Goffman's Dramaturgy: A case study analysis for potential inclusion in

communication theory studies

Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis presents Erving Goffman's dramaturgy as a useful framework to advance our understanding of the functionality of communication. While Goffman's work has been acknowledged and accepted as contributing to the understanding of interactive communication, often a comprehensive understanding of Goffman's dramaturgy is absent from communication theory textbooks. In this thesis, Goffman's dramaturgy is applied to an act of public communication to provide a strong argument for an increased and more comprehensive inclusion of his work in the field of communication studies. Using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) methodology coupled with Goffman's dramaturgy, this thesis examines the performance of Ed Burkhardt during an impromptu press conference held in Lac-Mégantic, after the train derailment. It finds the CEO's performance is strained by his selected role, normative pressures to conform to audience expectations, and a failed attempt to influence the frame. CDA is discovered to be a suitable methodology to be used with Goffman's dramaturgy because it encourages the researcher to include contemplations at both a micro and macro level.

Keywords: Erving Goffman, Dramaturgy, Communication theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, Case Study, Lac-Mégantic

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Introduction

A central effort of Erving Goffman's work is directed to understanding what it is that is going on during social interactions. In many ways Goffman provides normative descriptions about people's behaviours in interactions, as was a way of seeing; but he's not for looking for the epistemic. Instead he is interested in how meaning and reality is shaped and defined within interactions and how people behave in them.

His work has been controversial, eliciting strong responses from the academic community. Critics recognized the value of his contributions, but seemed frustrated by his style. He was criticized for lacking a defined "theoretical base," being "too micro-analytic," "fragmentary," and being difficult to replicate (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2004; Johansson, 2007; Meyrowitz, 1990). Yet, while Mead was responsible for introducing the notion of the "theatre of the mind," it was Goffman's dramaturgy that revolutionized the way sociologists and academics began to understand the functionality of human behaviour in social interactions (Prasad, 2005).

His dramaturgical perspective, one that first appears in his Ph.D. dissertation, is flushed out more fully in his first book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, and influenced and shaped all of his subsequent writing (Smith, 2013). Often Goffman's dramaturgy is confused with Kenneth Burke's dramatism, which is understandable as they used similar terminology and were publishing their work around the same time. There is not sufficient space here to discuss the complex intertwining of Burke's and Goffman's work, however, for austerity we

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can borrow from Prasad (2005) who suggests Goffman's dramaturgy is more micro-sociological, and Burke's dramatism is more rooted in humanities.

Em Griffin, author of *A First Look at Communication Theory* defines communication theory as the "systematic and thoughtful response of communication scholars to questions posed as humans interact with each other—the best thinking within a practical discipline," (Griffin, 2012, p. 37). While there are instances of Goffman's dramaturgy being applied to communication theory, this thesis found that often only artifacts from his dramaturgical approach are used, and often the interconnectedness between performer, audience and frame isn't explored. Winkin and Leeds-Hurwitz (2013) point out, "It isn't that these authors do not understand the complexity of his ideas, but brief overviews presented for newcomers to the topic make it difficult to provide anything other than simplifications" (p. 77). Further, a review of several communication theory texts suggests that Goffman is not included within theoretical discussions (Dilenschneider, 2010; McQuail, 2005; Oliver, 2004; Theaker, 2004). However Goffman's influence in the communication field is easily demonstratable. Often his ideas and concepts have become so mainstream that Goffman isn't cited as the original source, (Winkin and Leeds-Hurwitz, 2013).

Erving Goffman had a robust intellectual career. He was prolific and his ideas were popular. Often when this happens the ideas inspired by the writer start to take on a life of their own. These ideas can be harvested in ways that neglect a deep understanding of the original concepts. For instance, one can often hear people incorrectly employing Marshall McLuhan's quote, "the medium is the message" (Kenny, 2008). It is possible that Goffman's dramaturgy

has suffered a similar fate. The literature illustrates that often 'dramaturgy' is used, when the author could have used 'role-playing' in its stead.

This thesis explores Goffman's dramaturgy, as presented in Erving Goffman's published works. It argues that an understanding of Goffman's dramaturgy gives communication scholars a theoretical and methodological framework that can be applied to understand impression management and the social limitations and functionality of performances in communication. Goffman's dramaturgy not only organizes meaning, it also organizes involvement and illuminates how meaning is socially generated in a co-structured environment.

Can Goffman's dramaturgy be applied to an act of public communication in a way that will provide a strong argument for an increased and more comprehensive inclusion of his work in the field of communication studies? This thesis investigates how Goffman's dramaturgy can be applied to a case study in a way that deepens our understanding of what it is that is going on. Using an approach of critical discourse analysis, the transcript of a 29 minute global news media clip of MMA CEO Ed Burkhardt is analyzed. In this clip the CEO is featured arriving at Lac-Mégnatic five days after a train derailed and exploded in the Quebec town, killing 47 people. This analysis suggests that Goffman's dramaturgy can be used in a way that will lead to a deeper comprehension about how a single performance can have far-reaching and (arguably) disastrous effects.

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Literature Review

Goffman's dramaturgy

David Wallace, in a commencement speech, said,

Important realities are often the ones that are hardest to see and talk

about. Stated as an English sentence, of course, this is just a banal

platitude, but the fact is that in the day-to-day trenches of adult

existence, banal platitudes have a life or death importance. (Wallace, 2005)

Goffman was interested in these important realities. He used the term 'dramaturgy' to help his readers understand that in social interactions people are restricted by what they can say and do, depending on the audience and context. Like actors on a stage, they play roles specific to the setting and the audience. Their stage is what Goffman called "frame," it's the context in which people say and do certain things. Thomas Scheff, a student of Goffman's, argued that what Goffman was doing was freeing "his readers from the culturally induced reality in which he and they were entrapped" (2006, p. 23). Indeed, Goffman dissected and explored what many take as "a given," the daily platitudes of our social lives. The metaphor of 'life as a play' gave Goffman the language to explore, understand and write about human interactions.

Goffman's dramaturgy requires three things: a performer, audience, and setting (Goffman's frame). In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman explores the concept of self as performer. When an individual is in the presence of others, he will tend to say and do things that the other both can understand and expect. Thus the performer requires an audience, who will attempt to understand and assess the performance. Finally, Goffman's frame is used to understand what it is that is going on; how meaning and reality are interpreted

and brought to the situation. Frame, like the performer, is malleable, and can be altered and layered to generate understanding. Sometimes there are keys to understanding what the frame is, for example laughter can tell us that a joke is being played.

Goffman's performer

According to Goffman, when a person is involved in an interaction she deliberately conceals certain impulses or compunctions, and only says and does things that will be understandable to others, and somehow benefit herself. Often these performances are done automatically, in a very unselfconscious way, as they are learned at a very young age during socialization. In fact it is during socialization that behaviors and our expectations of other's behaviours become institutionalized, and behaviour rituals become reified.

Goffman uses the term "performer" to illustrate and explain why people will behave differently in different settings. A person does not interact in a consistent way with every person that he or she encounters. For instance, Liz will talk differently with her best friend, her great grandmother, her boss and her customers. It would be bizarre for Liz to discuss and behave the same way with a customer as she would her best friend. Further, the customer expects that Liz will treat him as a customer. He will not expect her to treat him the same way as she treats her grandmother. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* Goffman wrote, " Urban life would become unbearably sticky for some if every contact between two individuals entailed a sharing of personal traits, worries, and secrets," (Goffman, 1959, p. 49). Expectations are what people have in terms of understanding other people's behavior, and they help to form the social order of our communities.

According to Goffman the performer's primary objective is to "sustain a particular definition of the situation" to control how others respond to him (1959, p. 85). He will be motivated to behave in a way that will convey a particular impression of him, so that the others will behave favourably way toward him. Usually he will perform in such a way as to convince others that he is genuine, and that this is the way he always behaves. Sometimes the performer is completely taken in by his act, and sometimes he may be cynical about it. Goffman wrote, "the very obligation and profitability of appearing always in a steady moral light, of being a socialized character, forces one to be the sort of person who is practiced in the ways of the stage" (Goffman, 1959, p. 251). If the performer is taken in by his own performance, Goffman pointed out that he would also become his own audience (Goffman, 1959). His "conscience" will require him to perform and act in a "socially proper way" (Goffman, 1959).

Often the performer will try to exemplify the values of his society in the way that he behaves. He will try to anticipate what is expected of him, according to the situation, and will perform accordingly. In this way, it can be thought of as a commitment to a role. He will try to read cues (signs) about those around him, and adjust his behaviour according to his interpretations of the situation. He will also attempt to influence the definition of the situation, so that it will support and empower his performance favourably. People tend to treat individuals based on the impressions they have of them, both from the past and in the present. And Goffman was interested in learning how circumstances can be influenced and altered to enforce meaning and thus impact how a person behaves and is treated in interactions (Goffman, 1974).

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The receiver, or audience, will read expressive signs, in order to judge the performance and decipher the message. Goffman believed that the audience had a distinct advantage over the performer, as they had access to more clues—both visual and auditory. They are "hypercritical." Goffman believed that it was natural for an audience to be skeptical of the performance set out in front of them. He writes, "So common is this doubt that….we often give special attention to features of performances that cannot be readily manipulated, thus enabling ourselves to judge the reliability of the more misrepresentable cues in the performance," (Goffman, 1974, p. 103). Goffman did not believe that interactions could be symmetrical, but instead wrote,

> the arts of piercing an individual's effort at calculated unintentionally
>
> seem better developed than our capacity to manipulate our own behavior,
>
> so that regardless of how many steps have occurred in the information
>
> game, the witness is likely to have the advantage over the actor, and
>
> the initial asymmetry of the communication process is likely to be
>
> retained. (1959, p. 8-9)

Further, unlike the performer, who must work hard to read and foster impressions appropriate to the situation, the receiver or audience only have to know how to provide a response, which to Goffman, could lead to dangerous "stereo-typical thinking" (1959, p. 26).

Talk plays a particularly powerful function in interactions, according to Goffman; it was the most important source of expression because it is "active communication." It "presumes that our thoughts and concerns will have some relevance or interest or weight for others, and in this can hardly but presume little" (Goffman, 1981, p.121). And it can also be

treacherous. Goffman warns, "once the exchange of words has brought individuals into a jointly sustained and ratified focus of attention, once, that is, a fire has been built, any visible thing (just as any spoken referent) can be burnt in it" (Goffman, 1981, p. 37).

And while talk includes monologues, utterances, radio talk, self-talk, lectures, dramatic recitations and poetry readings, it is conversation that "binds others to us, can also do so for protracted periods of time" (Goffman, 1981, p. 121). It's important that the speaker is engaged in face-to-face talk, because that way the speaker can directly observe his audience. He can adjust his tone, body language as well as his words to match what he perceives from the audience. Without this capability, the success of the performance is put at more risk. Therefore not all talk is equal. The speaker at the podium will have "only incidentally—not analytically 'talk'" (Goffman, 1981, p. 170).

Talk is also an additional arena for which to observe good or bad behaviour. For instance, when a person interrupts someone talking, Goffman compares this to tripping them, demonstrating "insufficient concern for the other," (1981, p. 37). To ask an inappropriate personal question is similar to "making an uninvited visit," (1981, p. 37). Another functionality of talk, especially witty talk involving puns, is used to prove that there is a person behind the mask of the performer (Goffman, 1974).

Goffman uses the term "footing" to describe when performers change the meaning of the situation. Most often they use language to do this. Goffman argues that footings are "very commonly language-linked," which makes it easier for the student to identify them, (1981, p. 128). To illustrate this functionality, Goffman refers to a news story in which President Nixon comments on the attire of a reporter, when he implied that women look better in skirts. Nixon

said, "but slacks can do something for some people and some it can't." He hastened to add, "but I think you do very well. Turn around." Goffman explains,

> When Helen Thomas pirouetted for the president, she was employing
>
> a form of behavior indigenous to the environment of the ballet, a form
>
> that has come, by conventional reframing, to be a feature of female modeling
>
> in fashion shows and she was enacting it—of all places—in a news
>
> conference. No one present apparently found this transplantation odd.
>
> *That* is how experience is laminated. (Goffman, 1981, p. 156)

Nixon uses a technique that Goffman calls "footing," to shift what it is that is going on (press conference). And no one in the audience seems to question this obvious shift, which dictates not only the meaning of the exchange, but also the behaviour in the exchange.

For Goffman, it is the exchange of words that can bring people together, where they contribute to its sustainability and "lodges them together in some sort of intersubjective, mental world" (1981, p.70). Goffman notes that this intersubjective exchange is not limited to verbal expressions, but also will involve gestures, and other "non linguistic events [that] can most easily function as moves in a conversation" (1981, p. 71). It is possible to judge whether a conversation is succeeding or failing by whether the participants get "caught up by and carried away into the special realm of being that can be generate by these engagements" (1981, p. 166).

In his dissertation Goffman suggests that both the sender and the recipient are responsible for the message; one needs to send it in an understandable way that suits the receiver, and the receiver is responsible for decoding the information. And both engage in

what Goffman calls "mutual monitoring." Each read the other's cues in attempt to understand what it is that is going on. If unsuccessful in this message exchange, the result is "embarrassment, ill-ease and confusion" (Goffman, 1953, p. 90). And any improprieties will be judged from a moral standpoint, "simply because a capacity for mobilizing oneself for the moment is always subjected to social evaluations" (Goffman, 1967, p. 218).

Thomas Scheff argued that avoidance of embarrassment is the motivating factor for performers in interactions. He writes:

> it arises out of slights—real, anticipated, or just imagined—no matter
>
> how trivial they might appear to the outside observer. Everyone is extremely
>
> sensitive to the exact nuance of deference they receive. This is Goffman's key
>
> contribution to emotion knowledge. (Scheff, 2008, p. 55.)

Scheff's *Microsociology* applies Goffman's ideas on emotional work and interpersonal communication to bond theory, which stipulates that people are motivated to interact for the sake of maintaining bond.

Goffman believed that we could learn something about society by understanding something about people's performances. The performer will try to conceal any behaviour that is not considered acceptable in society, and people will often go to great lengths to correct behaviour that is not up to the social code. For Goffman, this reifies and proves that people both select and conceal certain elements of their character during an interaction.

If a performer has created a false impression, the damage he incurs can extend into other areas of activity for the performer, even afflicting future performances. Goffman argues that ordinarily what makes a performance false is when the situation becomes altered

(Goffman, 1971, p. 272). For example, to continue to work at the same firm after accepting a job at a new firm would oblige the performer to "continue on in some role and guise which no longer would be viable were the truth known" (1971, p. 272). This risk of social performances can often induce anxiety in individuals; especially those who are trying to conceal something. Goffman wrote, "A single off key can disrupt the tone of an entire performance" (1959, p. 56).

