly claim that the players (actor-network theorists) act-out extremely daring, but ultimately pointless, manoeuvres. Critics argue that ANT runs afoul of important and self-evident differences between humans and non-humans with regard to intentionality, which is a necessary aspect of traditional accounts of agency relationships.

Czarniawska (2006a) posits that the purpose of generalized symmetry is not an attempt to ascribe human attributes to inanimate objects. It is to highlight the important

role that objects play in the formation and maintenance of actor-networks. Durepos and Mills (2012) claim that what has been taken as demotion of privilege for human actors is not a moral perspective or a view that humans should be seen as “nonreflective machines, but instead that both humans and non-humans are produced through a process of co-interaction in networks” (p. 109). The role of actants in municipal budget making will be discussed in Chapter 5. My view is that non-human actants have more agency than, say, Erving Goffman’s nonthreatening notion of *props*. However, I wish to tone-down the ANT agency rhetoric. When viewed as a literary technique to describe the messy arrangements of municipal budget making, actant agency helps to engage with the performances taking place in the Halifax Regional Municipality case study. In other words, budget making performances depends on both human and non-human actors although the roles of the latter need not be thought of as consisting of honest or devious intentions. The important point for postdramaturgy is that a municipal “audience” observes the performances of non-human actants (often not mediated by humans) and that these performances (independently and in concert with human performances) help to constitute the budget and its effects.

ANT has in common with dramaturgy and historiography an inclination toward dramatic story telling. This often involves a propensity to focus on a hero – the actor assumed to be most powerful and often situated at the top of the hierarchy¹². The hero category could also include CEO’s, major projects or municipal councils and mayors. Critics argue that this privileging of heroes is at odds with the ANT notion that networks result from heterogeneous sources. ANT studies require difficult methodological

¹² Early ANT studies followed scientists and engineers. According to Berg & Lie (1995), research laboratories are spaces that are male-dominated; gender is not seen until women are present.

decisions: which of the large cast of actors (including those in the wings) should be followed? Even though Latour encourages researchers to make long lists, there are practical and theoretical limits to the scope of research foci. The inclusion/exclusion decision is ultimately determined (positivist researchers would say contaminated) by the observer rather than the observed. The potentially vast size of the actor-network and the lack of an obvious stopping point present problems for researchers. Strathern (1996) suggests that the amount of actor-following may simply be determined by the amount of time allotted for completion. In ethnographic and other ANT studies the local nature of the research renders moot the need for “analytical completeness”. But this should not be assumed to imply that anything goes. A careful tracing of the associations is still necessary and in any case is not likely to proceed in a linear fashion. This is particularly true in postdramaturgy where the social is conceptualized as messy and subject to constant movement.

The French School version of ANT has developed a reputation among critical scholars as an approach that ignores power and is inappropriately satisfied to restrict itself to describing the status quo (Holifield, 2009). For example, concerns have emerged from feminist perspectives. The unease felt about ANT managerialist tendencies was discussed by Susan Leigh Star (1991) who noted that heterogeneous engineers (in early ANT studies they are often males) may require relational or network configurations which become standardised¹³. Star (1991, p. 49) also makes the important point that “every enrollment entails both a failure to enroll and a destruction of the world of the non-enrolled. Pasteur’s success [see Latour, 1983] meant simultaneously failure for those

¹³ Star uses a story of being allergic to onions, and the systemic inability McDonald’s Restaurants to respond to this anomaly, to demonstrate that standardization creates configurations that overlook individuals in favour of a putative mainstream group.

working in similar areas, and a loss and world destruction for those outside the germ theory altogether”. Actors who fall outside of the dividing line may be disadvantaged and their voices marginalised – but ANT may not be suited to discover such a sub-plot. Postdramaturgy helps to challenge the status quo. Heroic actors (whether successful or a colossal failure) may still occupy centre stage but the ANT action should include the relations of non-central players and the structures that prevent researchers from noticing marginalized actors that deserve to be followed. This will be demonstrated in Chapter 7 with the story of Africville.

Philosophical Assumptions of Actor-network Theory

This section locates (as if a single location is possible) the philosophical assumptions of ANT. Its “intimidating ontological complexity” (Cressman, 2009, p. 1) and the requirement to conceptualize ANT as a unified known entity leave open to interpretation everything here that may sound like a conclusion. To assist with the analysis I use the seminal framework of Burrell and Morgan (1979). Although this work predates ANT, Burrell and Morgan usefully describe alternative assumptions about the essence of the phenomena under investigation (ontology) and assumptions about the grounds of knowledge (epistemology). Burrell and Morgan distinguish competing schools of thought with regard to ontology. They use a subjectivist-objectivist range that makes evident the assumptions that researchers implicitly or explicitly use. I recognize here that ANT thought is likely to rebel against the subject-object dualism¹⁴; however, I am not suggesting that ANT involves a pure form of subjectivism or objectivism. The

¹⁴ Burrell and Morgan have also been criticized for what may be seen as an inappropriate reification of the subject-object dualism (for a detailed discussion, see Deetz, 1996).

Burrell and Morgan framework recognizes a range of possibilities by supporting potential positions along an intellectual continuum.

Ontologically, ANT research employs interpretive sociology and implies a nominalist stance, understanding reality as a site of construction. Such a constructivist outlook suggests that the world is real only to the extent that actors make it so.

The poststructural elements of ANT (following Foucault, 1972) explore the discontinuity, complexity and randomness of events. On the other hand, realism would imply a world which is discoverable by social scientists. Realist ontology has been (and still is) the dominant basis for MOS. Researchers within a realist ontology are concerned to provide explanations for the status quo and social order. An important ontological distinction is that ANT researchers (especially in ANT&After mode) tend to see reality as pliable and multiple; on the other hand, reality in the realm of objectivist researcher ought to be reproducible (Corrigan, 2014), i.e., able to be tied to specific experimental data analysis so that scholarship can be recreated.

Quantitative research tends to be embedded in realist ontology, with researchers looking for causal relationships among variables as well as generalizability to other contexts deemed to be related. As indicated above, a central claim of ANT is that social science helps to make the realities it describes. But Law and Latour both speak against the more extreme proponents of social constructivism. For example, Law (2004, p. 7) says “I am not [emphasis added] saying that since the world defies any overall attempt to describe and understand it, we can therefore realistically believe anything we like about it”. A similar thought is added by Latour in a lengthy book section in *Reassembling the Social* (2005, p. 88-93) in which he differentiates between constructivism and social

constructivism and argues that by a *constructed fact* we mean “that we account for the solid objective reality by mobilizing various entities whose assemblage could fail; ‘social constructivism’ means, on the other hand, that we replace what this reality is made of with some other stuff, the social in which it is really built”. Thus, ANT concedes the existence of an external reality that sets a stage for social performances. One would have to take from this that an environment exists independent of (and prior to) the construction attempt of ANT researchers even though they tend to be antagonistic to the notion that social structures could be of any significance with regard to generalized causal explanations (Elder-Vass, 2008). ANT would contend that social structures are fluid and cannot be assumed to be stable enough to be taken for granted on an ongoing basis.

The ontological assumptions of ANT have been given various descriptions in the literature. Latour (1993, p. 47) refers to an “amodern” ontology, Law and Hassard (1999a, p. 4) allude to “relational materiality”, and Hassard and Wolfram Cox (2013, p. 19) indicate “ontological relativism”. Others describe ANT as having a flat ontology or a variable ontology. What these terms seem to have in common is less anxiety about methods and more caution about realism. Combining some of the above descriptors, I propose that the ontology of ANT is *amodern relational materiality*. ANT is concerned with the *material* in that it assumes the social is made up of a variety of heterogeneous material (Law, 2008). Furthermore, ANT posits that the social can only be understood relationally – actor-networks achieve their status and characteristics as a consequence of relations among actants, rather than just focusing on a single person or object. ANT theorists follow the relations among actors as networks are formed, maintained, thwarted or decomposed. The nominalist stance of ANT is amodern in that it is unwilling to accept

at the outset the existence of a social environment(s) that inherently determines the social world. “As opposed to understanding the social as a noun, ANT proposes understanding the social as a verb... rather than focusing on what happens cognitively or behaviorally, ANT looks at what happens relationally, that is, between actors” (Durepos, 2010, p. 143). This opens the possibility that performances can be expected to differ depending on local context. Also, within context, changes occur over time. Some social structures may *appear* to be permanent: Catholicism, the rule of law, monetary exchange, and the Montréal Canadiens hockey franchise are certainly punctuated black boxes. However permanent these entities appear these orders are susceptible to come “crashing down” (Law, 1992, p. 379) like the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, weather patterns, the Berlin Wall, or Enron.

A modern relational materiality implies that the constitution of an actor is an empirical matter (Doolin & Lowe, 2002). This idea is supported by Mol (2002a) who states that the explanatory strength of variables falls away when ontology is closely examined. Moving beyond the idea of the researcher’s gaze searching an object’s properties for explanatory value, the burden changes; “instead of the researcher’s eyes, the practitioner’s hands become of the focus point of theorizing” (Mol, 2002a, p. 152).

As indicated earlier, the ANT conception of the actor-network includes generalized symmetry. The human/non-human duality is tossed aside when the social is seen as heterogeneous. This ontological equality brings into the picture non-human actors that are often left out of MOS analysis, such as budgetary accounting systems, municipal taxation and PowerPoint presentations. Relationalism sets the stage for multiple knowledges. It is fairly obvious that multiplicity is contrary to singularity (as in most

realist accounts) but not so obvious that multiplicity is also contrary to plurality. As explained by both Mol (2002a, p. 84) and Law and Hassard (1999b, p. 12) entities in practice are multiple – they “are more than one but less than many”. It is not just a question of different perspectives of a single entity – but different versions (albeit versions that may be able to hang together as part of a larger actor-network).

From an epistemological point of view, the assumptions of ANT do not attempt to explain and predict what happens in the social. There is no examination of variables with statistical software packages to detect causal effects. Thus, the ways of knowing can be described as anti-positivist, i.e., the social can be understood only from the study of relations (and assuming these are constantly in motion) of those empirically involved. This includes the involvement of the researcher, a reflexive approach where ANT implies a rejection of any claims to “scientific” objectivity.

The basic epistemological stance of ANT is relationist – a concern to understand how social reality is constructed by following the relations among a variety of human and non-human materials. This includes the interactive effects of routines and texts, improvisation, drama, organizations, technical devices, and contestation. ANT basically spans the (artificial) boundary of intersubjectivism and subjectivism (Cunliffe, 2011) and may be conceptualized by a sense of research-as-craft rather than research-as-science. This treatment assumes that actants and the social co-produce each other. The practical implication of such assumptions for ANT fieldwork is that “the interactions that researchers examine in an organization involve relations between people, ideas and technologies, which together can be understood to form a network” (Hassard & Wolfram Cox, 2013, p. 11).

John Law (2009) takes the relationality of ANT to be an aspect of poststructuralist thinking. The tentative relations among the bits and pieces of translation, i.e., how heterogeneous materials may seem to be able to hang together, is the intellectual territory of ANT. Law (2009, p. 145) suggests that actor-network theory is essentially “an empirical version of poststructuralism. For instance, ‘actor networks’ can be seen as scaled-down versions of Michel Foucault’s discourses or... to attend to the productively strategic and relational character of epochal epistemes”. ANT is also heavily involved with the application of language. Wittgenstein’s (1963, p. 11) concept of “language game” helps us think about heterogeneity in ANT (and its relationship with dramaturgy) since language games signal dynamic relationships as rules of the game are applied to “countless different kinds of use of what we call ‘symbols’, ‘words’, ‘sentences’, and this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all”. Postdramaturgy can also learn from Wittgenstein that language games create multiplicity in history because “new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten” (ibid). Organizations (and researchers) make language selections in determining the stories they will tell or conceal, and this is a building block for dramatic roles.

The ANT tradition thus investigates the relational character of local actor-networks. ANT also has much of the poststructural feel of the territorial and rhizomatic philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari (1987, see discussion of the rhizomatic nature of postdramaturgy in Chapter 1). Latour indicated that he preferred the term “actant rhizomes” instead of “actor networks,” and Law considers Deleuze and Guattari’s agencement (assemblage) to be the equivalent of the concept of actor-network. Both refer

to tentative local problematization, interessement, enrollment and mobilization. ANT engages with mundane entities such as municipal budgets. These are made complex, multiple and fluid.

Above I have tried to enroll my audience into agreement that the epistemological underpinnings of ANT are antipositivist and relationist. That is one story. But let us allow sub-plots to creep in: Lee and Hassard (1999) draw attention to the epistemological *pragmatism* of ANT in noting that it can be seen as empirically *realist* (i.e., ANT having no misgivings about describing organizations and processes); Law (1991) states that ANT is epistemologically *relativist* (allowing the world to be seen in a multitude of ways); and Whittle and Spicer (2008) argue that ANT is epistemologically *positivist* (for example, the linearity of Callon's four-stage model of translation, and the assumption that organizational processes can be objectively represented in researcher accounts). ANT has opened itself to issues of version control, but this is also seen as a strength of the ANT research tradition.

Related to ontology and epistemology are assumptions about the methodological ways in which one attempts to understand the social. If ANT researchers make a commitment to the principles discussed above, then ANT methods must facilitate an inside view that enables first-hand knowledge. The researcher has to engage with the actors and their histories. They would have to be concerned not only with what is told, but also the assembly of what is told. As indicated above, the objects that we engage with (and in so doing help perform) are always more than one and less than many. ANT is just one more example of this at the level of philosophical belief systems.

Actor-network Theory & After

This section introduces a theoretical move to (re)assemble Goffman's dramaturgy by drawing on recent literature from scholars intent on disturbing the sociology of translation. This literature belongs to (if it is possible for literature to *belong* to anything) a loose category known as "ANT&After" (examples of writings that have come after ANT include: Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010; Bloomfield & Vurdubakis, 1999; de Laet & Mol, 2000; Gad & Bruun Jensen, 2010; Haraway, 2006; Hetherington & Law, 2000; Law & Hassard, 1999b; Mol, 1999; Strathern, 1999). These texts argue for a shift from traditional notions of ANT. However, this departure from tradition is seen as growing from, rather than abandoning, the fundamental philosophy of the French School. Among other things, ANT&After contemplates multiplicity, ontological politics, decentring and capacity for critique. I also want to identify, leverage and contribute to a cluster of ANT&After scholarship arising from the *Halifax School*¹⁵. Chart 2 highlights selected lines of management inquiry at the Halifax School that are concerned with history and the past. In particular, postdramaturgy is invested in the strand of scholarship that is interested in reconfiguring various qualitative methods using ANT and the historic turn as analytical lenses. This act of labelling is somewhat ironic given my previous discussion

¹⁵ I believe this is the first recognition of "The Halifax School" in formal academic writing. Successive cohorts of doctoral students have noted that the Director of the Management PhD Program at Saint Mary's University, Dr. Albert J. Mills, along with several students in the program at Halifax, Nova Scotia seem to constitute a school of thought around two broad areas of influence: phenomenological axis of existentialism and critical sensemaking, and a focus on history and the past.

In 2016 ANTi-History scholarship of the Halifax School will be internationally exposed in London, UK. Stephanie Decker (Co-Editor of *Business History*), Michael Rowlinson (former editor of *Management & Organizational History*) and John Hassard (leading UK management theorist) have been awarded an ESRC (Economic and Social Research) grant to develop a series of seminars around the theme of management, organizational and business history. One of the six core seminars will be devoted to scholarship of the Halifax School which has been singled-out as "an important research cluster for Management and Organizational History... based at the Sobey School of Business at St. Mary's University in Canada".

in Note 10, and can be seen as a translation activity (naming) that is simultaneously useful and problematic.

Chart 2
Selected works of the Halifax School

	Central concepts	Exemplar published work
Albert J. Mills Jean Helms Mills	Poststructuralism, history, feminism	Mills & Helms Mills, 2006
Gabrielle Durepos	ANT, history (ANTi-History)	Durepos, 2010
Christopher Hartt	Non-corporeal actant, history, sensemaking	Hartt, 2013
Terrance Weatherbee	Histories of management thought	Weatherbee, 2012
Kim Myrick	ANT, history	Myrick, Helms Mills, & Mills, 2013
Lawrence Corrigan	Dramaturgy, ANT, history	Corrigan & Mills, 2012a Corrigan & Beaubien, 2013

ANT has viewed the social as complex, one in which all realities, including theories, exist in their performance. I wish to enact one more scene where ANT&After (and historiography – see Chapter 4) inform the practice of dramaturgy. A nascent ANT&After insight is that more than one actor-network may exist producing multiple versions of phenomena. These phenomena may seem at first to be a single unit. Mol (2002a) demonstrates multiplicity with her study of different versions of atherosclerosis. The version that seems to be preferred depends on doctors' and nurses' training and interests, their medical tools, their geographic location in clinics or labs, or whether atherosclerosis is simply something a pathologist locates under a microscope – “Now there's your atherosclerosis. That's it. A thickening of the intima. That's really what it is. Then he adds, after a telling pause, Under a microscope” (Mol, 2002a, p. 30). A related contribution from the ANT&After literature describes multiplicity in a somewhat different way, as fluidity (de Laet & Mol, 2000). The Zimbabwe Bush Pump changes over time in response to technology, bush terrain, its working order, and the skills (and reputation) of its designer. When the design of this object (the bush pump) travels to places with different needs, it is adaptable to those it tries to help – a fluid object. The Zimbabwe Bush Pump and its enrollment of the Zimbabwean socio-technical landscape demonstrate the move in ANT&After to multiply what it means to be an actant.

In this thesis, my application of the multiplicity concept will be on three levels. First, ANT itself will be combined with Goffman's dramaturgy and with historiography, an ANT Multiple. Second, the postdramaturgical conception of the Halifax budget will be

demonstrated (in Chapter 6) as an object that depends on its enactment. The budget is more than one thing but in practice the different versions seem to be able to hang together and be understood. Third, multiplicity sets the stage for *Budget Theatre* to engage in ontological politics. This has to do with Goffman's frame analysis and the way in which definitions of the situation are framed. Mol (1999, 2002a) helps to move ontology away from a universalistic view that may hide the locality and politics of the situation. If municipal budget making produces and enacts different realities, then researchers, who are following actors around, have to ask uncomfortable questions. How do the different realities communicate and how do municipal managers and the Halifax Council choose from among them? One possibility is that we need what Mol (1999) and Law (2007) call an ontological politics. If there are different versions of reality, then one needs to explore the additional political reasons for enacting the favoured version (see Chapter 5).

Several times I have mentioned the ANT mantra - follow the actors around – but one of the problems with this relates to a propensity to follow the actors at centre stage and focus on them to exclusion of others. ANT&After de-centres as an important goal of analysis. And perhaps de-centring may be better understood as a methodology. The notion of centres of control is something that I want to retain for analysis of municipal budget making. ANT&After, when combined with dramaturgy and historiography, helps account for how control may, temporarily, become centred. “If this is no ‘better’ than accounts based on taken-for-granted centres of control, it is certainly a form of inquiry that is more sensitive to the conditions of centredness than is to be found in traditional, centred, distal social theory” (Lee & Stenner, 1999, p. 92). ANT&After addresses this problem by enabling a de-centring of the subject while also recognizing that the actor-

network is made out of components which include its centre. Law (1991, p. 12) explains that even though the actors at centre stage are built out of heterogeneous networks “there is a kind of sampling problem. This is because we tend to choose to do it on heroes, big men, important organisations, or major projects.” ANT&After attempts to determine why this occurs and what are its effects. In *Budget Theatre* the centre could be taken to be the meeting place (the Council Chamber) of the Municipal Council where the most public enactment of the budget takes place. Thinking in the ANT&After mode will ensure that the budget process is de-centred beyond the Council Chamber.

ANT&After will provide postdramaturgy with a greater capacity for critique than would be traditionally possible in French School ANTics. Even though Latour encouraged engagement with the non-human, and even though he petitioned social scientists to take account of the “missing masses” (Latour, 1992, p. 153), ANT studies have tended to focus on centred, powerful, and successful actors. ANT&After includes a move away from earlier concerns for successful networks. Failure is featured not simply to round-out the score, but because failure brings forward multiple voices and makes explicit that it is not possible to posit a single accounting (Hunter & Swan, 2007). The messy complexity of the social is usefully described with approaches that think about the actor-network in rhizomatic ways. Actor-networks, like the rhizome of Deleuze and Guattari, refer to an endless series of efforts at enrollment and de-enrollment.

Latour (1999, p. 15) claims that he wants to “recall” ANT – not *recall* as in *remember*, but as in the recent recall to the auto shop that my Toyota RAV4 had to undergo. The recalls are meant to avoid the risk of the theory and vehicle, respectively, from becoming too dangerous. Latour’s claim (1999, p. 15), later reversed, that there are

four things wrong with Actor-network Theory (1. actor, 2. network, 3. theory, 4. the hyphen) is overstated, but there is little doubt that alternative readings allow for a more robust relationship with postdramaturgy. Indeed, a relationship with ANT has already been established with accounting and budgeting literature (Ahrens & Chapman, 2007) that set the stage to explore “generative paths [and] emphasise the potential contributions of a study of the making up of ‘new’ accounting numbers” (p. 6). Thus, ANT analysis highlights the fragile nature of accounting and budget making and supports postdramaturgy.

Chapter 4: Historiography

Answering the Call for a “Historic Turn” in Organization Theory

Management and organization studies, when they have not ignored history and the past altogether, have largely relied on a realist conception of history and the past, at times conflating these concepts and/or seeing them as variables that can be manipulated to predict an outcome (this propensity is discussed in Weatherbee, 2012). History and the past are frequently manifested as a research background, as in the Greek proscenium where the entire theatre audience was given restricted views of the stage – all of which were from the front rather than the wings or backstage. Similarly, history and the past in MOS have mostly consisted of facts/data or as a feature of the found environment¹⁶. Against this positivist stance, there have been vigorous and sustained calls for MOS to engage with the ambiguous nature of historiography. These “calls” began in earnest two decades ago¹⁷ with Kieser’s (1994) emphasis on the importance of historical context. He contended that MOS scholars have under theorized history and the past. Kieser (1994) pointed out the need to account for contextual historical foundations whenever social performances are studied. Since then, a stream of argument in favour of a “historic turn” (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006, p. 6) has appeared in the academic literature (e.g., Burrell,

¹⁶ In my paper on temporality in qualitative research (Corrigan, 2014) several site-specific temporal threats to the statistical concept of internal validity are discussed in the context of the quantitative-qualitative debate. These threats to internal validity include ambiguous temporal precedence, bidirectional causation, history (defined as the threat that activities occurring at the same time as the administered treatment may cause the effect that was observed), maturation, attrition and testing. As indicated in my paper, experiences in the past allow some research subjects to game the research process, for example (as I personally know) in a weight-loss experiment, weighing someone may cause the subject to try to lose a few pounds prior to the next weighing.

¹⁷ The reader should be aware that this cut-off date is an arbitrary discursive decision, and a good illustration of how authors choose temporal periods to suit their planned performance. Indeed, much earlier appeals to attend to history can also be identified even if none of them were described as an academic call (for example, Gras, Larson, Hower, de Roover, & Stalson, 1937; Kuhn, 1962; White, 1973).

1997; P. Clark & Rowlinson, 2004; Clegg, 2001; Jacques, 2006; Mills, Weatherbee, & Durepos, 2014).

Clark and Rowlinson (2004) note that the turn toward history is not well defined. Part of this lack of definition stems from epistemological diversity among the advocates for a greater engagement with history and the past. However, common concerns are evident. In addition to disturbing a positivist belief system, the concepts of *presentism* and *universalism* have been problematized.

Presentism is a mode of thinking that allows the social to be expressed without consideration of temporal perspective. Phenomena from the present are incongruously introduced into interpretations of the past. The Simpsons television show is used by Booth and Rowlinson (2006) to demonstrate the point. In a lengthy cartoon career Bart Simpson never grows up, and his town always maintains the same setting. Presentism has the potential to distort the performances of management and organizations, rendering the performances as timeless. For example, in budget making, Halifax municipal councillors validate their own political goals when they invoke history to gather support for current projects in their district. Walking trails in the downtown area (part of a \$3.3 million capital project, 2013/14 Halifax Capital Budget, p. C7) are described as “following the historic Shubie Canal [and] restoration of archaeological features such as the ship’s cradle and inclined plane that were used to raise ships from Halifax Harbour to Sullivan’s Pond”. This presentist telling of history implies that this shipping infrastructure (a failed inland water transportation route that operated for only 14 years starting in 1856) somehow links to a present day proposal for walking trails and park benches. This interpretation is presentist because it does not depict the past in historical context, but

instead views history only through a functionalist lens and contemporary beliefs. Moving beyond a functionalist lens may entail looking at time from an antenarrative perspective; “Time is not running from past to present to future. There is no arrow of time” (Boje, 2014, p. 14). Municipal budget managers regularly make bets that suggest that time can run from future to present. Ex ante budget planning includes forecasts of future investment returns which are then budgeted in the current operating budget, or in ex ante forecasts of worker requirements for future road and sewer infrastructure projects, or when the Fire Chief reallocates money toward *prevention* of future fires rather than spending that money on current fire operations. Postdramaturgy learns from an antenarrative perspective that there is an interplay among past, present and future.

Universalism is a mode of thinking that enables phenomena to be uncritically claimed, and theories held to be generally valid, through different temporal periods and various geographic locations (i.e., fixed in time and space). Booth and Rowlinson (2006) speak of universalism to be found in the Flintstones sitcom. Fred and Wilma Flintstone apparently live in the Stone Age, but their “pre-historic” town has many elements of a typical in-the-present community. The Flintstones drive a car, live in a split-level house and also celebrate Christmas – the script ignoring that the Stone Age was approximately 8000 BC.

An MOS researcher engages with the historic turn when presentism and universalism are problematized to help obtain social knowledges of the past. But what of this call for a historic turn? It is not clear that the call has had much effect. As MOS scholars, have we (in sufficient numbers, and not just in the “history category”), negotiated the turn? How will we recognize when this has taken place? There are

indications that a relatively small cohort is actively talking about the historic turn, but only talking to itself. In other words, a lot of calling for the turn has occurred with not much performance of the turn.

In theatre, a “call” is an instruction to the company. For example, a *time call* is given just before each performance and a call to the “beginners”, i.e. those who (like the orchestra) act prior to the actual starting time of the show. The time call in MOS is being directed by what I will refer to as “history beginners”. Although stating that the turn will probably be ill-defined, the history beginners have already attempted a definition of what it would look like. Üsdiken and Kieser (2004) identified three separate research positions which they called supplementarist, integrationist and reorientationist. Briefly, the supplementarist approach refers to adding history as a variable in the analysis. “While history is reduced to a thing (a ‘variable’) the past is assumed – presumably as part of the thing” (Weatherbee, Durepos, Mills, & Helms Mills, 2012, p. 195). The integrationist approach argues for a melding of positivist data gathering but adding interpretivist aspects of, among other things, history. This approach also implies that research about the past is gathering of facts. The reorientationalist approach is one “that involves a critique of existing theories of organization for their ahistorical orientation, but also of the atheoretical character of much of historical analysis” (ibid). Booth and Rowlinson (2006) in discussing the prospects for a new journal (*Management & Organizational History*) were more prescriptive in funneling the call toward a “10-point agenda” (p. 5). These points generally focus on three main concerns: an anti-positivist stance, privileging the processes and context of history, and engaging with theories of history. The third of these foci resonate with this dissertation. The “agenda” calls for not only the need for more

studies of history and the past, but also alternative writing styles with which to study history and the past. I strongly believe that qualitative methods would have to be part of the research plan to surface temporal considerations (Corrigan, 2014). Postdramaturgy is intended as a further methodological experiment – one that sees theatricality as a basic element of historiography, i.e., the writing of various interpretations of the past.

In summary, I am not convinced that a historic turn in MOS is substantially underway. I am nonetheless drawn to the philosophy of its beginnings. By specifically acknowledging this I believe I am already starting to turn. But to “turn” seems an overly (curvi)linear way to conceptualize what is needed. Perhaps some other label or signpost that calls for an effort at multiplicity – a game of cat’s cradle (Haraway, 1994) rather than a turn? Cat’s cradle with its knotted string and multiple sets of crafting hands constantly changes the putative object as actants create multiple webs of relational patterns.

What is History?

What is history? Modernist historians have a ready answer to this question: it is a truthful telling of what has occurred in the past. Such realist ontology assumes that skillful, objective and diligent research will discover the past which can then be documented into a singular account. A justifiable belief system. Thus, history and the past must be the same thing in the realist view. Munslow (2010, p. 72) created a phrase “the-past-as-history” to indicate the conflation of the past and history and to draw attention to the problematic nature of this conflation. This followed Jenkins’ (1991, 1995) argument that history and the past have a different ontological status, contradicting the

dominant pattern in mainstream MOS that assumes the past to be a knowable entity¹⁸.

The critique provided by Jenkins and Munslow was not meant to imply that a past did not previously exist, or that knowable pieces of the past cannot be constituted as knowledge. Events, people and things can reasonably be shown to have existed. For example, I truly believe that the Halifax budget milieu includes elements amalgamated from a predecessor municipal entity that was known in the past (and present) as the City of Dartmouth¹⁹. The city had a legal charter, physical plant and I know the names of many of its past employees. The municipal councillors of Dartmouth past can be confidently verified and listed. However, a “history” of Dartmouth would also include dramaturgical symbolic resources and be subject to moments of translation in what I will call a history-actor-network. It is not enough to know with certainty bits and pieces of the past. The historian engages with these as they engage with each other.

Since “the past” has disappeared from view, and is not ontologically recoverable, we are left to interpret traces of the remains – fragments of the past in oral storytelling, books, museums, archives, budget worksheets, annual financial reports and numerous other communication devices. The historian has construction work to do in building a coherent story. But different historians will build different stories. History, then, when seen in this light runs the risk of being a modernist project that is problematic. The past can only be partially reconstructed, and this by historians who carry epistemological baggage that affects the knowledge-construction process. Even though the historian may

¹⁸ Realist historiographies (ahistorical orientation) still dominate the patterns of MOS.

¹⁹ The “City of Dartmouth” is usually presented as a discrete entity. However, it can be constituted as a community of communities, and also breaks-down along several other fault lines – former municipal units, previous identities such as “Austenville”, urban/rural divisions, or as part of nearly 6,000 square kilometers of geographic territory known as Halifax Regional Municipality.

strive toward “verifiability”, the historian still writes the scripts and acts as narrator of the performance.

History can also be viewed through an amodern lens (Durepos, 2015) which emphasizes multiplicity, i.e., where historical knowledges are situated in practices in which there are oscillating enactments. ANTi-History is an example of engagement with an amodern mode of historiography. Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 970) also see human agency as a temporal construction project in which the “the interplay of habit, imagination and judgement” is informed by the past but also help to constitute the present and the future. Emirbayer and Mische (ibid) thus theorize multiplicity in social action, i.e., actors are simultaneously embedded in various temporalities within any given situation. The final section of this chapter will discuss three modes of doing history (modern, postmodern, amodern) and their significance for postdramaturgy.

Hartt et al. (2010, p. 13), construe history as “an effect of heterogeneous actors, of pencils, computers, archives, men and women, traces, paper, archivists, conventions, fax machines, students, fathers... And if we are to write or reassemble the past... we must reassemble all human and non-human actors as well as their associations”. The following of actors in postmodern and amodern historiography is a re-enactment of the-past-as-history. White (1973, 1978) described history as a narrative discourse, the content of which is prepared in craft-like fashion rather than as in discovered knowledge. Historical narratives are assembled by historians who make choices as to how the found pile of facts from the past meld into the shape of an articulated story.

