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The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Evaluating the role of #MeToo public apologies in western
rape culture

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ABSTRACT

The #MeToo movement brought an outpouring of public apologies from famous men across various professional sectors of western society in 2017. By evaluating discourse that surrounds public apologies instigated by #MeToo, this research contributes to the ongoing exposure of men in high-ranking institutional positions who have sexually assaulted women and other marginalized individuals. Its foundations stem from theories that emphasize public discourse as a site of struggle for the contestation of gender and power, as well as the role patriarchal discourse has in reinforcing rape culture. Through a Critical Discourse Analysis of apologies from three powerful men in Hollywood supported by a Thematic Analysis of reactions from Twitter, this paper examines the role each apology played in legitimating a patriarchal culture of sexual assault. The research argues that in order to maintain a favorable self-image, each statement displays a prominent amount of apology strategies and patriarchal rhetoric, however this does not mean the apologies as discursive formations lack the capacity to challenge rape culture. In fact, an analysis of reactions to the apologies shows that each statement carries varying levels of disruption based on its ability to generate dialogue that either reinforced or confronted patriarchal discourse.

1 INTRODUCTION

On October 5th 2017, the New York Times released a report detailing almost three decades of sexual abuse by film executive producer Harvey Weinstein (Kantor and Twohey, 2017). The initial investigation identified eight settlements between various women and Weinstein, but by the end of the month, a list published on Twitter cited at least 82 women who had been 'sexually assaulted, raped, and molested' by Weinstein since the 1980's (Argento, 2017). This scandal became a tipping point for the culture of sexual assault that characterizes professional settings in which an overwhelming amount of positions of power are occupied by men. Dozens of accusations emerged against men in media, politics, business, and arts and entertainment industries such as Hollywood, where 83% of all directors, executive producers, producers, writers, editors, and cinematographers for the top 250 domestic grossing films in 2016 were men (Lauzen, 2017: 1). The notion of exposing the rampant sexual misconduct that powerful men engage in was coined 'the Weinstein Effect' (Stelter, 2017) and is still ongoing.

In the wake of the Weinstein scandal, actress Alyssa Milano posted on Twitter 'If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet' (Milano, 2017). This started an international multi-platform campaign using the hashtag '#MeToo', a phrase coined by Black activist Tarana Burke when she started the 'Me Too movement' in 2006 (Garcia, 2017). Expanding from Burke's grassroots campaign, #MeToo along with the Weinstein Effect laid the grounds for addressing the widespread rape culture that pervades western society.

In considering the 'culture of sexual assault' or 'rape culture', this paper utilizes an expansive understanding of 'culture' as an invisible 'set of informal norms and rules of behavior' that is shared by members of a society (Breger, 2014: 40). Interpretations of sexual assault have evolved throughout time and place, but the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) gives the following definition: 'sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim' ('Sexual assault', 2018). This unwarranted sexual violence remains prevalent

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

worldwide—affecting one out of every six women in America (ibid)—with one key player working to preserve this culture through institutional discourse: the patriarchy.

Bell Hooks provides an interpretation of the patriarchy as a system in which males are ‘inherently dominating [and] superior’ and thus ‘supports, promotes, and condones sexist violence’ (Hooks, 2010: 2) as a means of maintaining male domination. Through this understanding, sexual violence like that of Weinstein has become institutionalized in western patriarchal establishments, many of which have been formerly studied—educational systems (Schwartz and DeKeseredy, 1997; Carr and VanDeusen, 2004), the Catholic church (Mercado, Tallon and Terry, 2008), and the military (Alison, 2007).

This paper will focus on a patriarchal culture of sexual assault in which acts of sexual aggression are normalized through discourse. There is no doubt that the #MeToo movement has spurred an upsurge in public apologies for acts of sexual misconduct, but the question then becomes: how legitimate are these apologies when delivered under a certain pressure from the wider public to set right past wrongs? In order to evaluate the role that discursive strategies play in apologies from powerful men in a patriarchal institution, I will use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine three highly publicized apologies from prominent figures in the arts and entertainment industry. A set of Twitter reactions to each apology will also be considered using Thematic Analysis (TA) to evaluate the public’s reception and determine to what extent these discursive formations were seen as authentic. The first section of this paper will consider existing literature on public discourse as it relates to the patriarchy, rape culture, and public apologies as well as the theoretical framework inspired by the works of Foucault and feminist scholars. Secondly, I will discuss my research design and justification for why CDA and TA are the most applicable means of analysis. The final section of this paper will discuss my analysis and results, in which it will be argued that the three apologies hold differing roles in legitimating and disrupting rape culture.