Goffman points out that in general people think of "real" performances as those that are sincere, authentic and unintentional, and "fake" performances as those that are contrived and intentional. A "successful" performance is one that is gauged to be sincere. Goffman points out, "Some performances are carried off successfully with complete dishonesty, others with complete honesty; but for performances in general neither of these extremes is essential and neither, perhaps, is dramaturgically advisable" (1959, p. 71). However, often when we are asking whether a performance is real or not, we are really asking whether the performer is *authorized* to act in a certain way. Is she really a doctor, or just pretending? Yet Goffman isn't interested in discussing which performances are "real" and which ones are not. Instead he is encouraging his readers to ask, "in what ways can an impression be discredited?" (1959, p. 66). What the individual must come to be then, in order to remain credible, is someone that "others can see as normal" (1971, p. 279). For example in order to be treated and accepted as a doctor, one must behave as a doctor would normally behave. That is to say that we normally expect doctors to behave in particular ways, and when they don't, we begin to question if the doctor has been proper schooled. By understanding the ways that a performance can be discredited, we can understand something about the ways performances are believed.

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Goffman uses the term "face" to describe the "positive social value a person effectively claims for himself" (1967, p. 5). It is the socially accepted mask that a person wears, depending on the situation he finds himself in. It may be the face of a physician, a husband, a bus driver or a student. Regardless the face, it will afford the person a "small choice of lines" depending on the performance. Thus a person can be in the wrong face, be out of face, can lose face and can work to save one's face. Goffman explores these performance concepts in his book *Interaction Rituals*. Basic kinds of face work include avoidance processes and corrective process. The latter is used as a model for interpersonal behaviour when an apology is required to save one's face. The process must include an offering of some kind, where the guilty party must separate himself or depart from his offending behavior and offer some sort of compensation. Goffman writes, "An audience to the struggle is almost a necessity"(1967, p. 24).

Goffman points out *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, a performance often involves others in the interaction (sometimes they can be imagined). These others provide a service that ensures the performance runs without a hitch. They do this by maintaining a set of agreed upon standards, which will form an "important relationship to one another" (Goffman, 1959, p. 82). In a team, any member has the power to give the show away; therefore they become reliant on the others not to do this. They must cooperate to maintain a similar definition of the situation, (is it a prank? Is it work? Is it a family?) and come to define each member as someone "in the know."

If the team members are said to be in the know, then we can understand how the audience becomes segregated, in order for the performance to successfully define the situation.

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"In the know" implies that there are agreements that are made behind the scenes, away from the audience. Thus Goffman applies the concepts of "backstage" and "frontstage" to dramaturgy. An audience can also be segregated from another audience, and both devices are used to protect the fostered impressions generated during a performance (1959). For example the audience of a job interview performance is often segregated from the performer's current employer. If the two audiences were to merge, we can consider how the performance would quickly become jeopardized, and transform into a something less "credible."

The regions of a performance can influence meaning. Regions refer to the front or backstage of the performer's world, and enable the performer to adjust his behavior according to who is around him. To explore this concept, Goffman uses a server working in a restaurant. In this situation, the frontstage is where the server conducts his professional behavior to his customers, exhibiting the appropriate decorum, dress, and manners that the customers expect, and that will benefit him (employment, tips). Backstage the server engages in different behavior, relaxing his stance and language to match the setting with his fellow staff members. He may joke, slouch and eat food—mannerisms that would be considered inappropriate in the frontstage. He will also perhaps adjust his uniform, wash his hands, receive assistance, and make preparations to ensure success in his performance in the frontstage. However, performances still occur in the back region, as a performer will want to ensure that he is considered credible and trusted by his teammates. For Goffman it is key that the two regions are cut off from each other, so that vital secrets are not revealed. If the backstage is not controlled from the frontstage, "dramaturgical trouble" will be the result (Goffman, 1959, p. 134).

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Goffman also applied this concept to media, defining the backstage as "the region that is perhaps out of focus by the camera, the microphones are out of range of the speakers, hair and makeup applied, etc." (Goffman, 1959, p.119). Observing the transformation of behaviors between these two regions provides an interesting moment to observe impression management, according to Goffman. And it illustrates how the region defines behavior and meaning. Goffman wrote, "In general, then, backstage conduct is one which allows minor acts which might easily be taken as symbolic of intimacy and disrespect for others present and for the region, while front region conduct is one which disallows such potentially offensive behavior," (Goffman, 1959, p. 128). However Goffman cautioned against expecting pure examples of informal conduct or formal conduct.

> We will not find these pure cases because teammates in regard
>
> to one show will be to some degree performers and audience for
>
> another show, and performers and audience for one show will to
>
> some extent, however slight, be teammates with respect to another
>
> show. Thus in a concrete situation we may expect a predominance
>
> of one style or the other, with some feelings of guilt or doubt
>
> concerning the actual combination or balance that is achieved
>
> between the two styles." (Goffman, 1959, p. 129)

According to Goffman, "performance disruptions" are the ways that a particular performance can become threated. These include "unmeant gestures, inopportune intrusions, faux pas, and scenes" (Goffman, 1959, p. 212). Techniques for countering these disruptions include:

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- Dramaturgical loyalty-members of the team must not betray their secrets, or they may choose to switch audiences to counteract the danger of affective ties.

- Dramaturgical discipline – He must not become overly engrossed, and taken away with the performance. He remembers his parts and does not disclose secrets and give the show away. Goffman believes that the focus of dramaturgical discipline can be found in the management of the voice and one's face.

- Dramaturgical circumspection –staging of the show, presenting "cold facts in glowing light" (Goffman, 1959, p. 222). This usually involves teammates, and the "circumspect performer will have to consider the audience's access to external sources of information" (Goffman, 1959, p. 222).

The task of the performer is quite arduous. Goffman writes, "Behind many masks and many characters, each performer tends to wear a single look, a naked unsocialized look, a look of concentration, a look of one who is privately engaged in a difficult, treacherous task" (Goffman, 1959, p. 235). Indeed, for the risks of not performing well in a role designed mostly by the expectations of the audience and setting (frame) are greater than embarrassment and confusion. There exist risks of alienation, stigmatization and even institutionalization.

By dissecting the performances of agents in day-to-day ritualized settings, his work suggests that mutual awareness is fundamental for "understanding discourse" (Scheff, 2008, p. 81). In his dissertation Goffman writes:

the study was concerned with communication; unlike factors such as

attitudes, motives, allegiances, etc., there is a sense in which this factor

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cannot function at all unless the meaning intended by the actor is similar

to the meaning that his observers place upon his acts." (Goffman, 1953, p. 7)

Goffman's Audience

As previously implied, there can be different types of audiences. There are those who are directly witnessing and responding to a performance, reading cues and also providing feedback for the performer. There are also audiences that are separated from the performance either physically (as in lectures or "podium talk,") or through technology (phones, television, radio).

According to Goffman, often the audience will try to collaborate with the performers to ensure a successful performance. They will refrain from wandering backstage, they will often overlook embarrassing gaffes done by a beginner, and will often employ "tactful inattention" to avoid embarrassing the performer. These characteristics suggest that the audience, like the performer plays a crucial role in defining a situation. Smith (2013) notes "Goffman saw interaction as fundamentally collaborative" (p. 62).

Despite his argument that the audience is in a less arduous role in interactions, and can rely on stereotypical thinking to bring a particular meaning to a performance, Goffman believed that the role of the audience is not passive. Instead the audience is often obliged to show when a message has been received, rejected, or whether clarification is required. The bond between the performer and her audience is one that Goffman argues, are the "bindings of society" (Goffman, 1974, p. 90).

When people engage in an interaction they have an audience, whether it is imagined or real. As stated previously, the audience represents the normative ideals of the society, and the

performer will try to behave in an appropriate way, controlling what is both conveyed and concealed from his fellow participants in the interaction. In a way, a performance cannot come into being without the audience, and therefore its presence becomes a way for a person to emerge with an attached or assumed identity. It's a way for a person to assume their personhood in social reality. Further, the audience represents for the performer a sense of purpose and significance; an audience means that the performance will have a "lasting effect." Goffman wrote, "when others are present, some kind of record is assured" (Goffman, 1967, p.168).

As noted earlier, the audience has a unique position in an interaction, it is "hypercritical." It has access to all of the verbal and non-verbal cues the performer is giving off, and they are motivated to ascertain whether the performer has the proper credentials to assume a role. They also represent (at least in the mind of the performer) normative ideals. For these reasons, Goffman didn't commit himself to the belief that symmetrical communication was possible, or even ideal. He argued that audiences are hypercritical because often they don't have access to the back stage, and must instead rely on reading what the performer "gives off."

Goffman's frame

Goffman argues audiences' and performers' understanding of what it is that is going on in a social interaction can be misinterpreted or misread. In *Frame Analysis* he writes:

I start with the fact that from an individual's particular point of view,

while one thing may momentarily appear to be what is really going on,

in fact what is actually happening is plainly a joke, or a dream, or an

accident, or a mistake, or a misunderstanding, or a deception, or a theatrical

performance and so forth. And attention will be directed to what it is about

our sense of what is going on that makes is to vulnerable to the need for

these various misreadings." (Goffman, 1974, p. 10)

Goffman was interested in the organization of experience and he used the term 'frame' to refer to a particular definition of a situation that is constructed out of a set of principles that govern social events (Goffman, 1974). For Goffman, meaning emerges from how something is used in society. To illustrate this he writes, "all things used for hammering in nails are not hammers" (Goffman, 1974, p. 39). Meaning and reality are socially generated, and if we can understand something about a specific social instance (frames of reference), then we can explore how meaning is influenced. Goffman argues that this understanding is crucial for combatting "false consciousness." He writes:

I can only suggest that he who would combat false consciousness

and awaken people to their true interest has much to do, because

the sleep is very deep. And I do not intend here to provide a lullaby

but merely to sneak in and watch the way people snore." (Goffman, 1974, p. 14)

Goffman uses the sleep metaphor because he argues that most people fail to notice how they project "their frames of reference onto the world" (Goffman, 1974, p. 39). This is because their projections are usually confirmed. However Goffman cautions that he does not intend to argue against the concept that there exists a stable meaning in our world (he calls these sorts of frames natural frameworks like weather). Instead he is interested in social frameworks, and how they "provide background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim and

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controlling effort," of humans (Goffman, 1974, p. 22). He intends to uncover the ways that "additional meanings can be enforced socially, effectively transforming their meanings"(Goffman, 1974, p. 39).

Very often people will not be aware about the frame in which they are interacting. This is because the frame is "clear," each participant "has a workably correct view of what is going on, but also, usually, a tolerably correct view of the others' views" (Goffman, 1974, p. 338). Framing not only organizes meaning, it also organizes involvement.

Meaning can be triggered through "keying." For Goffman, it represents one way that activities are vulnerable to different interpretations, and leads all interactants to have the "the same view of what is going on" (Goffman, 1974, p. 84). Goffman lists five basic ways that keying is employed: make-believe (playfulness, fantasy, dramatic scriptings: tv/radio), contests, ceremonials, technical re-doings (practicing skills, demonstrations, replays, group psychotherapy, experiment) and re-groundings (upper class doing charity work).

Dramatic scriptings are those strips of activity that depict personal experiences in an edited form, such as a news story. They "provide a mock-up of everyday life, a put-together script of unscripted social doings, and thus are a source of broad hints concerning the structure of this domain" (Goffman, 1974, p. 52). He suggests that pornography is also an example of a dramatic scripting.

Frames can be transformed (as when a book becomes a play, and then becomes a movie) as well as reversed. In the latter case Goffman uses the example of a charity ball being covered on the news the day after the event. He argues, "The reporting of the event and its documentation are not only seen as reductions of or abstractions from the original, but are also

understood to possibly influence later occurrences of the real thing" (Goffman, 1974, p. 79). The charity ball exists in some ways, for the news coverage that occurs the next day.

For Goffman broadcasting has the power to transform (key) unstaged acts "into ones that are, perforce, staged" (Goffman, 1974, p. 320). This means that the performance can be transformed to different audiences, ones that the performer cannot adequately engage with. Activities not meant for the stage, etc. gestures, language selection, clothing, things that would ordinarily be concealed, risk becoming publicized, and performed.

Keyings are also subject to rekeyings, and Goffman points out that "we must deal with retransformations as well as transformations" (Goffman, 1974, p. 80). While Goffman details these occurrences as various layerings and laminations, the important thing to understand is "that often what is being described is not the frame as a whole but the keying it sustains" (Goffman, 1974, p. 82).

Fabrications represent another way that frames are vulnerable. Goffman defines them as intentional efforts "to manage an activity so that a party of one or more others will be induced to have a false belief about what it is that is going on" (Goffman, 1974, p. 83). While often others carry out these fabrications, Goffman notes that a person can become "hoodwinked" by their own (false) common sense. Self-deception can include dreams, hypnotism, and psychotic fabrications. Of all of these deceptive designs, when they are discovered, "the organization of activity…will become the subject of discrediting" (Goffman, 1974, p. 121). All discrediting has both a backward and forward reach, impacting future performances and reputation. But what is important is not that misreadings and misunderstandings happen, but that they happen so infrequently, considering the multitude of

vulnerabilities. Goffman explains this by arguing that people take so many "precautions in
advance to make sure of this infrequency" (Goffman, 1974, p. 328).

When a person becomes trapped in a certain frame ("frame traps") "incorrect views,
however induced, are confirmed by each bit of new evidence or each effort to correct matters,
so that, indeed, the individual finds that he is trapped and nothing can get through," (Goffman,
1974, p. 480). In these instances not only misframing is occurring, but also actions are being
misinterpreted to support a different (perhaps unintended) meaning.

If we can understand the complexities and vulnerabilities of the frame, then we can see
how meaning can be subjected to doubt and misinterpretation. Goffman points out that this
has implications to the performer's reputation and credibility. He writes, "an implication is that
innocence is not to be seen simply as a quality of an actor's soul; it is the relationship in which
he stands to events generated by the misframing of his acts by others" (Goffman, 1974, p.
324). So we come to understand other performer's behaviours by understanding and
interpreting the frame, however, the frame can also be altered so that the understanding of the
performer suits the frame. In this way we can see how the management of frame can control
how the performer can behave. It bears repeating, frame organizes not only meaning, but also a
person's involvement (behaviour). To control the frame, then, is to influence the conduct of
others and manipulate how others interpret what it is that is going on. It can become a play for
power, as Goffman points out early on in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*,

> Regardless of the particular objective which the individual has in
>
> mind and of his motive for having this objective, it will be in his
>
> interest to control the conduct of others, especially their responsive

treatment of him. This control is achieved largely by influencing

he definition of the situation." (Goffman, 1959, p. 3)

By studying the various vulnerabilities of frame, Goffman is also examining how the authority

of situations can be influenced. Thus ambiguities can become opportunities.

In the chapter titled "Frames of Talk," Goffman details the socially organized rules that

manage talk. One central function of talk is to give the speaker the means of aligning himself

with what is going on around him. Goffman points out that "while it is rare in "natural"

conversation that the best answer is provided on the spot, rare that witty repartee occurs, even

though this will often be the aim" (Goffman, 1974, p. 501). Instead the speaker is more likely

to use utterances, pauses, nods, grunts, "ahs" and "ums" in his speech. However, the speakers

are often alive to standards that "they can rarely realize" (Goffman, 1974, p. 501). For

Goffman this means that talk is often more loosely tied to the frame (as it is often somewhat

cut off from the interaction), and is therefore more vulnerable to keying and fabrication.