This section started-out by asking “what is history?” The question immediately brought us into deep water both theoretically and in terminology with four related

concepts: (1) history, (2) History – with a capital H, (3) historiography, and (4) the past. I intend to refer to the word “history” as an invented narrative discourse about the past (multiple histories are to be expected); “the past” is all that has occurred prior to the present, a situated actor-network and the object that is up for temporal consideration; and “historiography” is the rendering of accounts of the past into various writings. This leaves “History” as the term for the discipline about dealing with the drama that has occurred in the past, or as Jenkins (1991, p. 6) puts it, “the whole ensemble of relations”. From this discussion it should be clear that history and the past have different ontological status and should not be conflated. As I “do history” in this dissertation, I build a discourse out of what I see and who I am. To make sense of budget making, I look to history as a necessary sensemaking requirement whose rhizomatic qualities blend with dramaturgy and ANT to engage with ontological politics. The history that I write in this thesis will be one that I dramatize, not one I discovered.

Foucault and the Acquisition of Historical Knowledge

If history can be imagined as a craft-like activity toward the generation of knowledges then history must be dramatized in multiple configurations. This type of approach was already incorporated into the philosophy of Michel Foucault more than four decades ago when he commented on the traditional (positivist) historian's pervasive building block, the document: "History must be detached from the image that satisfied it for so long, and through which it found its anthropological justification, that of an age-old collective consciousness that made use of material documents to refresh its memory" (Foucault, 1972, p. 7). The document, then, becomes *active* material for historiography,

not just data that needs to be interrogated for truthfulness. According to Foucault's archaeology and genealogy of knowledge, questions of human existence can only be answered in context of understanding the past. History is not patiently waiting under a layer of debris waiting for the historian to brush away the unneeded fragments; nor is it evolutionary as in a steady march of progress toward some superior end point. Instead Foucault stressed discontinuity, complexity, and randomness of events that are inevitably entangled with issues of power, control and knowledge production.

Above I spoke of geography as a metaphorical location of historical knowledge. The idea of space is a recurring theme in Foucault's writings, often situated in micro-spaces such as medical clinics (e.g., Foucault, 1973) and prisons (e.g., Foucault, 1979). Most important for the development of postdramaturgy is that Foucault's territorial concept of "prison" included the idea that imprisonment is a mental condition as much as a physical place with metal restraining bars and suicide-proof toilet facilities (see the numerous references to imprisonment in Foucault, 1970, that are so reminiscent of Mead's theatre of the mind). Notions of territoriality have a capability to situate the past. Micro spaces are sites that often feature face-to-face impression management and efforts at translation into actor-networks – thus, micro-spaces incubate the creation of historical knowledges and transmission to audiences.

Historical territory should be considered an agile space closely connected to the individual that produces and performs history. There are at least two ways (physical and abstract) in which accounting systems territorialize budget making. First, accounting renders physical spaces calculable (Mennicken & Miller, 2012). For budget making in Halifax this could mean providing a written definition for a "state of good repair" for

municipal streets, a “social valuation” for a rural fire station, a “net cost” for such things as office facilities, soccer fields, “service revolvers” for police officers, and many more elements of the centres of calculation²⁰ developed in budget accounting. Second, budget processes territorialize by making abstract spaces calculable (Mennicken & Miller, 2012). For example, the Halifax budget process imposes different tax rates depending on whether a “taxable area” is categorized by the budget accountants as urban, suburban or rural. The Halifax accountants also differentiate between “profit centres” and “cost centres” and even calculate personal identity such as past failures of senior management, awards for public service, and “having the right people with the right skills doing the right things with the right tools” (2013/14 report to Halifax Municipal Council). In a Foucauldian move, Wise (2000, p. 296) explains the movement implied in performing intellectual space: “Like a hermit crab, I carry my home on my back, my stuff scattered about, bags packed in the trunk. I carry a space.” Goffman (1971, p. 28) lays out eight kinds of space which he calls “territories of the self”. This includes the *stall* which, like historical realism, is a securely-bounded space that does not admit competing knowledge claims. A more open conception of historical space would allow both a diversity of accounts of the past and an appreciation of the discursive practices of historiography (Foucault, 1972; Jenkins, 1995).

Accounting research has extensively drawn on Foucault’s work to demonstrate that accountants produce not only business analysis and instruments for decisions but also engage in social and political technique (Lambert & Pezet, 2012). Municipal budget making involves the accountant in a milieu where multiple competing entities challenge

²⁰ The term “centre of calculation” was developed in ANT (Latour, 1987, 1988) to discuss the sites in which knowledge production builds upon the actor-networks that accumulate translation resources from other places.

the budget assumptions, a panoptic gaze by both their political masters who want budget resources for their own districts, and an abundance of external stakeholders with specific requests for consideration. This activity, combined with the accountants' ethical code of conduct and the need to comply with accounting discourse (for example, GAAP – generally accepted accounting principles) creates the conditions for problematization of the self, in effect a performance by the budget accountants.

Foucault's earlier historical publications utilize so-called archaeological methods. These form the foundation for such works as *The Order of Things* (Foucault, 1970), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Foucault, 1972) and *The Birth of the Clinic* (Foucault, 1973). Under mainstream history any form of discontinuity “was at best an embarrassment for the historian at work – a failure, maybe a sign of lack of craftsmanship” (Baert, 1998, p. 120). In Foucault's words (1972, p. 8), “discontinuity was the stigma of temporal dislocation that it was the historian's task to remove from history”. In the discussion of dramaturgy in Chapter 2 Goffman's concept of stigma is described as a personal, deep discrediting of the self in face to face interactions. Consequently, both the budget maker and the historian have to manage stigma.

Many historians have denied Foucault's ideas. In a special issue introduction to *Foucault, Management and History*, Carter, McKinlay and Rowlinson (2002, p. 519) worry that Foucault and History may make stranger bedfellows than many would assume. They enumerate criticisms of his dense and oblique writing style, along with history-specific complaints of getting historical facts wrong and questionable historiography. I imagine that Foucault would tend to agree with these complaints, but then perhaps ask

“Est-ce un problème?”²¹ In a modern modes of history, such as ANTi-History and my proposal for postdramaturgy, the position with which Foucault identified himself is centre stage, i.e., the situated historian embraces discontinuity as an essential practice to approach reality rather than seeing discontinuity as stigma or an obstacle to be overcome.

In the Foucauldian model, history should be juxtaposed with the past in an effort to expose the present. As indicated by John Law (1992) taken-for-granted assemblages can unravel unexpectedly. Foucault’s project actively participates in unravelling by exposing taken-for-granted structures making them visible to those who are subjected to them. Foucault juxtaposes taken-for-granted structures along with alternative structures to bring these into sharp relief. This imagery sometimes employs a “notoriously impenetrable” style (Rowlinson & Carter, 2002, p. 531) that may include referents such as the anatomy of snakes, the domain of phantasms, and insane asylums. White (1987, p. 105) complains that Foucault’s writing consists of “a flood of utterances... [and] histories fraught with discontinuities, ruptures, gaps, and lacunae as his arguments. If he continues to fascinate (some of) us, then, it is not because he offers a coherent explanation or even interpretation of our current cultural incoherence but because he denies the authority that the distinction coherence/incoherence has enjoyed in Western thought since Plato”. So, Foucault is not without detractors. However Foucault’s archaeology implies a useful anti-realist conception of history and a critique of the mainstream historian’s preoccupation with long eras and their processes that are designed to “memorize the monuments of the past, transform them into documents, and lend speech to those traces which, in themselves, are often not verbal, or which say in silence something other than what they actually say” (Foucault, 1972, p. 7).

²¹ “Is this a problem?”

The above discussion implies that Foucault has provided a valuable contribution to postdramaturgy. The past should be viewed less as a search for facts and more about discontinuity and multiple interpretations (stories) of the past based on a selection of traces. This problematizes the character of history, History, historiography and the past, as well as the relationship of these with dramaturgy and actor-network theory.

Historical Irony

It can be said that “good drama” includes a variety of voices – such as humour, tragedy, satire and whimsy. What has been thought of as “good research” (viz. mainstream research) has methodically avoided such voices, instead striving for “scientific” writing that claims to be value-free. However, I wish to follow Goffman, Foucault and Munslow to open-up emotional possibilities. In particular, postdramaturgy embraces the interpretive voice of irony. From the Ancient Greek dramaturgy of feigned ignorance, it is a rhetorical device in which there is incongruence that conveys a meaning conflicting with the literal meaning. Situational irony may be used to assert or contradict a truth claim. In dramaturgy, irony arises when the script calls for an actor to perform out of ignorance. This technique surfaces the importance of a phenomenon by exposing an actor who is exotically unaware of it (however the irony is lost unless the audience is acutely aware of that which escaped the dupe). Czarniawska (2006b, p. 1667) claimed that Goffman was an “exquisite ironist”. Indeed traces of irony, along with sarcasm and satire, are to be found throughout Goffman’s writings. He has the reader understand “that phenomena are all that he suggests they are not” (Manning, 1976, p. 16). Fine and Martin (1990) identify a theme of irony in Goffman which reaches a high level in *The Medical*

Model and Mental Hospitalization: Some Notes on the Vicissitudes of the Tinkering Trades" (pp. 321-86 in Goffman, 1962). This essay presents psychiatric practice as a car repair shop. People, like automobiles, need to be fixed (comic irony), and the power and control of the fixer is absolute. Goffman's irony is risky since it can be misread. It is a framing practice that depends on the audience's frame as well. Fine and Martin (1990) call for ethnographers to continue Goffman's experimentation with ironic forms of writing. I do so by buying-in to the notion of "historical irony" (Munslow, 2010, p. 85).

Historical irony is thoroughly articulated by Munslow (2010). However, well prior to then Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1978) utilized the technique. The *History of Sexuality* was taken as authoritative, as if Foucault had proposed concrete historical knowledge of sexuality. The work was actually meant as an irony and "he had in fact done everything to show its [sex] insubstantiality, its spectral mystifications (M. D. Jordan, 2012, p. 7). Foucault has been heavily criticized for the implications of his ironic work (M. Jordan, 2008). I believe that his dense writing style was regarded as a practice that was "too ironic". However, the ironic style greatly contributed to the problematization of history as discussed in the previous section of this dissertation. Irony also increases postdramaturgy's potential to contribute to critical management studies. In his notes on speech genres, Bakhtin (1986, p. 134) writes, "Irony as a form of silence. Irony (and laughter) as means for transcending a situation, rising above it". These notes seem to indicate an emancipatory role for irony and comedic drama. Irony is promoted as a substitute for silence, "The word removed from life: the word of the idiot, the holy fool, the insane, the child, the dying person, and sometimes women" (ibid, p. 148.) Munslow (2010) expresses the view that historians can only craft useful stories of

the past by being ironic about almost every aspect of the historiography, and argues that our writings of the past can only be understood figuratively. Mainstream historians find irony (and metaphor) an unhelpful trope. I disagree with that assessment but as an amodern historian I must be suspicious of any epistemic and ontological truth claims – including my own. This being the case, irony should be applied to history as a reminder that *realist historical perspectives* (an oxymoron according to Munslow) can only be implied ironically rather than as true representations of the past.

Historical irony plays with implied representations of the past. It does this “by acknowledging the perpetually undetermined nature of ‘the past’ (or present) and language (representation)” (Munslow, 2010, p. 81). Historical irony is very personal. Munslow begins by acknowledging that it is the “*I*” that prepares and delivers argument. But ironically the social world (which is not ontologically available) is helping to construct the world that is creating the “*me*” (the author):

I am ironically aware, that I may be being created as much as I create and also doubt that which may have created me. So I ought to be aware of the irony that what I am writing is not ‘the true narrative’ that exists before or behind language. I cannot logically say I am offering the truth about the nature of history. For all I know I am an evil genie or a Yahoo devoted to promoting undecidability and the (ironic) doubleness of meaning and conventional historians are - as they claim - sane, sensible, reasonable, decent and honest in their endeavour to make the best of a bad job: and are justified in being wary of irony.

(Munslow, 2010, p. 79).

Munslow’s use of the “*I*” and the “*me*” is very similar to Mead’s concept of the *self* and the implication of ironic duality (see Chapter 2). Mead’s *I* is perhaps more in the form of impromptu performance but has the same ironic capacity for historiographical reflexivity. Mead’s *me* – the sum of a history of social responses to the expressions of the *I* – is a

social control device to help the *I* experience the social. Therefore, one is ironically the audience of one's own performance. As previously mentioned, Goffman's dramaturgical reliance on Mead's concept of the self is strikingly evident in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman, 1959, p. 244), where two parts of the self are discussed – the “all-too-human” self, and the “performer” which is concerned to manage impressions, resulting in a conclusion (similar to Mead's thesis) that a multiplicity of selves exist.

Neither Goffman in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* nor Munslow in *The Future of History* acknowledge the foundational influence of G. H. Mead's concept of *I* and *me*. However, it seems (ironically) that Mead was the ghost writer for the employment of the self in those two books – and for this dissertation.

The types of historical irony are extensively described by Munslow (2010, p. 87-101). The following Chart 3 summarizes Munslow's discussion.

Chart 3
Types of Historical Irony

	Description of the irony	Potential effect on the historian
Irony of Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what do the sources seem to mean? - what do the sources actually mean? - assumes that the past and history are ontologically different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use language games to present an ethically desirable history - no effort to pursue historical objectivity - the historian sees a self in the historical picture painted
Irony of historical authorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - narrative choices such as voice, order, duration and frequency - historical style shows an ethical and political commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - history cannot have meaning if judged on data alone - must maintain an ironist outlook that may include drama
Structural irony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - range of authorial choices acknowledged as past events are represented in a structured historical narrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - surfaces a tension between historical narration and history - causes the historian to be sceptical about writing the past
Linguistic irony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - linguistically constructed meaning is ironically unstable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no account of the past can match the actuality of the past, despite constant reference to documented reality

Historical irony has the potential to shift us away from the-past-as-history to a more performative endeavour that is subject to a fair degree of incoherence. Munslow posits that all histories are ironic. This may be the case because of what Michel Foucault calls *discontinuity* and what John Law calls *messiness*. These call attention to the incoherence of the historian's reading of the past that inevitably conflicts with other historians' readings of the past. Munslow (2010, p. 275) points-out that the historical ironies summarized above have considerable overlap, but "the central irony in 'doing history' is the effort to explain that which no longer exists in ways that assume it still does". Thus, historical irony manifests itself in an abiding and complex attitude of doubt that often results in the historian saying one thing while meaning another. Historical irony, when considered in conjunction with irony of the self (the *I* and the *me*) brings history into postdramaturgy's concern for *interesement* – the space in-between. Allies are interposed by their role which is situated in-between competing interests. As previously mentioned, *interesement* calls for devices that can go in-between a problematized actor and all other competitors seeking to define the situation otherwise. From a historical point of view, when historians allow for subjectivity (rather than claiming to find objective truth) they ironically occupy space between storytelling and reality reporting. This allows for a much more robust search for what Munslow (2010, p. 139) calls "history as an expression of a certain kind". These expressions are embedded in budget planning vocabulary and operational management that may be contrary to understandings of historical preservation and interpretation (Oakes et al., 1998). Creation of knowledge of the past must, then, be open to various forms of dramaturgy – in *Budget Theatre* the various forms include

televised meetings of the budget making process, graphic representations that are performed by “professional” staff, museum monuments and recorded heritage with deeply inscribed histories, dramatistic pageantry at civic ceremonies – all infused with ironic historical emplotment (Weatherbee & Durepos, 2010) that includes aesthetic performance. In summary, the ironic historian is a theatrical story teller who consistently demonstrates an affinity for an amodern stance that allows a postdramaturgical turn toward practice and enactment.

Loss of Knowledges

Inherent turbulence in the processes of creating history gives rise not only to the ironic positioning discussed above but also to the strong likelihood of loss of knowledges. Losses may be accidental or intentional, for example strategic misuse of the past by means of document destruction and misplacing (Carroll, 2002), systematic exclusion such as women being “hidden from history” (Jenkins, 1991, p. 7), false recollections (Rowlinson, Booth, Clark, Delahaye, & Procter, 2010), organizational forgetting (Martin de Holan & Phillips, 2004), organizational nostalgia (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006), or as discussed by Burke (2012), getting lost in an overwhelming amount of historical data. Burke (2012, p. 248-249) comments on the knowledge “explosion” referring to new metaphors such as “information overload” and “noise”, and he quotes the Washington Post’s estimate of 7,000,000 pages added to the World Wide Web each day. Burke (2012) cautions that the term *historical observation* may seem to be unproblematic – just another expression for looking. However, he develops a problematic for the “historicity of observation” (2012, p. 35) in that the great abundance of available historical data

provides a pessimistic ontological and epistemological outlook for mainstream historians. Historians of a different kind (postdramaturgical historians) also face the same problematic, although they perhaps see more potential for optimism. The data collected for this dissertation is a challenging example of the likelihood that knowledges will get left behind in a sea of data. Chapter 1 mentions that 5,541 textual documents were collected (leaving many behind) and 170 videos of meetings of the Halifax Council. The fieldwork harvested data enough to imagine multiple budget stories, and unfortunately will ensure that multiple his-stories are lost in the process.

Above, it was implied that recorded meeting minutes may be a rather inadequate history of the decisions of the Halifax Municipal Council. Part of the reason for this is what Burke (2012, p. 147) calls “collective forgetting” as when some budget policies are overlooked during election years. Discarding knowledge is another form of knowledge loss which is somewhat the result of people deeming particular items to be obsolete, for example, a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting only after large sections of the minutes are deleted. It is also possible that incompetent minute transcription (human errors in the Clerk’s Office) can contribute to the erasure of corporate memory – what John Law (1992) might put as data running away on its own. The sense-making process of choosing details and arranging them affects the municipal council members' understanding of their just-concluded interactions in public forum (Ellingson, 2005).

Burke (2010) refers to knowledge that is absent, perhaps temporarily, rather than deliberately hidden. He also believes that the organizational processes of forgetting have accelerated due to the problem of information overload. Whether or not the discarding of

knowledge may be seen as a form of “creative destruction” (a phrase attributed by Peter Burke to economist Joseph Schumpeter), municipal administrators often choose what to discard and what to expose. This can include the discarding of actants such as budget documents and even “discarding” the people who staff the budget consultations. It is not uncommon for meetings to be cancelled or consultation resources to be cut back.

Cancelling a meeting with those utilizing lobbying tactics is sometimes referred-to as sweeping things under the rug. In an ANT sense, what gets discarded in budget making performances says something about the extent to which actor-networks are punctuated, and the story of how this came to be would make for informative drama.

Given the ontological stance of Goffman that the social is prior to the self (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) with the individual person as a crafter of the self, and Munslow’s use of the *I* and the *me* in ironic duality, it follows that loss of knowledges has implications for the construction of the self. This is particularly important given postdramaturgy’s concern for *interessement* which this thesis construes as the space in-between competing interests. Accordingly, historical remembering and losing of knowledges can be understood as a non-corporeal actant (apparently non-embodied, non-material influences, Hartt, 2013) and a site of identity formation. Memories of the past can recast meanings for the present. For the historian, the past (with its remembered or forgotten bits and pieces) helps to construct a sense of self (Eley, 2011; Rowlinson et al., 2010) and the construction is affected by “collective memories [and] postmemory”²² (Boje, 2014, p. 159). ANT&After helps us to realize that history is not just a question of accumulation of accounts from

²² Collective memories are enacted when different actors negotiate the development of stories. Postmemory is a collective memory that was not directly experienced by the person with the memory, such as me retelling the history of Africville even though I never lived there.

individuals. Artifacts also carry memories of the past and are susceptible to loss of knowledges. For example, during the data collection stage of this dissertation, I discovered (thankfully in time to come to the rescue) that knowledge losing in the Halifax budget making process included routine overwriting (by the external recording agency) of computer tape drives used to store the videos of Halifax budget meetings. The planned “life” of the budget meeting video recordings was eight weeks – except that another actant (me) intervened to purchase CD copies of the meetings prior to destruction of the master tapes²³. Artifacts can also make off on their own, for example when fire destroys documents or buildings, when heavy rainfall colludes with power control systems to completely disable a \$55 million wastewater treatment plant²⁴, when enterprise resources planning (ERP) systems have “bugs” that produce errors in automated payroll approval, payment and budget records²⁵, or when part of an inventory of historic artifacts goes missing²⁶.

With its emphasis on performance and symbols, postdramaturgy emphasizes that loss of knowledges is part of the enactment of the organization and the self. Symbolism of the past contributes to how the past is remembered. This gets us beyond the passive “mechanical model in which memories are stored as in computer files” (Rowlinson et al., 2010, p. 71). Therefore, our research methods have to account for the loss of knowledges as a creative process rather than something missing in memory or inventory of records.

²³ The practice of overwriting the master tapes of Council meetings has since been discontinued at Halifax.

²⁴ Halifax media report – Halifax Treatment Plant Malfunction, April, 2009

²⁵ Halifax report – Halifax Payroll System, A Performance Review, August, 2013

²⁶ Halifax report – The Care of Halifax Cultural Artifacts/Artworks, September, 2012.

Postdramaturgical Histories

The discussion thusfar sets the stage for *Budget Theatre* to engage with the historic turn and to do so with an aggressive attitude. The main points that underpin such an approach, as discussed above in this chapter, are summarized as follows:

- history making should avoid presentism and universalism
- history is of an ontologically different status than the past
- history involves relations among heterogeneous human and non-human actors
- history cannot escape discontinuity, complexity and randomness in its entanglement with issues of power
- history has to account for space, both physical and intellectual
- history making is inherently ironic
- history is prone to loss of knowledges

In mixing the above ideas of history with Goffman's dramaturgy as well as ANT&After, I propose that postdramaturgical histories would not attempt simply to describe an untouched object, but rather to perform the object. History, then, is an actor.

That history is an actor is not a new theoretical claim (see Durepos, Mills, & Weatherbee, 2012; Hartt et al., 2010; Myrick, Helms Mills, & Mills, 2013). However, history-as-an-actor has been mainly restricted to recent applications of ANT. If a history is punctuated (as when the relational effects of the actor-network are extremely integrated and have come to be taken for granted) then history exists as a force of translation within an actor-network. The interests of other actors become aligned with the history(ies) because of relations within the actor-network. In ANTi-History, the past is interrogated and traces of the past are followed to understand how the social processes of reassembly

have come to regard stories (Boje, 1995) as a punctuated actor. Working in the budget theatre of Halifax, the task of the researcher is complicated because budget-making actors have to be followed simultaneously with the following of (1) the makers of histories of the municipality and (2) stories told of the municipality's managerial accounting. Postdramaturgy argues, with Myrick et al. (2013), that relational activities in the production of knowledge, and of history, need to be reassembled by the MOS researcher to better understand performances of the past. History can then be viewed as an effort of actor-networks rather than an objectivist representation of the past. The effects are revealed through reassembly (Latour, 2005).

If history is an actor, then ANT with its mantra of *follow the actors* will indeed be a relevant lens to study it. Postdramaturgy posits that Goffman's dramaturgy, with its concentration on scripts, roles, actors, audience, staging, etc., also makes a contribution to understanding how history enacts events (Jenkins, 1995; Weatherbee & Durepos, 2010) that prima facie are neither tragic or comedic but endowed with meaning by the dramaturge (the historian). Goffman's (1974) frame analysis, drawing on Mead, Burke, and Blumer, observes how actors come to know what category of activity is in progress (e.g., make-believe, competition, ceremony, rehearsing) or if the activity is "out-of-frame" (p. 201) as when actors ad lib a storyline that is tangential to the main plot but nevertheless maintaining the appearance of respectful involvement. Symbolic interactionists argue that the past is socially constructed and that its meaning results from analysis of frames. This allows historical artifacts and events to be understood and how history and the past are influential in organizing (Fine, 1993). This brings history into the realm of "the-past-as-history-as-artwork" (Munslow, 2010, p. 127) where

aesthetic/representational decisions constitute the history that will be framed. This also means that multiple organizational stories are possible as described by Boje (1995, p. 997) where the story-telling prowess of Walt Disney is demonstrated by the question “Who is better known, Jesus Christ or Mickey Mouse?” Boje describes the following of actors in *Tamara* as a chasing of discourses – individual decisions as to which of the actors to follow results in no member of the audience having access to all the stories. Postdramaturgy builds on the *Tamara* metaphor by imagining history as immersive theatre rather than promenade theatre. Immersive theatre was originated by the British drama company *Punchdrunk* and embraced in Canada with the *National Elevator Project* which presents short plays where the performing region is several working elevators located in local office towers. The audience chooses among various elevators then ascend and descend with the actors. There is no playbill or set running time (indeed it would be impossible to convey a set programme given the multiple nature of the relational enactment). The audience participates in the performing of the elevator play, experiencing the social, like the historian, at the site of the relations with actors.

Following the concept of multiplicity as articulated by Mol (2002a) and Law (2012), postdramaturgy suggests that history is multiple and occurs in an actor-network of relations. An embedding of histories should also be expected – like Russian dolls; histories nested in other histories or perhaps a budget-actor-network embedded in a historical-actor-network. The past can be seen as an actant (or as Hartt, 2013, would have it, a non-corporeal actant). There may be material elements (e.g., a museum building and municipal park to remember Africville of the past) but these are given meaning through various interpretations of the past, e.g., thoughts of the past – centring on the

ghettoization of Africville – rising up in current concerns that the park has been allowed by the Halifax municipal council to be an off-leash running area for dogs. The ironic symbolism of dogs frequently defecating on the historic territory is not lost on the former residents of Africville. The past accomplishes punctuated status when other actors are thoroughly aligned with it and the history is able to stand on behalf of other actors, having created knowledges through relations, and having wiped away any traces of being other than a singular entity. These knowledges of the past exist in the space in-between the actors, as above, in-between Africville, the museum, and the human-turned-dog park. The past is thus an effect of relations among actors and consequently fluid, messy and never closed. Hartt et al. (2010, p. 4) note the possibilities of “liberationist intent of ANTi-History [that is] realized through re-assemblies of the socio-politics of knowledge production of history and the past”. Postdramaturgy leverages Goffman’s conception of impression management (Goffman, 1959) and stigma (Goffman, 1963b) to alert the users of history to understand that history involves story telling (Boje, 1995, 2003). Avoiding closed-down versions of history allows an emancipatory story to enter the socio-politics of municipal budget making.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation outlined an incorporation of the notion of history and the past into postdramaturgy. This third strand was referred to as “amodern historiography”. Several meanings could be taken from that phrase but the intention is to follow Durepos (2015) who extensively elaborates the philosophical distinction among applications of history in modern, postmodern, and amodern modes. The distinction is embedded in the argument that “we have never been modern” (Latour, 1993, p. 46). Hence, we cannot be postmodern but rather amodern. The difference lies in the point of

production of knowledge. *Modernist* accounts of history production rest on positivism, with the historian largely seen as the arbiter of historical knowledge through cautious reconstruction of the facts. Consequently, modernist history is singular. *The* history is buried in a wealth of sometimes conflicting evidence and the researcher may only come close to the truth if extraordinarily diligent and privileged. *Postmodernist* accounts of history production focus on how the historian's discursive location influences how the past is constructed, making the production of history an outcome of where the historian sits in any specific discourse at a given time. Accounts of the past can only ever be mediated through the historian's narrative account so there may be more than one (plural) history produced. *Amodern* accounts of history view knowledge of the past as an outcome or effect of actor-networks, and these result in multiple (not plural) accounts of the past. The amodern historian should not be viewed as the arbiter of historical accounts so much as an important (but not necessarily central) actor in the production of histories. A summary comparison of Durepos' (2015) modern, postmodern and amodern trifacta for doing history, and dramaturgy's relationship to these modes, is provided in Chart 4. Determining the appropriateness of the above orientations for MOS has been a point of contestation in ongoing academic debates and, for scholars of history, has also influenced the recent call for more history in management and organization studies (Durepos, 2015). As *Budget Theatre* engages with the historic turn, it does so from an amodern point of view where there is an acceptance of the theatrical, rhizomatic, multiple, and relational nature of organization. The amodern emphasis on ontology and relational practice is where dramaturgy can make an academic contribution by focusing on the practices of human and non-human actants, and seeing that these practices are enacted performances.

Chart 4
 Postdramaturgy's relationship to modes for doing history in MOS
 (abridged and adapted from Durepos, 2015, ANTi-History: Toward Amodern Histories)

	MODERN	POSTMODERN	AMODERN
Philosophical assumptions	<p>(Realist ontology and positivist epistemology) Phenomena and the past exist independent of our mental appreciation of them.</p> <p>It is possible and desirable to represent the past in a truthful telling that is generally accepted as history.</p>	<p>(Emphasis on epistemology) The past is an absent present; it is not ontologically available. History as knowledge of the past is an outcome of the community and mind of the historian.</p>	<p>(Emphasis on ontology) The past is performed as history in practices. These practices constitute reality (today). Enactments of the past as history occur at the site of the relations of the actors.</p>
Presentation of the nature of history	<p>(Singular) History is presented as one more-or-less uncontested version of the past.</p> <p>History is discovered (not created) through verification and objective evidence thought to be "facts".</p>	<p>(Plural) Historians, by virtue of their situatedness, create different versions, knowledge, or perspectives on the past.</p>	<p>(Multiple) Focus is on various situated practices / different enactments that one phenomenon may take in different sets of relations.</p>
Relationship of history and the past	<p>(Real) History is an accurate portrayal of the past.</p>	<p>(Relative) There is one past but many somewhat unrelated narratives of the past (histories) that peacefully co-exist or actively compete.</p>	<p>(Relational) Enactments of the past as history occur in the relations of actors at the site of oscillation. Sites of oscillation are places between heterogeneous actors, where there is potential for translation or transformation.</p>
Role of the historian	<p>(Arbiter) Historians assume responsibility for writing history, and after careful consideration of facts, arbitrate historical knowledge. The historian is "objectively" removed from the told history.</p>	<p>(First Person Narrator) The historian writes the history but in so doing recognizes it as a (self-selected) product of the historian's situated efforts. The historian is included in the narrative, and talks about history as an outcome of the writer.</p>	<p>(Performer) The historian is not viewed as arbiter of historical accounts but as part of the performance of history in multiple practices. The historian is an important (but not necessarily a central) actor in the production of histories.</p>
Theoretical affiliation of postdramaturgy			<p>POSTDRAMATURGY - AMODERN Acceptance of the theatricality of organizing. Dramaturgy + ANTi-After + historiography ≈ rhizome. Emphasis on multiple, relational performances and ontological politics.</p>

Goffman's dramaturgical concepts (such as audience, teams, performance, stigma, dramaturgical loyalty, circumspection, performing regions, etc.) may help to show not only *what* has been assembled in the past but also provide possible configurations of *how* it was assembled. History as a dramaturgical performance also surfaces the concept of the self in a way that ANT does not. Since dramaturgy is based on Mead's notion of the self, the following of actors (including following the historian) reveals that historians create multiple versions of themselves along with their multiple histories. This approach supports Munslow's (2010) use of the *I* and the *me*.

Munslow intended the *I* and *me* to invoke a measure of historical irony. In that spirit I end this section with the ironic thought that amodernism may be turned against itself back to acceptance, albeit limited acceptance, of some modernist and postmodernist views of history. Durepos (2015) has effectively put brackets around (postmodernism) – brackets that clearly exclude amodernism and elevates amodernism to its own category. Hence, my hope to adopt a very broad conception of performative history is only possible if, as an amodern historian, I leverage my belief in multiple, relational, enacted histories to the extent that some room is reserved for historians of another kind. If there are historians that gather around different perspectives of an object (and, of course, there are), and if there are historians that see the past as a singular discovery (and even more historians of this variety), then maybe the diversity of thought is part of the multiple enactment of what we call history. I claim that modernist and postmodernist histories are more than what Burke (2012) might call noise. These accounts of the past actively make translation efforts and are often influential in the formation of actor-networks. If we wish

to understand how the social is performed, then modernism has to consider the effects of modernism and postmodernism. Relations in the social do not respect boundaries, reminding us of Haraway's (1994) metaphor of the cat's cradle with its composite, interwoven, and unruly knots. This ironic thought allows me to enjoy the messiness of boundaries which is a prerequisite for working in the postdramaturgical mode.

Chapter Summary

Postdramaturgy recognizes that management and organization studies, when they have not ignored history and the past altogether, mostly depend on a realist conception of history and the past. However, since “the past” has disappeared from view, and is not ontologically recoverable, we are left to interpret traces of the remains. Dealing with history as interpretation constitutes an engagement with the “historic turn”. In this dissertation I have outlined the three theoretical components of postdramaturgy, and discuss a more integrated view in Chapter 5.

This chapter deals with the difficult question “what is history?” The question was addressed by discussing four related concepts: (1) history, (2) History – with a capital H, (3) historiography, and (4) the past. This sets the stage for “History” (the term for the discipline about dealing with the drama that has occurred in the past) to be an important part of the postdramaturgical rhizome. The importance of past dramas is particularly evident in Chapter 7 where postdramaturgy is used to investigate Africville budget stories.

This chapter has also argued that history should be imagined as a craft-like activity toward the generation of knowledges. History, then, must be dramatized in

multiple configurations. This idea led me to Foucault who has provided a valuable contribution to postdramaturgy by teaching that the past should be viewed less as a search for facts and more about discontinuity and multiple interpretations (stories) of the past based on a selection of traces. This problematizes the character of history, History, historiography and the past, as well as the relationship of these with dramaturgy and actor-network theory.

This chapter also discussed historical irony and claimed that all histories are ironic. This may be the case because of what Michel Foucault calls *discontinuity* and what John Law calls *messiness*. These call attention to the incoherence of the historian's reading of the past that inevitably conflicts with other historians' readings of the past. My example of "doing Africville history" shows that historical irony manifests itself in an attitude of doubt that often results in the surfacing of one thing while another meaning is also in play. Historical irony, when considered in conjunction with irony of the self (the *I* and the *me*) brings history into postdramaturgy's concern for *interessement* – the space in-between.

With its emphasis on performance and symbols, postdramaturgy emphasizes that loss of knowledges is part of the enactment of the organization and the self. Symbolism of the past contributes to how the past is remembered. Therefore, my exemplar makes an effort to account for the loss of knowledges as a creative process rather than something missing in memory or inventory of records.

The discussion thusfar sets the stage for *Budget Theatre* to engage with the historic turn and to do so with an aggressive attitude. Postdramaturgy is performed in Chapters 6 and 7 using the budget making practices of Halifax and tapping into the

wealth of data that was collected for *Budget Theatre*. In mixing the above ideas of history with Goffman's dramaturgy as well as ANT&After, I enact various budget objects.

History is an actor in the performance and historiography belongs in the postdramaturgy rhizome. As performed in Chapter 7, I believe that historiography helps infuse the rhizome with an element of critique that may be missing without it.

Chapter 5: Producing Postdramaturgy

Introduction

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 present dramaturgy, actor-network theory and historiography, respectively. Postdramaturgy casts all three of these traditions as a rhizome methodology for producing knowledge of enactment. In so doing, it stimulates movement toward a more critical version of dramaturgy with an amodern orientation. I do not claim a methodology capable of predicting effects of enactment. My contribution explores a hybrid view of the theatre metaphor (Boje, 2003) recognizing that Goffman's dramaturgy will have to be "pushed and pulled a bit... to encompass subjects/objects of all kinds" (Mol, 2002a, p. 34). To a great extent, Goffman's genre of theatre is a modernist sort. Emphasis is on face to face interaction which at any one time will centre on a single stage, script and audience. Goffman allows that the geography of theatre may move around at times, perhaps to the backstage, and he discusses script busting and rewriting of lines. However, a linear progression is implied in traditional dramaturgy and in Goffman's conception of social drama a single truth is either revealed or disguised by those doing the acting.

Goffman (1959, p. 27) perceived patterns in social performances and believed that these hung together and unfolded in a "pre-established pattern of action ... which may be called a part or routine". The parts and routines constitute roles for the players that were seen as having the effect of making the social stick together in predictable ways. In my view, this is where dramaturgy needs to be pushed and pulled, and where ANT&After can be of service. Social entities may achieve durability for extended periods of time (Gill & Grint, 1995). ANT&After investigates how the durability came to be, and how it

is maintained. However, even with effective maintenance, the durability of a social entity is always open to question. Mol (2002a) argues that social order is an uncertain accomplishment which should be studied rather than assumed.

Originally, Goffman used the language of theatre to demonstrate how people present themselves (sometimes as a masked persona) in social transactions. They put on a show for others. Dramaturgy's interaction rituals (Goffman, 1967) enable individuals to help create their society through efforts at impression management, even if dramaturgy implies an environmental constraining frame. The frame should be thought of more like the context of moving pictures rather than a static portrait (Czarniawska, 2006b) because of the self-reflection that is a characteristic part of dramaturgical research. A classic example of this is Goffman's iterative reflection on the apparent "conclusion" of his introductory chapter to *Frame Analysis*. He writes about his own introduction as "accounts, excuses and apologies designed to reframe what follows" (p. 16); then he reflects on that reflection by saying "But what about comments on prefaces? ... Was the preface written in bad faith?" (p. 17); then he further comments on how that commentary just changed the framing again. Goffman continues six more times to reflect on each subsequent reflection. This was a powerful (and perhaps meant to be controlling) literary suggestion as to the nature of frame analysis and the symbolic epistemology of dramaturgy.

Postdramaturgy's conception of the theatre metaphor follows ideas of a modern dramaturgy that may be seen in promenade theatre such as *Tamara* (Boje, 1995) where many stories on many stages are observed by wandering audiences, or set in immersive theatre such as *The Elevator Project* where the audience rides with the actors as part of

the *dramatis personae*. Postdramaturgy assumes that its characters and plots are always in the making and that the milieu of the social stage(s) is messy and multiple (Boje, 2003; Mol, 2002a). Postdramaturgy is capable of reaching out and following actors through the mess.

Objects exist through multiple situated practices. An object (such as a municipal budget) is not a singular entity but a set of concurrent enactments. Therefore, the budget is always re-constituted in relation to other actants. This imagery of continual reform allows for the Halifax budget to be more or less constantly before the municipal council – “the budget” was discussed in 108 of 170 council meetings during the three-year period of data collection for this thesis. The constitution of the budget takes various forms (more than one but less than many) and is enacted in a number of incommensurable ways by the Council, municipal staff and external interests. Yet this multiplicity does not seem to create confrontation as to the nature of the object. Instead, there is an endless process of moving from one enactment of the budget to the next, and for simultaneous enactments of the budget. According to Mol (2002a, 2002b) it is the flow of relations (rather than one final confrontation) that makes atherosclerosis treatment work in hospital practice, and I believe makes the municipal budgeting process hang together as a punctuated actor.

Social-world Theatre with No Backstage

Postdramaturgy is centrally concerned with performance stories. Accordingly, my thesis is at odds with Goffman’s theorizing of backstage spaces where he posits that a more-or-less authentic self is performed. The dramaturgical tradition organizes physical and social spaces as “front” and “back” regions or theatrical stages (Goffman, 1959, p.

109). A social performance is presented in the front region by *dramatis personae* who construct a view of reality for the benefit of a specific audience. However, in the back stage, performers may “knowingly contradict” (Goffman, 1959, p. 114) some of the impressions fostered in the front region – for example, condescending comments about those absent, staging instructions, removal of masks and team collusion. This extension of the theatre metaphor promotes positivist connotations when the backstage is seen as a place (that is unavailable to the audience) where the genuine reality is hiding. Goffman’s concept of knowledge hiding in the backstage is quite literal, i.e., these two regions are physically disconnected so that the performance fostered in the front region cannot be traumatized by an unintended view of the back stage by members of the audience (Fine & Manning, 2003). An explicit example was provided by Goffman (1959, p. 116): “If the bereaved are to be given the illusion that the dead one is really in a deep and tranquil sleep, then the undertaker must be able to keep the bereaved from the workroom where the corpses are drained, stuffed and painted in preparation for their final performance”.

Goffman’s conceptualization of the backstage can more usefully be theorized as interwoven with heterogeneous actants from the front region. The boundaries between the back and front should be seen as being fluid (Ellingson, 2005). Since postdramaturgy talks of stages as multiple it makes less sense to use the metaphor of perspectivalism which suggests that reality is observed by a variety of watching eyes. This always necessitates the question, whose eyes? I suggest that Goffman’s concept of backstage is constructed from the point of view of perspectivalism because it assumes a reality that can be seen from the point of view of managed impressions (the front region) or privileged communication (backstage). However, ANT makes an effort to dissolve the

front/back dichotomy by instead attempting to follow actors as they engage in activities of problematization, interessement, enrollment and mobilization²⁷. In my view, this is an important contribution of ANT to the postdramaturgy rhizome. The front stage is wherever the actors are – and we attempt to follow them there. Mol (2002a) referred to this as a disappearance of the theatre curtains.

Although Goffman did not theorize the backstage to any great degree, he did claim that he always had enough realistic perspective to see the curtains (to understand that what is performed is an act). But, as discussed in Chapter 2, traditional dramaturgy is based it on G. H. Mead who stressed the interaction between the *I* and the *me*. If the self is performed in the theatre of the mind, then face-to-face interactions (which Goffman mostly focused on) become less important and Goffman's notion of the backstage is not a particularly robust conception of the self, especially if self making is seen as a dynamic process and, as a modern ontology implies, if there is more than one self. "People's identities do not precede their performances but are constituted in and through them" (Mol, 2002a, p. 37). Thus, the attempt to follow actors to Goffman's backstage is not going to be sufficient even if it were possible.

Postdramaturgy studies the dramas in which people perform their selves. This may be dramatized not only on the stages of theaters, with curtains, but also on social media and other internet platforms. Sometimes the acting cast includes outsiders delivering

²⁷ This argument is intended to refer to Goffman's conceptualization of the backstage (not every possible notion of the backstage). We would never be at a point of privilege to be able to see through all back doors, windows and behind all curtains. Therefore, I am not claiming the impossibility of the existence of a backstage somewhere. We can only follow the trails we know exist and seek to create multiple views. For example, no matter how many meeting transcripts, Council videos and other artefacts we may have of the Halifax budget process we cannot claim to have it all. We simply do not know where all the curtains are. But Goffman did think it was possible to know where the back stage existed in specific situations. It would be a physical space known to others who were effectively barred from entering. That is the back stage conceptualization that I believe is less than useful for investigating the social.

walk-on performances. This was exhibited in a recent Halifax encounter where Mayor Peter Kelly attempted to enroll members of Occupy Nova Scotia into his network (see Corrigan & Mills, 2012b). Kelly arranged for a meeting with the protesters in a tent on municipal territory that had been physically occupied. Kelly was concerned with, among other things, the amount of unbudgeted spending taking place to deal with this contingency. Advance notice of the meeting with the occupiers was leaked to CTV, a private television broadcaster.

As media reporters began to set up to film the tent meeting, Kelly physically manoeuvred the protest leader to his side (we use the term 'leader' as in temporary speaker – forced at times to represent the total when coming into direct contact with the media), turning him gently around to face the CTV camera for the photo op. This accomplished an on-television demonstration of his communion with the protesters – a man of the people. This directing activity would usually be stage-managed behind the scenes, but while the television crew filmed its video, a nearby Occupier made his own iPhone video (a play within a play?) bringing the manipulation to the front region with a posting on the internet.

(Corrigan & Mills, 2012b, p. 14)

If the theatre curtains have vanished, this broadens the study of postdramaturgical performances to multiple and morphing staging, and includes heterogeneous entities. Goffman focused on different perspectives on the self – those that are presented on stage, and those that are real, hiding behind the performance. This is what postdramaturgy attempts to avoid. Performances do not just display what has already been constructed, but also help to do the constructing.

The Role of Actants in Budget Making

Given its reliance on the metaphor of theatre, it is surprising how little theoretical attention dramaturgy has given to its concept of performance props. This is an issue that is briefly dealt with here because of the proximity of dramaturgy's *prop* vis-à-vis ANT's *actant*. Put simply, Goffman's dramaturgy would have it that actors use props. On the other hand, the case studies of ANT frequently show that props (actants) use actors. Postdramaturgy attempts to dissolve the semantic difference by positing that actors and props may use each other and at other times are ambivalent toward each other.

Looking first at dramaturgy's concept of props, it is clear that props are thought to have no agency. In Goffman's words (1969, p. 14) "Inanimate objects can certainly be said to be indifferent to whether or not they are under observation". Dramaturgical studies often refer to *fixed props* or *fixtures in the setting* (for example, Goffman, 1959, p. 245). Dramaturgical props are thus instrumental; they can be stored offstage when not needed by human actors. Mangham and Overington (1987) also unmistakably separate the notions of actors and props. The utility of a prop is evaluated by the extent to which it assists a human actor in persuading audiences that the dramatic reality being staged is authentic. When needed in specific scenes (and as prearranged in the staging directions), props are shunted around by stage hands using pulleys and ropes. In cyber-performance staging, computer animation provides customized and simulated props, as is the case in desktop theatre where the performers are actually computer avatars. In live theatre, some props are carried by the actors or part of the worn attire, such as in the budget presentations of the Halifax Police Department where the Police Chief shows-up in full para-military uniform complete with service revolver, police valour medals (also known

as “decorations”), and three-star epaulettes on each shoulder. In theatre, costume is intended to be seen at a distance to support the role one is playing. The service revolver of the Police Chief does not need to be loaded with bullets because that does not matter – there is no intention to discharge the firearm. The performance is staged to obtain approval for the operating budget of the Police Department.

ANT’s related concept of “actant” is controversially associated with the idea that non-humans may engage in action with a substantial amount of agency. Hence, the scallops of St. Brieuc Bay have to be coaxed into enrollment by the researchers – “If the scallops are to be enrolled, they must first be willing to anchor themselves to the collectors... In fact the three researchers will have to lead their longest and most difficult negotiations with the scallops” (Callon, 1986, p. 10). However, even those who are prepared to appropriate elements of ANT have concerns about assigning generalized symmetry to human and non-human actants. For many observers it seems a bizarre notion that actants, for example the scallops of St. Brieuc Bay, are actively working and negotiating enrollment into networks.

This dissertation has been dealing with the relational performativity of postdramaturgical actors. Engaging with “performances” emphasizes the hyphen in the phrase actor-network. The oscillation between actors and networks depends upon artifacts as essential players in producing the entities that are assembled together as subjects. The prominence of relational and multiple performances in postdramaturgy shifts attention away from the agential power of any one actor. The move is toward simultaneous agency to enable an outcome to be achieved. ANT studies are often centred on an obvious human agent who seems to have a motive to build a punctuated network

that continually bolsters the agent's power (Whittle and Spicer 2008). Key actors may include successful and heroic scientists (as in Pasteur's taming of France – see Latour, 1983) or unsuccessful engineering phenomena (as in the TSR2 fighter jet – see Law, 2002). In such ANT studies the centred figure usually operates in a hierarchical structure (Corrigan & Mills, 2012a). This is at odds with the thrust in ANT that networks are built from heterogeneous sources. In more recent thinking (ANT&After) the heroes and villains may indeed be non-human²⁸ but the academic discussion is less about agency and more about what it means to be an actor or actant. Postdramaturgy builds on this idea by introducing the term *actant-in-motion*. Actants are “in motion” when they are not alone – when they perform relationally with other active entities in simultaneous movements. This diminishes the discussion of implied intentionality. Performances in municipal budget making depend on both human and non-human actors, although the roles of the latter need not be thought of as consisting of honest or devious intentions. The important point for postdramaturgy is that a municipal “audience” observes the performances of non-human actants and that these performances (independently and in concert with human performances) help to constitute the budget and its effects. Thus, the amended notion of agency in postdramaturgy is receptive to the influence of both humans and non-humans in hybrid associations (Magnani, 2012) without emphasizing agency.

It is worth noting that although non-human actants have agency only when acting as actants-in-motion, the same can be said of many human actors. The accounting clerk in the back office, the budget transcription secretary, the payroll auditor, budget control accountant, and numerous others play minor roles in budget theatre. They take all their

²⁸ An example of an ANT&After hero is the Zimbabwe Bush Pump (de Laet & Mol, 2000), a technology that is fluid in its performance of boundaries, its working specification, and of its maker. An example of an ANT&After villain is the contraception device known as IUD (Dugdale, 1999) with its health risks.

instructions from supervisors. They are trained to perform in a specific way. They are actants-in-motion in the same sense as a host of non-human performers: the accounting information system (AIS) and the computer software for enterprise resource planning (ERP) are “trained” by humans to perform repetitive tasks. The AIS and ERP act in concert with humans to perform budget making. Public works operations also depend heavily on artificial intelligence such as automated control systems at wastewater treatment plants where physical infrastructure has replaced the need to employ humans. If the actants-in-motion have agency, it is because other actors have enlisted the interaction. However, once in motion, non-human actants (acting alone) can become headline actors in the budget making drama. This was the case when the “Inlet Gate Closing Sequence” did not shut off sewage flow to a pumping station and a “catastrophic failure” of the Halifax Wastewater Treatment Facility occurred, resulting in a budget cost in the amount of \$10.4 million – a forensic auditor eventually attributed agency to “mechanical failure, and not human error”²⁹. In another example of actants performing alone, Hurricane Juan, a Category 2 storm, inflicted an unexpected budget cost of \$23.8 million to clean-up and restore Halifax infrastructure.

In summary, postdramaturgy takes the analytical position that non-human actants have more agency than Goffman’s notion of *props* but balks at the full agency version of Latour (1996) and Callon (1986). As indicated in Chapter 3, I wish to tone-down the ANT agency rhetoric preferring instead to think of actants-in-motion interacting relationally.

²⁹ From media summary of the Halifax forensic report, <http://metronews.ca/news/halifax/36869/no-human-error-in-sewage-plant-flood/>

“Mapping” Postdramaturgy in the Context of Organization Theory

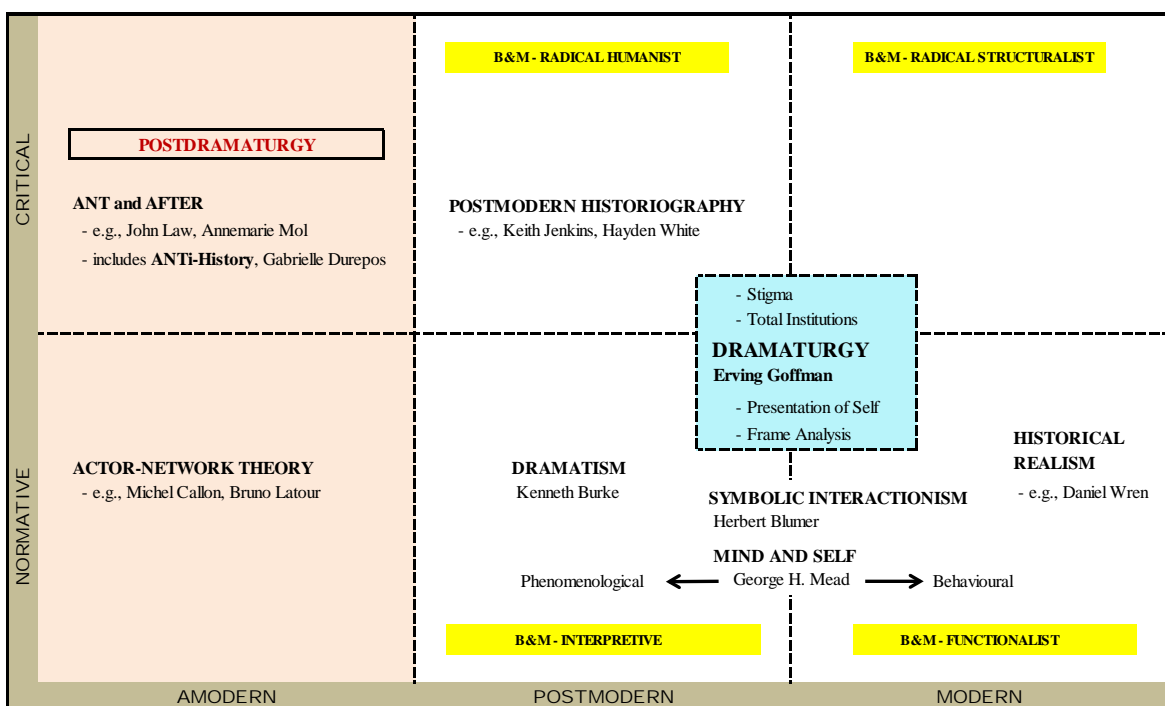
There have been several attempts in the academic literature to create a system of defined boundaries to assist in locating the underpinnings of various schools of MOS thought. These include the seminal (albeit somewhat outdated) “sociological paradigms” of Burrell and Morgan (1979), and more recent work on “knowledge problematics” (Cunliffe, 2011), the “typology of organization theory research domains” (Hassard & Wolfram Cox, 2013), as well as the modes of doing management and organization history (Durepos, 2015). In this section I suggest a theoretical frame of reference for postdramaturgy. This is stimulated by the idea of a mapping device – a useful geographic analogy – as a means of promoting discussion of the philosophical assumptions about the nature of postdramaturgy. The mapping device also indicates postdramaturgy’s theoretical connection to dramaturgy, ANT and historiography (see Figure 4)³⁰. There are limits to how far I am prepared to go with the mapping device. In imagining a pseudo-geographic arrangement I realize that it is problematic to place meta-assumptions neatly on a map with their own metaphorical latitude and longitude. Accordingly, we should keep in mind Goffman’s concession regarding basic deficiencies in the authenticity of metaphor, and “attempt not to make light of its obvious inadequacies” (1959, p. 9). However, a typology of research domains helps to elaborate my concern for two related categories of assumptions: First, there are ontological assumptions about the core of the social phenomena under investigation. For example, ontologically we need to question whether dramaturgy assumes that reality is objective and external to the individual or whether reality is constituted by acting it out in one's mind. Second, ontological issues

³⁰ The mapping metaphor causes some problems here since these putative borders are punctured on a regular basis. I have drawn all of the boundaries in Figure 4 with dotted lines to indicate there is no clear definition of where these boundaries begin or end.

should be considered along with epistemological assumptions. Finally, I am interested in classifying research in terms of fundamental political assumptions. Therefore, following Hassard and Wolfram Cox (2013), I do not focus on Burrell and Morgan’s sociologies of regulation and radical change. Instead I attempt to categorize the research traditions of interest as normative and/or critical.

Figure 4
Organizational Theory research traditions supporting the development of "Postdramaturgy"

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Dramaturgical epistemology implies a research method that purports to collect and analyze drama arising from face-to-face interactions. If we understand the social world as essentially theatrical, what claims can we make about the grounds for obtaining knowledge, and once obtained how forceful are our claims about its truth and stability?

³¹ The framework for this chart is a collage. The NORMATIVE / CRITICAL axis is borrowed from the research domains of Hassard and Wolfram Cox (2013); the AMODERN / POSTMODERN / MODERN axis follows Durepos’ (2015) modes for doing history; these frameworks and the indicated research traditions are all superimposed on the four sociological paradigms of Burrell and Morgan (1979).

For example, do we claim that our dramaturgical research has uncovered tangible knowledge? Something we might describe as real? Or is the nature of knowledge more personal and subjective? As Cunliffe (2011) cautions, we should also be careful to not conflate epistemology and methodology.

Figure 4 reflects the view that Goffman's dramaturgy does not seem to take an extreme ontological position. As discussed in Chapter 2, dramaturgy implies a subjectively-based nominalism while in some ways also approaching an objective attitude toward realism. Goffman sometimes plays his hand as do some symbolic interactionists who imply objectivist assumptions that posit that reality is a concrete given or as an environmental force that results in observable and measurable variables. However, since dramaturgy is capable of seeing the social world as pliable, researchers with a craft-like approach are less apt to work in a functionalist or radical structuralist mode. Thus, Goffman's dramaturgy extends into a postmodern normative paradigm but, as observed by Becker (2003), Goffman's work also exhibits empiricist, positivist tendencies. Burrell and Morgan (1979) discuss dramaturgy as being located in the functionalist paradigm, although in the least objectivist fringe of the paradigm. Cunliffe (2011) similarly shows dramaturgy in a position mid-way along a subjectivist-objectivist continuum of her topology (p. 655). The position of dramaturgy, in Cunliffe's view, leans toward interpretivism since human actors see reality as a territory of symbolic discourse. Borrowing from the topologies discussed above, dramaturgy is showcased in Figure 4 along with its antecedent cast of characters. Dramaturgy is presented as holding an important measure of nominalism giving it interpretivist characteristics. Its overlap to the modern/normative quadrant also recognizes its functionalist possibilities.

The above discussion concentrates on the horizontal axis of Figure 4. Dramaturgy also punctures boundaries along the vertical axis. By situating Goffman's dramaturgy mostly in the normative category, I join with those who have criticised the tradition of dramaturgy for its minimal contribution toward critical management studies. Goffman's actors did not fight back; they conformed to the requirements of a capitalist society that erased struggles such as class, race, and gender. "Goffman's moral selves knew their place in the order of things. Capital was a missing term... He was the naturalistic observer [with] an apolitical social psychology. It did not take sides... and it did not address issues of social injustice, war, or violence under capitalism" (Denzin, 2002, p. 107). On the other hand, even if Goffmanesque dramaturgies did not initially engage as critical management studies, the analogy of the theatre has been extended to do just that. For example, Boje et al. (2003) make the case that dramaturgy should give greater recognition of the tension that exists between actors or ideas as they interact in the social. Boje et al. (2003, p. 2, emphasis added) "combine the theatrical perspectives of both Goffman and Burke into a *critical postmodern perspective*". Paolucci and Richardson (2006) also use the tools of dramaturgy toward a more critical theory of social interactions. They use the humour of Gerry Seinfeld to remake Goffman's neutral perspective into one with an expressively critical stance.

Thus, Figure 4 suggests that dramaturgy has some limited capacity for critique. This is evident in *Stigma* and in the concept of *Total Institutions*³². The influence of these writings, and the general ironic (and possibly sarcastic) tone of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and *Frame Analysis*, allow dramaturgy to claim part of each of the four

³² The critique in these examples of Goffman's dramaturgy is implied rather than overt; the reader has to work to see it, i.e., the reader is left to figure-out the critical inferences from the thick description given.

quadrants of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) sociological paradigms. Postdramaturgy makes use of this geographical flexibility to foster analysis that would have a distinctly critical orientation.

The antecedents of dramaturgy that were discussed in Chapter 2 (Mead, Burke and Blumer) have also been positioned in Figure 4. All have been situated in the normative category due to their lack of concern to provide a critique of, or substantive alternatives to, the status quo. Briefly, the positioning of Mead's precursor concept of *mind and self* depends on whether a phenomenological or a behavioural scientist view is taken. The intellectual followers of Mead occupy a very wide range of ontological and epistemological territory. Behavioural interpreters of Mead do so in the context of the functionalist / modernist paradigm; the phenomenological interpreters of Mead generally work within the context of the interpretive / postmodern paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Although Mead's followers cover a gamut of thought from modernist to postmodern, Mead himself seemed to take a position part way between (1) understanding society as a subjectively constructed entity and (2) a biological view which ignores the influence of the social aspects of human interaction (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Subjective leanings toward postmodernism are even more pronounced in the tradition of dramatism (K. Burke, 1935, 1945) which is shown in Figure 4 as being more interpretivist than dramaturgy. Researchers in that mode are prepared to accept that organizing is theatrical, not just metaphorically like theatre as dramaturgy would have it. Figure 4 shows symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) as cutting a wide swath. Blumer would likely be positioned within an interpretivist worldview since his symbolic interactionism would construe social meaning as managed and transformed through an interpretive process.

However, as indicated above, some symbolic interactionists see reality as existing outside of our appreciation of it and posit that we can get to know reality with scientific research methods.

The postdramaturgical rhizome includes ANT which is also shown in Figure 4. ANT postdates the Burrell and Morgan paradigms and, by occupying territory completely outside of the proposed objectivist-interpretivist continuum, disturbs the convenient 2 x 2 matrix of Burrell and Morgan. I show ANT in the *amodern* category because of its emphasis on ontology, its actors performing at the site of relations, and the oscillation between heterogeneous actants with a potential for translation. However, ANT has frequently been described as being sociologically normative, apolitical and lacking in a capacity for critique. Such criticism is most pronounced when directed at the early ANT writing of Callon and Latour (Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010; Whittle & Spicer, 2008). Accordingly, ANT is placed in the normative/amodern region. However, potential for critique clearly arises in ANT&After writings (see Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010; Corrigan & Mills, 2012a; Law & Hassard, 1999a). These emphasize multiple relational performances of organizational actors (e.g., Law, 2012; Mol, 2002b). ANT&After has the capability to deliver a reflexive MOS approach with a willingness to engage in ontological politics.

Postdramaturgy also includes historiography. Figure 4 shows that approaches to history span the entire range of mapping possibilities. Historical realism (e.g., Wren & Bedeian, 2010) takes a modernist view that phenomena exist in a positivist sense, independent of our appreciation of them, and prone to progressivist, presentist and universalist accounts of the social (Weatherbee & Durepos, 2010). Historical realism is

also immersed in a normative research culture. Facts are to be found and faithfully reported as they were found, not criticized or deemed to be suspect politically.

Postmodern historiography (e.g., Jenkins, 2009; White, 1978) radically departs from historical realism by fundamentally assuming that the past is not ontologically available, by presenting plural versions of historical knowledge, and by engaging in a more personal role (first person narrator) to recognize the historian's situated efforts.

Movement toward postmodernism (and amodernism) allows history to become involved in a philosophical conversation as to what it is possible to know about the past (Jenkins, 1991). Regarding the vertical dimension of my mapping scheme, postmodern historiography releases an opportunity for critique such as losing or hiding knowledges, privileging certain accounts, listening to "voices from the edge" and "reading against the grain" (P. Burke, 2012, p. 204). The possibility for critical management studies is further enhanced by employing amodern historiography (e.g., Durepos & Mills, 2012). ANTi-History is not only an example of amodern / critical thinking but I would argue that it can also be considered an important research methodology in the category of ANT&After. ANTi-History emphasizes ontological philosophical assumptions and sees history as multiple and relational. Most important for its relationship with postdramaturgy, ANTi-Historians are cast in the role of performer; they are not viewed as an arbiter of history but as part of the theatrical performance. This view is consistent with Locke and Golden-Biddle (1997) who discuss Boje's (1991) argument that corporate storytelling should consider its performance context.