Goffman writes, "licence abounds," when individual speak of their inner states and

opinions, as there are few ways that these statements can be attested or proved. People

generally are not held to consistency in these regards, but these expressions (of inner states) are

not what people speak about often. Instead people spend most of their speaking,

providing evidence for the fairness or unfairness of [their]current

situation and other grounds for sympathy, approval, exoneration,

understanding, or amusement. And what his listeners are primarily

obliged to do is to show some kinds of audience appreciation. They

are to be stirred not to take action but to exhibit signs that they

have been stirred." (Goffman, 1974, p. 503)

Goffman notes that speakers are most often concerned with presenting their versions of

events. It is a replaying of events, not merely statement of facts. And these replayings, in order

to be successful require the element of suspense, the audience must not have already heard the

story. Goffman argues then that what talkers do is present "dramas to an audience" (Goffman,

1974, p. 508).

The central obligation in interactions according to Goffman is to ensure that the other

person understands our behaviour. Goffman writes,

Whatever else, our activity must be addressed to the other's mind, that

is, to the other's capacity to read our words and actions for evidence of

our feelings, thoughts and intent. This confines what we say and do, but

it also allows us to bring to bear all of the world to which the other can

catch allusions. (Goffman, 1983, p. 192)

However, when the frame is broken, the performer and the definition of the situation

become extremely vulnerable. For instance, the surveillance capacities of digital media

technologies can place performers in very precarious situations. Performances can be replayed

out of their frame, removed from their audiences, and widely broadcasted. For example, when

the Mayor of Toronto, Rob Ford, is filmed on camera phones after attending a beer festival, his

performance becomes something more than a simple evening stroll after having a few beers.

And the personal performance becomes fused to the public (professional) performance that has

far reaching effects: both into the past and the future.

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Goffman and Communication/PR theory

In the literature review the author discovered that Goffman's dramaturgy has often been defined rather casually, with much attention to many of its artifacts applied to communication and PR including "frame" (Manning, 2008; Johansson, 2007; Ytreberg, 2002; Hallahan, 1999; Entman, 1993; Reber and Berger, 2005), "front/back stage," (Pearson, 2009; Benford, 1992; Hogan, 2010; Meyrowitz, 1990; Rettie, 2009; Ytreberg, 2002) "performance," (Hogan, 2010; Meyrowitz, 1990; Manny, 2008; Sternberg, 2009) and "impression management,"(Hogan, 2010; Johansson, 2007).

Goffman's dramaturgy has been pragmatically applied to understand celebrity gossip (Marshall, 2010) mobile phone communication (Rettie, 2009), mass media (Ytreberg, 2002; Sternberg, 2009; Meyrowitz, 1990; Manning, 1996), social media (Hogan, 2010; Pearson, 2009), organizational theory (Manning, 2008), social movements, (Benford, 1992), policy development (Hajer, 2004) and communication/PR theory (Johansson, 2007; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2004; Ytreberg, 2002; Meyrowitz, 1990; Hall (Hallahan, 1999) (Benford, 1992)ahan, 1999; Entman, 1993).

Most often in these works Goffman's dramaturgy is explained as a model in which impressions (selective) and roles are managed (Johansson, 2007; Ytreberg, 2002; Hogan, 2010; Pearson, 20 (Entman, 1993)09; Manning, 1996), and rules of behavior are exposed (Sternberg, 2009).

In the literature reviewed it appears that scholars have been challenged to understand, translate and apply Goffman's dramaturgy in a comprehensive way. While many authors suggest that Goffman's concepts lack a structured theoretical framework (Leeds-Hurwitz,

2004; Johansson, 2007; Ytreberg, 2002; Meyrowitz, 1990) others imply that Goffman's work can be brought into some sort of structure. Ytreberg (2002) and Manning (2008) refer to a "Goffmanian framework" Johansson (2007) argues in favour of a "Goffman model " and Hogan (2010) refers to "Goffman's dramaturgical approach." This ambivalence perhaps is because Goffman himself had a general mistrust for labels and categories, as they were often used in place of active critical thinking used to understand the "complexity and contradictions of any thinker's work" (Smith, 2013).

Nonetheless many scholars (Hallahan (1999), Johansson (2007), Leeds-Hurwitz (2004), Marshall (2010), Rettie (2009), Ytreberg (2002) have attempted to illustrate ways that Goffman's ideas can be incorporated into public relations and communication theory. Goffman's work on interactions is cited most often a key concept applicable to communication theory. Johansson (2007) and Manning (1990) argue that an understanding of Goffman's interaction concepts can help organization leaders build stronger relationships, while Rettie (2009) suggests they (Goffman's interaction ideas) foster situational analysis, which is helpful for understanding mediated situations. A Goffmanian framework allows researchers to "untangle the complexities" of broadcast media, according to Ytreberg (2002). Similarly, Sternberg (2009) aruges Goffman's work can "lead to a deeper understanding of misbeahavior in mediated settings."

Leeds-Hurwitz (2004) suggests the value of understanding Goffman's interactions is important because they (interactions) are "the heart of our communication with others." Meyrowitz (1990) notes that Goffman's "dramaturgical model" can be adapted to understand the interdependency of people's performances and behaviours, and Manning (2008) thinks

Goffman's "rich, complex, daring" legacy and holds "much analytical promise for those scholars undertaking empirical studies of human interaction" (p. 682).

Scholars also note the wide applicability of Goffman's work. According to Benford (1992), "the analytical scope of dramaturgy is quite broad," and Prasad (2005) notes dramaturgy "goes beyond the surface of interactions of everyday life in order to uncover the hidden dynamics behind work, home, professional, and community performances" (p. 47).

Often Goffman's work on front and backstage performances has been applied to media, including social media. Rettie (2009) extends Goffman's stage regionality concepts to the usage of mobile phones, arguing that when someone overhears a mobile phone conversation, it is similar to Goffman's concept of "cross-talk." Ytreberg (2002) uses Goffman's front and backstage and argues for a "middle region" to understand the role of broadcast talk. Meyrowitz (1990) points out that media often can bring back regions to the front and Pearson (2009) suggests that Goffman's frontstage can be interpreted as the observable area, while the backstage is more private, and social media is blurring the lines between these regions, because "what may feel private is in fact broadcasted to a potentially large and unknown audience." Prasad (2005) argues "dramaturgical research comes closer to reaching its full potential when conscious attention is directed to the front and backstage divide" (p. 48).

Gaps in the Literature

The literature demonstrates the challenges scholars have faced when applying Goffman's dramaturgy to communication theory. While Goffman is acknowledged and accepted as greatly contributing to the understanding of interactive communications, what is missing is a consistently applied and defined Goffmanian concept of dramaturgy.   While

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Goffman himself defied being boxed in, the term "framework," is appropriate because it invokes the idea of a supportive architecture. One of Goffman's significant contributions is the development of a lexicon so that we may explore and understand the functionality of interactive communication and social order. There exists an opportunity to develop a more comprehensive framework of Goffman's dramaturgy, one that includes the interconnectivity between the audience, performer and frame and their relationship to meaning and power (i.e. Goffman's authority).

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Theoretical Framework

Tenants of Goffman's dramaturgical framework

Goffman's dramaturgy is an exploration of the interactions between the audience, the performer and the frame. As Randall Collins (2004) suggests, Goffman's research explores the conditions that maintain the social order, and bring meaning to communication.

Goffman argues that our society is built upon our expectations that people will regularly preform the roles that are expected of them. This is what helps to form social order. When people are involved in a social gathering, Goffman implies that they have an internal script, which is used to their benefit; they are generally self-serving. The audience is hyper vigilant, and is the unique position of being able to read the performance's verbal and non-verbal cues, and gauge whether the performer has the proper credentials to perform that specific role. Performers organize their behaviours between backstage and frontstage, and often find ways such as "keying," and "footing," to manipulate the frame so that the audience will accept the performer's view of the situation. This way the performer can influence the way that the audience will behave toward him (Collins, 2004). Prasad (2005) writes, "the goal of dramaturgy…is primarily to enliven our understanding of social interactions by bringing characters and their motives to life."

According to Goffman, "one finds that when the individual is in the immediate presence of others, his activity will have a promissory character" (Goffman, 1959, p. 2). Thus a dramaturgical framework will need to look for indications of this by evaluating the impressions that a person "gives off." We can look to the audience's reactions to be able to gauge the success of a performance and these can be compared to the efforts of the performer. Goffman

writes, "so far as the others act *as if* the individual had conveyed a particular impression, we may take a functional or pragmatic view and say that the individual has "effectively" projected a given definition of the situation and "effectively" fostered the understanding that a given state of affairs obtains," (Goffman, 1959, p. 6).

A Goffmanian dramaturgical framework must consider the roles people adapt, interpretations of frame (or clues of this), regions (backstage or frontstage) and the type of audience that is present to understand meaning and the power dynamics of an interaction. It must understand all of these things to better comprehend what it is that is going on. Manning (1996) argues that it "requires close readings and thick descriptions of performances, self-presentations, and emergent negotiated order(s)" (Manning, 1996, p. 262). It must examine the dynamic relationship between individual, audience and frame. To employ this type of approach would involve looking at a strip of activity and analyze both the verbal and non-verbal communication that indicates a role, a definition of the situation, and audience, essentially mapping out geography of how meaning and "reality" is created.

Challenges

Despite its capability to broaden our understanding of the functionalities of social interactions, one tenant of Goffman's dramaturgy involves understanding performance-audience communication in relation to regions. The backstage and frontstage impact on performances and meaning could be difficult to assess, as it is sometimes not obvious if the audience is witnessing a frontstage or a backstage performance. Incidentally, a key feature, and perhaps appeal of social media, is the presumption that it blurs distinctions between back and frontstage.

Second, often audiences will not always reveal whether they have been taken in by a performance, as Goffman points out, they often feel are consumed by the pressure that 'the show must go on.'

Why a Case Study Method?

Understanding theory very often requires application. Goffman himself used multiple methods to observe patterns of behaviors in social settings. His works contain a multitude of case studies and literary examples to explain his observations of human interactions.

Further, Yin (2009) suggests the case study methodology allows scholars to investigate "contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident," (p. 18). Therefore it seems appropriate to use a case study methodology to illustrate how Goffman's dramaturgy can be applied to understand how performance, audience and frame function to create 'meaning' and a socially created 'reality.'

As Yin (2009) points out, selecting data for case study research depends on the scope and research question. Phillips and Hardy (2002) note that one must consider the theoretical framework and research question, along with practicalities such as timing and access.

This case study includes all three components of Goffman's dramaturgy: frame, audience and performer. It is a 29.27 minute video clip produced by the Canadian broadcasting company Global, and available online (http://globalnews.ca/news/707916/watch-mma-railway-chairman-ed-burkhardt-addresses-media-in-lac-Mégnatic/).

This case garnered international attention from the public relations community. As the public relations profession is supported by communication theory, it seems appropriate to use a

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case that invoked such a strong response from the PR community. By analyzing this particular

case through Goffman's dramaturgical framework, this thesis demonstrates the applicability of

his dramaturgy to communication theory.

The Case

On July 6, 2013, in a small Quebec town called Lac-Mégantic, an unattended train carrying 72 cars of petroleum crude oil ran away, and became derailed. An explosion killed over 42 people, and the town lost more than 30 buildings to the fire and explosion. It has been called the fourth deadliest rail accident in Canada's history (10 of Canada's Worst Train Accidents, 2013). An American company called Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway (MMA) owns the railway line. After 20 hours, firefighters still could not access the centre of the fire (Hutchins, 2013).

On July 10, 2013, MMA CEO Ed Burkhardt arrived in the Quebec town. *Maclean's magazine* wrote that he was the most hated man in Lac-Mégnatic, (Hutchins, 2013). Quebec's Premier said his actions were, "deplorable," and local residents called him a "rat." *The National Post* ran an article titled, "Rail boss goes from industry legend to Canada's public enemy No. 1 in under a week after Quebec train disaster," (Catts, 2013). Most of these comments were written after Burkhardt's performance during an impromptu 43-minute news scrum. Burkhardt told reporters he wasn't wearing a bulletproof vest. "I hope I am not going to get shot," he said, (Brumfield & Newton, 2013). After the fourth deadliest rail accident in Canadian history, Burkhardt, formerly referred to as a "railway legend," quickly became the target of this story.

Burkhardt was criticized for not arriving on site until four days after the explosion (company officials were on site the first day), releasing a poorly translated press release, and for suggesting firefighters and a company engineer had a role in the disaster (when asked who

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might be responsible.) Burkhardt's comments, which have run in many media outlets including social media, were spoken in a crowded and "impromptu 43-minute news scrum," during which the CEO was heckled and jeered at. Using Goffman's dramaturgical framework, this research examines the functionality of Burkhardt's performance, audience and frame. What is unique about this performance is that it is unscripted and documented, and generated a significant response from the public and media.

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Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a form of research that focuses on the relationship between language and society, and addresses how content and meaning are influenced by text and by the wider socioeconomic contexts in which they are embedded (Merkl-Davis & Koller, 2012). It examines the role that language plays in creating and sustaining unequal power relations and focuses on how some people (performers) are privileged over others (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). In addition it is interdisciplinary, enabling the researcher to bring together theories or frameworks (such as Goffman's dramaturgy) to written and spoken texts in a rigorous manner (Fairclough, 2013). Merkl-Davis and Koller (2012) provide a useful example for the application of CDA, which they used to understand how a defence firm's chairman used discourse to influence the audiences' impression of the financial performance of the organization.

As pointed out earlier, Goffman believed that when people are in front of others, they will try to mobilize themselves so that others will have a favourable impression of them. Goffman also teaches us how social roles create a reality through a complex process that relies on the use of language and discourse. Thus CEOs of large corporations must often try to manage an impression that will be received favourably by their organizational audiences. While Goffman didn't use the term 'power' in his writing, it is often implied in his descriptions of performers who mobilize their activities and define the situation so that others will treat them favourably. Further, as Benford (1992) suggests, to perform is to assume a position of power, one of authority. Due to its concerns with its emphasis on the relationship between power and

language, contextuality, micro and macro level analyses and interdisciplinarity, CDA is a good

fit with the behaviour of a CEO during a crisis (Merkl-Davies & Koller, 2012).

As Merkl-Davies & Koller point out, there are a multiple ways to approach data within

a CDA. To begin, this paper applied Linda Putnam's (2005) guiding principals as a starting

point. Putnam proposes four principals:

1) Let the text and context talk to you,

2) Work back and forth between the text and the concepts (dramaturgy),

3) Look for inconsistencies, ironies, or unexpected occurrences, and

4) Dispute your own interpretation and explanation.

These principles served to guide the process of analyzing the data and apply them through the

lens of Goffman's dramaturgy.

Text and context

It was important during this first step to identify elements of the discourse that might

represent themes or patterns. The first step in analyzing the text from the video was to create a

transcript of the video. The text of Ed Burkhardt's performance was analyzed on a line-by-line

basis to detect patterns of grammatical devices (see discussion on analytical framework below)

that he and the audience employs to influence meaning. Merkl-Davis and Koller (2012) point

out, "the description of linguistic devices used in a particular communication situation serves

as evidence for subsequent interpretive arguments," (p. 182).

The application of Goffman's dramaturgy to this case study focused the microanalysis on

the way the CEO uses language to:

- Perform in a way that conforms to the pressures that society expects him to; and,

- Influence the way the audience behaves toward him.

Work back and forth between the text and the concepts

During this point of the analysis, it was important to connect the emerging themes from the initial step to broader discourses. It took micro level discourse and related it to macro-level issues such as organizational performance, impression management and mediated audiences. By working between the two levels of discourse, we can understand how the micro is influenced by broader discourses and vice-versa.

Look for inconsistencies, ironies, or unexpected occurrences

Inconsistencies present opportunities to question the analysis of the data, and address any puzzles presented in the data. Contradictions may also suggest the use of dramaturgical tools such as "footing," and "keying," used by performers to shape and influence the meaning for the audience.

Dispute your own interpretation and explanation

In this final stage, the researcher's own role in this study was acknowledged, and interpretations are questioned in an effort to present meaningful analysis and conclusions.

Analytical Framework

The press conference was transcribed to include both verbal and non-verbal communication. It was analyzed on a line-by-line basis and coded for recurring themes. An analytical framework was developed to analyze the data. Using the example set out by Merkl-Davis & Koller (2012), three levels of analysis (micro, meso and macro) were chosen. As Goffman points out, often performers will anticipate what role is expected of them, will try to influence the definition of the situation, and will work with teammates to

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support the performer. Therefore a micro-level analysis focuses on the specific language used during Ed Burkhardt's performance to indicate role, the audience to which he is addressing, and frame.

CEOs often perform in a factual, authoritative manner when speaking in public, in order to create a favourable impression for their organization. Two grammatical devices were chosen: impersonalization and evaluation. Merkl-Davis & Koller (2012) describe impersonalization as something that "obfuscates social agency, thus representing processes in a more abstract, factual manner" (p. 182). Interestingly, this device renders social agents obsolete, and absolves management from responsibility (Merkl-Davis & Koller, 2012). Impersonalization is categorized by vagueness, passivity, use of metaphors and metonymy (substituting one word/phrase for another).

According to Merkl-Davis & Koller (2012) evaluation "serves to make value statements," about other performers, events or ideas. They can be explicit or implicit, and reflect the normative values of society, or at least the normative values that they imagine society to have.

Macro-level analysis includes considering the wider social context in the interpretation of the data, and helps "to explain why social actors are represented in a specific way" (Merkl-Davis & Koller, 2012, p. 182). This type of analysis considered the typical role of a CEO, and how people will generally behave toward this socially generated role. It focused on certain impression management techniques (apologies, excuses, denials), which are employed during performances in crisis communication events. As Fairclough (2003) points out, there are certain grammatical aspects of language that can be used strategically to influence the

audience. These include the use of pronouns, passive voice, and use of metaphor and metonymy.

Analytical Framework

As Fairclough (2010) points out, the object of a critical discourse analysis is not merely an analysis of discourse, but it is an exploration of the relationship between discourse and "non-discoursal elements of the social, in order to reach a better understanding of these complex relations," (p. 602). Following this model, speech acts are considered to be micro-analytical, while the social norms that support dominating behaviour are called macro-analytical. The framework used for this critical discourse analysis includes three levels of analysis, namely (1) micro (the text), (2) meso (the context of producing/receiving/distributing the text), and (3) macro, (the socio-economic context) (Merkl-Davis &. Koller, 2012).

Micro-Level Analysis

The micro-level analysis included an examination of the transcript on a line-by-line basis (460 lines), as exhibited in Appendix 1. This approach supports the detailed discussion that follows.

Expressions of a legitimized role often will appear natural and acceptable by the audience (van Dijk, 1993). Thus the micro-level analysis will need to focus on the discursive strategies that the performer uses to legitimately exert control and influence over his audience. In the case study we can look for indications in Burkhardt's talk for speech that is used to support his role as the CEO of an American Railway company. . The analysis will first identify keywords and patterns associated with the use of these

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keywords (themes) adopted by Burkhardt that signify the particular role he has adopted during the press conference.

Beelitz and Merkl-Davis (2012) point out that after a crisis often the organization becomes concerned with "legitimacy construction," and how the organization is portrayed in the media. Examining the text with this performative lens will enable us to contemplate the performer's point of view; how Burkhardt views the situation (Goffman's frame) along with his potential goal—restore the credibility of his organization.. Often in these situations CEOs will use pronouns to refer to the company, will interpret the event, use "verbal remedial strategies," and try to provide explanations and information "designed to rectify a predicament" (Beelitz & Merkl-Davis p. 106).

The initial analysis illustrates Burkhardt's attempt to promote his company's legitimacy (by use of explanation, distancing tactics (evasion/blame), providing information and issuing an apology.

The predominance of keywords such as 'responsibility' and 'obligations' (line 23, 126), 'our financial resources' (line 20, 307), 'rail safety' (102, 107, 344, 433) 'industry practice' (lines 58, 104) 'our insurance' (lines 17, 33, 119, 121, 125, 201, 281, 283, 373), 'investigation' (lines 102, 298, 341, 363 439) suggests the predominant theme of Burkhardt's word choice is on the discourse of organizational legitimacy based on what Beelitz & Merkly-Davis (2011) label "technocratic discourse". This discourse emphasizes "facts and figures and rules compliance," it is instrumental and opposite to normative and engaging discourse, which is often used by CEO in front of stakeholder audiences (Beelitz & Merkl-Davis, (2012, p. 107). Beelitz & Merkl-Davis also point out

that technocratic discourse emphasizes "rationality, rather than emotion" (p. 111). Which is very interesting as a portion of the reporters' questions are about Burkhardt's emotional state.

Merkl-Davis and Koller (2012) discuss the specific language used by a chairman of a UK defence firm. They developed a framework used to document specific grammatical devices used to enhance an authoritative performance, which subsequently nominalizes others. The two specific grammatical devices they used were impersonalization and evaluation. They define impersonalization as a tool which "renders social agents obsolete…[and] absolves management from any responsibility or accountability for organizational activities and outcomes" (Merkl-Davis & Koller, 2012, p. 182). It includes referential vagueness, passivisation, grammatical metaphor, and conceptual metaphor/metonymy. The authors define evaluation as a form of "attributive adjectives, adverbs, verbs and nouns with particular denotative and connotative meanings" (Merkl-Davis & Koller, 2012, p. 182). It can be implicit or explicit. The framework employed will include these two categories, as they relate to Burkhardt's performance as the CEO of a large American railway company. Based on themes detected while coding the transcript, the framework will also include references to emotions and words used to influence the behaviour of others.

Meso-level analysis

As van Dijk (1993) suggests a critical discourse analysis will often be used to study the relationship between power structures and discourse structures. For example directive speech often is used to empower performers and enable them to issue

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commands to influence how others behave (van Dijk, 1993). Yet it is important to contemplate the social rules that create the conditions for this dominant behaviour to be legitimized. Therefore a CDA must also consider the socially constructed world that encompasses the text, and lends it credibility (Fairclough, 2003). The meso level analysis contemplates the specific context in which the text occurs, as well as the community in which the text is produced, distributed and received. This level of analysis explains the reasons for the presence of the discourse—in this case it is an examination of the role and functionality of the press conference and media after a crisis. This level of analysis will examine the relationship between. Burkhardt and his immediate audience, the media. Van Dijk points out that "power and dominance of groups are measured by their control over (access to discourse)" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 257). Therefore a meso-level analysis will also consider the role of power and dominance within the press conference.

Macro-level analysis

As Merkl-David and Koller (2012) point out, a macro level analysis "involves taking the wider social formation into account to interpret the findings of the text analysis" (p. 182). The focus will be to understand the specific roles that members of society adopt according to a set of social rules. In this case, the manner in which a CEO of a large American company is expected to behave. Also notable is the social-economic climate in which the press conference occurs.

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Results: Analysis of Burkhardt's press conference in Lac-Mégnatic

Micro-level analysis

The focus on this level analysis was on the use of impersonalization and evaluation in Burkhardt's language, as well as the methods used by Burkhardt to try to restore the image of his organization and influence how others behaved during the press conference. A micro level analysis revealed four dominant themes occurring in the transcription: 1) Influence 2) Referential Vagueness 3) Evaluation (blame and defensiveness) and 4) Emotion.

1) Influence

Very often power and dominance can be measured by the amount of control or access one has to discourse, in this case the media (van Dijk, 1993). This perhaps explains the prevalence in the text Burkhardt dedicates to controlling or influencing the reporters' behaviour. In a situation where the media are firing loaded questions to the CEO, it is no wonder then that the CEO would direct his efforts at controlling the stream of questions directed toward him. An analysis of the text illustrates the prevalence of words used by Burkhardt to control: who asks the questions, which questions are answered, and who gets a turn at talking.

When reviewing the text, what is initially noticeable is the way Burkhardt's talk is populated with a variety of "ums" and" uhs." Goffman calls these "subvocalizations" response cries. They function as placeholders in the conversation, so that the listener won't cut into the person's speech. The speaker will use them when he is searching for an adequate word to use to effectively hold his "claim on the floor" (Goffman, 1981, p. 110).

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When understood this way, we can see how these small utterances are used to influence and control others' behaviour during the speech, as they work to fill a void that would otherwise be filled by someone else.

Burkhardt begins talking to the media by directing them how to behave ("be respectful," line 2) and attempts to control what questions will be asked of him by asking himself questions ("why have I not been in Mégnatic earlier this week?" line 10) ("how do I feel about this?" line 12). Essentially he is doing their job; he takes their voices away, and asks himself their (imagined or real?) questions. This way he can control what he is asked and thus what he responds to. But he also causes them to remain silent. He decides which reporters get to speak ("I'm going to talk to this lady," line 78), ("NO …wait a minute now. I'm going to talk to the lady…lady in yellow," lines 94-97), ("No No …no…I think I've answered…I'm going to allow this gentlemen and then you come back," lines 112-113), ("I'll take this gentleman here," line 296) and which ones do not ("NO…I think I already answered your questions," line 177), ("you have asked too many questions," line 320).

According to Goffman the performer's primary objective is to "sustain a particular definition of the situation" to control how others respond to him (Goffman, 1959, p. 85). When Burkhardt states "I…I…I hope you have heard my apology uh about a dozen times in the last ten minutes" (lines 326-327) he is defining the past ten minutes of the press conference as an apology. This is a keying technique used to attempt to "sustain a particular definition of the situation" and press this definition onto his audience. As the transcript reveals, Burkhardt's statement is false, however in the context

of a press conference, it could be possible for a newcomer to not know this. Burkhardt continues "I'll issue it one more time. We own an…we are making an abject apology to the people in this town" (lines 327-328). Goffman writes, "In its fullest form, the apology has several elements: expression of embarrassment and chagrin; clarification that one knows what conduct had been expected and sympathizes with the application of negative sanction; verbal rejection, repudiation, and disavowal of the wrong way of behaving along with vilification of the self that so behaved; espousal of the right way and a avowal henceforth to pursue that course; performance of penance and the volunteering of restitution." (Lemert, 1997, p. 122). Arguably Burkhardt wants his audience to believe that his organization has appropriately apologized, when the transcript suggests otherwise.

His performance throughout the press conference renders this apology ineffective. Burkhardt states "We can't roll back time," along with a couple non-verbal shrugs, which suggest an inconsistency with the sincerity of a genuine apology. Perceived sincerity is one of the hallmarks of a successful performance, according to Goffman, no matter how studied or contrived it may be. Burkhardt attempts to influence his audience's evaluation of his own performance during the press conference by replaying the events using a method that Goffman calls "keying."

In many ways both Burkhardt and the reporters are defining the situation. It's a press conference, and they both have props. The reporters are equipped with microphones, cameras and questions; Burkhardt is equipped with information ("facts") and a role. He's afforded a privileged position within the press conference, and the

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reporters exercise what Goffman calls "dramaturgical discipline" (Goffman, 1959, p. 216). The reporters and Burkhardt work as a team to enable him to put together a performance that is believable for a corporate CEO. The yellers in the background do not get the same privileged position as Burkhardt, as they are not part of the team. The cameras do not pan over to the yellers to give them screen time, nor do the reporters walk to the "yellers" and ask them questions with microphones pointed toward them. However, when Burkhardt knocks over few of the microphones on the podium (line 115), three reporters quickly rush in to fix them, without comment. When Burkhardt moves away from his podium and out of frame, the reporters request that he move back to the podium (line 367 – "Can you just turn this way because the camera's back there", line 379—"Sir! Sir! Can we just get you to come back here?").

However, the camaraderie of the team does extend into the actual questions that the reporters pose to Burkhardt. Burkhardt's performance as a CEO, and the face work that accompanies that role, faces dramaturgical trouble when the audience (reporters) attempt to ask Burkhardt backstage questions. These questions include "did you sleep last night or not? (line 164), "why it took you so long to get into town" (line 196), "What you are feeling about it (the pictures of the city)" (line 219), and "How much are you worth?" (line 331). So while Burkhardt attempts to define the situation, so too does the audience. For Burkhardt it is a press conference and an apology; for his immediate (and perhaps distanced) audience, it is quite possibly a trial, one that inevitably situates Burkhardt on defense.

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2) Impersonalization

Merkl-Davis and Koller (2012) argue impersonalization excludes or obfuscates social agents in texts. In this text, it is accomplished by the use of referential vagueness and passivation. Referential vagueness is defined by Merkl-Davis and Koller (2012) as involving the use of pronouns such as "we" and "our" to refer to a collective social actor that is often not clearly defined. In the transcript Burkhardt refers to MMA as "this company" (line 17, 49, 215), as well as "our company" (line 69) and regularly it is referred to as a collective company ("our company," "we're going to stand up to our responsibility," "we're working with insurers.") It is clear that the media and the victims are not included in this "we" and "our," and neither are the "dozen railway managers that descended upon Lac Mégantic" (line 28), the mayor, the insurance workers, the first responders, "the people in this town," (line 229), and the engineer, who "worked for us" (line 354). Significantly Burkhardt never refers to MMA as "my company."

It is possible that Burkhardt is considering MMA's stakeholders when he speaks, as everyone else seems to be excluded from this collective. When asked by a reporter "Why would you allow this train to go unmanned? (lines 47-48) Burkhardt responds with the collective, "We've actually had I think a quite reasonable safety records, up until Saturday and then we blew it all" (line 53-54). When pressed by the reporter on the same question, "Why would you let it go unmanned," (line 55), Burkhardt replies "We're not going to do that anymore" (line 58-59). This indicates that he is using this tactic to evade personal responsibility for the train derailment, and is attempting to defuse the anger by hiding behind the organization as a collective. But it also indicates how the reporter views

Burkhardt as being personally responsible for the accident. The fact that the question is repeated means that the reporter did not receive satisfaction from Burkhardt's first response to the same question. Another reporter asks "There is a questionable track record of your company in the past , the ten years since <u>you</u> have been chair," (line 44-45).