In summary, I offer Figure 4 as a mapping of paradigms for organizational theory research traditions supporting the development of postdramaturgy. I am aware of the

limitations of the mapping exercise and that the term “paradigm” can be misleading, presenting a somewhat contrived sense of commonality among selected groups of researchers. The commonality can break down because research is messy, ideas are incessantly contested, and research traditions are seldom as behaved as specified in paradigm maps. However, the use of the map analogy may help readers to metaphorically see that postdramaturgy is an epistemological and ontological leap from the “opening position” of dramaturgy, its precursors, and the supporting cast consisting of ANT and historiography. To achieve its potential, postdramaturgy assumes an amodern / critical attitude that accepts the theatricality of organizing, emphasizes multiple, relational performances and reveals ontological politics.

Ontological Politics of Postdramaturgy

Postdramaturgy makes a leap away from research traditions that see reality as independent, prior, fixed, singular, and ahistorical. Instead an alternative view is offered; that realities might be relational, simultaneous, morphing, multiple, and historically performed. However, this brings forward a critical question – if the job of the academic researcher extends beyond arbitrating and reporting discovered facts, then realities (more than one) become involved with politics (Law, 2007; Mol, 1999). Which realities are to be deemed worthy of sponsorship? The question becomes even more difficult if the theatricality of organization is acknowledged.

The realities of organizational life are performed in a variety of practices. As Mol (1999) explains, a potential consequence of reality multiplicity is that there are various

performances of an object that are available. *Ontological politics*³³ is a compound phrase that deals with ontology, that which is constituted as real, and politics, that which can be debated, shaped and critically opposed. If epistemology goes to the background because “true” facts are no longer the only grounds for justified assertions, and realities are performed rather than discovered, then political reasons can be debated concerning the promotion of one version of reality instead of another. Ontological politics follows from performance rather than *perspectivalism*. *Perspectivalism* would have it that truth about an object is voiced by anonymous, objective experts from different points of view.

... their eyes are different. They look at the world from different standpoints. This means that they see things differently and represent what they have seen in a diversity of ways. *Perspectivalism* broke away from a monopolistic version of truth. But it didn't multiply reality. It multiplied the eyes of the beholders. It turned each pair of eyes looking from its own perspective into an alternative to other eyes. And this in turn brought pluralism in its wake. For there they are: mutually exclusive perspectives, discrete, existing side by side, in a transparent space. While in the centre the object of the many gazes and glances remains singular, intangible, untouched.

(Mol, 1999, p. 76)

Following Law and Mol, this dissertation is not centred on getting to know the municipal budget as a passive object. In other words, I do not view the budget as a single actant without agency. I am more concerned to demonstrate the enactment of the budget, with theatrical performances rendering the budget as a multiple object. If enactment is featured instead of epistemology there is no longer a single object in the middle waiting to be discovered from a host of perspectives. The objects of interest in postdramaturgy are followed around – they show-up in performances but are not always on stage.

³³ The term “ontological politics” was introduced and has been discussed in the ANT&After literature. Annemarie Mol (1999, p. 87) attributes the coining of the term to John Law. However, Law (2004, p. 13) gave attribution in the other direction by referring to “what Annemarie Mol calls ontological politics”.

Goffman's frame analysis combined with history-as-an-actor-network may be usefully applied to the concept of ontological politics. Postdramaturgy would thus need to be sensitive to the possibility of "layered" ontological politics. A frame is a way of organizing performances to identify the category of activity that is taking place. For example, the ceremonial entry of the mace³⁴ at the beginning of budget meetings may be understood romantically as a gesture to recognize war events of the past.

Exhibit 1

The Ceremonial Mace at Halifax City Hall

Republished courtesy of The Chronicle Herald Ltd.



Others may frame the marching of the mace as an unwanted waste of time and cost to the budget (the commissioner's wages). Others still may see the mace as a symbol of those in power versus those who have no power. The traditional mace was a weapon with a

³⁴ All those assembled in the Halifax Council Chamber prior to the beginning of the budget meeting must rise as a uniformed commissioner marches into the room with a decorated mace which is placed in a cradle in the centre of the room. The meeting is assumed to be "in session" while the mace is present.

heavy head on a shaft used to bludgeon enemies – ironic symbolism given the impending budget battles for scarce money resources.

Goffman's frames analysis shows how people make a distinction among these different kinds of notions. The suggestion is that the processes of framing may be directed at artfully making something appear genuine and the same processes may be used to mislead others (Fine & Manning, 2003). A frame is thus a class of communication that causes actors to accept the politics of one meaning over another (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). As indicated earlier in this thesis, Goffman's framing is not securely anchored to objective reality. The framing of social experience may be anchored to additional strata which increases the likelihood of layered ontological politics. For example, the framing of an interaction between Halifax and Africville can be viewed in layers of politics – see Figure 5.

Layer 1 (budget framing) is instrumental. When Halifax plans for money to be spent, this can be viewed either as an investment or an expense. Accountants will appeal to generally accepted accounting principles to sort this out but the categorization has political implications. But accounting principles do not cover the range of possible categorization, as shown by the following excerpt from a budget speech having to do with the expense of the municipality paying for sidewalk snow removal.

Councillor Mosher: This item has come to Council 15 times since 1998...
It's not a sexy expense... but, Mr. Mayor, why can't we clear the snow.

(Halifax RC meeting, April 30, 2013)

Budget framing includes whether or not the categorization of the expense can be sexy, i.e., interesting enough to capture the attention of the elected officials. Un-sexy items are

poor candidates for budget funding. An “investment” implies a positive action designed to foster future yield (the cash outlay is recorded on the Balance Sheet as an asset) whereas an “expense” implies a negative situation involving a financial problem (the cash outlay is recorded on the Statement of Expenditure as a cost). The wise municipal councillor in budget debate always refers to budget allocations as investments. However, Africville budget requests ended-up in the problem category rather than warranting investment, as indicated in the following excerpt from the Council minutes.

His Worship the Mayor referred to page 4 of the staff report, dated July 22, 1962 which listed three basic approaches which are available to the City:

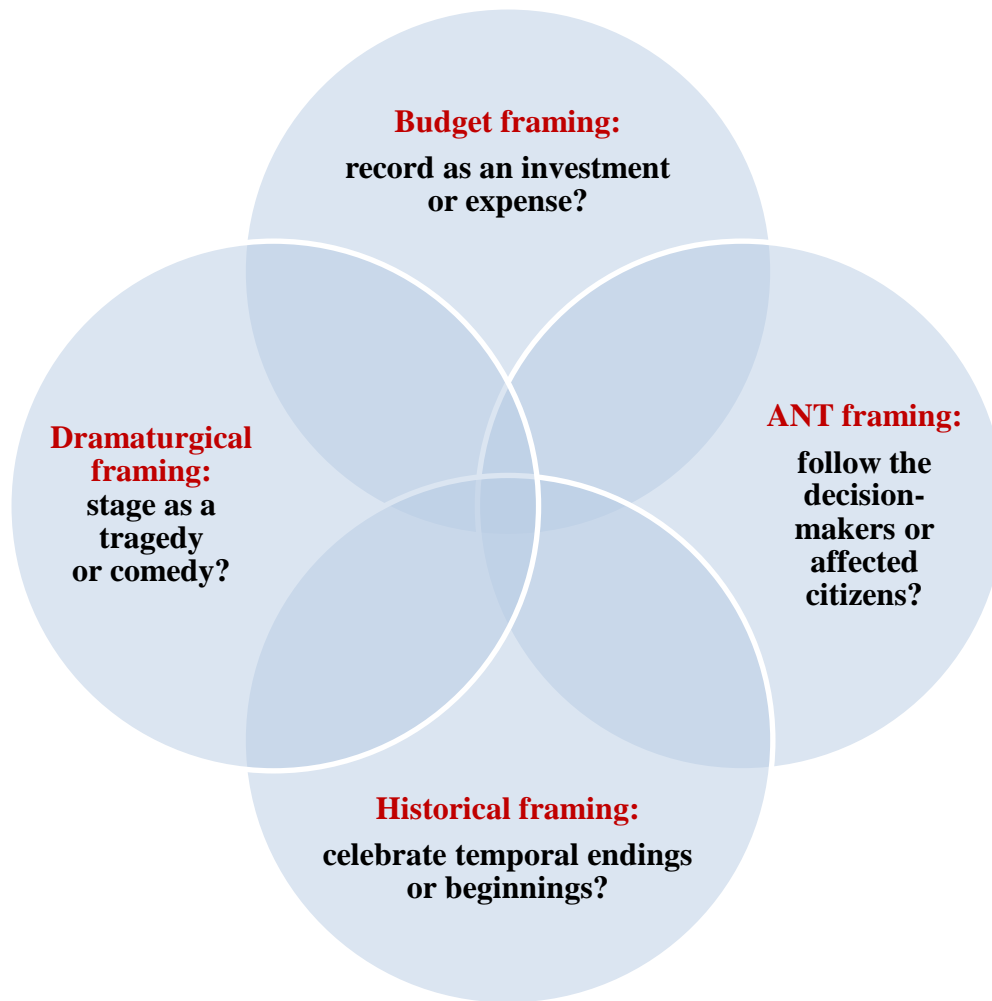
1. The City can do nothing about the problem – this has been the basic approach for over 100 years.
2. The City can make full use of its statutory powers to remove blight [i.e., the “dilapidated structures” of the community of Africville]. It can limit compensation and assistance to the absolute minimum required by law.
3. The City can use its statutory powers to remove the blight and, at the same time, temper justice with compassion in matters of compensation and assistance to families affected.

It was agreed by all members of Council that... action must be taken to solve the problem.

(Halifax Council meeting minutes, October 24, 1962)

As with all the layers in Figure 5 (and additional layers not shown) the possibilities for ontological politics abound. I have shown binary opposites as the goalposts for a range of considerations.

Figure 5

Halifax and Africville: examples of layers of ontological politics³⁵

³⁵ The genesis of this idea of nested layers of ontological politics comes from multivariate statistics, specifically hierarchical linear modelling (HLM, Aitkin & Longford, 1986; Fullagar & Kelloway, 2009). This is perhaps a surprising source considering the qualitative nature of this dissertation. HLM departs from the vast majority of studies using regression analysis by considering design effects introduced by multi-level structures. For example, when studying effects related to students in primary school, one considers the pupils, then adjusts for the fact that pupils are nested in classes, then the classes are nested in schools, then the schools are nested in local authorities, which are nested in geographic areas.

With traditional regression approaches, such as multiple regression and logistic regression, a fundamental assumption is that the observations are independent. HLM (and postdramaturgy) says they are not independent. Questions answerable by traditional regression methods, such as “Do schools differ?” are less interesting than “Why do schools differ?” which HLM attempts to address.

Hierarchical data structures are common in the social sciences. Once you know that hierarchies exist, you see them everywhere. Multilevel statistical analysis, and the above conception of nested histories and layers of ontological politics, are strategies for finding patterns (or absence of patterns) in data.

Layer 2 (dramaturgical framing) is methodological. If the researcher uses the metaphor of theatre to frame the contest between Halifax and Africville then decisions have to be made about what is going on in the interaction. Shall we see tragedy or comedy? Political aspects of this decision are elaborated by Morreall (1999, pp. 43-45) who points out that in comedy – and here I think the fit with postdramaturgy is ideal – life tends to be depicted as:

- messier and more complex
- having a high tolerance for disorder and improvisation
- accepting of ambiguity since not everything has to make sense in comedy
- making room for divergent thinking as comedy calls attention to incongruities, is able to apply ironic disengagement from the situation, and stresses playfulness

If we attend seriously to the theatricality of budget making, then it turns out that we are dealing with more than one budget and that these are made in relations. They are, as Law and Hassard (1999b) and Mol (1999) point out, performed into being. I propose that rather than thinking of budget making as different perspectives on the same object, we approach the research milieu as ontological politics – as “doing” different budgets. Sometimes the process seems tragic, sometimes comedic.

Layer 3 (ANT framing) also engages with ontological politics when it is recognized that the stories of the researcher mobilize further actor-networks; researchers never simply describe the actors they follow (Law, 2004). They too enact realities as they select from available actants. When studying Africville do we follow the translation efforts of the powerful, for example the Mayor, Council and Chief Administrative

Officer? Or do we follow the involved citizens, i.e., those with little voice in municipal affairs? As Haraway (2006) declared in her own explicitly political version of ANT&After, researchers make realities and they have to determine what kind of difference they wish to make. Haraway uses tropes – cat’s cradles and cyborgs – that disturb politically unethical realities. ANT is intensely concerned with assemblages. Often these are assumed to be a single thing, albeit subject to reassembly. If we adopt the view of the municipal budget as a multiple entity – an assembly with associations – the relations among the different assemblages may be uncertain or incongruous. This is what Mol (2002b) calls the problem of difference or the complexities involved in comparing. Since perspectivalism is not in play, then we are engaging with different actor-networks produced in different processes of assemblage. If the actor-networks overlap (and Mol suggests that in hospital management systems they are often able to accomplish an elegant overlap) the ontological politics should help the overlap to be productive. “If politics is about better social and non-social arrangements, and about the struggles to achieve these, then method assemblage and its products can also be judged politically” (Law, 2004, p. 149). Accordingly we should understand that an actor-network theorist engages in ontological politics when making a version of reality more credible while eroding or concealing other versions.

Layer 4 (historical framing) brings a temporal perspective that involves a host of political considerations when dealing with the past. Figure 5 represents only one of these – the decision as to whether to celebrate beginning or endings. Postdramaturgy pays attention to a modern historiography (Durepos, 2015) to learn how history as a non-corporeal actant (Hartt, 2013) contributes to performances. As indicated above,

ontological politics deals with that which is constituted as real. With respect to history, ontological politics involves an analytic concern regarding enactment of different readings of the past and the relations that give preference to a multiple enactment of the past. Historical readings may depend upon the point in time that is to be foregrounded. Political expediency would lead Halifax to perform Africville in the recent past, as in the 2010/11 budget which established an African Nova Scotian Affairs function integrated into the Business Plan/Budget process. The settlement included a \$3 million cash contribution, land, acknowledgement of loss, park maintenance, and renaming of Seaview Park to Africville. The budget concession was part of a resolution to resolve the outstanding litigation with the Africville Genealogy Society et al. and reach “a settlement that brings some closure to the dispute with dignity to all parties”. Closure is the political solution sought by Halifax. Dramaturgical closure techniques attempt to silence audiences. “This tactic is increasingly common among corporations today, and it works because the theatrical spectacle enacts the fantasy that we, its audience, can be mere observers, apart and unsullied by the messy work of organizations” (Boje et al., 2004, p. 767). Meanwhile, Africville actants are focusing on beginnings, the other end of the temporal spectrum – the war of 1812³⁶. One history has it that the settlement of Africville was a revolutionary act by Black Refugees who escaped bondage in the United States. The variance of temporal location, beginnings or endings, multiplies what can be considered as real as knowledges of the past are created by actor-networks.

The four strata indicated above, and others that have been omitted, indicate some of the layered ontological politics that oscillate in the relations between Halifax and

³⁶ The dramatic metaphor of theatre is used in this dissertation to tell a budget story concerning Africville. The drama went literally on-stage in September 2014 when “Settling Africville” (written by George Elliott Clarke) was performed at Alderney Landing Theatre in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Africville. Figure 5 shows some common ground where they interact in an untidy mixture of politics. I say that the strata “oscillate” because at any one moment the point of engagement may be budgetary, methodological, or historical – and always political. The ANT&After literature recognizes multiplicity (actors can be more than one but less than many) in a way that early ANT (which was focused on single punctuated actors) was unwilling to accept. For example, Dugdale (1999) tells of conversations that oscillate between seeing IUD’s as a single object as well as performance of different IUD objects. Dugdale is not totally satisfied with the term “oscillation” because the performances often take place simultaneously. Mol (2002a, p. 84) also observes the “double move” that studies multiplication of a single actants and the “coordination of this multitude into singularity”. The municipal budget, the Halifax Regional Municipality, Africville – all these terms speak of entities that seem to hang together, even if not entirely stable. At different sites, Mol (2002a, p. 119) learns that different atheroscleroses are enacted “but this does not imply that the hospital explodes into idiosyncratic fragments. Instead, singularity of objects, so often presupposed, turns out to be an accomplishment. It is the results of the work of coordination. A relative scarcity of controversy in daily practices, where so many different objects go under a single name, is likewise a remarkable achievement”. Postdramaturgy tells of these achievements as the result of layered ontological politics that can be considered analytically from the point of view of framing.

Chapter Summary

Goffmanesque patterns in social performances unfold in what he believed were pre-established patterns or routines. The patterns and routines constitute roles for the

players that were seen as having the effect of making the social adhere together in predictable ways. This chapter disturbs these ideas. Postdramaturgy's conception of the theatre metaphor follows notions of a modern drama that may be seen in promenade theatre where many stories on many stages are observed by wandering audiences, or set in immersive theatre where the audience rides with other actors as part of the *dramatis personae*. Postdramaturgy assumes that its characters and plots are always in the making and that the milieu of the social stage(s) is messy and multiple (Boje, 2003; Mol, 2002a). Postdramaturgy is capable of reaching out and following actors through the mess since it adds ANT and historiography to the toolkit of dramaturgy.

Objects exist through multiple situated practices. An object (such as a municipal budget) is not a singular entity but a set of concurrent enactments. Therefore, the budget is always re-constituted in relation to other actants. This imagery of continual reform allows for the Halifax budget to be more or less constantly before the municipal council. Chapters 6 and 7 provide a postdramaturgical analysis of some of these enactments. These following chapters show how the Halifax budget is performed in a number of incommensurable ways by the Council, municipal staff and external interests. Yet this multiplicity does not seem to create confrontation as to the nature of the object. Instead, there is an endless process of moving from one enactment of the budget to the next, and for simultaneous enactments of the budget. I will show a diversity of enactments of the Halifax municipal budget but it still hangs together as a punctuated actor.

Postdramaturgy is centrally concerned with performance stories. Accordingly, my thesis is at odds with Goffman's theorizing of backstage spaces where he posits that a more-or-less authentic self is performed. In this chapter, I posit that the backstage can

more usefully be theorized as interwoven with heterogeneous actants from the front region. The boundaries between the back and front should be seen as being fluid.

Given its reliance on the metaphor of theatre, I note the insufficient theoretical attention dramaturgy has given to its concept of performance props. This is an issue that was briefly dealt with in this chapter because of the juxtaposition of dramaturgy's *prop* vis-à-vis ANT's *actant*. In Chapters 6 and 7, I show how performances in municipal budget making depend on both human and non-human actors. The important point for postdramaturgy is that a municipal "audience" observes the performances of non-human actants and that these performances (independently and in concert with human performances) help to constitute the budget and its effects. Thus, the amended notion of agency in postdramaturgy is receptive to the influence of both humans and non-humans in hybrid associations without emphasizing agency.

From a theoretical point of view, postdramaturgy has many moving parts. Therefore, in this chapter I used a mapping system to show how relationships among organizational theory research traditions support the development of postdramaturgy. The use of a map analogy may help readers to metaphorically see that postdramaturgy is an epistemological and ontological leap from the "opening position" of dramaturgy, its precursors, and the supporting cast consisting of ANT and historiography. Postdramaturgy makes a leap away from research traditions that see reality as independent, prior, fixed, singular, and ahistorical. Instead an alternative view is offered; that realities might be relational, simultaneous, morphing, multiple, and historically performed. These thoughts are discussed in this chapter in the context of four strata that indicate some of the layered ontological politics. These oscillate in the relations between

Halifax and Africville that are enacted in the next two chapters. The municipal budget, the Halifax Regional Municipality, Africville – all these terms speak of entities that seem to hang together, even if not entirely stable. Postdramaturgy tells of these achievements as the result of layered ontological politics that can be considered analytically from the point of view of framing. Chapter 6 mainly concentrates on strands of dramaturgy and actor-network theory. Chapter 7 mainly concentrates on strands of historiography, stigma and critique. In all the following enactments, organizational symbolism is central.

Chapter 6: Using Postdramaturgy to Perform Municipal Budget Making

*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*

(Shakespeare, 1969, V. v. 24-28. 79)

Introduction

This chapter uses postdramaturgical techniques to study empirical aspects of municipal budget making at Halifax Regional Municipality. Further empirical study of the Halifax exemplar will be considered in Chapter 7 from the point of view of postdramaturgy's capacity for critique. Welcome to Halifax budget theatre.

Arrival at the theatre

When an audience arrives at the theatre the beginners are already performing³⁷. Music from the orchestra pit sets the tone for what can be expected from the actors to come on to the main stage. The “music” in the Halifax Council Chamber is the polyphonic voice³⁸ (Bakhtin, 1981) from a previous Finance Committee meeting where guidelines for the budget were discussed, a foreshadowing of the deliberative mood for the 2013/14 budget deliberations of the Halifax Council. All of the regional councillors

³⁷ In a similar vein, and as a self-reflective comment, I add that this dissertation does not “arrive” to an empty theatre. Postdramaturgy is in time to join several academic conversations that are already underway. The milieu has begun its reassembly of dramaturgy, actor-network theory, and historiography.

³⁸ Polyphonic voice as in Bakhtin's (1981) derivative from the overtones of musical language. When I was the Dartmouth City Manager, I often used an expression; *City Hall has a hundred back doors*. By this I meant that on any issue we operated in an open milieu where representations were made on many fronts. Many competing voices independently reached the ears of the elected officials and their departmental advisors. Bakhtin's notion of *polyphonic* teaches that these voices meld into one. At the time of making budget decisions, the internalized onslaught of telephone calls, emails, letters, interviews, elevator pitches, sidewalk conversations, consultant reports, newspaper editorials – all of this and more – are internalized and form a polyphonic voice during deliberations of the municipal government.

had been invited to the Finance Committee meetings but attendance was intermittent and not all attended. Here is an impression of the April 24, 2013 meeting³⁹.

[The room is alive with happy chatter. Businesspeople in suits and polo shirts discuss their families and hobbies, while news reporters discuss their recent work. As the time of the meeting draws near, the room becomes animated as more elected officials enter. The room chatter subsides as the meeting begins. Monitors on all sides of Halifax Council Chamber project images of the speakers as cameras record their verbal and body language. It is clear that a performance has begun.]

(Field notes from Halifax Finance Committee, April 24, 2013)

At the Regional Council (RC) meeting where the Halifax 2013/14 operating budget is introduced for final approval, the first order of business is to appeal to divine inspiration.

The Mayor calls upon Councillor Hendsbee to read the Invocation. All stand.

God, Our Creator,
 Bless us as we gather today for this meeting.
 You know our most intimate thoughts;
 Guide our minds and hearts
 so that we will work
 for the good of our community,
 and help all of Your people...
 Amen

(Halifax RC meeting, April 30, 2013)

Several Councillors bless themselves with the Sign of the Cross after the invocation.

This ritual performance seems to signal the gravity of the budget work to be done, and

also signals a deterministic belief that a higher power may be watching along with

Halifax citizens tuning into Eastlink TV. The invocation policy makes implicit

³⁹ In this and the following chapter, excerpts from Municipal Council meetings and texts are presented as indented citations along with my commentary and excerpts from field notes. To differentiate the quotations from my own commentary/notes, the latter are shown in [square brackets]. Where speakers greatly emphasized a particular word or phrase, I underlined it.

assumptions about the homogeneity of those engaged in the proceedings, for example that they all believe that a divine power exists and also that God is willing to take a Director role at the Halifax Council Chamber on budget day.

A postdramaturgical approach looks at the underlying *modus operandi*. Perhaps the invocation is a team-building exercise to pray that the councillors cooperate with a prearranged script. The use of religious symbolism in municipal administration draws on emotional associations which attach to deep associations that are reproduced in corporate performances (Höpfl, 1996).

Exhibit 2

Screenshot of a Webpage of a Budget Meeting held in the Halifax Council Chamber (Reproduced with permission of Halifax Regional Municipality Archives)

[The Sergeant At Arms is saluting in the foreground, Councillors surrounding the room, a TV monitor on left-hand side (several other monitors not shown), a videographer near the front left, and Mayor standing at the podium. The website has a clickable agenda on the right of the screen to scroll through the performance playbill.]

2013 Regional Council Ag x Archived Video - Regional x

archive.isiglobal.ca/vod/halifax/archive_2013-04-30.mp4.html

ScholarOne Manus... Google sprott.carleton.co/t... HRM RBC Royal Bank - Si... J Mgmt Inquiry Dartmouth, Nova Sc... Google Scholar Google

HALIFAX Halifax Regional Council
Archive: Apr 30th, 2013

Jump to a specific agenda item by selecting it from the list.
If the video is paused, start playback after making your selection.

1. INVOCATION
Special Presentation - Past Poet Laureate - Shauntay Grant

2. SPECIAL COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

4. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

9.2 - Petitions - None

10.2.1 - 2013-14 Project and Operating Budget Recommendation Report

10.4.1 - Summer Festival Grant Program

10.4.2 - Festival and Events Grant Funding Request — First Intake

10.5.1 - Councillor Johns Extension of Water Service District Boundary to McCabe's Lake North Lands

10.1.1 - Award - Unit Price Tender No. 13-225, Micro Surfacing – Phase 1 – Various Locations

10.1.2 - Award - Unit Price Tender No. 13-228, Street Reconstruction, Asphalt Walkway Resurfacing and Water Main Renewal, Kincardine Drive – East Region

10.1.3 - Request for Permanent Encroachment – Collins Road, Bedford

10.1.4 - Case 18288 – Amendments to the Cole Harbour/Westphal MPS and LUB to enable residential development adjacent to Lake Loon, Westphal

10.1.5 - Case 17000 - Amendments to Downtown Halifax Secondary

chive.isiglobal.ca/vod/halifax/archive_2013-04-30.mp4.html

The least potentially contentious items (i.e., community announcements, proclamations, acknowledgements and petitions) are considered first. This is strategically favorable for the Council as it establishes an initial celebratory tone (Futrell, 1999). On Halifax budget day, tensions are high so there is a greater requirement for peaceful opening acts. The Mayor calls upon the municipal Poet Laureate, Shauntay Grant.

Mayor Mike Savage: We have a number of items on our agenda; and a number of very important issues, including our budget to deliberate on today. And so I think it's a very good time to bring forward a poem. Shauntay Grant is a writer, spoken word performer, and musician... her stage play *Steal Away Home* won the 2011 award for outstanding drama at the Halifax Fringe Festival. I'm very pleased to ask Shauntay to come forward and give us some learning; give us a poem.

(Halifax RC meeting, April 30, 2013)

Notwithstanding the opening niceties and touching performance by the Poet Laureate, the budget meeting gets off to a rocky start when the councillors cannot agree on terms of engagement. One view among the councillors has it that the meeting should operate in "Regional Council format" but with the speaking rules relaxed. The other proposed view is to operate in "Committee of the Whole" (COW) which allows councillors to speak as many times as they want and without time restrictions. After obtaining legal advice from the Municipal Solicitor and further discussing the speaking rules for a quarter of an hour, it is decided to suspend the rule that would have restricted speaking time to five minutes, with a second opportunity to speak for three minutes. Thus, a systemic closure technique available to truncate budget discussion is set aside. But the management (assisted by elected officials) has other budget closure techniques at its disposal. The introduction of the Halifax budget is precluded by lengthy congratulations to all persons involved with its creation. It seems like a *fait accompli*. The

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) states that the budget should already be approved by now.

Richard Butts (CAO): Your Worship, we are a little late in getting this budget to you; normally we would like to have it approved before the start of the fiscal year.

[Clothing worn by the predominately male municipal staff is standardized – dark suit, white shirt and tie. But on budget day in the Council Chamber the top Halifax executives were jacketless. The CAO with button-down white shirt and the CFO with top button undone on his shirt, tie loosened, and shirtsleeves rolled up, signifying that they are in working mode.]

(Halifax RC meeting, April 30, 2013)

An agenda is flashed on the screen that specifies exactly how Council is to proceed, including a “historical context” of past discussions of legislative bodies. This is followed by a lengthy recitation by the CAO which attempts to transfer ownership of the budget to the Council by insinuating that the budget is merely the carrying-out of the previously given direction of Council.

Richard Butts (CAO): Just to refresh Council, on December 4 we met and Council gave direction on the budget; gave direction to staff; we went away and prepared budgets for each and every business unit; on December 19 we received direction from the Finance Committee at that point; we’ve been coming back to the Finance Committee almost every two weeks since and receiving feedback; and that manifests itself here today [with the directions we received].

(Halifax RC meeting, April 30, 2013)

The PowerPoint slide accompanying these comments shows a flowchart with a series of seven colourful boxes and directional arrows – the word “direction” or “directive” is printed in five places on the slide. The definition of the situation (Goffman, 1959) being framed for the audience is that staff has acted as obedient servants of the Council’s

wishes. A flurry of closure remarks are then enacted by the Deputy Mayor. These remarks emphasize the “50 hours of previous debate... and as many as 10 previous meetings [of the Finance Committee]”. But the Council members seem intent on actually debating the proposed budget. Councillor Harvey makes one more closure attempt after Council engages in a lengthy discussion of the operations of the CAO Department.

Councillor Harvey: We are approaching the end of the discussion on the first department. We haven't added anything, subtracted anything, or reordered priorities on anything. Are we going to do this for the next three days? Make little speeches about our favourite pet projects and subjects?

(Halifax RC meeting, April 30, 2013)

“Arrival at the budget theatre” has already highlighted, from a postdramaturgical perspective, several aspects of organizing. Budget making is a performance, it is a contest that thrives on role diffusion among the players, and that symbolic interactions will help constitute the budget and its actors.

Obligatory Passage Point

The budget formally tabled at the Halifax Council meeting can be seen as an “obligatory passage point” (Callon, 1986, p. 7) and, as indicated above, efforts can be made to suspend disbelief of the need to construct a budget that might be different than the obligatory version. Management and elected officials seem to enter the stage with a script that unfolds the budget process in a particular way. Substantial staff resources and sustained managerial effort is made to ensure that particular ideas are able to travel, producing centres of calculation that become not just points of passage, but obligatory points of passage (Doolin & Lowe, 2002).

Before allowing the councillors to discuss the budget documents, the Mayor calls upon municipal administrators to present an overview of the budget issues and their recommendations. The presentation is understood as a chance for audience members to reflect on the proposed budget. Yet, the presentations given do not practically involve the chamber audience. The municipal executive members often refer the Council to “documents you have before you” or “the results of the public consultation”, or “the discussion that we had at the Finance Committee last week”, etc. Discourse is kept within the confines of supposed shared knowledge between officials and the Council, allowing the dramaturgical team to enact the appearance of proficiency and commitment to their roles as guardians of the municipal budget. Critique by the public audience is effectively restrained (Futrell, 1999). An extensive process is developed to hard-wire the Halifax budget process along with meeting dates and locations for budget approvals, and more importantly a request by the executive staff for the elected officials to take ownership of something they call “priority outcome direction”. The Municipal Council is asked to accept the staff recommendations as to what direction ought to be given by Council to staff. In essence, the Chief Administrative Officer puts forth an ironic request to the Municipal Council – *Please direct me to do what I say should be done*. This is formalized with voting on the following motion.

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Consider the Priority Outcomes as described in Attachment A of this report and approve as amended, and direct staff to develop the 2013/2014 Budget and Business Plans in support of these priorities; and
2. Direct staff to present the 2013/2014 draft Budget and Business Plans to the Finance Standing Committee for review and discussion prior to consideration by Regional Council.