Burkhardt seems to have difficulty distinguishing himself from the company, while at the same time acting as the company's representative. Blame is easier to assign to one individual, rather than a collective. But it's not easy for an organization to have feelings, which may perhaps explain the reason why Burkhardt has difficulty expressing emotions about the disaster. Burkhardt is placed in a non-compossible situation: his audience is asking him to display feelings and take personal blame and apologize for the disaster, but also represent the organization and provide information about the insurance policy and any future plans.

3) Evaluation (blame/defensiveness)

Evaluation is achieved when the speaker conveys a particular attitude toward another person, an entity or an event (Merkl-Davis & Koller, 2012). The qualities that are ascribed by someone can help us to understand the normative values of a person, and the attitudes of an organization. They can be implied (e.g. "The engineer has been suspended," line 448) or explicit (e.g. "I think he did something wrong," line 459).

During the coding process it was noted that the evaluative statements made during the press conference mostly fell into two categories: Blame and Defensive. It was decided to assign these two evaluative elements their own code, due to their frequency.

Blame and defensiveness seem to be used strategically to downplay MMA's role in the disaster. When Burkhardt speaks of MMA, he uses strong positive evaluations, such as "Our financial resources are going to be devoted to this" (line 21) and "We're going to stand up to our responsibility" (line 24) and "We were following industry practice" (line 59). This contrasts to the implied negative evaluative language used to describe the mayor and the engineer.

Burkhardt's evaluative statements about the mayor are mostly negatively implicit. For example when he states, "I find my movements around town to be pretty constricted," (line 401) he is implicitly blaming the mayor for his lack of free mobility in Lac-Mégantic. Other implicit negative comments directed toward the mayor include "It won't be me denying it, it will be the mayor's office," (line 398) and "I'm not sure I'm going to get an approval from the mayor's office to do this," (lines 395-396). This implicit way of expressing judgment enables Burkhardt to present his opinions subtlety, as though they were objective (Merkl-Davis & Kooler, 2012). It's a strategic maneuver to present an evaluative statement, without directly owning it.

Burkhardt also places blame on the train's engineer, both explicitly and implicitly. As the press conference progresses, Burkhardt moves from implicitly blaming the engineer ("I think it's questionable whether he did [follow company policy]" line 92) to explicitly blaming him ("I think he did something wrong..and if you think I said he did nothing wrong then you haven't been listening here" lines 459-460).That Burkhardt is more direct when he blames the engineer, suggests a stronger attitude and perhaps agenda.

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Burkhardt's defensive comments are used to exonerate both himself and the company (MMA) from any wrong doing. At a personal level Burkhardt tries to defend his own actions (not arriving on the scene earlier) when he says a dozen railway managers tried to meet with the mayor, but "it took a couple of days for that meeting to occur," (line 31). He further explains that he would be "more effective" working in his office than "trying to work out of a cell phone" (lines 35-36). Plus, he rationalizes, the first responders had the community "basically occupied" (line 38) and they "didn't need me getting in their way" (line 38). As a defense technique Burkhardt tries to appeal to logic and presents himself as the victim of circumstances and other people's actions. Later he states that "it was easier" for him to remain at his office rather than run "around here with a cell phone in my hand" (line 207-208).

But the impression he attempts to form for himself (and MMA) is incongruent with the way people often think of CEO's of large corporations. Further, Merkl-Davis & Koller (2012) write "the language used in corporate narrative documents is never 'innocent', because it is used to achieve a variety of economic, social and political goals" (p. 179). Thus we must look at Burkhart's defensive claims through this purposeful lens, and try to notice when language is used to impress a specific (innocent) impression upon the audience.

When Burkhardt states "this company has never had a significant mainline derailment on its own" (line 50), and "leaving this train unmanned was standard industry policy," (line 105), "this was a failure of the brakes," (line 184) he attempts to present MMA as a responsible and rule-following organization. When a reporter suggests that

MMA has "ten times the average uh number of accidents per mile" (line 256) and is a "low cost sort of company," (line 258) Burkhardt challenges the statistic and rationalizes that it has been MMA's object to "hold our costs down" (line 269).

Goffman wrote "the gestures which we sometimes call empty are perhaps in fact the fullest things of all" (Lemert, 1997, p. 30.) This is the reason why Burkhardt's shoulder shrugs are coded, not because they are numerous, but because they represent sentiments that are inconsistent with the utterances they accompany. Often the shoulder shrug is used in North American culture as a way to express some sort of defeat or hopelessness. Burkhardt uses the shrug as a way to punctuate an evaluative comment. For example, when Burkhardt states on line 59, "We were following industry practice. Was the industry practice adequate? I would say not. ((Shrug))." The shrug suggests that Burkhardt and MMA are not only innocent, but are also victims, because they were just following the rules. Burkhardt does not say that MMA should have taken extra precautions for this particular freight, due to its explosive properties.

If Burkhardt were to pound his fist down onto the podium instead of shrugging, the effect would be different. When Burkhardt is asked to respond to the angry people of Lac Mégantic, he says "I would feel the same way if if uh something like this happened in my community. Beyond that ((shrugs)) I don't know what to say" (line 139). This feeling of helplessness and self-victimization threads through the press conference, but becomes more pronounced again when Burkhardt says that he "understands the extreme anger" but that "we can't roll back time" (line 203-204). This comment is the word equivalent of a shrug and further illustrates how Burkhardt's includes self-victimization

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in his performance of as CEO of a company during a crisis. The effect is similar when Burkhardt responds "then let the chips fall where they may" (line 377) when asked if criminal negligence could be found against the engineer.

4) Emotion

The reporters' interest in the emotional state of Burkhardt indicates a disconnectedness between Burkhardt and his audience. Burkhardt seems to realize this when he attempts to address this when he asks himself "how do I feel about this? Am I a compassionate person?" (lines 12-13). Burkhardt describes himself as feeling "absolutely awful," "devastated," and that "it has [his] utmost sympathy" (line 137). Yet when he's further questioned if he understands why people are mad at him he explains, "I don't think that's any secret. Yes I understand why they are mad and because I happen to be the chairman of the board of directors of the company uh I guess its my role to uh collect the uh all this this criticism and so on.." (lines 142-145). Later when he is called a murderer (line 194) Burkhardt responds "I understand the extreme anger. And uh, and uh..uh, beyond that uh I uh we'll do what we can to address the issues here. Uh we can't roll back time" (lines 202-204). When pressed a third time if he understands the anger Burkhardt says "If I lived here I would be very angry with the management of this …of this company" (lines 214-215). Burkhardt's inadequacy to respond to these emotional-based questions can be measured by the number of times the same question is repeated.

Burkhardt answers questions about his emotional state evasively and passively. He obfuscates the agency when he states "he understands the extreme anger" that indicates that they are not the focal point of the message he wants to convey. Merkl-

Davis and Koller (2012) write, "using the passive voice constitutes a way of putting the information the author considers important into subject position" (p. 185) By this rationality we can see how Burkhardt gives his company a privileged position in his speech patterns. The performative role that he is committed to is not the caring and wise grandfather, or the angry environmentalist, he is committed to playing the role of the CEO of an American railway company. As such, it is difficult to display feelings when representing a non-human entity, and we can see evidence of this struggle when Burkhardt attempts to convey emotions during the press conference. Any displays of emotional release would jeopardize his credibility to perform as the CEO, and vice versa. For example if Burkhardt were to openly weep and was unable to coherently form words because he was so overcome with emotion, his performance (and future career) as a CEO would be undoubtedly be jeopardized.

Meso Analysis

Burkhardt indicates what it is that is going on when he states "I guess we're holding a press conference" (line 154). We can think of the press conference as an event that is organized by a set of established rules that affect each participant's conduct. For instance, it is expected that reporters will ask questions, take photos/ videos and take turns when asking questions. The person at the podium is considered to be an expert on the subject matter, and answers reporters' questions usually in a methodical manner. The CEO of an organization is often the person who represents the company and can be perceived as the formal head of the company. In many ways they are symbolic figures that serve as the mouthpiece for the organization and its members (Merkl-Davis &

Koller, 2012). Generally his or her inferred target audience includes stakeholders and the media.

Therefore we can think of the press conference as a mediatized interpersonal ritual. It is an activity that is governed by both deference and demeanor, and therefore is similar to many other interactive activities. As Goffman points out, there are rules or "ritual constraints" that govern how people behave during these interactions (Goffman, 1981). The podium speaker is required to conduct himself with proper demeanor, and show deference to the reporters by answering their questions, but without speaking too long. Goffman points out that often people will "show proper demeanor in order to warrant deferential treatment" (Lemert, 1997, p. 28). To do this, the performer must learn to conceal certain aspects of himself, which "might make him unworthy in their eyes" (Lemert, 1997, p. 28).

Burkhardt's statements suggest that the role he seeks to perform is the CEO who was thrown into this situation, but not responsible for it. While he's "willing to stay here as long as it takes," (lines 6-7) he only "happens to be the chairman of the board" (line 143) whose role it is to "collect…all this criticism and so on" (lines 144-145). He represents himself as a hard worker, a man who can sleep anywhere if he's tired enough (line 168), who isn't a "particularly wealthy guy" (line 333). Therefore we can see that being a rich, dominant successful CEO was an inferior role choice for Burkhardt. Goffman argues that the performer will often try to present an idealized version of himself, and will "conceal or underplay those activities, facts, and motives, which are

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incompatible with an idealized version of himself and his products" (Goffman, 1959, p. 48).

As the performance of the speaker is often filmed, the podium performer usually practices patience and maintains a sense of cordiality while he or she provides information to his or her audience(s). While it may appear to be impromptu, the podium performer has often prepared a set of key messages beforehand, in anticipation of the reporter's questions. However, Burkhardt's involvement in the press conference is also pre-scripted, and he is obligated to maintain his public appearance according to the social rules of the situation.

Burkhardt breaks several of these conventions when he verbally lashes out at reporters ("Well you're asking a lot of questions that I wish I had the answers to," (line 120) "I think I responded to that already," (line 136) "Alright may I answer that? (line 149), "Were you hear a few minutes ago when I answered that?" (line 199) "you're saying that we have said that we're not going to help the business people in this town. That is not correct," (lines 228-230), "I've answered that question an number of times," (line 255) "you have asked too many questions," (line 320) "I hope you have heard my apology uh about a dozen times in the last ten minutes," (lines 326-327) "And if you think I said he did nothing wrong then you haven't been listening here," (line 459-460). Goffman would call these verbal reprimands a failure to contain "creature releases" (Lemert, 1997, p. 112). Goffman writes, "To engage in situational impropriety, then, is to draw improperly on what one owes the social occasion" (Lemert, 1997, p. 112).

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When Burkhardt lashes out at the reporters he is demonstrates the press conference is not significant enough for him to conform to the rules of the engagement. But it also gives us clues about who Burkhardt considers to be his primary audience. When Burkhardt speaks with chagrin to reporters, it's meant (presumably) for them only, not the wider audience who will watch him during the 6 o'clock news. But because this press conference is televised, audiences not immediately present also have access to Burkhardt's performance.

Macro Analysis

A macro analysis of the transcript considers the extra-linguistic functionality of the discursive performance and the linguistic options available to Burkhardt (Alvesson, 2000). In this analysis three dominant themes were noted: 1) Rationalization 2) CEO Discourse, 3) Culture/Nationalism (French/English, Canadian/American).

1) Rationalization

Rationalization is a linguistic device used to appeal to logical thought in order to persuade others to view a particular event with less emotion. As the mouthpiece for MMA, Burkhardt provides an account for the disaster, which he calls "a failure of the brakes" (line 184) in a way that paints the organization as a rule-following company that was forced to cut costs due to economic pressures ("difficult market" line 269). When we view the events through this capitalistic lens we can follow Burkhardt's logic that a railway line will need to be re-established in Lac-Mégantic despite this disaster, because it is good for the economy. When asked about this Burkhardt explains, "a railway runs through this town….uh as a ..we have a number of shippers that depend on

rail service. We have one right in town..uh Tofessa, it's a very good customer. These guys uh have to have rail service. And...or else they are going to lay their people off and uh…have more problems than we we create" (lines 300-304). According to this logic, the economic benefits of having the railway through the town outweigh the risks (environmental, human, etc.).

Capitalism not only decides the options for MMA, but it also narrows the speech options for Burkhardt, who just "happens" to be the CEO of the company. And Burkhardt tells the story of MMA acting as a rational player in a tight economic climate (big financial meltdown" line 284) that provides jobs and security for its suppliers. As a responsible company, Burkhardt assures his audience that MMA has a solid "insurance backup" with staff working "elbow to elbow" (line 126) to "stand up to our responsibility" (line 24). It is a tactic used to marginalize the real victims of the disaster, and to deflect moral blame for the disaster by highlighting the company's positive attributes.

As previously mentioned, rationalization does not give Burkhardt the vocabulary to express emotions when referring to the real victims of the disaster. Thus like the "yellers," the real victims of this disaster are marginalized by the organizational rationalization discourse that Burkhardt uses as the CEO of a large railway company.

2) CEO Discourse

Beelitz and Merkl-Davis (2012) define organizational legitimacy as being "vital for an organization's survival, as it attracts resources and the continued support from its constituents" (p. 101). During a crisis or controversy, corporations will use language to

attempt to restore this legitimacy as quickly as it can. Often this entails persuading audiences that the organization upholds the same normative values as them, despite what has occurred. Therefore it would be incumbent upon MMA to assure its audience that it values both human life and the environment, things that the explosion destroyed. However the CEO, as the mouthpiece for the organization is restricted by what he or she can say. Burkhardt is placed in a difficult situation. While he must talk the talk of a corporate CEO, he must also try to create an impression with his audience that appeals to their values.

3) Culture/Nationalism (French/English, Canadian/American).

The transcript only implicitly refers to the French/English and Canadian/American tensions that forms the backdrop to the disaster in Lac-Mégantic, and Burkhardt's performance.

In the summer of 2013, Quebec had been recently experiencing increased tension since the Partis Quebecois (PQ) won a minority government in September, 2012, and prepared Bill 14. The controversial bill, which was later abandoned, proposed further measures to 1977's Bill 101 to legislate the use of French in Quebec (Fairclough, 2013)(Brenhouse, 2013). Under the proposed bill, English language companies would be required to conduct all business in French, as enforced by language police. We can see evidence of this tension when a reporter asks Burkhardt if someone who speaks French will accompany him if/when he visits the victims (line 388).

Reference to Burkhardt's 'Americanism' is made when a reporter asks him "How can you guarantee that in the United States something like this won't happen…I mean

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they are watching this story with interest….this train originated in the United States and

is going back to the United States and how can you guarantee that your oil stock and your

tracks are safe?" (lines 98-101). This point is further illustrated when Burkhardt describes

MMA's insurance company as a "Canadian insurance company" (line 124).

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Discussion

Burkhardt uses discourse as a means to influence how the audience will view both him and his organization. He uses defensive and blaming statements to direct the audiences' attention away from himself and MMA. He also attempts to construct a reality in a way that benefits himself and his company, but not the real victims of the disaster. He puts together an account of events that serves his organization, rather than being accountable to the Lac-Mégantic community.

Goffman's dramaturgical framework helps us to understand how people behave and how social limitations can affect the function of a performance. Goffman teaches us that social roles are formed and performed in a co-created space that is defined (and re-defined) by language and communication. Often what we think of as 'real' is a symposium of words used to project an idea of a self in response to perceived norms of an audience, within an agreed upon (or not) definition of the situation.

An analysis of Burkhardt's performance in Lac-Mégantic illustrates the point that Burkhardt is restricted by what he can say because of the role he has chosen to perform. For example when Burkhardt states on lines 142-145 "Yes I understand why they are mad and because I happen to be the chairman of the board of directors of the company..I guess it's my role to ..collect…all this criticism and so on" he not only indicates his chosen role to perform, but he also displays passive resignation and acceptance of the negative responsibilities that this role has for him.

And because the audience is in the unique position of being hypercritical, this presents a significant challenge to the success of Burkhardt's performance. Burkhardt attempts to deal

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with this by re-defining the situation using a technique that Goffman calls "keying." Burkhardt describes the situation as an apology, he attempts to present himself as a victimized and passive CEO and he attempts to obfuscate the real victims of the explosion by the words he chooses to portray himself and MMA. Burkhardt is expected to behave as a CEO, and he attempts to do this, while also exhibiting that he personally shares the same (presumed) values of his audience: hard-working, responsible and humble-ness. He does this so that the audience will accept his view of the events, and will decide to treat him in a favourable way. It is suggested that dramaturgical trouble occurs for Burkhardt when he does not adequately display the emotional response that both his immediate and distance audience expects of him. Further when he criticizes the reporters, he fails to respect the rituals of the press conference by not exhibiting the proper deference to his immediate audience. This creates a binary in Burkhardt's performance - he is trying to apologize for the disaster's occurrence and represent his organization in a favourable way, yet he cannot display the proper demeanor of decorum to his immediate audience, the reporters. These specific challenges are perhaps exacerbated because Burkhardt does not have access to his distanced audience, nor is he able to assess his audience's reception to his performance, and thus is unable to make the performative adjustments that Goffman suggests is necessary to ensure a successful performance.

Further, when Burkhardt waivers from the typical crisis communication script, he sets himself up for dramaturgical trouble. During a crisis, the audience has come to expect the to CEO arrive immediately after an accident, to be polite and available to reporters, to be knowledgeable, show proper deference, display an appropriate emotional response and issue an effective apology. Goffman teaches us that people are motivated to behave in ways to

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influence how they are treated. Those CEOs who conform and adopt accepted crisis communication behaviour and scripts are not morally superior to Burkhardt, they are perhaps just more cognizant of their role and their audience's expectations. But when one deviates from the expectations of the audience, often the reaction is a moral one.

Admittedly, it is unlikely that scholars will be contemplating Ed Burkhardt's performance 10 years from now. However his performance has given us the opportunity to contemplate some of Goffman's dramaturgical framework with practical vigor. This paper has attempted to fill in a gap in the literature, and represent Goffman's ideas on dramaturgy in a more comprehensive way to illustrate the potential for Goffman's work within communication theory studies. Often Goffman's ideas have been applied in piecemeal, and this study suggests that a more complete application of Goffman's dramaturgy is not only possible, but preferable. It is suggested that an understanding of Goffman's dramaturgy enables communication scholars to more fully contemplate the purpose and use of specific communication artifacts in social settings. In the case outlined above such artifacts include the apology, facework, keying, the relationship between authority and language, teamwork, and influence over what it is that is going on. Goffman lends us a vocabulary to document and subsequently understand the microworld, things that we often take as a 'given.' Through his work, he manages to deconstruct assumptions that what we perceive of is real, and helps us understand the way that the social self is constructed—with language. Communication scholars will benefit with this knowledge as it promotes reflexive thinking in a time when technology is enabling communication to occur at unprecedented rates.

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This thesis found that a CDA methodology proved to be a suitable match for Goffman's dramaturgical framework. Like Goffman's dramaturgy, the CDA encourages scholars to contemplate the manner that power and authority are depicted and enacted in discourse. And while both approaches include a micro level analysis, the CDA methodology also encourages a macro analysis, which considers discourse at a larger socio-economic level. Often power and authority are linked to larger socio-economic factors, such as capitalism, and the performance of these macro qualities can become institutionalized in discourse. Goffman, whose work was influenced by the social rights movement, was interested in how authority and institutions can exercise power over others (Scheff, 2006). And his dramaturgy helps us to understand and question this socially manufactured authority, much like the CDA methodology.

Conclusion

As Scheff (2006) points out, much of Goffman's work is challenging because it does not conform to a structure that most scholars have come to expect. Goffman does not provide his reader with theses or systematic summaries. Instead he studies interactions at a micro level, and discusses his ideas in an "epistolary style" (Scheff, 2006, p. 3). Perhaps this is because Goffman resisted being boxed in and described stereotypical thinking as 'lazy.' His writing style accurately reflects this.

Goffman's microsociology has influenced scholars from multiple disciplines since the 1960's. His work is ambitious and widely adaptable. Artifacts of his work have infiltrated our language and affected our understanding of our social worlds. Terms such as "saving face," "impression management," "performance," and "framing," have become commonplace. Therefore to argue the value of Goffman's thoughts on dramaturgy, and suggest that they be more comprehensively studied, seems suspiciously obvious. I have argued that his thoughts on dramaturgy influenced all of his writing. It is possible that an understanding of Goffman's dramaturgy will make the rest of his work more accessible to some readers.

While this paper suggests one way of applying Goffman's dramaturgy as a framework to offer a richer insight into a communication case study, it does not propose a dogmatic approach. The findings of this study cannot be generalized, however it is believed the findings could be useful to scholars interested in symmetrical communication, online communication and organizational communication. For example, many organizations seem to be inspired to

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build one strong corporate brand, under which many complex and inconsistent entities are forced. Often this brand will be afforded characteristics that are meant to personify norms that society value, using vernacular language, in attempt to secure market profits. Using Goffman's concept of dramaturgy, it would be interesting to study a performance of one such organization, and how it attempts to influence the frame and behaviours of its audience. Future scholars might also apply Goffman's dramaturgy to social media, in a more comprehensive manner to explore the interconnectivity between performer, audience and frame.

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Appendix A

Transcript

http://globalnews.ca/news/707916/watch-mma-railway-chairman-ed-burkhardt-addresses-media-in-lac-megnatic/.

((Burkhardt appears before a podium of microphones in the middle of a road. There is no one behind him, but there is some red police tape that seems to be used to keep people out of the area that appears behind him.))

1   **Ed Burkhardt:** Now… ((left hand gestures)) the big problem [EV] that I'm going to have

2   is everyone talking at once here. So please don't do that Be respectful [IN.] and uh and uh

3   I will try to ((right hand gestures pointing)) identify people around

4   here that haven't asked questions. And I will call on them [IN.] ((Reporter enters from

5   E.B.'s right hand side, and picks up microphone from podium and crouches down and

6   hold microphone in front of Burkhardt)) And uh I'm willing to stay here as long as it

7   takes [PAS.] Uh…To uh…. Um I'll make a couple of comments first and then actually go to

8   the questions [IN.] Uh I've been asked the same question a number of times [BL] that I want

9   to uh to ((left hand gestures)) uh respond to so we don't have to do that again [IN][BL.] And

10 that is why have I not been in Mégnatic earlier this week. Earlier after this tragedy

11 occurred. Actually before I start on [IN] ((left hand gestures)) that people have been said

12 how do I feel [EM] about this? Am I a compassionate person? [EM] I feel absolutely awful[EM]

13 about this. I'm devastated [EM] by what's occurred [PAS] in this community. ((camera man

14 enters behind Ed Burkhardt and moves to E.B.'s right hand side, takes pictures, then

15 exits))I've never been involved in anything remotely approaching this in my whole life

16 [DEF] (yelling in background) and the uh, the uh, the devastation here is absolutely awful.

17 [PAS (EV)] This company [REF] is going to respond to th- to this tragedy as best it can. Uh,

18 we're working with our insurers [REF] to establish a uh and we want to [REF] uh, make a uh

19 an arrangement with the Red cross to assist Red Cross' efforts in relocating people and in

20 rebuilding the uh the people's homes.

21 Our financial resources [REF] are going to be devoted to this. This comes first. There is no

22 question about the uh the uh damages that have occurred [REF]. (Yelling in background)

23 [EM]. We we don't have [REF] a uh a uh total on this in any sense but uh.. and I don't think

24 we will [REF] for a long time. We're going to stand up [REF] to our [REF] responsibility[EV].

25 Now…why wasn't I here earlier? [IN] Wh-When this occurred I had to ask myself the

26 question where would I be best be [DEF] ((right hand scratches right ear)) where can I be

27 most effective for what we have to do[REF]. We had a dozen railway managers [REF] that

28 descended [MET] on uh on Lac-Mégnatic on..on.. Saturday and Sunday. And uh they have

29 uh tried to meet with the mayor [BL] and uh due to the many many factors [REF] ((another

30 camera man goes into the background, on Ed. Burkhardt's left and soon leaves)) that I'm

31 sure she was dealing with [BL] it uh, it took a couple of days for that meeting to occur[BL].

32 What was I doing…doing at that time? ((camera person enters behind Ed. Burkhardt's

33 right hand side)) I was working 20 hour days at my desk [DEF] uh trying to deal with [EV]

34 the press and with lining up contractors insurance companies and others to deal with

35 this..this disaster [EV]. I felt [EM] I was, I would be more effective [DEF] ((camera man enters

36 behind Ed Burkhardt's left hand side)) doing that at my desk than trying to work out of a

37 cell phone [DEF] in Lac Mégnatic especially at the time that the first responders had this

38 community basically occupied [MET]. They didn't need me getting in their way [BL]. But at

39 the time I said I'm going to go there on on uh Tuesday, which is exactly what I've done.

40 [DEF] I..I…I left my uh home on Tuesday and uh got here a couple of hours ago at this

41 point. Now um, so those are the couple of of statements that I wanted to make that might

42 address some of the questions [EV] that people will ask [IN]. So now I will say let's come

43 with the questions [IN].

44 **Reporter:** Mr. Burkhardt you know there is a questionable track record of your company

45 [BL] in the past, the ten years since you have been chair [BL] . Why is it that in this case

46 (Yelling in background[EM]) that when it went…it was unmanned given the previous

47   issues you've been having and other actions. Why would you allow this train [(BL)] to go

48   unmanned (Yelling in background [(EM)]) (inaudible) in Lac Mégnatic?

49   **Ed Burkhardt:** This train er this company [(REF)] in the 10 and a half years that its been in

50   existence its [(REF)] never had a significant mainline derailment [(DEF)] on its own [(DEF)] on its

51   own tracks [(REF)] until…until uh this tragic event[(EV)]. We've had [(REF),] like most railways

52   everywhere [(DEF)] some minor (Yelling in background [(EM)]) derailments in the yards, on

53   industry tracks and elsewhere. (Yelling in background [(EM)]) We've actually uh had I think

54   quite a reasonable safety record [(EV)] up until until Saturday and then we blew it all [(BL)]. Uh

55   **Reporter:** Why would you let it go [(BL)] unmanned?

56   **Ed Burkhardt:** Uh, every railway in North America that I know of were park ranged

57   unmanned.[(DEF) EVA)] Uh, I think that's probably come to a halt [(EV)] (yelling in background

58   [(EM)] or will come to a halt, its certainly come to a halt on our railway [(REF.)] We're [(REF)] not

59   going to do that anymore. We [REF] were following industry practice [(DEF.)] Was the industry

60   practice adequate? I would say not[.(EV)] ((Shrug))

61   **Reporter:** But there was a fire. This is different [(EV)]. There was a fire that had to be

62   extinguished. And then whatever happened after the fire (inaudible)…(E.B. interrupts)

63   **Ed Burkhardt:** We….we uh….whatever happened after the fire?

64   **Reporter: (inaudible)…**the time that fire was extinguished and the time that it came

65   here. But we do know [(REF)] that it came unmanned. Why wasn't there surveillance [(BL)]

66   around the clock so that when the train starts to move again it won't be unmanned given

67   the fact that there was a fire?

68   **Ed Burkhardt**: The gentlemen that uh, ..that was called out by the fire department at the

69   time that they had this fire uh was a track foreman, was an employee of our company [(REF)]

70   that was not familiar with diesel locomotives [(BL).] Uh…the fire was out, uh…he was

71   aware that the locomotive was shut down but wasn't aware [(BL).] of the uh, of the uh

72   consequences that would come from that. He talked to our train dispatcher's office in

73   Farnum Quebec, and advised them of that. Uh, there was very little time actually [(EV),] that

74   uh we're talking minutes its pretty hard to see how they [(EV)] could have gotten somebody

75   to the scene that could have restarted this locomotive and uh prevented this this thing. [(EV)]

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76   (Many questions loud at the same time)

77   **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>NO…NOW PLEASE</u>. [IN] ((Right hand held up))

78   <u>I'm going to talk to this lady</u> [IN] ((right hand pointing to crowd)) right here and <u>no one</u>

79   <u>else. At this time, and then I'll try to take others</u>. [IN]

80   **Reporter:** (inaudible…) how many hand brakes were set, and were and of the hand

81   brakes set?

82   **Ed Burkhardt**: <u>We know</u> [REF] that the hand brakes were set throughout the five diesel

83   units because <u>we actually had the chance to see them and verify that</u> [DEF] [REF]. As for how

84   many handbrakes were set back in the train..uh the derailment started right behind the

85   diesel engines, and uh those <u>cars haven't been subjected to anybody inspecting them</u> [REF].

86   And when they when <u>we can get in there</u> [REF] to inspect them <u>I, uh, doubt</u> [EV] if we're

87   going to find much because they've been <u>destroyed</u> [EV].

88   **Reporter:** What is the company policy for how many hand brakes you can set?

89   (Some microphones are being held up by reporters crouching low near Ed Burkhardt.)

90   **Ed Burkhardt**: <u>We…we uh, have</u> [REF] a company policy that I don't have…uh that

91   information in my head, the locomotive engineer at the time told us that he followed that

92   policy. <u>I think it's uh questionable whether he did</u> [BL] .