(Report from the CAO, December 4, 2012)

At the December 4, 2012 COW meeting, Council approved the motion but not before a lengthy debate in which every elected official stated (for the record) additional budget priorities that should be considered. These reveal a persistent turmoil in municipal budgeting (Czarniawska, 2010). In the 2013/14 budget, this included disparate demands for downtown development, rural development, better roads, additional money for the performing arts, green belting, transit improvements, crime reduction, better snow removal, creation of an urban forest, maintenance in rural volunteer fire stations, climate change management, affordable housing... and a host of other items. In this session, the Councillors bring forward 56 diverse items for budget consideration and make a further 41 comments on the municipality in general. When subsequent budget accounting schedules come forward as prepared by municipal management, individual councillors are already draw-in to the process. Dramaturgical loyalty (Benford & Hunt, 1992) has been created toward the budget process with allegiance to the definition of the situation that has been constructed by management. A successful Haligonian budget drama requires its performers to “act as if they have accepted certain moral obligations” i.e., they must display dramaturgical loyalty (Goffman 1959, p. 207). Team members attempt to form an actor-network to foster loyalty. The Mayor, CFO and Chair of the Finance Committee speak of financial imperatives that frame the discussions to follow.

Mayor Savage: I have asked the CFO to give a presentation, financially, that outlines some of the financial imperatives facing us.

Greg Keefe (CFO): I will give an overview as to what our budget planning and process is, how it works ... This slide here, I hope you can read it, it's a bit busy, outlines what the process is [pointing to a diagram]. This morning we are in that top left box.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Note the plural form – “we” are in that top left box. And it seems the only way to get out of that box is to follow the arrow on the diagram. Alas, this puts everyone in another box with another arrow.

Now, a little talk on fiscal. A bit of the trap, if you will, that we always find ourselves in, cost pressures on municipal prices cause us to have to find efficiencies and sharper focus on priorities... We're proposing that we do the budget deliberation at the Finance Committee ... this is fairly common [this format is thus substituted for the Regional Council format where all the elected officials would participate].

Deputy Mayor Rankin: The intention, uhm, the best intention, of this motion is to frame discussion, certainly not to limit discussion [then goes on to move that discussion be constrained to the items in the staff report].

(Halifax COW meeting, December 4, 2012)

Later (in the official minutes of the COW meeting) the approximately four hours of debate and the 96 priorities and comments of the elected officials are distilled into brief bullet points in a chart, then further distilled into 19 “themes” that happen to accord with the definition of the situation already being fostered by Halifax management. The constructed themes travelled a great distance from the rich description given by the elected officials, and now are generic categories (for example, taxes, public safety, transit, road service, heritage, etc.). Thus the encroaching ideas of the elected officials are now less dangerous and will not disturb the established passageway. The constructed themes highlighted in the meeting minutes are all pre-established operational categories of the municipal management structure. For example, one of the themes is identified as “state of good repair”. Actually, this was not specifically mentioned by any of the Council speakers, but, when transcribed into the form of an immutable mobile – some form of text such as writing, graphs, figures, or statistics – the categorization helps to monopolize centres of calculation in the municipal accounting offices. It also creates dramaturgical loyalty specifically to the “Attachment A” referred-to above by the CAO.

The obligatory passage point has been established. If you wish to obtain budget resources, you will have to come this way.

Messiness in Budget Making

In postdramaturgy, the social is conceptualized as messy and subject to constant movement. The \$1 billion annual amount of economic activity in the budget of the municipality of Halifax manifests itself in the accounting department as a multitude of general ledger accounts, making it difficult or impossible to follow the “chain of translations” (Czarniawska, 2010, p. 436) from political commentary to actual funding allocations in the budget. Once the political commentary is translated into enclosed technical accounts the processes that are publically lauded as open and transparent are surely more turbid. The April 30, 2014 Council motion to approve the municipal budget is a case in point. Even the mover of the budget motion was unsure as to its constitution.

Deputy Mayor Rankin: There have been many reports... but this appears to be the motion for our consideration today.

(Halifax RC meeting, April 30, 2013)

The Council is asked to vote on the motion that takes Deputy Mayor Rankin 7½ minutes to read into the record. The omnibus motion includes reference to two staff reports, the Operating Budget document (349 pages), the Project Budget (203 pages), tax rates for urban, suburban, and rural areas, a transit plan and associated taxation, a complex tax structure map, resolutions on education funding, fire protection funding, distribution of information to taxpayers, interest rate authorizations, withdrawals from reserve accounts to pay for capital and long term debt issuance. All this is a single motion. Yes or No.

The yes or no ultimatum interferes with the fluidity of the budget (de Laet & Mol, 2000).

Whether or not the budget should succeed is not a binary matter.

[During the meeting, numerous questions and heated disagreements on the meaning of various budget items and effects on specific district taxpayers. Disputes over snow clearing subsidies appear to threaten passage of the entire motion.]

[Near the end of the meeting, the Chair of the Finance Committee discovers “new information” that causes him to no longer support the motion that his Committee developed.]

Councillor Karsten (Chair of Finance Committee): I want to be obliging, but maybe we need to take our break, Mr. Mayor, and have staff give it some more thought, and come up with something else creative.

(Halifax RC meeting, April 30, 2013)

After a lengthy break were everyone except the municipal managers went for supper, Council returned to hear that staff was unable to be “creative” enough to solve the snow clearing impasse. Wonderfully, there were no further speakers on the budget and the Mayor took the opportunity to call the question. The various controversies seem to have dissolved during supertime and the motion call resulted in a 17 - 0 vote in favour of the budget. When the voting result was displayed on the monitors in the Council Chamber, several Councillors snickered and yelled out jokingly that they should call for “a motion of reconsideration” or a vote recount. But it seemed the situation was so messy that the only possible resolution was to accept the budget resolution and move on to the next item on the Council agenda.

Research Sites

Postdramaturgy may be considered an amodern mode of investigation because of its emphasis on ontology, the oscillation between heterogeneous actants with a potential for translation and because its actors enter into relations at multiple sites. This section identifies some of the sites of Halifax budget making, and elaborates a postdramaturgical perspective of the enactment that takes place. The research sites of interest in Halifax budget theatre are stocked with performance symbols, budget audiences, and a complex cast of actants.

Principal Performing Stage

As explained earlier in this dissertation, I offered a contribution to the conceptualization of Goffman's "backstage" by explaining that the ontology of Halifax budget texts should be understood as multiple enacted practices (Mol, 2002a), thus situating budget actors as always being in the front region. Postdramaturgical research is less concerned with Goffman's notion of the frontstage/backstage divide where he theorized the potential for actors to disclose a more genuine version of reality. However, amodern thinking recognizes that corporate drama unfolds on multiple stages, both physical and ethereal. Whatever multiple stages or regions one might investigate, the following of actors in an actor-network of Halifax municipal budget making inevitably leads to the most obvious stage setting – a space known as the Halifax Council Chamber. This physical territory comes very close to replicating the proscenium-type stage, complete with a dedicated performance region, segregation of the audience, amplified sound and special lighting, an area that serves as the "wings", the Municipal Council members as the performing cast, and the Mayor as house manager. A strong recurring

pattern in this setting is that the Mayor and CAO sit in an elevated position on a podium. The mayor's podium is eight inches (one step) above the CAO, who is located one step above the municipal councillors. This physical distance is an impression management feature that renders an appearance of power and authority. The Mayor and CAO are joined on the podium by the Municipal Solicitor lest the weight of law is required to reinforce the power distance. The municipal executives on the elevated platform thus build on "generally accepted cultural norms: royal ceremonies use thrones to emphasize dignity, judges in court sit on a raised podium. The presentation of authority contradicts the idea of [the councillors] as a 'partner' of management" (Biehl-Missal, 2011, p. 630). These observations become apparent for the researcher in dramaturgy mode. When postdramaturgy is invoked, one can also see that the physical setting contributes to the constitution of multiple selves.

Mayor Savage: I'm going to ask the Deputy Mayor to take the Chair so I can have a few words as well.

[To enter the debate, the Mayor then descends the podium to physically sit among the Councillors at their level on the main floor – the legal rules of procedure prohibit him from engaging in debate from the Mayor's presiding seat.]

(Halifax COW meeting, December 4, 2012)

It seems that the action of "stepping out of the Chair" reconstitutes the Mayor as a different self – one that can express opinions on the budget rather than needing to remain an impartial arbiter. The Council Chamber stage setting combines with numerous municipal rituals to further constitute the self. For example, the marching-in of the mace, the invocation, the formalized procedure requiring that everyone address only "the Speaker" (the Mayor) and to not directly communicate with each other but, rather,

“through the Speaker” – all of these rituals affect the relational interactions among members of the Council. Relations are also affected by systemic affiliation of the Mayor’s self with an aura of deity. This is enacted by Councillors and staff who constantly refer to the Mayor as “Your Worship”. Occasionally more dramatic enactment takes place such as the Mayor wearing around his neck the “Chain of Office”⁴¹ (an interesting term to describe a part of the Mayor’s costume). The historical belief system and dramatic symbolism associated with the Chain of Office (what Goffman, 1959, p. 34, would call "expressive equipment", see Exhibit 3) involves the social elevation of persons above others simply because they got elected to something.

Exhibit 3

Mayor Savage wearing the Halifax Chain of Office

Republished courtesy of The Chronicle Herald Ltd.



⁴¹ For over a thousand years, originating with the Dukes of Normandy, civic authorities have borne an official seal incorporating the arms of the authority. This seal was originally worn on a gold chain around the neck of the chief official. This “decoration” has evolved into the Chain of Office. Although decorative, the practice of wearing a Chain of Office has become steeped in historic tradition. (<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal>).

Finally, I note that the hierarchical differentiation is further punctuated by the interior layout and decoration of the Council Chamber. Immediately behind the Mayor's chair is a large portrait of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the "crown" head of state with jurisdiction over all subjects. She seems to be looking over the Mayor's shoulder, her royal presence helping the Mayor maintain expressive control of the Councillors. The seating area for the audience present in the Council Chamber is located at the furthest possible point from the podium of the Mayor and CAO. As theatre productions go, it is an unusual setup. Approximately 90% of the floor space in the Council Chamber is given to stage the play and only 10% for seating of the paying customers (ratepayers and taxpayers). This raises the question of who is listening and engaging with the budget process. The next section discusses audiences present in, and absent from, the Council Chamber.

Budget Audiences

The postdramaturgical idea of multiple performing regions has implications for conceptualizing the audiences that may be interested in budget theatre. At the formal budget day presentations, the Municipal Council and senior management perform the budget to each other and to themselves. There is little opportunity for direct interactions with the citizen spectators who are physically present. Even the municipal staff in attendance is marginalized if a non-scripted recital thwarts a Councillor's performance.

[Councillor Nicoll asks the CAO a complicated question about the projected "budget surplus". The response was apparently too wordy and the Councillor realizes that the CAO's recital is taking time off her 5-minute speaking allotment.]

Councillor Nicoll [interrupting the CAO]: "I'm on the clock, sooo..."

CAO [truncating the explanation]: “My comments are complete.”

[This evokes loud chuckles from the audience as the Councillor continues her own performance, subsequently making sure to not make the mistake of asking too many more questions.]

(Field notes and transcript from Finance Committee April 24, 2013)

There are 25 visible microphones⁴² in the Council Chamber but none are located in the area designated for the small audience in attendance. But postdramaturgy’s audiences are not as tame as Goffman would have it and they find other ways to make their voices heard. Social media and mainstream media reach out beyond the Council Chamber and ensure that budget stories proliferate. This suggests yet another way of setting boundaries around our budget object. As theorized by de Laet and Mol (2000), in important ways a community object (like a municipal budget) includes the accountants, engineers, typists, planners, officials and others that put it together. It also includes the communities that the budget operations will serve.

Postdramaturgical audiences prefer immersive theatre and this contributes to relationalism and multiplicity of apparent texts. I do not mean to imply a perspectivalist proliferation where many different eyes see the same budget object. Various postdramaturgical audiences see substantially different enactments. I have already focused on the Halifax budget as a self-constituting mechanism for Municipal Councillors. The elected officials strut and fret their hour upon the budget stage, seeing themselves on the television monitors and knowing their constituents may be watching. Another election is just around the corner. The unseen watchers of the television

⁴² One each for the Mayor, CAO and Solicitor; one each for the 16 Councillors; and six for staff.

broadcast (or the internet “streaming” equivalent) have other things in mind and this results in the budget becoming more than one thing (Mol, 2002a). The budget for some taxpayers is a device that inflicts fiscal pain. Fixed-income senior citizens, struggling businesses, and other economically disadvantaged actors all fear the budget and its tax increases. The budget is an unwanted charge to their bank accounts.

Another category of audience is what I will call the casual observer. The casuals watch the budget broadcast and for them it is entertainment. They are far less interested in looking at pages of accounting schedules which are filled with rows and columns of numbers. The casuals are interested in people. Budget performances have the potential to produce melodramatic soap-opera celebrities. A recent star-power example of municipal celebrity is Toronto Mayor Rob Ford who is regularly featured on international news networks and comedy shows, such as CNN on November 18, 2013, and several talk shows, including The Tonight Show, The Daily Show and Letterman’s Late Show.

Toronto Mayor Rob Ford: The taxpayers are going to get robbed blind.
The taxpayers want me to save money but the councillors want to spend it.

[The Mayor then proceeded to list 25 motions that he intends to “lay out on the floor of Council” but he refused to show them to the executive committee. The list included budget cuts to the Councillor’s travel accounts and reduction of Councillors’ staff.]

(The Toronto Sun, January 29, 2014)

Halifax budget meetings often feature a range of Rob Fordian political emotions such as passion, controversy, optimism, alienation, amusement, greed and hostility.

[At one point in the 2010/11 budget debate, the Halifax Council considered allocating a large sum of money into a temporary account called a “strategic projects parking lot”. The councillors could nominate projects to be funded, i.e., listing them for inclusion in the parking lot, and Council would later have to choose among these competing projects.]

Councillor Mosher: We come around here and the only way to get something in [the budget] is to take something out. The parking lot is like throwing a piece of meat in front of a bunch of hungry wolves.

(Halifax RC budget meeting, April 28, 2010)

At times the budget discussion entwines with entertainment directly, as was the case when Halifax funded concert deals with recording artist Paul McCartney. In a subsequent financial and public relations fiasco Halifax lost a significant amount of money when the Mayor and CAO agreed to sponsor a Black Eyed Peas concert (Corrigan & Helms Mills, 2013). To the Black Eyed Peas, the budget was an employment contract. To the Office of the Halifax Auditor General, the budget became a scandal of illegal financial transactions. These are not just perspectives on the same object. An “employment contract” and a “financial scandal” are two further manifestations of the budget which is more than one but less than many.

An omnipresent and central component of the audience in budget theatre is the news media – television and newspaper reporters who inscribe budget interactions, thus writing histories for publication (in the form of short vignettes and monographs). The news media is an audience with an important difference, i.e., they in turn have a large audience to entertain. For them the Halifax budget is headline news and a generator of increased audiences that may boost advertising revenue. As discussed in the opening chapter of this dissertation, Burke (2012) questions who has the authority to decide what is knowledge. The news reporters witness the budget making drama played-out in the Council Chamber then spread budget knowledge they (the media) help create. Burke (2012) cautions that the word “spread” should not be taken to imply that what moves

does not change. News reporters may not have accounting training but they do know what will grab the attention of their followers. Often the translated budget knowledge does not meet the purposes of actors in the municipal bureaucracy. This is a regular occurrence. Recently published news commentary on the 2014/15 Halifax budget is a case in point.

Herald News headline: HALIFAX BUDGET WILL COME IN SHORT

[First line of the story:] Halifax is forecasting a \$303,000 budget shortfall as vacant buildings, overtime staffing and a drop in revenue weigh on the municipality's bottom line.

[Last line of the story:] Halifax's debt as of the March 31, 2014 audited financial statements was \$219 million.

(Herald News, Brett Bundale, September 16, 2014)

The headline, leader and closer of the Herald news story all conflict with the definition of the situation being fostered by the Halifax municipal executives. Halifax management repeatedly enacts the financial condition of the municipality as being "professionally" administered. The Herald news story conflates the alike sounding but dissimilar concepts of deficit and debt, as well as declining to mention that the \$303,000 deficit would be an immaterial amount – 0.0003 of the \$845 million annual budget. This is an example of management attempting to enroll audiences into a budget-actor-network while competing versions of the budget push back, and also is a further example of ontological politics and the budget as a multiple object.

It should also be noted that a number of additional audiences and their conceptions of the Halifax budget could be selectively rehearsed here:

- the Provincial government
(the municipal budget as a legal requirement of Provincial legislation)
- special interest lobby groups such as the Neptune Theatre Foundation
(the budget as a patron of the arts)
- civic archivists
(the budget as a historical document in need of preserving for future generations)
- the data entry clerk in the accounting office
(the budget as a 349-page book requiring many thousands of entries in need of posting to the automated accounting information system)
- internal auditor
(the budget as a Foucauldian Panopticon that facilitates an unseen central gaze; with “budget variances” established as a form of monitoring apparatus)

These diverse audiences are not likely to spend time thinking that “their” budget is different from someone else’s budget. In a long career of accounting for budgets I have noticed that for most actors (most of the time) a budget is a single and comprehensible object. On the other hand, budget debates can deteriorate into warlike struggles to outgain other actors in a competition for financial resources. For those same actors – and more obvious for the accounting technicians who have to mediate the struggles – “the budget” can swiftly convert from a single object into a network of thousands of individual budget line items and a host of assumptions, calculations, legal commitments and wild guesses. Once these estimates are fixed and explained to the Council they disappear from view since they become parameters that disappear from sight since they become embedded in the budget process. Thus, it is possible to have a “good” budget even though it imposes a

tax increase. The tax is embedded in a complex set of calculations that is able to be set aside. “So it is that something much simpler [a working budget model] comes, for a time, to mask the networks that produce it” (Law, 1992, p. 385).

According to a modern thinking, the flow of relations makes disparate functions, artefacts and processes work in administrative practice (Mol, 2002a, 2002b), and I believe makes the various versions of the municipal budget hang together as a punctuated actor. Each audience can own a conception of “budget” that is nevertheless understood by other audiences who may have a different conception. The bits and pieces form competing or overlapping budget-actor-networks that interact in layers of ontological politics. The actors interact in physical spaces as discussed above, and the territories of the self and other abstract spaces which are further discussed in the following section.

Territoriality

In this dissertation, I have considered physical and abstract means by which budget making is territorialized (Deleuze & Guattari, 1984, 1987) by individual actors, teams and budgetary accounting. This is manifest in postdramaturgy’s concern for physical performing spaces such as the front region and the wings, in mental spaces such as the territories of the self (Foucault, 1979; Goffman, 1959), and in historical territory that is closely connected to the individual who produces and performs history. In a controversial research methods move, I have also territorialized the ontological and epistemological assumptions of dramaturgy, ANT and historiography. This is performed in this dissertation by engaging in a geographical mapping exercise (see Chapter 5). Fleming and Spicer (2004, p. 75) make the point that there is “scant literature exploring

the social geography of organizational life [and] the power-laden nature of spatiality”. More recently Maréchal, Linstead and Munro (2013, p. 185) argue for “organizational territorial studies” to gain a better understanding of space and its connection to notions of power. In particular they employ the notion of territoriality. Postdramaturgy is, among other things, a study of territoriality within MOS and a demonstration of its performativity. In this sense, territoriality is a departure from Goffman’s emphasis on physical spaces such as the principal performing stage and the off-stage regions. I posit that the notion of territoriality exposes how municipal administrators, elected officials, and other *dramatis personae* such as non-human actants interact relationally.

Arrangements of physical and social experiences and their non-corporeal understandings (Hartt, Mills, Helms Mills, & Corrigan, 2014) are potential territorializing agents in budget relations. In addition to issues of control over symbolic space, territoriality also involves cultural performance (Cunliffe, 2002) that stems from the proprietorial marking of physical property. This can be seen in the seating arrangements in the Halifax Council Chamber research site. Councillors are seated according to the numbering system (1 to 16) for their geographic districts. The numbers relate to polling areas for municipal elections; the rural areas are numbered sequentially (as are the urban areas). Therefore, the “rural” councillors sit near to each other, as do the “urban” councillors. This creates a special dynamic that affects budget discussion at times. Councillors have no electoral impetus to take a wider view; they are rewarded (i.e., re-elected) by their constituents for focusing on their own districts. Accordingly, councillors seem to be constituted by the geographic boundaries of their district, and this is

reinforced by the corresponding spatial layout of the seating arrangements in the Council Chamber.

[The urban/rural divide was evident in several debates during the 2013/14 budget process. For example, the budget recommended a 25¢ fare increase to pay for “transit technology enhancements”. The fee would be applied to users of buses. Most of the bus routes are in the urban districts. During debate, a motion was made to charge new technology costs to the general tax rate – which would be payable by both urban and rural taxpayers. The motion was put forward by Councillor Watts (urban) and seconded by Councillor Mason (urban).]

Councillor Watts [urban]: Every person who chooses a bus over a car is reducing congestion and contributing to environmental sustainability. And this is doing everyone a service... whether you have bus service; whether you take the bus or not.

Councillor Dalrymple [rural]: First off the bat, when the comment is made “chooses to take the bus” [looks disgustedly toward Councillor Watts] as we have said over and over again, for residents in rural HRM it is not a choice if they can take the bus; there is no bus... there are 80 to 90% of rural areas with no buses... let there be no doubt: this is an urban budget. Services in the urban area but making the rural pay for it. There’s no one in rural area asking for this transit technology – nobody, zero, none, zip.

Councillor Nicoll [urban]: Well, to Councillor Dalrymple, the highest increase that Metro Transit gets is from urban fees. It’s a difficult task; Metro Transit is highly subsidized with the taxes. And I’ve always supported technology. [Then clarifies that the new tax would only be for two years.] Oh, only two years; I could support that.

[Rural councillors then appear to gain momentum to defeat the motion. This provokes a “friendly amendment” to the motion by Councillor Mason, an urban member who sits next to Councillor Watts. The amendment shifts the new tax somewhat more to urban areas.]

[The rural councillors continue to speak against the motion – some passing notes back and forth to each other during the debate – and when the motion is called, it is defeated with only five urban councillors voting in favour and every rural councillor voted against.]

(Halifax RC meeting, April 30, 2013)

Although “block voting” as dramatized above happens on a regular basis, it would be a mistake to assume that the councillor’s self is wholly formed from urban/rural relationships. The councillors maintain secret territory of their own. This is also supported by the physical setting. All of the desks of the councillors are equipped with privacy dividers which separate each elected official, while Municipal Clerk staff members are fully exposed in the centre of the room. For Deleuze and Guattari (1984), territoriality is a “psychological dimension whereby an area or domain becomes owned by a person, a gang, a pack of animals, the common people – where they feel secure, comfortable, and responsible” (Maréchal et al., 2013, p. 199). Deleuze and Guattari promote a view of assemblages that I believe helps to clarify how ANT contributes to postdramaturgy. The assemblages of Deleuze and Guattari (1984, p. 8) are “territorial first... man or animal: ‘at home’ (*chez moi*). The territory is made of all kinds of decoded fragments borrowed from milieus”. The notion of heterogeneity of assemblages and their territoriality resonates strongly with ANT. In examining budget performance, ANT studies how territoriality is developed, maintained and contested. The public and private spaces of the Council Chamber help actors territorialize the budget.

Goffman’s dramaturgy emphasizes face-to-face interactions. However, before ending this section I wish to note that physical access to the elected officials and civic management is not a necessary condition for interactions in the internet era. Relational activities also occur at other sites, sometimes with actors who may never be seen in person. Actor-networks can be formed (or dismantled) using electronic tools such as email, twitter, texting, Facebook, and 24/7 news cycle with blogs and citizen journalism. Interactions land on the computer screens of the Municipal Councillors, on their

electronic in-boxes and on their cellphones. This is the case even in the most secret meetings of the Halifax Council. On an upper floor at Halifax City Hall is a special meeting room for the Mayor and Councillors. This territory is designated as totally private and “in camera sessions” may be held here. It is not uncommon for secret discussions take place in public and private organizations (Grey, 2012; Keane, 2008). The Council may be able to use in camera sessions to coordinate its script in time for budget day. However, these discussions (or parts thereof) often make a reprise performance in on-line dramas that publically expose that which was intended to be secret. As discussed in the MOS literature, electronic communications has made it easier for formerly isolated actors to communicate across borders (Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005) and use “technologies of performance” (Catlaw & Sandberg, 2014, p. 230) to spread stories.

Klagge (1997, p. 71) makes an important point when he says that bureaucratic structures should be viewed as being “monkey bars... [or] structures, although rigid, cold and sterile, provide the framework upon which and within which organization members act, reflect, imagine, and create.” This dissertation is concerned to show that the use of organizational dramaturgy helps to create one’s personal and organizational space, recognizing the movement and displacement that is necessarily associated with that term.

Performing Halifax Budget Making

For some management and organization theorists it may seem somewhat oxymoronic that the words “drama” and “accounting” could be used in the same sentence. There has been much research deconstructing the dreary accounting stereotype,

and Goffman's (1963b) concept of stigma has been used to explore the dominant image of the accountant as a socially inhibited and unintentionally comic persona (Jeacle, 2008). This widely-held sentiment is ironically lampooned by Monty Python's Flying Circus as follows.

Employment Counsellor: Well, accountancy is rather exciting isn't it?

Mr. Anchovy (an accountant): Exciting? No it's not. It's dull. Dull. Dull. My God it's dull, it's so desperately dull and tedious and stuffy and boring and des-per-ate-ly dull.

Employment Counsellor: Well, er, yes Mr. Anchovy, but you see your report here says that you are an extremely dull person. You see, our experts describe you as an appallingly dull fellow, unimaginative, timid, lacking in initiative, spineless, easily dominated, no sense of humour, tedious company and irrepressibly drab and awful. And whereas in most professions these would be considerable drawbacks, in accountancy they are a positive boon.

(Monty Python (1969) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TweR8oCeCBo>)

Given an often exaggerated understanding of the accounting identity, one might wonder why the accounting profession has not rebelled against such offensive images. Jeacle (2008, p. 1298) implies "that the rationale for such non-intervention may be grounded in serving the interests of the profession itself. Professional credibility is inherent in the accounting stereotype. The bean counter may be dull and dreary but is also regarded as a safe and trustworthy custodian of business assets". This thesis rejects both of these generalizations. Instead of a boring stereotype or a trustworthy custodian, postdramaturgy constitutes the budget accountant as dramatic and historically situated.

Postdramaturgy recognizes that drama is a fundamental feature of social interaction. Corporate accounting is no exception. Theatrical budget performances are closely related to the storytelling capacity of accounting. As discussed in Chapter 2,

Hatch et al. (2010) describe theatre as an art practice derived from storytelling rituals, requiring both a performer and an audience. Mangham (1988, p. 57, as cited in Boje et al., 2003) criticizes Goffman's dramaturgy because it seems to be preoccupied with scripted action, whereas the social is instead akin to improv theatre. I believe Mangham's critique stems from too limited a view of Goffman's storytelling style of writing. Since the corporate theatre metaphor depends on storytelling prowess, the metaphor makes the most sense if "stories" and "drama" are conflated. Municipal budgeting is rife with storytelling. Budgeting processes make extensive use of rituals to sustain the definition of the situation that is intended in the enacted stories.

Theatrical Capacity of Accounting

That theatricality is a feature of corporate activity has been thoroughly theorized in dramaturgy studies (e.g., Boje et al., 2004; Cornelissen, 2004; Czarniawska, 2006b; Dacin et al., 2010). Postdramaturgy's contribution is to show that accounting stories help to constitute the municipal budget as an amodern entity. A multitude of actors perform different budgets. An enactment may enroll budget audiences or be re-storied when other actors make competing enrollment attempts – and an enactment of the municipal budget can be seen as a self-making project as much as a budget-making project. Thus, accounting in all of its expressions, and budgeting in particular as a calculation of the business, produces organizational actors and does not simply occur within the organization (Fauré, Brummans, Giroux, & Taylor, 2010).

In this section, Halifax budget actors and actants are followed around to analyze some of their translation efforts. To accomplish this the four ANT moments of translation

are applied (here entitled Acts I to IV). The moments of translation involve interaction, movement and negotiation. The “following around” of players consists of excerpts from a necessarily small selection of my data. These particular traces were chosen because of their exposition of the theatrical capacity of accounting and the prospect for various self constructions. The budget fragments organize around an ANT mini-play with the following programme:

Organization → Halifax Regional Municipality

Setting → various stages

Main plot → the 2013/14 Halifax budget does not contain a tax increase

Counter plot → yes it does

Dramatis personae → manager, councillor, auditor, budget papers, citizen blog, newspaper, and a historical record

Dramaturge / Storyteller → yours truly

Act I – Problematization

In this mini-play, problematization involves persuading other actors that a common interest is shared in making the Halifax budget. In this initial phase of translation, an actant seeks to define a problem such that others can recognize the problem as their own. Problematization is presented by the agent in a process that comes along with a packaged solution that convincingly belongs to the agent alone. Resistance is possible and successful problematization is only accomplished when the actors accept roles defined for them by the agent. In the case of the 2013/14 Halifax budget, the newly-

elected municipal councillors strongly wished to identify a problem of increased taxation. However, the municipality is much easier to manage if there is an increase in tax revenue.

So the problematization concern of management is to secure agreement for an increase in taxes in such a way as other actors are prepared to deny that this has occurred.

Acceptance of the problem and solution would result in the recommended budget becoming an obligatory passage point.

Since problematization involves construction of a shared interest, work toward common parameters begins well in advance of budget day. To accomplish this, management appeals to mega-processes (for example, the Halifax Regional Plan and the Citizen Survey). Management's interpretation of these is purported to be foundational for the budget. Municipal mega-processes are so costly, geographically dispersed and time consuming that the hapless elected official could never hope to duplicate or even successfully challenge the reported results. Halifax management problematized the 2013/14 budget with a "Priority Outcomes Report".

The foundation of the Halifax strategy is the Regional Plan⁴³. The Regional Plan was developed with extensive public consultation and the current review continues that rigorous consultation process. In addition, the Citizen Survey conducted in January of 2012 sought to solicit public opinion on community priorities. All of the direction in the Regional Plan, Citizen Survey Results, and staff expertise⁴⁴ has been used to develop the Priority Outcome Recommendations included in this report.

(Recommended Priority Outcomes Report, December 4, 2012)

⁴³ The Halifax Regional Plan is outlined in a highly technical document of 118 pages plus 19 maps.

⁴⁴ The senior staff consultation became known as the "Champions Table".

Management, though, has to be magnanimous toward the elected officials even as the Priorities Outcomes Report creates hazards for anyone to disagree with it.

Accordingly, the Report provides the following alternative for consideration by the elected officials.

Alternative: Council could choose not to provide priority outcome direction to staff and deal with their priorities during the 13/14 budget deliberations. This approach is not recommended by staff since delaying priority direction would inevitably prolong and delay the budget approval process.

(Recommended Priority Outcomes Report, December 4, 2012)

The recommended alternative effectively implies that a Council that is not willing to “provide direction” is either incompetent or prone to “inevitable” and inappropriate delay of due process. The Halifax Council unsurprisingly agreed with the main recommendation in the Report, ignoring the alternative of considering other than what management has summarized.