93   (Question many people at the same time)

94   **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>NO…wait a minute now</u> [IN] ((left hand gestures)) <u>I'm going to talk</u> [IN] to

95   the lady (left hand touches forehead) in the…

96   **Reporter:** (inaudible) CNN

97   **Ed Burkhardt:** ((pointing to a place in front of him)) Lady in yellow, yes…

98   **Reporter**: (inaudible…) <u>How can you guarantee</u> [BL] that in the united states something

99   like this won't happen…I mean they are watching this story with interest. <u>They want</u>

100   [REF]…this train originated in the United States and it is going back to the United States

101   and <u>how can you guarantee</u> [BL] that your oil stock and <u>your tracks are safe?</u> [BL]

102   **Ed Burkhardt:** Uh, I think uh that in the aftermath of <u>any tragedy like we've we've had</u>

103   <u>here</u> [REF] [PAS]) that there's going to be a <u>complete investigation of how the safety can be</u>

104   <u>improved for these trains</u> [REF]. I..<u>I've referred to the fact</u> [EV] that for example leaving this

105 train unmanned was <u>standard industry policy</u> ^(DEF). Uh I <u>really question</u> ^(EV) right now

106 whether that uh that <u>should continue</u> ^(EV). And <u>I don't think it will</u>^(EV). It certainly <u>will not</u>

107 <u>on this railway</u> ^{(EV)(IN)}.

108 **Reporter:** What you are saying is that…(inaudible)

109 **Ed Burkhardt:** I'm saying that uh that rail safety can be improved by uh some policy

110 changes that uh <u>hopefully are going to be</u> ^(EV) <u>implemented as a result of this</u> ^(PAS).

111 (Questions loud many at once)

112 **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>NO NO…no.. I think I've answered…I'm going to allow this gentlemen</u>

113 <u>and then you come back</u> ^(IN) ((indicating another reporter in the crowd))

114 **Reporter:** Mr. Burkhardt you mentioned you are working with insurers

115 **Ed Burkhardt:** ((knocks microphones over)) oops huh huh , ((3 people in background

116 fix them))

117 **Reporter continues:** mentioned that you are working with your insurers, can you provide

118 some more details on that including who your insurers are and what you expect the

119 financial impact to be for your company to be able to continue.

120 **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>Well you're asking a lot of questions that I wish I had the answers to</u> ^(EVA)

121 because uh uh <u>we want to know this this ourselves</u>^(REF). <u>We have</u> ^(REF) a lot of insurance

122 and I'm not going to advise at this point what our limits are. I think <u>our limits</u> ^{(REF} are

123 <u>going to be tested</u> ^(PAS). I think no question they are our <u>insurers' capabilities</u> ^{(REF) (EV)} are

124 going to be tested. The insurance is uh held by uh a Canadian insurance company and uh

125 <u>I'll say who they are is private information</u> ^(DEF) They will have they will have uh

126 adjusters and <u>people working elbow to elbow with our people</u> ^(REF) and uh…the

127 community to address the uh to <u>permit claims to be filed</u> ^(REF) <u>to set up a process for the</u>

128 <u>handling of claims</u> ^(REF) and uh to do <u>our very best</u> ^{(EV)(REF)} <u>to meet our obligations</u> ^{(EV)(REF)}

129 here.

130 (Multiple questions yelled)

131 **Ed Burkhardt:** All right. <u>This..this gentlemen now</u>^(IN).((pointing in front of him))

132

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133   **Reporter:** (inaudible) of Quebec..Sir what about the people of Lac Mégnatic. What do

134   you have to say to them? They are <u>very very angry</u>[EM]. What happened here and the way

135   that you have…(inaudible)

136   **Ed Burkhardt:** well. You know <u>I think I responded to that already</u> [DEF], but I will again.

137   And that is it has my <u>utmost sympathy</u> [PAS] [REF] and uh <u>personally I'm devastated</u> [EM] by

138   <u>what happened here</u> [REF]. I would <u>feel</u> [EM] the same way if if uh <u>something like this</u> [REF]

139   happened in my community. Beyond that ((<u>shrugs</u> [EV])) <u>I don't know what to say</u> [PAS]

140   **Reporter:** (yelling) Do you understand why sir do you understand why they are <u>mad</u> [EM]

141   at you?

142   **Ed Burkhardt:** Uh……I think uh…<u>I don't think that's any secret</u> [DEF]. Yes I understand

143   why they are <u>mad</u> [EM] and because <u>I happen to be the chairman</u> [PAS] of the board of

144   directors of the company uh <u>I guess its my role</u> [PAS] to uh <u>to collect</u> [EV] the uh all this uh

145   this ((right hand gestures)) <u>criticism</u> [EV] and so on…

146   (Questions yelled)

147   **Reporter:** <u>Why are you here</u> [BL]? Why are you not in front of school where all the people

148   who were evacuated are <u>Why are you here</u> [BL] in the middle of the street where…

149   **Ed Burkhardt:** (interrupting reporter) All right, <u>may I answer that</u>? [IN] [DEF] <u>We came</u>

150   [REF] into town <u>our first effort</u> [PAS] [REF] was to get accreditation so that <u>we could go into the</u>

151   <u>yellow the yellow zone</u> [PAS] that accreditation <u>has been denied</u> [BL] because <u>the police</u>

152   <u>don't want</u> [BL] anymore people in the yellow zone. So <u>we have talked</u>[REF] to the mayor's

153   office <u>we have said</u> [REF] that <u>we would like</u> [REF] to hold a press conference <u>she says</u>

154   <u>put…do that through me</u> [BL] ….<u>I guess we're holding a press conference</u> [IN] ((left hand

155   gestures)) and <u>we're not doing it through her</u> [IN] [EV]. <u>We'll do this again if need be</u>[IN], and

156   <u>we also said</u> [REF] that <u>we'd like to go</u> [REF] <u>to where the people are so</u> [REF] that <u>we can</u>

157   <u>uh…answer their questions and uh, address them</u> [REF]. She wanted…

158   ((Police figure enters far background behind security tape))

159   **Reporter:** (interrupting) (Inaudible)

160   **Ed Burkhardt:** No…please…will you please <u>allow me to continue</u> [IN]? She uh, the

161   Mayor's office has our request in hand and we'll see <u>how she deals with it</u> [EV] but she

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162   wants us ^(REF) to do all of that through her office ^(EV). Which I understand. There's got to

163   be some uh, some measure of control^(Ev).

164   **Reporter:** You were able to sleep last night or not ^(EV)?

165   (Police figure leaves scene in far background)

166   **Ed Burkhardt:** ((Leans in to listen better))

167   **Reporter:** Did you sleep last night or not? ^(EV)

168   **Ed Burkhardt:** Uh…If you um..are tired enough you will sleep anywhere ^(EVA).

169   (Many questions yelled at once.)

170   **Reporter:** Sir if the people of Mégnatic and the Mayor want to build a new railway that

171   goes around the city would the company help them out financially to do that?

172   **Ed Burkhardt:** Uh, we'd like ^(REF) to uh, work on the plan for that. What can we do

173   financially ^(REF) uh, I'm not sure. That's, I mean that would not be an immediate uh long-

174   term project.

175   ((Police figure enters in far background))

176   (Questions)

177   **Ed Burkhardt:** NO…I think I already answered your questions ^(IN). (Right hand

178   gestures) I'm going to talk to this lady ^(IN) ((pointing)) here now.

179   **Reporter:** (inaudible) of Montreal. Mr. Burkhardt how do you ^(BL) explain the security of

180   the of your train. Your train failed failed ^(BL) many times. The train was not was not

181   parked on the (inaudible) there was no (inaudible) switch that was working. The security

182   brakes were not on probably or didn't work. It's failure on failure. ^(BL) How can you

183   explain ^(BL) that? How is it possible?

184   **Ed Burkhardt:** This was a uh failure of the brakes^{(PAS)(DEF)}. Uh…its very questionable

185   whether the uh the brakes…the hand brakes were properly applied on this train^{(BL)(EVA)}. As

186   a matter of fact, I'll say they weren't or we wouldn't have had this this incident^(BL). The

187   uh…

188   **Reporter**: (Interrupting him): Was it an employee that removed…the brakes?

189   **Ed Burkhardt:** Um, I don't think any employee removed uh, uh uh brakes that were set

190   uh they f… I think they failed ^(BL) to set the brakes in the first place.

191   **Reporter:** Okay.

192   **Ed Burkhardt:** And uh…

193   **Reporter:** (Interrupting) Sir there is a lot of <u>anger</u> [EM] in this town. I'm wondering if you

194   would address that. Some people in this school have gone so far as to call you a <u>murderer</u>

195   [BL]. I want to know how you would address that and also the fact that uh some were

196   wondering <u>why it took you so long to get into town</u>[BL]? Just first responders…

197   **Ed Burkhardt:** (interrupting) Were you were you..

198   **Reporter:** just why <u>it took so long for you</u> [BL] to come into town..

199   **Ed Burkhardt:** Were you here uh a few minutes ago <u>when I answered that</u>[EV] [DEF]?

200   **Reporter**: Sorry…I just want to verify why it took so long and how you respond to this

201   <u>extreme anger</u> [EM]?

202   **Ed Burkhardt:** Um, I understand the <u>extreme anger</u>[EM]. And uh, and uh…uh, beyond

203   that uh I uh <u>we'll do what we can to address the issues here</u> [REF]. Uh, <u>we can't roll back</u>

204   <u>time</u>[DEF] [REF)(PAS]. Uh, the… reason that I took a couple of days to show up is that I felt my

205   time was better done to (Police enters in background, lowers red police tape) organize our

206   <u>our on going efforts</u> [REF] [DEF] contractors, deal with the insurance companies, and I did an

207   awful lot of work with the press right from my office but frankly <u>it was easier</u> [DEF] than

208   running around here with a cell phone in my hand and trying to do it from here.

209   **Reporter:** You did email me and I received that, but

210   **Ed Burkhardt:** (interrupting) Well well you're uh…

211   **Reporter:** (interrupting) Do you understand the <u>anger</u> [EM]?

212   **Ed Burkhardt:** (Interrupting) I, uh un….

213   **Reporter:** (interrupting) Understand it..I mean do you see why they are so <u>angry</u> [EM] …

214   **Ed Burkhardt:** (Interrupting) If if I lived here <u>I would be very angry</u> [EM] with the

215   <u>management of this…of this company</u>[REF].

216   **Reporter:** Have visited the city? Have you been there, and seen the ?

217   **Ed Burkhardt:** (Interrupting) I have seen the pictures of it which uh…<u>there's lots of</u>

218   <u>pictures</u> [EV] …

219   **Reporter:** What are you <u>feeling</u> [EM] about it?

220   **Ed Burkhardt:** Its absolutely horrible. <u>Its like a uh war zone</u>[(MET)(EV)]. Its its…((shrugs))

221   **Reporter**: But you don't go down to help the local community.

222   **Ed Burkhardt:** I uh…

223   **Reporter:** (interrupting) their business…their business are <u>dying</u>[(MET)]…

224   **Ed Burkhardt:** (Interrupting) I said <u>I said quite the opposite</u> [(DEF)]

225   **Reporter:** besides that…

226   **Ed Burkhardt:** I <u>said quite the opposite</u>. [(DEF)] <u>Let me ((right hand gestures)) talk</u> [(IN)] to

227   this gentleman right here please. ((turning around to address other reporters-who are now

228   standing to his front right)) And then <u>then we'll get to others</u>[(IN)]. You're saying that we

229   have said that we're not going to help the business people in this town. <u>That is not</u>

230   <u>correct</u>[(DEF)]. <u>We want to set up a dialogue</u> [(REF)(PAS)] with <u>the people in this town</u> [(REF)] and

231   find out what they're, <u>what issues they have as a result of this</u> [(PAS)].

232   **Reporter:** <u>They need</u> [(REF)] quick answers. Now.

233   **Ed Burkhardt:** I…<u>I'd like</u> [(EV)] to give them a quick answer now, but we have to uh, we

234   have uh..to be set up with an office and <u>likely we've just lost the office</u> [(BL)] that <u>we've</u> [(REF)]

235   been using.

236   **Reporter:** Sir! Sir! Sir!

237   **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>I'm going to talk to this gentleman over here</u> [(IN)]. ((turns around))((Left

238   hand gestures)) ((left hand touches back of head.))

239   **Reporter:** You told my colleague last week that you had you had proof that sabotage was

240   involved. In other interviews you mentioned that you have that it's incontrovertible. That

241   <u>the firemen did not seem responsible</u> [(EV)]. So how do you uh how do you <u>justify</u>[(EV)] that?

242   **Ed Burkhardt:** Um, uh, <u>I don't use the word sabotage</u> [(DEF)]. But when <u>we first uh saw</u>

243   [(REF)] this locomotive which was on..on Saturday, and uh this was uh right in the aftermath

244   of this tragic derailment uh, <u>our people</u> [(REF)] noted that the uh the locomotive uh, um

245   ((reporters now standing behind him holding microphones)) emergency shut off uh

246   switch and been pulled and a number of circuit breakers and other apparatus in the cab

247   had been turned off. Uh <u>they said</u> [(REF)] this locomotive had been tampered with. OK this is

248   a matter of definition of what the word tamper means ((Left hand gestures)). Somebody

249 tampered with it. Uh, <u>we later</u> ^{(REF)(DEF)} found out..<u>we didn't know at the time</u>^{(REF)(DEF)}, that

250 uh, that it was the Naunts fire department.

251 Did they do this maliciously or on purpose? <u>Absolutely not</u>^(EV). They did what they

252 thought was correct. <u>It was an important causal factor</u> ^(PAS) in the in this whole thing^(REF).

253 Do we hold them responsible? No…

254 **Reporter:** Sir…(interrupting)

255 **Ed Burkhardt:** I can't…<u>I've answered that question any number of times</u> ^(DEF)and I…

256 **Reporter:** (interrupting) Sir! Sir! <u>Your company has had ten times the average uh</u>

257 <u>number of accidents per mile</u> ^{(EV).} million miles travel in the states would you describe

258 your company as a <u>low cost sort of company</u> ^(EV) …

259 **Ed Burkhardt:** The uh, the statistic that you refer to is..<u>is an apple to oranges</u> ^(DEF) uh,

260 uh, comparison. Uh most regional and short line railways don't have the train miles the

261 hundreds of thousands of train miles everyday that the big railways do. <u>So our statistic</u>

262 <u>about minor derailments uh come out higher</u> ^(DEF). Uh <u>we</u> ^(REF) do have minor derailments,

263 every railway in the country. These are usually in the yards, there on the industry tracks,

264 there are locomotives with a pair of wheels off somewhere, uh….uh…in winter time <u>we</u>

265 ^(REF) uh <u>derail on the ice going back into an industry</u> ^(DEF)…

266 **Reporter**: (interrupting) But these seem to be <u>very low cost, very low cost</u> ^(BL) train

267 company…

268 **Ed Burkhardt:** Well MMA its uh operated in a <u>very difficult market</u> ^(DEF) so its got to be

269 in <u>our objectives to hold our costs down</u> ^{(REF) (DEF)}.

270 **Reporter**: Sir, can you see your company ever operating in this town again?

271 ((More reporters stand behind him))

272 **Ed Burkhardt:** Uh…

273 **Reporter:** (interrupting) Like running a train through this town again? Do you think

274 that's going to happen?

275 **Ed Burkhardt:** Uh…<u>I would think so</u>. ^(IN)

276 (Multiple questions)

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277   **Reporter:** …Are you <u>afraid</u>, (EM)   are you <u>afraid</u> (EM) the company might go bankrupt after

278   this?

279   ((Some reporters move into the background behind E.B., holding microphones instead of

280   keeping them on the podium))

281   **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>Uh, everybody everybody in the world of business always, that has a</u>

282   <u>business of any size, thinks that there could be occasions under which they could go</u>

283   <u>bankrupt</u> (PAS)(REF) (DEF). I <u>worry</u>(EM) about bankruptcy, uh we went through a uh very

284   difficult period in the aftermath of the big financial meltdown um 2008… ((more

285   reporters move in behind him))

286   ((more reporters converge behind Ed Burkhardt))

287   **Reporter: (interrupting)** But everybody doesn't have have <u>such crisis</u> (EV)

288   **Ed Burkhardt:** Well uh, but everybody doesn't have <u>such insurance backup</u> (DEF). So if

289   you can tell me how uh ultimately how many claims <u>we'll have to pay</u>(REF) and can

290   compare that with <u>our insurance coverage</u> (REF) then I can answer your question. But I

291   don't any of that information and <u>I can only speculate</u>.(DEF)

292   (Questions yelled at same time)

293   **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>No no I think I've answered your question already</u>. (IN) ((left hand

294   gestures)) ((Left hand points)) ((Left hand goes to back of head)) No.

295   Questions:

296   **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>I'll take this gentleman here</u>. (IN)

297   **Reporter:** CBC News: <u>How can you imagine your company</u> (EV) operating in this town

298   again..<u>after what's happened</u>(EV). How is <u>that possible</u>? (EV)

299   ((more reporters join behind the podium, behind Burkhardt))

300   **Ed Burkhardt:** A railway runs through this town. ((Left hand gestures)) Uh…as a ….<u>we</u>

301   (REF) have a number of shippers that depend on rail service. <u>We</u> (REF) have one right in

302   town. ((more camera men and reporters entire behind him)) Uh Tofessa, it's a very good

303   customer. <u>These guys</u>,(REF) uh have to have rail service. And…or else <u>they are</u> (REF) going

304   to lay <u>their people</u> (REF) off and uh….have more problems than <u>we we create</u>(REF). So <u>we</u>

305   <u>hope</u> (REF) that when the investigations are completed that <u>we uh, that we can go in</u> (REF)

306   and start to uh, to uh to make a path through uh the wreckage, ((More cameras move to

307   behind the podium)) later <u>we'll clean</u> (REF) up all of the wrecked cars, and build track back

308   and start to run trains through here again. Very carefully I might tell you and and I'll say

309   something beyond that…<u>those trains are not going uh to change crews anywhwere</u> (IN) in

310   the Mégnatic area anymore. <u>We're going</u> (REF) to go right through east to west and west to

311   east and uh …and uh…

312   **Reporter:** (interrupting) Would you help lac-Mégnatic rebuild these tracks outside the

313   city centre?

314   **Ed Burkhardt:** Uh, ((left hand scratches right cheek)) <u>we'd like to look at that project</u>

315   (REF) (PAS) and what kind of help <u>we can</u> (REF) do is going to depend on <u>our financial</u>

316   <u>capabilities</u>(REF). <u>We'd like, initially we'd like to work on the plan</u> (REF) with the mayor's

317   office.

318   **Questions**. SIR! SIR!

319   **Ed Burkhardt:** NOW now, <u>wait a minute now</u> (IN), I'm going to uh ((Looks around in

320   audience))….no…I'm ….. you have uh, <u>you have asked too many questions</u>(BL)

321   …uh…who do I?.....I'll ask this ((left hand points)) gentleman ((Left hand touches back

322   of head)) back here again…

323   **Reporter:** ….the number of people who are dead…at least fifteen…there's dozens of

324   bodies that are still missing do you think at the <u>very least you owe an apology</u> (BL) to this

325   town for what happened?

326   **Ed Burkhardt:** I……I…<u>I hope you have heard my apology uh about a dozen times in</u>

327   <u>the last ten minutes</u>(DEF). I'll issue it one more time. <u>We owe an…we are making an abject</u>

328   <u>apology to the people in this town</u>. (REF)(PAS) Uh…

329   **Reporter:** (interrupting) How much are <u>you worth</u>? (EV)

330   **Ed Burkhardt:** (leaning in) Say this again?

331   **Reporter:** How <u>much are you worth</u>? (EV)

332   **Ed Burkhardt:** How much am I worth? Uh, <u>a whole lot less</u> (EV) (EVA) than I was uh, on

333   Saturday but the fact of the matter is that <u>I'm not a particularly wealthy</u> (EV) guy.

334   **Reporter:** How much is that?

335   **Ed Burkhardt:** I don't know, I don't add it up. [EVA]

336   **Reporter:** A quick follow up on the hand brake. On the hand brake sir. You mentioned

337   the hand brake wasn't properly applied. Provide us with more detail on that.

338   **Ed Burkhardt:** The hand brake <u>we know</u> [REF]…<u>we know</u>[REF] the hand brakes were

339   applied properly on the locomotive. The fact that when the air brakes released on the

340   locomotive the train ran away would indicate that the hand brakes on the balance of the

341   train <u>were not properly applied</u>. [BL]

342   ((Camera men arrange cameras behind the podium, behind Burkhardt))

343   Questions. Sir!

344   **Reporter:** This was your engineer. He's <u>your employee</u>. [BL] That didn't apply the

345   brakes?

346   **Ed Burkhardt:**:It was <u>our employee</u> [REF] [BL] that was responsible for setting uh an

347   <u>adequate</u> [BL]number of handbrakes on this train as well as the uh air brake.

348   **Reporter:** Did <u>you</u> [BL] (inaudible).

349   **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>Did we</u>?? [REF]

350   **Reporter:** the engineer. Suspend him?

351   **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>He's not working now</u>[BL]. He is uh, under investigation. He's not

352   working.

353   **Reporter:** Is it suspension or leave???

354   **Ed Burkhardt:** Did <u>we train</u> [REF] him? He worked for <u>us</u> [REF] for many years. He's a guy

355   that had a uh, completely clear safety record up <u>until Saturday</u>[BL] [DEF].

356   **Reporter:** Is it a crime?

357   **Ed Burkhardt:** Um, again. ((turns away from podium to address reporters who have

358   gathered behind him)) ((More reporters gather in this area behind the podium and behind

359   Burkhardt)) <u>I'm going to respond to that question again</u>. [DEF][IN] <u>I am not a lawyer</u>. [DEF]

360   [EVA] You could uh run a whole course in law school on what constitutes criminal

361   negligence and so on…Uh ((<u>shrugs</u> [EVA])) I don't know. I can't draw the line between

362   <u>carelessness and criminal negligence</u>. [EVA]

363   **Reporter:** Sir can you give us more information about your insurance policy?

364   **Ed Burkhardt:**:I'm I'm going to talk to this gentleman here first and then I'll get to [IN]

365   ((right hand gestures behind him)) you.

366   **Reporters:** (Inaudible)

367   **Reporter:** Can you just turn this way [IN] because the cameras back there…((someone

368   taps his shoulder from behind and points))

369   **Reporter:** Can you just face that way [IN] please?

370   **Reporter:** ……..(incomprehensible)…if criminal negligence could be found what do you

371   think of that?

372   **Ed Burkhardt:** I uh, Understand exactly what the uh why the the police are considering

373   criminal charges for this thing [REF] . And I think that the process they are going through is

374   to try to uh investigate this thing to a level where they can decide based on their standards

375   whether they think a criminal prosecution is necessary.

376   **Reporter:** and If that's the case?

377   **Ed Burkhardt:** If that's the case, then let the chips fall where they may [PAS].

378   **Reporter:** Aren't you scared? [EM]

379   **Reporter:** Sir! Sir! Can we just get you to come back here? [IN]

380   **Ed Burkhardt:** I'm going to ((moving back to podium)) I'm going to answer ((moving

381   back toward podium)) some of the questions behind me….

382   **Reporter:** Can you give us some more information about your insurance policy…is it a

383   perfect policy [EV] in that kind of …case?

384   **Ed Burkhardt:** The insurance policy is uh..a very good policy [DEF] and its got uh, the

385   insurance people know all about it (yelling in background [EM]) they're uh, they're closely

386   involved in uh with us, and they have representatives [REF] here uh we'll uh, the question is

387   is the higher limit adequate? [EVA]

388   **Reporter:** Will someone who speaks fluently French [BL] will be with you when you visit

389   the victims?

390   **Ed Burkhardt:** Uh, yes. Yes.

391   **Reporter:** Yes?

392   **Ed Burkhardt:** Yes.

393   **Reporter**: So you're promising that you'll visit the victims..?

394   **Ed Burkhardt:** I would <u>like to</u>, (EV) ((turning away from podium)) I would <u>like</u> (EV) to visit

395   where these people are. <u>I'm not sure I'm going to get an approval from the Mayor's

396   office</u> (BL) to do this.

397   **Reporter:** Why not?

398   **Ed Burkhardt:** inaudible) It <u>won't be me denying it, it will be the mayor's office</u>. (BL)

399   **Reporter:** The Mayor can't deny you from meeting with the victims of this crash. You

400   can meet with the victims yourself if they want to meet with you.

401   **Ed Burkhardt:** Okay. Uh, <u>I find my movements around town to be pretty constricted</u> (BL)

402   by the uh where the police line are.

403   BACKUP…..BACKUP….

404   **Ed Burkhardt:** Unintelligible………..<u>I would actually like</u> (EV) to go out and to meet

405   <u>these people</u>. (REF)

406   Questions (inaudible)

407   **Reporter:** (inaudible)..for six hours or next days?

408   **Ed Burkhardt:** I will be in town uh…today and tomorrow.

409   **Reporter:** Did you come already at Lac-Mégnatic before?

410   **Ed Burkhardt:** I've been in Lac-Mégnatic a number of times over the years.

411   **Questions** (Inaudible)

412   **Ed Burkhardt:** ((turns to reporter, back to podium)) In fact I've stayed here overnight

413   and I've gone through on trains I know the area <u>not well, but somewhat well</u>. (EV)

414   **Question:** Just to clarify on the engineer sir. Are you saying it's the <u>engineer's fault</u>? (BL)

415   **Ed Burkhardt:** ((turns back to podium)) I'm saying that uh, <u>it seems that adequate hand

416   brakes were not set on this train and it was the engineer's responsibility to set them</u>. (BL)

417   (REF) So uh, in that case…

418   **Reporter:** (interrupting) So its <u>his fault</u>? (BL) So it's <u>his fault</u>? (BL)

419   **Ed Burkhardt:** uh in that case….well <u>you'd have to say were the standards that were

420   applied adequate?</u> (EVA) (REF)

421   **Reporter:** Has <u>he been suspended from his job</u>? (BL)

422   **Ed Burkhardt:** He has been suspended <u>he is not working</u>. [(BL)]

423   Questions (inaudible)

424   **Reporter:** Why don't <u>you just fire him</u>? [(EV)]

425   **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>We don't</u> [(REF)] summarily fire people and <u>we have to</u> [(REF)] go through a

426   process with the union. I can tell you that the…

427   **Reporters: (interrupting) questions (inaudible)**

428   **Reporter:** without pay sir? Without pay…

429   **Ed Burkhardt:** Uh <u>he's not being paid</u>. [(EV)]

430   **Reporter:** Sir do you think that a …..

431   **Ed Burkhardt:** (Continuing) <u>I don't think</u> [(EV)] that <u>he'll be back working for us</u>[(BL)]. That's

432   my <u>personal opinion</u>. [(DEF)]

433   **Reporter** Do you think that a two-man crew could have avoided the accident?

434   **Ed Burkhardt:** I don't know how….you know I've been around the rail industry all my

435   life and with a two-man crew uh, let me tell you how it normally works. The engineer sits

436   on the engine and the conductor goes back and applies hand brakes. With a one man crew

437   the engineer gets off the engine and he applies the hand brakes. And uh, he said he did he

438   uh…uh..the trains have been parked at this location every day for as long as I can

439   remember. Probably back to long before <u>we took this railway</u> [(REF)] over from back when it

440   was Canadian Pacific. I think <u>they probably</u> [(REF)] parked trains on that.

441   **Questions**. (inaudible)

442   **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>NO. NO ….please</u>….[(IN)]

443   **Reporter:** do <u>you plan</u> [(BL)] on using one-man crews again in the future?

444   **Ed Burkhardt:** <u>We actually think</u> [(REF)(DEF)] the one man crews are safer ((Ed Burkhardt is

445   now surrounded by reporters holding their microphones in front of him)) than two man

446   crews because there is less less exposure on the uh for employees and less distraction.

447   **Reporter**: Why has the engineer been suspended?

448   **Ed Burkhardt:** The engineer has been suspended. [(BL)]

449   **Reporter:** Why has he been suspended?

450 **Ed Burkhardt:** Because for for right now for investigation and the fact is that he is uh,

451 under the police control [(EV)]. He's not, as I understand in uh, in jail, but uh, the police

452 have uh, talked about prosecuting him [(EV)] and they want [(REF)] him staying where he is.

453 **Questions** (?) (inaudible)

454 **Reporter:** If he did nothing wrong[(EV)], why did he.. why is he suspended?

455 **Ed Burkhardt:** Why, why has the company suspended him?

456 **Reporter:** Yes if he did nothing wrong[(EV)]…

457 **Ed Burkhardt:** (interrupting) Be-…I….

458 **Reporter:** did he do something wrong?[(EV)]

459 **Ed Burkhardt:** I...think he did something wrong [(BL)(DEF)]. And if you think I said he did

460 nothing wrong[(DEF)] then you haven't been listening here[(BL) (DEF)].

461 (Questions) (Inaudible)

462 **Reporter:** Why would he have not applied the hand brakes? What's your theory?[(EV)]

463 **Ed Burkhardt:** Because, uh why would he have not, uh, it's hard to explain [(EV)] why

464 somebody didn't do something, rather than, uh…he applied …we think he applied some

465 handbrakes, and the question is did he apply enough [(BL)] of them? He told us he applied uh

466 eleven hand brakes, and uh, our general feeling [(REF)] is that that's…NOW…that that is not

467 true[(BL)]. Initially we took him at his word. [(DEF) (REF)]

468 (Questions) (Inaudible)

469 **Police officer:** Thank you very much. As you said we have accepted to meet with us so

470 we have investigators that would like to meet with you[(EV)]. ((Puts arm about Ed Burkhardt

471 to lead him away)) [(IN)]

Transcription Conventions
(?) talk too obscure to transcribe.
Becau- cut off, interruption of a sound he says.
LOUD Emphasis sounds
? rising intonation
(Inaudible): indicates speech that is difficult to make out.
. A full stop indicates a stopping fall in town. It does not necessarily indicate the end of a sentence.
Speaker ID – for example A: - one or more capital letters followed by colour.
-…-: indicates a pause
(( )) : a description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity

Key:
BL: Blame
IN: Influence
EV: evaluation of self/organization (positive)
PAS: Passivization, omission of actors
REF: Referential vagueness (ambiguous reference to participants/victims)
DEF: Defensive
MET: Metaphor/Simile
EM: Emotion
EVA: Evasion

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