Once the Priority Outcomes are adopted by the councillors as their own, the deliverables (operations and projects) need to be funded. This will require a substantial increase in municipal revenue. Such revenue is primarily driven by taxation. Thus, Halifax management recommends to the Council that the 2013/14 budget be based on an increase of tax that would be equal to the Consumer Price Index⁴⁵ plus 1%.

Richard Butts (CAO): The Finance Committee provided a recommendation to limit tax increases to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) + 1%; and also asked for a shadow budget⁴⁶ of no tax increase and a

⁴⁵ During the budget presentations, a tax increase based on Consumer Price Index is frequently characterized as not really being an increase at all – “no increase other than natural inflation” – or at worst, the Consumer Price Index displayed by management as a “standard increase” or “reasonable increase” and a “minor increase”.

⁴⁶ Apparently there are at least two budgets at play here – the CPI+1% budget on the main stage, and a “shadow budget”. A budget in the shadows seems to imply an undesirable thing lurking in the background.

further reduction of the tax rate. At last week's Finance Committee meeting, Mr. Mayor, we received a direction to use the no increase option as presented during that meeting. So the budget you have before you today [pause] does not have a tax increase.

[While the CAO is presenting this, a PowerPoint slide on the monitor says "Residential and Commercial Tax rates drop".]

(Halifax RC meeting, April 30, 2013)

The management proposes a solution based on unchanged tax rates, average tax assessments, inflation, and several other tricky points of calculation. The upshot is that the budget proposed under this no-tax-increase option would effectively increase overall municipal tax revenue by \$13 million.

Greg Keefe (CFO): So to explain the "No Tax Increase Option", what this actually means: it's, it's a very tough thing to define. So I'll try to do it. The only extra tax revenue we've got comes from the Assessment Roll that's due to the expansion not to the market increases. So for residential what does that mean? It means we decrease the rate to offset the one point four percent increase in the assessment for fully-capped homes – which breaks them out even. Assessment up one point four, the rate down one point five, they break even. Fully-capped properties see no change in the municipal tax. Others will benefit from the reduced rate, but the actual tax on the property will go up because the assessment has gone up more than the one and a half percent, umm, because they made some renovations or in some cases they bought a different house.

[Mr. Keefe continues his explanation for a considerable time with several complex charts full of numbers and calculations. It seems that taxes are lower for some taxpayers, but higher for others.]

Greg Keefe (CFO): On the next slide, just in terms of openness, and, just [he chortles at this prospect] to bring some clarity to the averages [laughs again]... [more lengthy explanation of a variety of averages and "interesting facts", then he concludes...] So, we use averages; it's a way of talking how do you handle a hundred and fifteen thousand properties in a few statements to manipulate. And averages is a good way to talk about it. But as you can see, as you drill deeper the picture on averages changes.

(Halifax RC meeting, April 30, 2013)

Other *dramatis personae* also recognize the burden of taxation as their problem too.

The members of the Finance Committee have already indicated their no-tax positions by voting on budget motions at the committee level. However, their position is fluid because the Council budget debates allow for new demands for services not contemplated in the discussions to date.

Act II – Interessement

Interessement is the process of convincing others what dramatic roles they should want to have. Allies are “locked into place” (Callon, 1986, p. 8). However the allies are also interposed by their role which is situated in-between (inter-esse) competing interests. Since budget making is a process that attempts to define reality, there is bound to be competition in stabilizing, as Goffman would say, the definition of the situation. It is in this sense that interessement calls for actions and devices (some more hostile than others) that can go in-between a problematized actor and all other competitors seeking to define the situation otherwise. In municipal politics, elected officials are always in-between competing interests. The rhetoric of lower taxation is too loud to ignore, however the constant demands for more and better services depends on higher taxation.

The sources of revenue and the application of funds in the Halifax budget (nearly \$1 billion of activity in a given year) requires constant intervention by professionals and experts. As highlighted by Callon (1986), authoritative actors play a central role in the interessement phase because, through the enactment of their knowledge (in many forms such as public hearings, pilot projects, technical reports and espoused “best practices”), they become authoritative interpreters of common interests (Magnani, 2012).

From its opening gambit in the Finance Committee deliberations, the 2013/14 Halifax budget was scripted as an exemplar of fiscal success – new services included in the budget but zero tax increase. The Mayor, staff, and many Councillors lauded this wonderful achievement, ad libbing the “no tax increase” scenario in a great many speeches. However, Councillor Outhit did not accept the theatrical cue.

[Mr Keefe (CFO) responds to Councillor Outhit's question about a guarantee that taxes will not see an increase. The response was that only 38% of Halifax businesses will see their tax bill decrease. At this revelation, the red-faced Outhit lights-up and becomes belligerent, arguing with the Chair and delivering several insults.]

Councillor Outhit: Overall we are not bringing-in more taxes. I get that. New businesses paying new money. But of existing businesses, who paid taxes last year, and will get a tax bill this year, 70% of them may see some sort of tax increase.

[Then after further heated argument with the Chair of Council...]

Councillor Outhit: If you want to snow the people, go ahead and snow the people!”

[The Chair rules Councillor Outhit's commentary out of order and, after being unsuccessful in securing an apology from Outhit (who stormed out of the meeting room at this point), changed the focus and swiftly called for the vote on the budget.]

(Field notes and verbatim text from Finance Committee April 24, 2013)

The municipal executives, however, had locked their allies into place by a prior joint commitment to delegate the budget review process to the Finance Committee, and with a formal motion to accept the Priority Outcomes proposed by management. In effect the accounting for taxation had become an obligatory passage point in the management of the budget. The vote to approve the 2013/14 budget was unanimous despite the rant of Councillor Outhit.

Act III – Enrollment

In the first two acts of budget translation, associations are already somewhat stabilized. Enrollment has begun to occur. Alliances are defined, co-ordinated and the bits and pieces of the budget start to dissolve into what appears to be a durable whole entity. The scripted cause (that of presenting a no-tax-increase budget that actually yields \$13 million additional tax dollars) is now much stronger because the actors have been translated. Their interests have become aligned by means of one actor becoming the Director of the drama. The Council has become aware how complex is the municipal tax structure, and they are happy to assign the explanation role to management. Hunter and Swan (2007) characterize enrollment as a granting of obedience by the enrolled actor's own consent. However, even top management is uncertain about the actual workings of the taxation system, as was evident in the budget presentation to the Finance Committee.

[A motion is made to forward the no-tax-increase budget to Regional Council. Then Councillor Mosher begins a lengthy congratulatory speech which she follows with numerous questions about the budget. She drills the presenter about the budget and its reference to inflation. The presenter stutters about the increase in expenses proposed to the Council as increases due to inflation.]

[All now defer to Bruce Fisher, the municipal tax expert, who speaks to Council for the first time this session. Fisher is an accountant with the dramatic title of Budget Director. He is introduced as the only one who understands the Halifax tax structure, and the room laughs nervously at the apparent truth of that statement. This joke would carry through the discussion of the budget. Mr. Fisher seems to be imbued with an aura of "mystification" (Goffman, 1959, p. 74) and he quells the stream of questions from Council Members with a few simple words.]

[The head of the Council takes the opportunity to speed-up the proceedings, announcing that he is putting the timer on.]

(Field notes from Finance Committee April 24, 2013)

The Council then tones down its aggressiveness and allows the management performers some breathing space to build the desired impression. This allows the Halifax budget performances to coalesce around a zero tax increase for the good of “the audience, as a protection or a threat that close inspection would destroy” (Goffman, 1959, p. 76).

Because the forces of enrollment can be undermined, translation should be considered tentative, i.e., *loose assemblages* (Hunter & Swan, 2007, p. 405) of things that are not bound to each other yet may become allies for a time. Thus, wholeness of the no-tax-increase budget must be perceived as precarious. Indeed, a raucous debate on snow clearing takes place before the final vote is taken on the budget and Council controversially agrees (in a vote of 9 in favour and 8 against) to provide 1% tax increase to provide money to pay for the added snow clearing service.

Councillor Watts: So, we’ve just raised taxes. After we just said no we weren’t going to. We just changed our mind and raised taxes... just to be clear, that’s what we’ve done... [sardonically] Thank you.

[No one responds. The Mayor immediately calls for a recess.]

(Halifax RC Meeting, April 30, 2013)

With the vote to increase taxes (and the tacit agreement of all actors with other increases in the budget for fines, fees, area rates, and other pseudo-taxes) the budget-actor-network is nearly complete. Now the tax increase in the budget is \$13.8 million. Other municipal revenue sources also show an increase year-over-year. There is very little discussion of the supplementary revenue sources – these quasi-tax increases conveniently disappear into the background. With intense focus on property tax, the other bits and pieces

dissolve into the whole and become durable. The total approved budget for 2013/14 was approved as an omnibus motion in the amount of \$824 million. This was \$34 million higher than that of the prior year. Clearly, management has been successful in forming a budget-actor-network where significant additional financial resources are included in the budget – even in the face of a sustained movement for a budget with no tax increase.

Act IV – Mobilization

Mobilization is the final stage of the translation process (postdramaturgy ironically views this “finality” as being temporary at best). The no-tax version of the budget-actor-network has successfully grown with the enlistment of all kinds of heterogeneous links. At this point, technical artifacts are produced and performed (*inscription*) to protect the interests of the actor-network. The Halifax website is updated with all kinds of good news, introduced with a telling of history:

European settlement first occurred in the region with the founding of Halifax by the British in 1749. An election for Council members was held and Halifax became a forerunner in the later emergence of a democratically elected government in North America. Events of historical significance have greatly influenced the development of the Region... enriching our social and cultural environment.

... steady economic growth
 ... recognized as a great location to do business
 ... emerging as a leader in the future of business prosperity
 ... overall municipal tax rates (general + area rates) have been reduced by 1.1% for residential and 3.4% for commercial properties⁴⁷

(2013/14 Approved Budget book posted on the Halifax website
<http://www.halifax.ca/budget/BudgetBooks.php>)

⁴⁷ Note that it is technically possible for tax revenue to rise even with a decrease in the tax rate. In calculation of the tax invoice, the tax rate is the multiplier, but the tax invoice also depends on assessment values as the multiplicand.

Mobilization includes more aggressive communication channels. These take a markedly different shape as few or perhaps only one actor speaks for the entity (*single point actor*).

The Halifax tax structure, although not understandable to anyone except Bruce Fisher, can now be promoted as a simple set of budget messages in a YouTube video entitled “Municipal Budget 101” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0a1w9-Ro5co>).

In administering Budget 101 on video, Mr. Fisher calmly communicates a few distilled messages on behalf of the entire actor-network:

- “Our finances, and your money, is well taken care of.”
- “Halifax taxes benchmark fairly well against other cities across the country.”
- “Should we try to keep taxes as low as we can?”

As the last point is being stated, three checkboxes roll onto the computer screen:

- ✓ Better Services
- ✓ Lower Taxes
- ✓ Efficiencies

The Tax Department also is mobilized to mail an information pamphlet to all Halifax taxpayers entitled “Your Municipal Tax Dollars at Work”. The pamphlet features a column graph with “Residential Tax Benchmarks” that have been prepared from a survey of “Typical Home Taxes”. This document is a reprise of the Budget PowerPoint slide that played so well to the Finance Committee audience.

[A colourful bar graph is shown on the computer screens. This compares “typical” taxation of a dozen selected cities in Canada. Halifax sits neatly near the extreme left of the graph – the ideal location because this signifies relatively lower taxes compared to the benchmarks.]

Finance Committee Chair Karsten: Oh so you mean Halifax is there, way over there on the left. That’s a lot better than being on the right.

[As the budget presentation progresses, financial staff soak-in a great deal of praise for the favourable depiction in this graph. No one spoils this performance by pointing-out that the Halifax tax column is extremely close in amount to six other municipalities on the chart, and the only cities exhibiting discernably higher taxes are Toronto, Vancouver and Victoria.]

(Field notes and transcript from Finance Committee April 24, 2013)

Halifax budget administration makes use of many “facts” that come as comparisons to municipal competitors. Few budget categories are ever treated as simply good or bad – as if they are unconditional. Rather, budget line items are spoken of as better or worse than something else: than the same fiscal period in the prior year; than other alternatives listed in the staff report; than their benchmarks; than municipalities elsewhere in the country. Thus, performance of the municipal budget involves comparisons that attempt to generalize a standard condition. Mol (2002b) discusses how similarity and difference is enacted and concludes that the process is complex rather than explainable with simple charts and statistics.

According to Latour (2005, p. 223) such devices as YouTube videos and information bulletins are “immutable mobiles” that enable forms of control at a distance. The numerous components that comprise the budget-actor-network are rendered unseen because the components are collapsed into unified tools such as charts and graphs. When (and if) the effects of the actor-network come to be taken for granted (*punctuated*), the actor-network puts a provisional end to controversy and makes the political cost of alternatives too high (Latour & Woolgar, 1986). At this point the actor-network is said to be *black-boxed*. The Halifax management has effectively reduced the participants in the budget drama to a small number of representatives so that taxation could be explained with the aid of a few diagrams using their version of reality. They had translated the

interests of others into their own and thus temporarily gained obedience of the cast of characters. This included even the independent news media. The Halifax Herald (front page, May 1, 2013) was obliged to report that a tax increase had been authorized, however, the headline was kind – “A small tax hike for Halifax”. The text of the newspaper story started with a welcome report that the budget would henceforth cover sidewalk snow clearing: “Peninsula homeowners who have been clearing their snow-covered sidewalks can put away their shovels”. And the news reporter seemed to have adopted the confusing tax vernacular of the Halifax CFO: “Although the general tax rate will now go up, that won’t necessarily mean a corresponding hike in that homeowner’s tax bill”. The news media thus became part of the no-tax-increase actor-network.

Communication techniques such as strategic ambiguity assist in the development of the budget storyline of no increase in the Halifax tax rate, but taxpayers still have to pay more taxes due to property assessment increases. Favourable media coverage helps in “cooling the mark out” where additional taxes are extracted from the mark (taxpayer), followed by “teaching” the mark to accept the loss without public complaint (Goffman, 1952, as discussed in Fine & Manning, 2003, p. 44).

In summary, the ANT mini-play has described how actants mobilize and hold together a budget-actor-network. A single point actor.

Writing the Budget

The postdramaturgy rhizome helps to bring out an important idea relating to single point actors – that they are never as single or alone as they may come to appear. ANT already helps with this by showing that processes of translation work to keep

heterogeneous “bits and pieces from following their own inclinations and making off on their own” (Law, 1992, p. 386). If the interests of the bits and pieces come to be accepted as extremely integrated (a punctuated actor) then the actor-network can be thought of as one – with its power vested, however tentatively, in a single point actor. Dramaturgy, ANT, and historiography cultivate this idea by growing from different parts of the postdramaturgical root, i.e., helping us to ironically see the single point actor as multiple. The multiple relational performers engage in ontological politics.

This section of Budget Theatre focuses on the writer(s) of the budget. If the municipal budget can come to be seen as a single thing, then it may also seem that it has one creator. Dramaturgical studies have explored collective writing⁴⁸ and found that staged performances are often episodes of impression management. For example, the Walt Disney Company is a prolific producer of stories. These appear on movie screens, television and in the administrative stories of its corporate offices. In official histories of the Walt Disney Company, Walt (and Walt alone) created Mickey Mouse; although co-created by numerous artists, the animated films did not carry screen credits and “most members of the general public thought Walt wrote the stories, made the drawings, and did the layout, voices, and sound effects” (Boje, 1995, p. 1022). This raises a question – do citizens of Halifax think the CAO wrote the entire budget? The public outpouring of thanksgiving to the CAO by the elected officials would indicate that is the case. As a former CAO of one of the component municipalities of Halifax, I realize how outrageous such a proposition would be. Yet ownership is attributed when convenient.

[Councillor Dalrymple enthusiastically expounds upon what he sees as the many virtues of the proposed budget. He says we should not be looking at the “minutiae” and he spends most of his 5-minute speaking allotment

⁴⁸ I use the term “writing” in a very broad sense to stand-in for artifacts of all kinds.

praising Halifax and the CAO for the excellent Halifax budget compared to “Halifax of the past” and to other government organizations.]

[The CAO jumps-in to joke that Council should vote to extend Dalrymple's time at the microphone.]

(Field notes from Finance Committee April 24, 2013)

The CAO slipped out of role temporarily giving the audience a glimpse that a performance is underway. Not everyone on Council is as generous as Dalrymple. It is clear at this point that some Councillors do not recognize the budget as their own. Most of the elected officials take a combative tone as if the budget is full of tricks that the Councillors must expose.

Councillor Hendsbee: Like my hair, I will be going through these books with a fine tooth comb.

[Another councillor announces that she is “on board” with the budget for the first time since she joined Council – fellow members vigorously applaud. The Councillor then drills the presenters at length while jesting about trying to find a reason to vote against the budget once again.]

(Field notes from Finance Committee April 24, 2013)

This illustration speaks to the fragility of the power structure in the municipality.

Important decisions often do not achieve a level of unanimity. As indicated above, ironic remarks may be expected “by which a teammate jokingly rejects the line while seriously accepting it” (Goffman, 1959, p. 91). Public disagreement among members of the team diminishes the reality sponsored by the team. Drilling of management presenters is a common routine in the Halifax Council Chamber. Since there is a copious amount of budget data involved, the accountants can never know what they will be questioned on. Maintaining a professional performance in the face of attack and criticism (sometimes

ambushed) allows management to occupy a space in-between competing interests.

Interessement in this situation calls for the accountant to go in-between management's problematized version of reality (for example, the no tax increase budget-actor-network)

and all other actors seeking to define the situation otherwise. The point of the budget

interrogation is not so much to assess the accountants' mastery over every detail of the

budget; rather, it is to determine their capacity to play their role responsibly and to

convince the audience of their reliability (Lambert & Pezet, 2012). The reliability of the

budget numbers here is demonstrated by a declaration that management has adhered to

"generally accepted accounting practices". Thus, management performs the calculations

correctly. But the accountants are also given another role – to perform what is

represented by the numbers. Postdramaturgy particularly pays attention to the

performances represented by the numbers and their effects on ontological politics.

Numbers are standard equipment for sponsoring one political view over another

competing view. Boje's (2014) concept of antenarrative is helpful here. "Ante" is given a

double meaning, signifying (1) *before* and (2) *a bet* - specifically the initiating bet in a

round of gambling. Antenarrative, therefore, is a double entendre⁴⁹. Boje (2014) argues

that antenarratives are in-between, connecting living stories with narratives, and in so

doing transforming them. The municipal budget acts *ex ante*, i.e., the budget is based on a

combination of assumptions and predictions that are essentially subjective. *Ex ante* plans

for the budget select from various alternatives then reassemble "those bets on the future,

collapse possibilities into a few actualities" (ibid, p. 10).

⁴⁹ Boje (2014) describes antenarrative as having double meaning. I have extended what I believe is Boje's intention for antenarrative to foster critique. I do this by preferring the French term "double entendre", literally double meaning, but an ambiguity where the second meaning is often assumed to be risqué.

Elected officials realize the asymmetry in their knowledge and business acumen compared to the CAO and his management resources. Therefore they have established the position of Municipal Auditor General, a counter intelligence agent who reports only to the Council and not the CAO.

Responsibilities of Auditor General

50 (2) The Auditor General shall examine, in the manner and to the extent the Auditor General considers necessary, the accounts, procedures and programs of the Municipality to evaluate:

- a) whether the rules and procedures applied are sufficient to ensure an effective control of sums received and expended, adequate safeguarding and control of public property and appropriate records management;
- b) if money authorized to be spent has been expended with due regard to economy and efficiency;
- c) if money has been spent with proper authorization and according to an appropriation.

(Excerpt from the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008)

Auditing is a profession that is heavily invested in a positivist view that there is only one right answer to each question. For the internal auditor, there is only one true budget story, and it is the auditor's job to know what it is. Ironically this contributes to an amodern view of the budget (the budget-multiple) since the auditor sees yet another distinct version of the budget, one that is a set of facts – and a directive document that must be obeyed.

Collective writing of the municipal budget is heavily influenced by the dramaturgical concept of discrepant roles (Pettit, 2011). An objective of the municipal

team is to give a sustained performance of the agreed upon definition of the situation. This is certain to involve impromptu budget performances by Council Members who improvise from cues of previous speakers. The cues may suggest that team members should over-communicate certain aspects of the situation. “Given the fragility and the required expressive coherence of the reality that is dramatized by a performance, there are usually facts which, if attention is drawn to them during the performance, would discredit, disrupt, or make useless the impression that the performance fosters” (Goffman, 1959, p. 141). A postdramaturgical role issue, then, is to draw attention to discrediting information about impromptu performances that take place. Even though improv theatre performance has rules to promote teamwork, 90% of improv is a flop (Oleniczak, 2013). Improv players give their all anyway – if they fail they wish for it to be a spectacular failure. Improv players are expected to accept the recited lines just given by the previous speaker and build upon them (usually humorously) without denying the given premise (Oleniczak, 2013). However, improv budget performances are subject to additional points of view. These may be so at odds with the planned performance that the dramaturgical category can be understood as an acting role out of sync with the script, or what Goffman labels a discrepant role.

The informer (Goffman, 1959) is one example of a discrepant role. This includes the possibility of a Municipal Councillor (who is a member of the Council “team”), to publically engage in a political betrayal after being privileged to have off-stage access to hazardous information. Of course this has the potential to ruin the budget show in front of the audience. When budget making stakes are high, the potential for discrepant enactment increases. An example of discrepant enactment occurred in the planning for construction

of Halifax Cell 6 of the Otter Lake Residuals Disposal Facility. This capital project was to provide landfill space for garbage generated in the region. The preliminary budget estimate of the Cell is \$16.6 million. In addition to the financial cost, the “political cost” is also very high since no one wants the garbage facility to be located in their district (not-in-my-backyard syndrome). The 2006 Regional Plan required that the budget process for the Otter Lake landfill must include a “public consultation process as defined by Council”. But secret meetings of Councillors and management attempted to thwart a public meeting that had already been advertised to get public input. Numerous citizens were on hand in the Council Chamber for the public hearing, and spilling-out into the entrance hallway, when it was revealed that a vote was to be taken to cancel the hearing. Several councillors went quickly into discrepant roles.

Councillor Hum: I can tell you that I am not very pleased with the way this is proceeding. You talk about the lack of political guts. You talk about the lack of transparency. That’s what the public hearing is about. Not for us to make a decision before the hearing.

I can’t believe we’re heading in this direction, and, again, behind closed doors. Because the Environment Committee didn’t know about this, and I’m sure there’s other Councillors who didn’t – unless you’re in the inner circle bringing this motion forward.

Councillor Dalrymple: I felt that we had rammed this through without the consultation required to the point where I didn’t even speak on this issue at the committee level. I’m certainly not on the inner circle and didn’t know about this [the motion to cancel the public hearing] until just a second ago when it was done.

Councillor McCluskey: I think there’s a lot of political posturing going on here, Your Worship, and we kept all these people waiting this long. We might have as well gone ahead and heard them.

(Halifax RC meeting, March 8, 2011)

The above example involved a public performance of knowledge obtained in secret by some, while being withheld from others. However, knowledge is not necessarily needed to perform a conception of the self. Even in the case of “absent knowledges” (P. Burke, 2010, audio podcast), elected officials still are cognizant of the unseen audiences watching on television or the internet. The Councillors may be called upon to perform the appearance of knowledge.

[Councillors try to appear knowledgeable whether or not they have read the meeting material sent to them in preparation for the budget meeting, or whether they fully understand the issue at hand. This was the case in a budget debate where a Councillor was unaware that the operating budget for the Halifax Ferry Service had been reduced. The service cut was clearly described in the budget documents. The Councillor was able to quickly move from a position of total surprise to performance of a more “professional” self that was knowledgeable of the transaction. By the end of the performance, the Councillor even claimed prior consultation with constituents on the subject.]

(Field notes, discussion with elected official, January 30, 2013)

When a discrepant performance takes place, the remaining actors have a major dilemma: do the rules of improv still require the next speaker to accept the new premise?

Postdramaturgy would have it that the unwritten rules of self-making trump the rules of improv. In the case of Councillors in a budget-making situation, the self is complex, at times being performed as professional, caring, decisive, knowledgeable, authoritative, and so on.

I have “followed around” a variety of human actors in their role as writers of the municipal budget. That is a necessary but, from a postdramaturgy point of view, insufficient analysis. Postdramaturgy proposes that non-human actants also perform as budget writers. By co-writing the budget, actants-in-motion are never alone – they perform relationally with other active entities in simultaneous movements. As discussed

in Chapter 5, this diminishes the issue of implied intentionality on the part of actants, an irritant which has been troublesome for critics of ANT.

Performances in budget making are given by human and non-human actors. For example, the annual Halifax budget process has to grapple with policing costs in the very substantial amount of \$74 million. Postdramaturgy would propose that the police organization is a rhizomatic entity. It is rooted in the territory of the municipality but springs up in a variety of tactical activities, military rituals, and ongoing financial obligations. Theoretically, the Police Department cannot move or delegate its operations. It has to sustain its legitimacy to command respect and to receive budget resources.

Policing as practice is an elaborate form of ritual, an illusion of control in a divided, democratic, secular society in which strangers must somehow get along... policing through its own promotional rhetoric and politics created quasi-sacred status in the polity. The police are a kind of aberrant and sacred island amid a sea of secularization. At the same time, they are what society makes of them, “dirty workers” of a kind, and so they keep much of their work out of sight and back stage.

(Manning, 2008, p. 688)

The budget-presenting members of the Halifax Police Department perform their authority with full para-military uniform, valour medals, and shoulder epaulettes. Simultaneously, non-corporeal actants such as citizens’ fear of crime and widespread feelings of personal insecurity have already assembled a convincing case for perfunctory approval of all of the budget requests of the Police Department⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ Studies imply that citizens, especially older citizens, have an increased sense of crime-related fear even though Statistics Canada has reported a dramatic decrease in crime rates over the past decade. An academic study reported that “North Americans are insecure, vulnerable and fearful people living in risky, dangerous and threatening times. We are surrounded by mass media stories about home-grown terrorist plots, global warming, rising crime rates, flu pandemics, drug wars, poverty and illegal immigrants. In many respects, it is our fears and anxieties about these threats that now drive so much public policy” (Larsen, 2008, p. 265).

Halifax had the highest rate of gun-related violent crime of all major Canadian cities in 2012, according to *The Daily* report of Statistics Canada

(<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140423/dq140423b-eng.htm>).

Police Chief Blais:

We're talking about a city of 400,000 people where our homicides have been going down, our attempted homicides are going down, firearms that have been discharged have been going down.

But we still have work to do.

(Excerpt from the Herald News, April 23, 2014)

Deputy Police Chief Moore:

We were the murder capital of Canada.

We've had some significant gun-violence issues.

I'm not prepared to take my foot of the gas.

There is still lots of work to be done.

(Excerpt from the Herald News, September 22, 2014)

The above closing remark from each of the Police Chief and his Deputy seems ominous. And the “fact” that there is “still lots of work to be done” (implying a need for increased budget resources) is presented in the police budget materials which contain exhibits such as PowerPoint slides that refer to the “Mayor’s Roundtable on Violence” and a “priority alignment business case” to obtain specialized equipment to respond to serious situations. In the policing industry, specialized equipment may refer to costly budget items such as computerized smart guns. The smart gun is an actant that recognizes it’s human – thus, the bank robber who successfully disarms an arresting police officer does not have an authentication that is known to the officer’s smart gun; so the weapon will not discharge a bullet on behalf of the robber. The smart gun if purchased would “cause” the police budget to require more money for operations, in addition to the gun’s high initial capital

cost of acquisition (I estimate that equipping all Halifax police officers with smart guns would cost nearly \$1 million, 525 officers x \$1,800). The smart gun also requires information technology such as individualized software to perform such tasks as controlling the “progressive” weapon firing rate. And if fired, the gun will automatically send a report to the police information system (and to back-up police officers) telling where and when the weapon has been discharged. The smart gun attempts to write a portion of the budget because a case is made that, without its associated capital and operating costs, citizens cannot hope to feel safe. Police managers have no choice but to keep up with weapon technology if they, like Deputy Chief Moore, do not intend to take their foot off the gas. This imperative is further mobilized when the Halifax Police Department brings to bear other supporting actants. These engage in relational performances. Below I describe a few of these budget actants: crime map bubbles, YouTube crime videos, and crime twitter.

The Halifax Police website allows citizens to observe “crime mapping” (<http://maps.halifax.ca/crimemapping>). Crimes such as assault, break and enter, robbery and theft of motor vehicle may be dramatized for interested citizens. From the safety of your home you can use a computer to select crime types. Your selections populate with “crime bubbles” a colourful on-line map of Halifax. The larger the bubble on the screen, the more crime has occurred in that area. Once activated, the proliferation of bubbles all over the map seems to indicate that the city is rife with crimes of all sorts. The bubbles come to the attention of elected officials through the media and from telephone calls from constituents who may now feel even more unsafe. The bubbles become a budget making actant. And for those who wish to witness a youth in a random act of gun violence, the

police video cam advertises a recent shooting on Barrington Street in a YouTube video⁵¹.

The video is haunting because the incident takes place in a well-known area in the centre of town. A shot is fired, and followed-up with five further gunshots stage right. Citizens can also maintain up-to-the-minute contact with crime through the police twitter feed.

Recently, 29,600 police twitter followers were enticed into the actor-network of the Halifax Police Department by viewing the following message:



Halifax_Police @HfxRegPolice · Nov 27, 2014

George Edward Hubley, 30, of Sheet Harbour Passage, charged w/ accessory to murder after fact & indecently interfering w dead human body

The Police tweet provoked numerous news media stories. The George Edward Hubley tweet became an immutable mobile further enabling control at a distance and supporting greater budget resources even without the need for a specific budget request in the Council Chamber. Despite a claimed 25% drop in the crime rate over the past decade⁵², the number of police officers included in the Halifax budget has consistently grown, and the overall police budget has been approved for increases every year. Human performances, their relations with corporeal and non-corporeal actants, and a host of symbolic props contribute to a budget story that engages with the ontological politics of giving the police organization large budget increases when other expenditures (for example, grants to non-profit agencies) are cut back. Other versions of the police story are possible. The point is that actors make their selections and dramaturgically perform them. Political choices and corresponding budget resources flow from the performances.

⁵¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBdUgxepEdc&index=20&list=UUhrHPBkK4c0g4KXzjisbivw>

⁵² <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11854-eng.htm>

Reflexive Comments on Impression Management and Chapter Summary

Goffman's theoretical perspective includes the notion of impression management. He explains that individuals in social situations engage in two different kinds of symbolic activity: impressions "given" and impressions "given off" (Goffman, 1959, p. 16). Impressions *given* primarily involve verbalizations and the creation of expressive communication; the second type of impressions, those *given off*, involve nonverbal displays that are seen as less subject to the actor's control (Chriss, 1995). Postdramaturgy treats impression management as an ANT translation activity – one that attempts to enroll other actors into a desired definition of the situation.

Since this section has been a performance of Halifax budget making, I wish to conclude it by engaging in reflexivity concerning my own impression management efforts. By "reflexivity" I refer to my capacity as a researcher to reflect on the politics integral to the production of knowledge. As I dramatize the action in *Budget Theatre*, how does my situatedness affect the academic contribution of this dissertation? I do not intend to leave standing a positivist view, so evident in mainstream management research, that the story I tell could not be stated otherwise.

During the research for this dissertation, and particularly in the writing of this chapter, I have sensed a personal angst that at least in part arises from my (re)immersion into the municipal budgeting milieu. Fifteen years of previous municipal budget making came flooding back into current view. Sitting in the Halifax Council Chamber as a researcher for many hours of budget debate, it felt at times like I would at any moment be called by the Mayor to step up to the staff microphone to explain something about the

budget being presented. In a significant sense, I am perhaps permanently marked as “executive” and “municipal budget maker”. A positivist research mindset might look upon this situation as problematic – something to be overcome – something to be put into a box so it does not interfere with the quest for objectivity. However, postdramaturgy does not seek objectivity. The social is seen as relational, multiple, messy and subjective. Accordingly, I believe that studies of the social must engage at the level of ontological politics. This implies that the *Budget Theatre* dissertation is the writing of a historical narrative. I used my assembled insights about management and budget making as one aspect of my accumulated data, realizing that generalizability is an unstable concept that is illusive in qualitative research.

If there is such a thing as *postdramaturgical* reflexivity, it would drive me to ponder not only my stories of budget making, but also the making of my *self* as this dissertation is performed. A multiplicity of *selves* is possible – the ethnographer, the storyteller, the historian, the accounting professional, the PhD candidate. Mead’s (1934) role concept of the *I* and the *me* is useful here. The *generalized other* that constitutes the *me* reflects a complex make-up of business experience, technical training, social upbringing, aesthetic values, and a proliferation of experiences of the *I*. As a social control device, the *me* helps the *I* experience the social. Therefore, in the writing of this dissertation I admit to being the audience of my own performance. I am a performer who is concerned to manage an impression regarding a new research methodology to be known as postdramaturgy. “Mead suggests that the human mind itself is a theater in which a number of internal dramas are always taking place. Within this theater of the mind, every individual functions as a playwright, providing her or himself with scripts”

(Prasad, 2005, p. 44). I have incessantly rehearsed my dissertation scripts with myself (and repeatedly performed them to my tolerant wife) often with great applause, but more often with sharp self-criticism. My final act will be a further attempt at impression management. My planned stage performance of “defending” postdramaturgy will of necessity be a defence of my *self* as presented to and perceived by my Dissertation Committee and others who may be willing to enroll into a postdramaturgical actor-network.

Mead wrote of the *I* and the *me* in the 1930s. About the same time, Bakhtin (1941, as translated in 1981) also discussed the self in the context of epic and novel genres, which he seems to see as differently presenting history. In his paper, Bakhtin claims that the novel is capable of achieving much of what the epic does not, including an ability to see individual actors, as Mead did, as engaging with their own self-image. Bakhtin speaks of the epic as one of the “high-distance genres” (ibid, p. 34) in that it implies a distant past that “has come down to us already well defined and real... already completely finished” (ibid, p. 14). In this sense, the past is conceived in the epic as not being pliable. The main actor in the epic is a fully formed hero. The novel, on the other hand, allows for the self to be remade in the present. “But of critical importance here is the fact that the novel has no canon of its own... only individual examples of the novel are historically active, not a generic canon as such” (ibid, p. 3). What I find most interesting from a postdramaturgical point of view is that Bakhtin discusses the “self’s descendents” (ibid, p. 34) which implies an *I/me* relationship that sees self-making as part of history-making.

The aim of this chapter is to perform my data using the metaphor of theatre. I attempt to make a start at assembling a research methodology, to be known as

postdramaturgy, that is more robust than Goffman's theatre metaphor. In so doing, I stimulate movement toward a more critical version of dramaturgy with an amodern orientation.

This chapter also demonstrates that postdramaturgy is a fruitful way to engage with ontological politics (Law, 2007) involved with budget making. Realities are produced by municipal budget making practices, and since those practices differ so do the realities. As Mol (1999, p. 84) argues, realities are "more than one but less than many". The nominalist stance in this chapter promotes an understanding of realities that are socially constructed through dramaturgical resources. Postdramaturgy deepens the exploration of budget making realities by emphasizing discontinuity, complexity, randomness, and politics.

The performances described in this chapter set the stage for Chapter 7, which aims to make a contribution by engaging with ontological politics by seeing history as performance of those politics. Unraveling *ontological politics* and *history as performance* builds upon the preparatory foundations of ANTi-History (Durepos & Mills, 2012) and the rhizomatic nature of postdramaturgy. Chapter 7 also responds to the call for a "historic turn" in management and organization theory (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006, p. 6) by keeping in mind that this dissertation is *doing* history and that this research is historically situated. With this in mind, I now extend my story of Halifax budget making by dramatizing the Africville budget.

Chapter 7: Using Postdramaturgy's Capacity for Critique

Hamlet: *What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune that she sends you to prison hither?*

Guildenstern: *Prison, my lord?*

Hamlet: *Denmark's a prison.*

Rosencrantz: *Then is the world one?*

Hamlet: *A goodly one;
in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons...*

(Shakespeare, 1982, II. ii. 239-247. 250).

Introduction

Postdramaturgy makes sustained efforts to reimagine Goffman's version of dramaturgy and to extend the tradition toward a more critical amodern form. In my view, Goffman has laid the foundation for this with concepts of *stigma* and *total institutions*. Postdramaturgy goes beyond description to a more critical stance by following actors through text and other improvised histories to surface power relations on a more problematic basis, seeing reality as multi-layered and subject to question and destabilization. The opening quote sets the stage for this chapter with a backdrop of history and stigma. Prince Hamlet claims (ironically) that the world is a goodly prison, a sentiment that is reminiscent of Foucault's Panopticon. Municipal budget making involves the accountant in scenes where multiple competing entities challenge the budget assumptions and heavily compete for financial resources. The contest is mediated by a centralized budget management system and the Municipal Council which provides a panoptic gaze over the accounting discourse. Various regulatory elements of the Halifax

accounting system constitute the budget as a central gaze (for example, centralized budget directives and consolidation of departmental business cases, widespread fiscal restraint to suppress taxation, and mandatory internal audits). The repercussions of the central gaze include communications to internal control systems and the general public. This involves storytelling as “an apparatus of observation, a means of centralized control, a way of accounting for performance... and the rendering docile of people in organizations” (Boje, 2014, p. 47). Also, “budget variances” (with the implied dictum – thou shalt not overspend the established allowance in your departmental accounts) impose a ubiquitous form of panoptic discipline. These create conditions for an impression of capitalism even though municipalities are mandated to operate as not-for-profit entities. Weber’s “stahlhartes Gehäuse – steel hard shell” (Baehr, 2001, p. 162), being an effect of human assembly, symbolizes such budget capitalism. The automated budget control system (a non-human actant born in the IT Department) monitors actual spending and creates a history of it, then compares this to the approved budget. It punishes any budget offenders by reporting “unfavourable variances” to central command, i.e., the Office of the CAO. But the panoptic budget gaze also falls on the CAO when immutable mobiles are activated by the Halifax Auditor General in the form of “follow-up dashboards” and “risk rankings” (Halifax Auditor General, 2014, p. 8) to publicize management’s actions on the hundreds of recommendations contained in the Auditor General’s annual reports. However, automated budget control systems are themselves dramatic and may create an “illusion of control... through the presence of practices meant to by-pass the control system and invisible work (work-arounds)” (Beaubien, 2012, p. 48). So actors may never be rendered as docile as anticipated by the designers of automated budget systems.

Foucault (1972) criticizes mainstream historians' quest to remove stigma from history. He described this as temporal dislocation. Goffman's concept of stigma is described as a personal, deep discrediting of the self in face-to-face interactions. Consequently, both the budget maker and the historian have to manage stigma. Goffman shows that some social actors are underprivileged by persistent stigmatized misframing. As indicated in the Africville budget dramas to come in this chapter, people with minimal power have to work hard to reframe histories of the past to combat stigmatizing attributes applied to them. The treatment of the citizens of Africville is a specific example of incessant and harmful framing that resulted in a historical pattern of constituting Africvillians as "the monstrous, the Other, the wild" (Star, 1991, p. 38)⁵³.

Postdramaturgy uses historiography as one means to address its concern for critique. Postdramaturgy seeks to understand how we might think about Otherness as budget relations travel from one milieu to another. With the lens of historiography to look at the budget ordeals of Africville, I awaken an Other voice. In so doing, I show how postdramaturgy can be used in critical management studies. Patriarchy and racism are often lost in positivist explanations of the social. Postdramaturgical historiography can be used in ways that recognize ontological politics of decision making and to promote the notion that decisions could be differently developed and applied.

Presenting Africville

After the American Revolution of 1775 and the War of 1812, Black Loyalists, who were escaped slaves, and free Blacks came to Nova Scotia to settle land. An oral

⁵³ Susan Leigh Star used the phrase "the monstrous, the Other, the wild" when referring to a critique of the treatment of customers by McDonald's Restaurants.

history account by the Africville Heritage Trust (2014) suggests that some of these people settled in the north end of Halifax to be close to fishing opportunities in Halifax Harbour and to have a chance to find paid work. The area developed into a community which eventually became known as Africville (also known as Campbell's Road).

The African American Refugees... were undertaking a heroic act, especially because they landed in a colony that wasn't expecting them and didn't want them – except as the cheapest labour available. Indeed, to make sure that they could not compete with white farmers, foresters, and fishermen, the Government of Nova Scotia settled the blacks on stony or swampy land. They were forced to have to beg for food and shelter and to accept the worst pay for the dirtiest jobs – to survive.

(Introduction to the play “Settling Africville”, Clarke, 2014)

Exhibit 4
Africville with Halifax Harbour in background



Nova Scotia Archives, ca. 1965, Bob Brooks NSARM 1989-468 vol. 16, Negative no.: sheet 8a image 20

Geographic areas are creations which are socially constructed (Latour, 1983) and I do not wish to imply that Africville is merely a piece of rocky land in the north end of Halifax with a nice view of the harbour. The “spirit” of Africville (Clairmont, Kimber, Pachai, & Saunders, 2010) is able to live on without a civic address. The historical essence of Africville is a non-corporeal actant that is able to travel great distances by dramaturgical means such as a national exhibition of artifacts, audio-visual material, photographs, art and documents at the Canadian Museum of History. The non-corporeal essence is also maintained by the naming of Africville as a National Historic Site, by several history books, and by two staged theatre plays. As a historical budget-making story, Africville has everything I could want as a postdramaturge: important effects on the Halifax budget, elements of dramatic enactment through videos and other performances⁵⁴, historical prominence and implications, opportunity to demonstrate an “ANT&After” view of how actants have agency, and elements of critique and ontological politics focusing on a silenced municipal stakeholder group that later on found a voice that could no longer be ignored.

The Africville community survived for well over a century until the 1960’s when the families who lived there were relocated to public housing by Halifax civic authorities. The growth of Halifax after World War I led to pollution of the Halifax Harbour and a sharp reduction of wooded areas around the community. Thus, traditional livelihood activities of Africvillians such as fishing, piggeries, raising chickens, and farming were made difficult (Clairmont et al., 2010). Lack of running water, along with lack of sewage and paved roads was cited as the City's reasons for the forced evacuation of Africville in

⁵⁴ As a reflexive comment, I think the high profile nature of Africville made it easier for me to study (easier in terms of material available; not theoretically easier).

the 1960s. The City of Halifax previously promised to provide water and sewer services. However, the people of Africville never had sufficient agency to warrant the substantial budget allocation that would fund a water line extension – but in 2011 a non-human actant, the Africville Museum, did warrant the water extension! The municipality was obliged to provide (limited) water services as part of a legal agreement to create a historical replica of the church as a museum.

The Africville community was variously characterized as an urban blight, a ghetto, and a slum (Africville Heritage Trust, 2014). Many years of systemic abandonment played a part in creating the conditions for Halifax administrators to stigmatize Africville. When the City evicted the residents in the 1960's, hosed-down garbage trucks were used for the transfer of people and belongings. Residents' homes were destroyed as a business arrangement of the urban renewal movement.

Performing Africville Budget Histories

Budget Theatre posits that accounting is dramatic. For those who might find that idea novel and surprising, this section problematizes competition for Halifax budget resources from the point of view of history and stigma. Following Mol (2002a) and Law (2012), postdramaturgy suggests that history is multiple and occurs in an actor-network of relations. An embedding of historiography – histories nested in other histories – creates a budget-actor-network that is inherently provocative. The following dramatic scenarios suggest three competing, but simultaneously overlapping, stories of the budget history of Africville:

1. Historical neglect
2. Historical aggression
3. Historical romance

These scenarios are rehearsed below to demonstrate some of the politics involved with the performance of budget relations.

Historical neglect

Here is one history: the Halifax budget process systemically ignored Africville. While large allocations of money were annually included in the budget toward development of the downtown core and the posh southend of Halifax, budget money was not spent to improve conditions or even provide basic municipal services in Africville. Archived records and oral history act to remember traces of the past and provide the following partial list of Africville budget exclusions (Clairmont et al., 2010):

- No water or sewage facilities – creating serious health issues
- No garbage collection – breeding vermin, odours, and slum-like appearances
- No snow plow service – isolating the community in winter
- No paved roads – creating safety, drainage and aesthetic issues
- No fire protection – therefore, insurance could not be obtained

City officials may have calculated that the cost of providing the services would exceed the total tax revenue from the area, thus creating a fiscal deficit.

This briefly described version of the past implies a failure on the part of the City to see its own historical role in Africville's inadequate infrastructure. The all-white administration declined to see budget discrimination as racism, preferring instead to see the overall "problem of Africville" (a term using by the City Development Officer in his

October 24, 1962 report to the Halifax COW). That Africville was overtly considered to be a social problem is evident in the following excerpt from Council minutes:

His Worship the Mayor advised the Council that he would call a meeting of the Committee of the Whole Council when the report of the survey of the problem of the colored people in Halifax, which was undertaken by the Dalhousie Institute of Public Affairs, is available [emphasis added].

(Halifax City Council, September 13, 1962)

The City's rationale for relocating the residents of Africville was that Halifax had an honourable, albeit paternalistic, obligation to, in effect, free Africville from its plight.

His Worship the Mayor referred to Page 7 of the Staff report of July 23, 1962, and stated that the opening contention of the Section headed 'Conclusions', is supported by the whole body of law as contained in the City Charter, By-Laws and Regulations of the City;

It is the opinion of Staff that the blighted housing and dilapidated structures in the Africville Area should be removed. It is the further opinion of Staff that the full legal authority of the City should be used to accomplish this removal. It is the further opinion of Staff that the use of legal authority should be tempered with understanding and natural justice on matters of housing and matters of compensation for the apparent owners of land and buildings within the Africville Area.

(Halifax City Council, October 24, 1962)

This mode of action did not account for a strong desire of Africville residents to remain.

The report omitted any information about the historical social assemblage of the community. In discussing the translation process in ANT, Callon (1986, p. 216) notes, "To speak for others is to first silence those in whose name we speak." The current and past voices of Africville were effectively silenced, making way for physical destruction of Africville homes. Allan O'Brien, one of the expropriating Halifax Councillors and later the Halifax Mayor, said "I think the total Halifax community was embarrassed by the degree of publicity about having a so-called slum as part of the city. As a result, some

action was pushed on us by that particular feeling⁵⁵. Frankly, I don't think we on the Council had a lot of information about the fairly lengthy history of Africville – I don't recall being informed about it at the time" (Clairmont et al., 2010, p. 100).

Historical visions of the past formed a non-corporeal actant (Hartt, 2013) that intersected with a budget-actor-network in the year 2010. The Halifax solution to "the problem of the colored people" was to provide funding in the operating budget for the appointment of an African Nova Scotia Affairs Integration Office. Municipal Council enthusiastically endorsed this budget initiative which was to provide a welcome senior position within the CAO's Office. That is to say, the "position" was welcome. The additional cost to the budget was not. The CAO's budget presentation material characterized the planned Integration Office as a "budget pressure" listing it along with other budget pressures such as fuel price increases, provincial grant cutbacks, and new costs such as an outdoor skating oval. And the African Nova Scotia Affairs Integration Office was not implemented with any great dispatch.

Councillor Hendsbee: Just one quick question: following-up from our, [pause] our Africville [pause] announcement, and stuff; I wanted to know the status of the Policy Advisor position for African Nova Scotian Affairs. We have made a commitment but I don't know if the position has been hired yet.

Richard Butts (CAO): Through you, Your Worship, to the Councillor, no the position has not been hired yet. We've gone through two rounds of interviews and we haven't found an acceptable, or I should say a successful candidate yet; and we're looking at other strategies to perhaps partner with other parties.

[Councillor Hendsbee resumes his seat with no further question.]

Councillor Watts: Yeah, and I'm actually glad that Councillor Hendsbee brought that up because at a recent meeting in Cherrybrook that was a question that was top of mind for several residents. And you know I must

⁵⁵ Evidence of a non-corporeal actant at work.

say that I was embarrassed that I had not [pause] had no knowledge of what was happening with that position. So I think, I guess, that it may be helpful to fast-track that. I know you want to do it right but two years since implementing and I think it's about time that we get that position in place and honor that commitment.

(Halifax COW meeting, April 3, 2012)

It took Halifax 30 months to hire someone to fill the budgeted position, and even then the appointment was only a secondment from the Provincial Government, and the position is now vacant again. Sylvia Parris, an African Nova Scotian woman and policy consultant, was hired in August 2012. She did not report to the CAO, was a Manager (but not Director), had no staff, was not authorized to make decisions, and worked in the department of Government Relations and External Affairs (seemingly an outward focus). The position reported to another manager (a white person), who reported to the CAO (another white person), who reported to the all-white Municipal Council. In the 2013/14 budget documents, the CAO office does not include any mention of the position or its function. The CAO's PowerPoint slides extensively discuss 29 "service areas" in seven sub-departments of his office. No mention of the Integration Office.

Sylvia Parris was introduced to the municipal organization as one who would create a new office and determine her own role. In ANT terms, Parris was an agent who was intent upon disrupting the existing actor-network. Hunter and Swan (2007) enter a discussion of actor-network with Iopia, an equality and diversity worker, to learn about the dynamics by which marginalized actors can enact a sustained role. "By taking on the formal race equality work in her institution she too is being enrolled by the prison network on the basis of racialised positioning, providing a 'Black perspective'. This positioning in itself, however, reproduces racism by confining Black and minority ethnic

staff into certain racialised roles. Thus, Iopia is in the position of enrollee and enroller” (Hunter & Swan, 2007, p. 412).

I began this narration by proposing the first of three budget histories, i.e., that the Halifax budget process systemically ignored Africville in the past. The section has shown how a postdramaturgical perspective engages with the past and melds this with the present under a critical lens. A case has been made that the systemic underprivileging of Africvillians is still in play.

Historical aggression

Another history – and this aggressive version of the past is dramatically different than the first. Instead of being starved of fiscal resources as told above, my second story looks at the past and sees that an extremely large amount of money was spent in the Africville area. However the budgets over many fiscal periods brought infrastructure to the community that was devastating toward the residential sustainment of Africville.

Clairmont et al. (2010) and the numerous exhibits in the Africville Museum tell of the following budget allocations for the immediate Africville area. First of all, a railway line was constructed in the 1850s and expanded twice before World War I, becoming a triple set of rail tracks. These ran right through the centre of the community. Land was expropriated for this purpose. The rail tracks divided the community into two parts and the trains rumbled through with no crossing signals and passing immediately beside houses. A hospital for infectious diseases was constructed in 1870. Although expensive for the City to build, the hospital reflected its temporal situation in that there was no knowledge at the time about curing infectious diseases such as typhoid and diphtheria.

People were sent to the backyard of Africville to literally die out of view. Other facilities constructed in the area included Rockhead Prison in 1854, a bone meal factory that manufactured fertilizer, a stone crushing plant, an abattoir (animal slaughterhouse), and in 1858 the City closed its sewage disposal pits in the southend of Halifax and placed them at the edge of Africville. In 1955 an open city garbage dump was created within a quarter of a mile from Africville. So it can be seen that there were some very large financial investments funded in various Halifax budgets – but they were intensely inappropriate for a residential area.

Exhibit 5

Canadian National Rail freight train passing through Africville



Nova Scotia Archives, ca. 1965, accession no. 1989-468 vol. 16 / negative sheet 5 image 8

Postdramaturgy makes a leap away from research traditions that see reality as independent, prior, fixed, singular, and ahistorical. Instead an alternative view is offered; that realities might be relational, simultaneous, morphing, multiple, and historically performed. The realities of Africville (more than one) are heavily involved with politics (Law, 2007; Mol, 1999) that are performed in a variety of practices. Ontological politics deals with ontology, that which is constituted as real, and politics, that which can be debated, shaped and critically opposed. Political reasons can be debated concerning the promotion of one version of reality instead of another. The “problem of Africville” was performed by the 1964 City Council as a relocation plan in the name of urban renewal. The accountants in the City budget office looked at the Africville property and determined that it was not worth much. My postdramaturgical approach uses an alternative version of history to conclude that the low imputed valuation was due to the City’s historical destruction of its worth.

The actual relocation took place between 1964 and 1967... the first deal involved a woman who sold her house (she did not own the land) for \$500, free moving, accommodation in public housing and the cancellation of an outstanding \$1,500 hospital bill. All told, the City spent about \$550,000 for the Africville lands and the buildings; another \$200,000 was budgeted for welfare assistance, furniture allowance and the waiving of unpaid taxes and hospital bills... City expenditure far exceeded the Development Department’s 1961 estimate of \$70,000. In fact, the total costs approximated \$800,000, the figure that City officials earlier deemed prohibitively high for the alternative of bringing Africville up to standard in terms of City services and housing quality.

(Clairmont et al., 2010, p. 70)

By means of aggressive economic policies to translate Africville from a seaside community to an industrial zone, the slum-like conditions were first created by the City then later used to stigmatize the Africville residential area. By the processes of stigma,

the Africvillian was “reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one” (Goffman, 1963b, p. 12). The relocation of humans and possessions was carried out in a budget-friendly, but not a people-friendly, manner. Using hosed-down garbage trucks for the relocation was certainly an inexpensive strategy, but the symbolism was summed-up by an Africville relocatee who worried about the perceptions of her new public housing neighbours, “Just think what the neighbours thought when they looked out and saw a garbage truck drive up and unload the furniture” (Clairmont et al., 2010, p. 72).

The actor-network that I will call *Halifax Urban Renewal* failed to enroll many members of the Africville community. Attempts to write-out the history of a caring community become difficult when stories of the past are so compelling. A particular Africville history-actor-network has collided with the Halifax budget-actor-network in the form of a class action lawsuit⁵⁶. Lawyers for class-action appellants are seeking financial compensation from Halifax Regional Municipality for land expropriated in the past. The lawsuit applies to those who owned land, who rented housing, who owned a business or who held squatters’ rights to land from 1962 to 1970. The effect on the Halifax budget has already been felt in the form of invoices from lawyers, accountants and equity consultants. The potentially massive budget costs are to come and have not yet been calculated. However, it would not be unreasonable to forecast settlement expenses in the millions of dollars. The class action seeks 1960 land and building values compounded for 50 years of statutory interest (alternatively the class action may accept current property value for the land which would be worth a considerable sum since

⁵⁶ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/africville-residents-want-changes-to-proposed-lawsuit-against-halifax-1.2875622>

Africville had extensive water frontage on Halifax Harbour). Whatever the eventual valuation amounts for individual properties, the payments will not resemble the \$500 originally given in the 1960s.

Postdramaturgy allows us to learn from histories of Africville that there is still racism now. The pending class action lawsuit will be an interesting battle of competing versions of history ultimately manifesting in the budget of the municipality. The class action lawsuit will be played in a theatre setting similar to the Halifax Council Chamber, i.e., a Provincial courtroom with its own proscenium-type stage, actors, set, scripts, props, symbols and dramas.

Historical romance

I will tell a third Africville budget story. The first two argued about a dichotomy – whether a slum condition was caused by a lack of budget resources or whether by too many budget resources (of the wrong kind). The historical romance version asserts neither of these. The reality claimed in this section is that Africville is not a slum at all, but instead an idyllic seaside community worth preserving. Budget resources are required to perform the preservation, and historiography is an actor (Durepos, 2015) in the budget-actor-network.

Postdramaturgy can be a more powerful analytic lens than ANT alone since the concepts of history and heterogeneity are explicitly brought into the performance. Using ANT without other methodologies as co-actors can be problematic because “we see that heterogeneity is historically constituted and time has been something of a blind spot for ANT with its emphasis on spatial relationships and distributions such as

in the metaphor of the network” (Hetherington, 1999, p. 52). Like the sections on historical neglect and historical aggression, this section demonstrates that history plays a part in power relations.

In Nova Scotia, municipal amalgamation of four municipalities and a regional services authority occurred on April 1, 1996. These five loosely bound actor-networks of the past collapsed into something called the Halifax Regional Municipality. The reconstituted Halifax became legally responsible for any liabilities of the former entities. Postdramaturgy pays attention to how liabilities travel over time; accounting systems interconnect not only the general ledger accounts but also connect communities and their liabilities. Thus, taxpayers in the former Town of Bedford, the former City of Dartmouth, and the former County of Halifax, now all have a financial interest in Africville budget allocations. This came dramatically to the forefront in the year of amalgamation when a historical institution known as the Africville Genealogy Society filed a lawsuit against Halifax for its part in destroying the idyllic community of Africville. The compensation demanded was an apology, land and a financial settlement. Postdramaturgy looks at temporal flows rather than seeing budget demands as a singular event. The monetary budget effect to respond to the Africville Genealogy Society did not occur until 14 years later. Halifax agreed to pay \$3 million to the Society along with an ongoing commitment for budget funding to help Halifax municipal departments to become more sensitive to African Nova Scotian communities.

After 2010, the non-corporeal actant of historical romance (strong emotional ties that the former residents held for their past) came into prominence. Discourse no longer centred on the physical blight and slum conditions that formerly dominated both the

public record of municipal council deliberations, as well as stories in the news media.

To assist with this movement of discourse, immutable mobiles were created such as the stylized *Africville* wordmark and artwork which is used in conjunction with tag lines such as “The Spirit Lives On” and “Recognizing the past, present and future”. The process of romanticizing requires a tricky balance of collective forgetting and remembering.

Creatively destroying remembrances of hardship and slum conditions is prerequisite to forming new memories of the idyllic seaside community.

The class action lawsuit set in motion an extended process to determine compensation. As explained by Strathern (1999, p. 167) the compensation process itself provides a script for what comes to be defined as compensable: “For compensation entails making relations between persons visible through the flow of payments, and making them afresh. The vehicles for compensation (usually conceived as wealth of a kind) are thus pressed into the service of creating, limiting and expanding social relationships.” *Africville* compensation processes involve creation of historical romance. This required a rebranding of *Africville* from a *slum problem* to an *idyllic community*. Even after the non-corporeal actant of romance effectively delivered to the community a Halifax budget contribution of \$3 million, the remembrances of *Africville* continued a process of adjustment. For example, in 2014 Canada Post created a postage stamp to commemorate *Africville* during African Heritage Month. The artwork for the stamp was an amalgam of two photographs from the 1960s. The first photograph was of seven girls from the Sunday School class. In the original picture, the girls are standing in front of an old vehicle (the original picture is featured at the *Africville* Museum).

Exhibit 7

Africville 63¢ stamp celebrating African Heritage Month



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The romanticized version of this photo (produced for the stamp) has the girls in a field of flowers. Also, after “erasing” the old car, a new background is substituted, i.e., colourfully painted houses in good repair and the community church overlooking a pristine ocean harbour. The second photograph composing the amalgam also had some remedial work performed; the triple railroad tracks that were built right through the middle of the community were deleted from view by Canada Post.

These amended and conflated images remind us that public institutions, such as Canada Post, collude with other actors to hide knowledges (Boje, 2014; P. Burke, 2012) so that collective forgetting is made possible and for secrets to be maintained even though there is the irony that the secrets are well known. “Pragmatist storytelling is all about secrets. How much energy does it take for these institutions to contain their secrets?”

Enormous amounts” (Boje, 2013, p. 8). There is also the issue of subtexts which attempt to manage impressions by maintaining various corporate secrets such as doctored photographs or, as discussed in Chapter 6, the certainty of tax increases for many Halifax taxpayers resulting from the no-tax-increase budget.

The romantic performances outlined above produced a definition of the situation that was not dependent on showing a deprivation or surfeit of past budget resources. Since the past was reconstituted as worth preserving, significant financial resources could be allocated from the municipal taxation reserves. In the 2010 budget, the Municipal Council approved a recommendation that was not based on “urban renewal” but rather characterized as a “community initiative”.

Legal Matter - Community Initiative:

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council: 1) Approve the terms of settlement re: the Africville Genealogy Society et al vs City of Halifax as outlined in the Discussion and Budget Implications section of the Private and Confidential report dated February 19, 2010 and; 2) Release the Private and Confidential report to the public upon ratification.

(Halifax RC meeting, February 23, 2010)

Regional Council approved the recommendation and subsequently released a “private and confidential” memorandum about the advice provided by its managers and accountants, and its deliberations on the matter. This cleared the way for an apology (laced with historic overtones) as follows.

On behalf of the Halifax Regional Municipality, I apologize to the former Africville residents and their descendants for what they have endured for almost 50 years, ever since the loss of their community that had stood on the shores of Bedford Basin for more than 150 years.

You lost your houses, your church, all of the places where you gathered with family and friends to mark the milestones of your lives.

We apologize to the community elders, including those who did not live to see this day, for the pain and loss of dignity you experienced.

We apologize for the heartache experienced at the loss of the Seaview United Baptist Church, the spiritual heart of the community, removed in the middle of the night. We acknowledge the tremendous importance the church had, both for the congregation and the community as a whole.

The repercussions of what happened in Africville linger to this day. They haunt us in the form of lost opportunities for young people who were never nurtured in the rich traditions, culture and heritage of Africville.

Our history cannot be rewritten but, thankfully, the future is a blank page and, starting today, we hold the pen with which we can write a shared tomorrow.

(Excerpts from Official Apology, February 24, 2010
Full text at <http://www.halifax.ca/Africville/apology.php>)

The apology performed the romance of Africville and the stage setting was dramatically different than conceptualizations of Africville of the past. Note the change of register in the apology:

- “their community that had stood on the shores of Bedford Basin for more than 150 years” → history is invoked to imply an earned permanence; the pristine “shores of the Bedford Basin” are referenced rather than centring on the buildings and infrastructure conditions that were slum-like.
- “your houses, your church, all of the places where you gathered with family and friends to mark the milestones of your lives” → the recognition of people with families, going to church, marking milestones is far removed from previous references to “the problem of the colored people in Halifax”.

- “We apologize to the community elders” → the term “elders” has traditionally been used to connote those who have a deep knowledge of the past and who are in a position to provide wise counsel.
- “We acknowledge the tremendous importance the church had, both for the congregation and the community as a whole” → that the church had “tremendous importance” for the community as a whole must come as a surprise to all those who saw a historical precedence for dirty facilities such as a garbage dump and later industrial development.
- “the rich traditions, culture and heritage of Africville” → this is a complete change of register, remembering Africville in terms heavily valued by the white ruling establishment; you are one of us after all.

The apology ends with an ironic statement that history cannot be rewritten (even though the Mayor’s apology does just that) and the script states that “the future is a blank page” (“thankfully”, according to Mayor Kelly). The Africville apology came along with a \$3 million budget. This funding allocation was to provide “the basis for establishing a fitting memorial for Africville... and creation of an Interpretive Centre that would convey the history of the community of Africville” (Chief Administrative Officer, 2010).

The romantic version of Africville has been made possible through the establishment of a history-actor-network. That history is an actor in budget making is evident in the above postdramaturgical rendering of social relations.

Epilogue to the stories of historical neglect, historical aggression and historical romance

Now I come to the main postdramaturgical points of the story extravaganza narrated above. Stories that are tellable are more than one but less than many. And they do not necessarily interfere with each other. They hang together. These points were elaborated previously in this dissertation. The Africville stories of historical neglect, historical aggression and historical romance serve as exemplar dramas that demonstrate heterogeneity and history as an actor in municipal budget making. The three Africville budget stories may be seen as milieus that perform as co-actors – histories that are nested in one another. Milieus cross; “the milieus pass into one another; they are essentially communicating” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 313). The space in-between stories – stories that at first appear to be competing as independent versions of the truth – serve to create a basis for exposing multiple postdramaturgical relations. When we see that milieus pass into each other it is easier to articulate that ontological politics are at play, providing a space for postdramaturgy to engage in critique.

Historical Irony

Postdramaturgy embraces the interpretive voice of irony in which there is incongruence that conveys a meaning conflicting with the literal meaning. Goffman’s dramatic irony is risky since it can be misread. It is a framing practice that partly depends on the audience’s frame. Since researchers are, ipso facto, writers of history they too engage in framing activity and this opens up possibilities for postdramaturgical critique. Fine and Martin (1990) call for researchers to continue Goffman’s experimentation with ironic forms of writing. I do so in this chapter by applying the notion of “historical irony”

(Munslow, 2010, p. 85) to my study of Africville. Munslow (2010, p. 78) expresses the view that historians can only craft useful stories of the past by being “ironic about almost every aspect of the project”. I find Goffman’s theatrical metaphor helpful in this regard since it enables a certain carnivalesque playfulness (Bakhtin, 1984) with implied representations of the past.

The irony of *justification* stems from the assertion that the past and history are ontologically different things. When I look at the sources of data for Africville, I have to ask what the sources seem to mean. This has serious potential effect on my writing as a historian. I can (and do) use language games to present an ethically desirable history. The words and examples that I choose (from vast sources of alternative data) help me enact Africville as historically underprivileged. But I did not wish to let that story stand alone. In the battle of Africville against the Halifax bureaucracy, I show how Africvillians ironically use the tools of bureaucracy (for example, lawsuits, corporate branding and news media) to begin to ameliorate past injustice. I make little effort to pursue historical objectivity, explicitly pointing out that my stories come in multiple versions. Most of the time I tell of Africville as if I am a detached narrator. However, the historian sees a self in the historical picture painted. Ironically, I am both an outsider and an insider in the Africville histories. I was the Commissioner of Corporate Services for Halifax (in charge of accounting and budgeting, among other things) at the time of municipal amalgamation and for three years thereafter. The Africville liabilities began to make themselves known to me in the form of accounting records that “carried forward” financial obligations in an “Africville Reserve Fund” and a “Self Insurance Reserve Fund”. These accounting records preserved the idea that Halifax owed a debt toward

Africville. Many years after my departure from Halifax these reserve funds and additional assets were used toward payment of the \$3 million settlement for the claims of the African Genealogy Society (Chief Administrative Officer, 2010). The concept of the irony of justification provides for involvement with my chosen exemplar from the past.

The irony of *authorship* deals with narrative choices such as voice, order, duration and frequency. I have chosen a historical style that performs an ethical and partisan commitment so that postdramaturgy's capacity for critique and ontological politics can be showcased. History cannot have meaning if judged on data alone. Postdramaturgy posits that the researcher must maintain an ironist outlook that includes dramatization. Thus, when looking at the artifact of the Africville postage stamp produced by Canada Post, one has to wonder about the politics of its creation. As an ironic postdramaturge, I helped Canada Post disclose information that had gone underground. The amalgam of pictures, the "forgetting" of the train tracks, the erasure of the old backdrop car, the addition of flowers and idyllic colouration – all of these were constructed by Canada Post as author of the postage stamp. I deemed it necessary to ironically author an alternative view of the stamp and its enrollment into the creation of historical romance that inspired a \$3 million allocation in the Halifax budget.

Structural irony acknowledges choices as to how past events are represented in an arranged historical narrative. This speaks to an inherent tension between historical narration and scepticism about writing the past. This chapter section is a case in point. My motivation for writing this section in the first place is to surface Munslow's (2010) idea of tension in historical writing. So now I am ruminating about rumination. I believe that my stories of Africville would have been substantially different if I had

chosen a temporal starting point that began with, say, Mayor Kelly's apology on February 24, 2010. Instead of leaping back and forth between time periods, the history could have been a story of reconciliation with everyone, in the words of Mayor Kelly, holding "the pen with which we can write a shared tomorrow". However, I declined to structure the exemplar in that manner. I choose to see Africville as a corporate storytelling project (Boje, 2014) with a nebulous beginning and an unfinished ending.

Linguistically constructed meaning is ironically unstable since accounting of the past cannot claim to be a match of past realities. Managerial historiography makes constant references to documented reality. However, postdramaturgy learns from Foucault that researchers should detach from the idea that history is justified in claiming a singular truth even if it uses "material documents to refresh its memory" (Foucault, 1972, p. 7). The Africville museum exhibits, documents, artifacts, photographs, and other "evidence", then, become active material for postdramaturgical historiography, not just research data that needs to be examined for truthfulness. With its on-line videos, travelling exhibitions, staged theatre plays, and other performances, the community of Africville artistically maintains an ironic identity that simultaneously is able to enact dramatic performances as an urban slum and an idyllic home.

The Budget as a Stigmatization Tool

Goffmanesque analysis conceptualizes stigma as a discrediting attribute. However, in keeping with a postdramaturgical perspective, this section ironically theorizes stigma as a valuable asset. When competition for budget resources is fierce the players have to use all means of attracting attention. The budget can be seen as a plethora of actor-networks attempting to strengthen an agreement of other actors to provide

financial resources. In this regard, stigma can be converted to a role-playing asset even though the stigma continues to be deeply discrediting. Therefore, if the stigma of Organization A is more severe than the stigma of Organizational B, then A has a competitive advantage in the competition for scarce budget resources. Halifax budget decision makers are usually comprised of “normals” (Goffman, 1963b, p. 15) who regularly perform a compassionate self toward the stigmatized.

The attitudes we normals have towards a person with a stigma, and the actions we take in regard to him [sic], are well known, since these responses are what benevolent social action is designed to soften and ameliorate. By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances. We construct a stigma theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents, sometimes rationalizing an animosity based on other differences, such as those of social class.

(Goffman, 1963b, p. 15)

Like normals, stigmatized individuals and groups competing for budget resources must engage in self-presentation, but of a different sort. Instead of trying to present themselves favorably, they are required to present themselves in such a way that indicates that they accept their inferior status (Lemert & Branaman, 1997). The Halifax Grants Committee, comprised of several municipal councillors, takes the role of drama critic. This includes the function of unmasking performers who make claims on the budget by virtue of their neediness. As critics, the Grants Committee might note “the degree to which any performer in a human drama performs in accordance with general requirements and various ranges of the characterization” (Lyman & Scott, 1975, p. 110). The Grants Committee has prepared a script for this purpose (a 42-page instructions booklet and application form), and the stigmatized are required to act their role in strict compliance

with that script, a form of dramaturgical loyalty. Those who apply for budget money through the Community Grants Program have to show that their plight is not due to a loss or reduction in government grant, loss of sponsorship, debt retirement, poor cash flow management, poor financial planning or lack of building reserve fund. These do not constitute “need” under the evaluation criteria of the grants process. Committee members are required to use a “Community Grants Program Application Review Form” to assess apparent need (Halifax Grants Committee, 2014). There are 12 different reasons for immediately rejecting any application. For those surviving this first cut, the guidelines of the Grants Committee dictate that a maximum of 100 points are allocated as follows.

- 25 points maximum – determination of how great is the stigma, such as systemic barriers to equitable participation and limited access to public funding.
- 20 points maximum – scope, scale or type of inclusion.
- 50 points maximum – consistency with “Project Merit in Relation to Municipal Funding & Program Priorities” such as Community History and Community Diversity.
- 5 points maximum – organizational viability.

In the 2013/14 Halifax budget process, the competition for grant money was intense; the Halifax Community Grants Program received 140 applications from needy organizations. Only 80 grants were given for a total value about \$½ million. The successful applicants were those who performed adherence to the “scorecard themes” in the business plans of the budgeting process. The struggle to select from alternative practices occurs in budget planning process which exclude some knowledges and teach actors how to view the

budget organizing process and the organization (Oakes et al., 1998). Potential stigmatized beneficiaries (according to the Halifax Council-approved “sector criteria”) include Black community advocates, low income individuals and families, clubs for underprivileged boys, housing for young and unwed mothers, shelters for “vulnerable populations and persons at risk”, and opportunities for persons with special needs such as poverty, isolation, linguistic barriers, discrimination and disability (Halifax Grants Committee, 2004). These categories are built-into the scorecard themes and become obligatory passage points to obtain money from the budget.

Different interests are addressed in postdramaturgy through *interessement* (Callon, 1986). The stigmatized hope to make allies of the members of the Grants Committee. The members are interposed by their role which is situated in-between (*interesse*) competing interests of the grant respondents who compete to enact the committee’s definition of the situation. The devices by which actors detach others from their definition of the situation in order to attach themselves to budget resources, shows that actors are always negotiating their relationships with others (Strathern, 1999). History is a tool that may be employed by the stigmatized in their quest for grant allocations. For example, the Black Ice Hockey and Sports Hall of Fame Society received a grant for materials for historical interpretive panels to highlight past athletic participation and achievements of African Nova Scotians. A similar application from the Vietnamese Association of Nova Scotia for historical materials and facilities rental for individual skills workshops for resume writing was refused. This is an example of messiness in budget making. The competition between the African Nova Scotians vs. the Vietnamese Nova Scotians was

resolved with a battle of stigma strength, capacity at storytelling of the past, extent of grant money available, and mobilized relationships.

In the spirit of postdramaturgy, it should be noted that application of stigma in the allocation of grant money does not apply only to humans. Non-human actants also compete in the budget making process. For example, the Halifax Grants committee saw fit to provide a grant of money to the Cat Rescue Society but denied a similar application from the Safe Haven for Reptiles. Clearly, the snakes were unable to leverage their superior stigma to obtain a monetary grant for their safekeeping. The cats prevailed.

Stigma is also used as a general strategy in ontological politics. An elected official commented on a range of experiences in the Council Chamber where Councillors sometimes attempt to stigmatize the budget process (or each other) to try to get their own way in public Council meetings:

Councillors play this game – if others don't see something as a priority, then the councillor will try to characterize the other person as not being sophisticated.

When approving a building project, a councillor in favour may say that a vote against the project indicates they are a hick and don't understand municipal infrastructure.

What councillors place on the agenda for debate sometimes provokes the idea of stigma. For example, Council has been heavily criticised in the media for always talking about the Cat By-law (but never doing anything about it). When a cat item came back to Council recently they were reluctant to discuss it, fearing that they would be stigmatized as incompetent.

(Field notes, quotation from undisclosed elected official, January 2013)

Goffman's concept of stigma helps to strengthen postdramaturgy's capacity for critique.

“The Greeks, who were apparently strong on visual aids, originated the term stigma to refer to bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral

status of the signifier” (Goffman, 1963b, p. 11). But *processes* can also have a moral deficit. The next section turns to a discussion of postdramaturgy as critique.

Historic Turn – Postdramaturgy as Critique

Several strands of the postdramaturgy rhizome contribute to its capacity for critique as indicated above. These strands include drama, historiography, irony, stigma, and the following around of actors. *Budget Theatre* engages with the historic turn by maintaining a critical attitude about political opportunities to manage impressions of the past. I have tried to be true to postdramaturgy’s theoretical underpinnings as this chapter has engaged with the municipal exemplar. History making should avoid presentism and universalism, and should surface complex relations among heterogeneous human and non-human actors. My stories of Africville have also shown that history has to account for physical and intellectual space, and that historiography is inherently ironic and prone to loss and hiding of knowledges. In mixing the above ideas of history with Goffman’s dramaturgy as well as ANT&After, the postdramaturgical histories of Africville attempt to perform budget making. Nested histories are actors in the performance. Following ANTi-History (Durepos & Mills, 2012), alternative knowledges of Africville have been interrogated to understand how traces of the past may help us to understand social processes of reassembly. Stories (Boje, 1995) are involved as a punctuated actor. Postdramaturgy focuses on scripts, roles, actors, audience, staging, etc., to make a contribution to understanding how history emplots events (Jenkins, 1995; Weatherbee & Durepos, 2010) and endows them with meaning.

Postdramaturgical analysis requires the presentation of multiple accounts of the past as well as an exploration of the ontological politics at play. Providing multiple histories of Africville potentially liberates actors from alienating interpretations of the past. Underprivileged actors are given a voice. In “traditional” dramaturgy, Goffman's actors often do not resist or protest. They more rarely seek to overthrow or emancipate. Goffman’s writing seek to identify “an *underlife of secondary adjustments* rather than organized resistance and exposure of the inequities of institutional life; he seeks to escape power rather than identify it and rebel” (Mitchell, 1978, p. 116). This is referred-to as “disguised dissent” by Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 1001) who discuss the performance of dramas in resistance processes. Postdramaturgy attempts to reassemble dramaturgy by leveraging one of its themes of the underlife of public institutions (Goffman, 1962). Postdramaturgy sees organizational underlife as in-between spaces and cracks in institutional processes that allow partial freedom for the self. We are also aided by Goffman's propensity to harshly expose organizations and organizational actors (Chriss, 1995).

I argue that organizational drama leads to serious social and organizational consequences (in my exemplar, budget consequences) that might always be otherwise. The theatre metaphor, therefore, can be useful for theorizing how those effects are punctualized. As argued by Czarniawska and Jacobsson (1995, p. 392), “theatricality should not be viewed simply as a channel for indignation, an emotion which has become so extremely common”. The critique in this chapter is not robust enough to be labelled as indignation – the overt and implied criticisms are used in this dissertation as exercise for the postdramaturgical method. However, postdramaturgy is potentially emancipatory

since it promotes a view that social realities are sustained by human and non-human performances. There is always the possibility of emancipatory changes in the performance due to improvisation, walk-on appearances, discrepant roles, forgetting of lines and script-busting.

Theories of critical dramaturgy are in early development mode (Boje, 2003).

Budget Theatre attempts to be more aggressive with the performance metaphor. The main contribution of my thesis is to (re)assemble Goffman's notion of dramaturgy by joining with a movement toward a more critical version of dramaturgy. I do so with an amodern orientation. The inspiration for this orientation stems from multiple sources: critical dramaturgy and antenarrative (Boje, 2014; Boje et al., 2004), ANTi-History (Durepos, 2015; Durepos & Mills, 2012) and the carnivalesque (Bakhtin, 1984). Critical dramaturgy is concerned to show how organizational dramas are exploitive; antenarrative is a presumption that a pre-story can be enacted with enrollment effects; ANTi-History promotes amodernism; and the carnivalesque is a literary mode that embraces irony, multiplicity and transgression.

I make the claim (see Chapter 5) that dramaturgy, ANT and historiography belong together to provide complementary exposition of power relations. The outcome of drawing from these three literatures will be a useful addition to the toolbox that MOS scholars draw upon to undertake research. A postdramaturgical attitude also allows us to implicate ourselves as both actors and audience of our own work.

Chapter 8: Concluding Thoughts

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women, merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts.*

(Shakespeare, 1890, II. vii. 147-150. 121)

Introduction

In this dissertation, I have proposed postdramaturgy as a qualitative approach to research that is concerned to understand social interactions in management and organization. Given the theatrical metaphor inherent in its methodology, I have also sought to dramatize postdramaturgy with an empirical application using selected materials from the budget making practices of Halifax Regional Municipality. I have attempted to enroll my audience into a postdramaturgical actor-network, thus contributing to the field of management and organization studies. In this chapter, I offer concluding thoughts on postdramaturgy, including an overview of its contributions and limitations.

Theoretical Contribution to Qualitative Research Methodology

Acceptance of the theatricality of organizing and adoption of “performance” as a metaphor provides qualitative researchers with powerful methodological tools for exposing the social. This dissertation proposes the view that budget organizing is both like-theatre and is-theatre. Accordingly, this dissertation participates with the dramatic by acknowledging that social interaction is held together by human and non-human actants, and by proposing a qualitative research method capable of dealing with heterogeneity.

This thesis enters several conversations that are underway in the MOS literature. Using Goffman's metaphor of theatre (and partially "misreading" Goffman) and by adding performative elements from ANT and a modern historiography, I attempt to add a voice that takes these conversations in a different direction. I have leveraged a storytelling relationship among three academic schools of thought, the interpretive tradition of dramaturgy, ANT and After, and a modern historiography. All three perspectives are devoted to the study of performance and together they provide complementary exposition of power relations. The outcome of melding the three literatures will be useful for MOS scholars. The dissertation also has engaged with ontological politics by exploring assumptions about the essence of budget making. This second contribution expands my thesis beyond epistemological assumptions about the grounds for knowing. Various realities are produced by municipal budget making practices. The nominalist stance in this dissertation promotes an understanding of realities that are socially constructed through dramaturgical resources. Postdramaturgy deepens the exploration of budget making realities by emphasizing discontinuity, complexity, randomness and irony. The contributions of this dissertation are linked by their concern for performance. Performances are often scripted but postdramaturgy shows that improv is just as likely; we act with script and props that have been brought by stage managers and other actors (Latour, 2005). The development of postdramaturgy, my engagement with ontological politics, and seeing history as performance of those politics allows the budget process to be destabilized in a way that allows us to appreciate its multiple and contested status.

Contribution to the Historic Turn in Organization Theory

The dissertation sees budget history as performance. This is an extension of my engagement with ontological politics by seeing history as performance of those politics. That history is subject to ontological politics builds upon the Mol's (2002) concept of multiplicity and also contributes to the foundations of ANTi-History (Durepos & Mills, 2012). Postdramaturgy responds to the call for a "historic turn" in management and organization theory (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006, p. 6) by keeping in mind that this dissertation is doing history and that this research is historically situated. The history that I write in this thesis is purposely dramatic, recognizing that the social is enacted, not discovered. My contribution to the historic turn includes an exemplar that demonstrates how being acutely aware of dramatization, stigmatization, historical irony, and telling multiple stories of the past, intensifies the capacity of historiography for critique in MOS.

Contribution to Municipal Budget Making Practice

Practitioners of municipal budget making may benefit from this dissertation by learning to understand that they inevitably become enrolled in their own budget making. In municipal administration there annually plays a fiscal enactment where elected representatives approve what is labelled the "official" version of the budget. At that point the Chief Administrative Office and senior municipal executives are likely to feel an intense professional satisfaction – as if they have used the budget to solve a thorny infrastructure problem. However, as discussed in the section on actants' agency, postdramaturgy works to help these executives see that the reverse may be true – the infrastructure has solved a thorny budget problem. The ANT concept of actants is

typically ignored by municipal budget practitioners. The postdramaturgical approach, in particular ANT's notion of translation, can be used by practitioners in thinking about the ways in which management may enroll material objects to draw in multiple "others" into their own networks. Unfortunately, I have to concede that practitioners may also learn from postdramaturgy how to exclude others from networks. Practitioners in municipal administration are ultra-concerned to perform formal processes.

Postdramaturgy enables us to illuminate the less formalised processes. Often these are the processes through which equality and diversity manifest in entities. Because postdramaturgy theorises relationships between humans and non-humans, it also helps us to consider how material objects commonly present in organizational dramas contribute to sustaining or challenging inequalities. These dramas take place in municipal by-laws, human resource policies, strategic planning documents, application forms, political speeches, websites, PowerPoint slides, and a host of other actants. Human actors and their non-human co-actors produce equality and diversity networks (Hunter & Swan, 2007). Practitioners would do well to take into consideration that budget making is a drama in which multiple actants (i.e., human and non-human actors with the agency of both taken seriously) compete for scarce resources, coming face to face with others to contend for public approval.

Another practical implication is that municipal managers should recognize that they (whether they realize it or not) use history and traces of the past to develop durable images to unify actor-networks (Durepos & Mills, 2012). Such unified images are necessarily fictions. From my experience in municipal administration I think that managers believe too strongly in their stories, forgetting that management constructed the

images in the first place and that their stories are subject to retelling. Postdramaturgy encourages managers to question their histories and recover the “little wow moments” (Boje, 2011, p. 4) and the “unique outcomes that are neglected in favor of changes over time” (Goffman, 1962, p. 127). Thus, *Budget Theatre* can have useful operational implications for municipal practitioners. Their practices could benefit from dramaturgical conceptual approaches to deepen analysis and implementation of governance processes that require organizers to be self-conscious of their performances.

Good drama includes a variety of voices (Bakhtin, 1986; Boje, 2014) and recognition of this important thought may help to open-up emotional possibilities in practice. Management is a craft not a science. As indicated in Chapter 1 there has been very little doctoral work in Canada and the United States on municipal administration. In particular, dramaturgy, ANT, and historiography provide a framework for managers to think about social justice, responsible government, dealing with challenges and resistance, avoiding stigmatization when wielding position power, and understanding competing claims on the budget of the municipality; an approach that Grey (2012) calls decoding. Reconciling the theatricality of organization, and the organizing itself, is a management skill needed by practitioners in municipal management. The players regularly deal with “corporate performances” such as public consultation and deliberations, the lobbying efforts of special interest groups, and the formation of budget making networks. Municipal managers would do well to pay attention to polyphonic voices (Bakhtin, 1981). Postdramaturgy helps to make dramatic performances evident and by so doing contributes to practice.

Curtain Call – Postdramaturgy Seen as a Rhizome

In this dissertation, I have proposed that postdramaturgy is a rhizome. This notion deserves a curtain call. The term rhizome is used by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to define social and material assemblages such as accounting and budget making. Deleuzian assemblages are not troubled by notions of centredness or symmetry. A rhizome grows in multiple directions to enroll whatever resources it needs. Social research methods should do the same. Postdramaturgy proposes that the messiness of the social implies knowledges that are illusive, and always on the move. A compound research approach that draws upon a trifecta of applied methodologies (critical dramaturgy, ANT & After, historiography), all growing from the same amodern root, has more resources to investigate the social. I believe that the rhizome approach is a good one in that it frees us from some of Goffman's structural barriers in terms of physical space, and the primacy of individual agents in face-to-face interactions. The social includes ethereal spaces, multiple agents, cyber interactions, and non-corporeal actants. Postdramaturgy allows the concept of agent(s) to be more fluid.

The rhizomatic qualities of antenarrative (Boje, 2014) is at the heart of postdramaturgy. Antenarrative has a double connotation – it is “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” (Boje et al., 2004, p. 756). Postdramaturgy theorizes translation processes that use histories and other pre-stories to dramatically enroll actors.

Limitations of the Thesis and Future Research Directions

The research milieu for *Budget Theatre* has several limitations as well as opportunities for further elaboration. First of all, the proposed area of study is a single sector, a municipal government and a focus on municipal budgets. Since Halifax Regional Municipality, and only that municipality, is where I performed field work and gathered artifacts, it might be argued that the level of analysis is too micro. A similar complaint was held against Goffman who was seen as “a discoverer of the infinitely small” (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 112). Postdramaturgy is a view of micro-practices with a gaze drawn to the specific and contextual. However, it is through the analysis of micro-practices that we can access sensemaking practices of individuals (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and from that create change by improvisation (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Although a tight focus is a limitation, the milieu does provide a useful platform to develop theoretical ideas. There are many aspects of municipal organizational life that could be explored and this provides fruitful opportunities for future research. For example, the work could be extended to other parts of the not-for-profit sector.

It is tempting to claim that this dissertation is a firm beginning for postdramaturgy and that things will inevitably progress from here. However, that is just the kind of progressivist attitude that I seek to avoid in my thesis. I believe that *Budget Theatre* has entered an academic space where a robust conversation about “performance” was already taking place. Accordingly, decisions had to be made as to how much of the previous conversation(s) should be exposed. Such decisions will always be open to question. For example, the literatures for all three strands of postdramaturgy’s theoretical framework could have been more thoroughly rehearsed:

- Dramaturgy: I could have delved further into the antecedents of dramaturgy.

In this thesis I have reached back 60 years to Goffman, 80 years to Mead, and to the more recent dramaturgical work of Boje and others. This may seem to be a shallow dive when one considers that dramaturgical social plots, scenes and characters (along with spectacle) were evident some 2000 years ago in Aristotle's Poetics. Such ancient underpinnings of dramatic storytelling have been discussed elsewhere (e.g., Boje, 2014; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Mangham, 1996b).

I plan to engage more directly with the Greek dramaturge in another forum.

- Actor-network Theory: For the most part, this thesis follows Latour and Callon, and plays with their work by employing ideas of Law, Mol and others. However, the ANT literature is large and it certainly has deeper roots than I have discussed here. For example, in recent years a philosophical link between Heidegger and Latour has been theorized (Schiølin, 2012). I have not engaged with this uncomfortable notion or acknowledged that ANT may owe an intellectual debt to Heidegger. No doubt, other thinkers are similarly unacknowledged and this forms a limitation for this thesis.

- Historiography: It might also be argued that my literature review on historiography is too selective. Chapter 4 starts with the historic turn literature because I claim that *Budget Theatre* makes a contribution to that literature. However, there was much history work done in the field of management before the call for more history. The themes of postdramaturgy have led me to mainly draw on Jenkins, Munslow, Foucault and Burke. I also draw heavily from work of members of the Halifax School, including Mills, Weatherbee, Hartt and extensive

reliance on Durepos (ANTI-History and Amodern Historiography). In future work I plan to explore other sources. For example, this thesis tends to describe modernist researchers through the eyes of postmodern researchers. Future research opportunities would include going back to original sources to discuss and critique modernist attempts to do history in MOS and relate these to the underpinnings of postdramaturgy.

Although the above-noted literature omissions may limit the value of this thesis, I have nevertheless attempted to enter several academic conversations that are underway.

It is not practically possible for my contributions to cover the whole field. A false attempt to do so would have resulted in a turbid and ineffectual thesis. Also, I am acutely aware that (as this dissertation threatens to exceed 270 pages) there is a practical limit to the “running time” that my audience would be prepared to accept. The best that I can hope for is to usefully contribute to some of the conversations that I engage with, even if the contributions will always be partial and that the academic conversations will still be going on after I leave the space.

There may be differences in municipal culture of big and small administrations, differences of urban and rural, differences of strong mayor and strong manager structures, the municipality of the present and the municipality of the past. All the dichotomies. However, everything that I wanted to suggest with postdramaturgy can be accommodated in this single Halifax municipal unit. Historical events are necessarily situated somewhere. But this dissertation is not “about” the events. This dissertation sets the stage for an assembly of a research methodology to be known as postdramaturgy, for engaging in a discussion of ontological politics, for seeing budget history as performance, and for

contributing to knowledge of budget making practices. The Halifax exemplar is sufficient for these purposes. I avoid assuming that what happens in a single Nova Scotian municipality plays out in the same form on other stages. Indeed, a major tenet of postdramaturgy is that the stages are multiple and one should not expect to encounter generalized conditions.

A possible limitation is that postdramaturgy may not be a well-received research strategy in practice. As discussed by John Law, the politics of research work against interpretivist research methods, “In my experience conference organizers, journal editors and referees, and grant-giving bodies all tend to buy into the full package of common-sense realism. They don't much care for the vague, the imprecise, the multiple. These become technical flaws and failings, signs of methodological inadequacy” (Law, 2007, p. 605). Therefore, from an academic point of view, a limitation of postdramaturgy is its theoretical thickness. Owing as it does to its rhizomatic roots in dramaturgy, ANT & After, and a modern historiography, the methodology is multi-layered. There are many moving parts and these may want to run off in different directions. Postdramaturgy in its complete form makes demands that will test the page-length limits of many journals, and perhaps be difficult to apply in a way that some academic journals would be willing to accept. Not all readers will be convinced by my methodology which is self-admittedly qualitative, multiple, relational, messy and performed rather than aiming at hypotheses and calculated predictions. To tell more positivist stories would be to collude with a bias within MOS for singular, longitudinal narratives and quest for so-called internal and external validity. Postdramaturgy runs afoul of most if not all of the theoretical risks of positivist quantitative research. In quantitative research these risks are usually referred-to

as “threats” but postdramaturgy takes pleasure in the heterogeneity that stimulates those threats. I believe that researchers should acknowledge a personal implication in their research projects even though this may cause an uncomfortable and somewhat ironic condition, given that the search for socially-constructed meaning is always an interpretation by the researcher.

Although the potential reception of postdramaturgy in positivist journals will be muted at best (and openly hostile at worst), there are fruitful opportunities in research methods journals, critical management studies, historiography, journals interested in corporate symbolism and story-telling, and other outlets for qualitative research. For example, I already have interested co-authors for papers on key performance indicators in electrical co-operatives, historical accounting in the Majesty Court of Vice Admiralty, organizational fields in an accounting merger, and a postdramaturgical analysis of the furnishings and interior design of justice facilities and prison cells. I also have more or less immediate plans to convert *Budget Theatre* into a book and prepare several follow-up papers on methodology, history, and a critical management piece using Africville as exemplar.

Postdramaturgy joins with those who would wish to add an alternative view to mainstream paradigms. Researchers of the social need rhizomatic philosophies that recognize that the social is a mess of disorderly assemblages.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis has embraced “performance” as a way to think about dramatic social interactions such as municipal budget making. I posit that the messiness inherent in management and organization calls for a research method capable of dealing

with heterogeneity. *Budget Theatre* makes a move toward providing such a methodology. The contribution of this dissertation includes reassembly and an amodern orientation of Goffman's notion of dramaturgy. Postdramaturgy grows from a rhizomatic relationship among dramaturgy, Actor-network Theory, and historiography. The contribution of this thesis also includes a performance of ontological politics in municipal budget making, an extension of engagement with ontological politics, by seeing history as performance of those politics. Potentially, *Budget Theatre* offers some encouragement for public administrators to understand budget making as drama rather than uncritically seeing it as routine administrative practice. Accordingly, postdramaturgy is a response to three academic calls that I believe to be mutually reinforcing: (1) the call to take more seriously the methodological underpinning of Goffman's dramaturgy; (2) the call to engage in ontological politics when applying Actor-network Theory; and (3) the call for a historic turn in management and organization studies.

Overall, this qualitative doctoral research is inspired by the concept of theatre, played-out as internal dramas and public dramas. The research methodology entails an acceptance of the theatricality of organization. This dissertation also traces the assembly of networks and observes performance, including observations about the physical site and its actants.

Shakespeare's notion that *all the world is a stage and all the men and women merely actors on that stage* seems believable as it stands. However, postdramaturgy helps us to look critically beyond the proscenium-type stage. Social actors do more than just watch. The social is more akin to immersive theatre. I have endeavoured to show that budget performances are not merely performances – they help to constitute the self as

much as the budget-multiple. Finally, as a long-time budget insider in the not-for-profit sector, I assert what I have felt for an entire administrative career – that budget making is anything but mundane.

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