2 THEORETICAL CHAPTER

Three relevant bodies of literature will be evaluated in the following section to properly assess the #MeToo apologies under the sphere of patriarchal discourse. The first is concerned with public discourse as a site of struggle over gender and power dynamics. This will then be considered in a discussion inspired by literature from feminist theorists about the ideological making of the patriarchy as a producer of rape culture. These ideological considerations will then be utilized to evaluate past research on apology discourse, specifically public apologies, their tactics and implications.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 A site of struggle: Power and gender in public discourse

As theorized by Foucault, discourse refers to ‘ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them’ (Weedon, 1996: 108). While western discourse has been used as a tool to construct institutionalized ideologies such as the patriarchy, it also serves as a site of struggle for the contestation of ‘gender’ and power. Foucault recognized this, viewing discourse as not ‘irreducible to the language’ (Foucault, 2002: 54), but instead as a force that is pervasive in all conceptions of knowledge and power. This ever-present struggle of power in discourse can be evaluated through ‘discursive formations’ (ibid: 41), which are more literally described by Fairclough as ‘points of entry’ for qualitative research to examine ‘how particular discourses emerge as dominant’ (Fairclough, 2013: 19). Although countless studies have utilized CDA in application to public, political and gendered discourse (Van Dijk, 1997), fewer have explored discourse as the intersection of all three of these topics.

Past literature that has studied discourse in the public sphere mainly considered political discourse such as the rhetoric of U.S. presidents (Campbell and Jamieson, 1990; Hart, 1984;

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

Snyder and Higgins, 1990; Stuckey, 1992; Windt, 1983, 1990), political speeches (Sharififar and Rahimi, 2015; Wang, 2010; Sipra and Rashid, 2013; McClay, 2017), journalism (Richardson, 2009), and apologies from political figures and institutions, which will be discussed in a later section (Ancarno, 2015; Schumann and Ross, 2010; Harris, Grainger and Mullany, 2006). Although CDA has been used in many different academic fields, political discourse is most relevant to this dissertation due to its inherently public nature. Political discourse deals with the 'reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination' (Van Dijk, 1997: 11) between politicians and their publics, and as such falls in line with a view of discourse similar to that of Fairclough and Foucault. Political discourse is oftentimes an act of persuasion (Chaiken and Eagly, 1983); speech tactics such as the strategic opposition of 'them' versus 'us' (Van Dijk, 1997: 34) can create sentiments of solidarity or polarization in audience members, while word choice, sequencing, and frequency emphasizes key words or phrases (Van Dijk, 1997: 34; McClay, 2017). This research on the strategies and functions of political discourse can be applied in a public sphere to apologies with equal importance.

The intersection of gender and political discourse has only been touched upon (Ross, 2014; Särnhult, 2014; Sriwimon and Zilli, 2017), but the realm of discourse under gender and feminist theory has been studied substantially. Research utilizing feminist CDA (FCDA) and feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis (FPDA) to look at language in gender follows post-structuralism's emphasis on discourse as a site of struggle (Lazar, 2007: 144) as well as Foucault's idea that power is produced through discourse that validates its application. Similar to CDA, Lazar's FPDA has been used in a variety of contexts, including news media (Barát, 2005), and workplace (Holmes, 2005; Kendall and Tannen, 1997) and educational settings (Remlinger, 2005) to uncover and challenge patriarchal power structures (Lazar, 2005). Holmes' work on discourse and gender in the workplace is especially relevant considering her focus on "naturalized' conversational strategies through which power (and gender) relations are constructed and reinforced in [...] workplace interactions' (Holmes, 2005: 3). Holmes' research suggested that gender stereotypes often make an 'unacknowledged contribution'

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

(ibid: 56) to what men versus women deem appropriate behavior and speech in workplace settings, with more lenient social rules in place for men. This work is especially relevant in contextualizing the apologies of the three transgressors in this paper, since all three men address harmful acts of misbehavior against women or those in subordinate positions in the workplace.

Wodak postulated that the western system of language is 'a means of legitimating male structures' (1997: 10). In accordance with this, Henley and Kramarae (1991) proposed a 'dominance' approach to the study of gender in discourse, which focuses on male dominance in discursive practice and supports the concept that "[d]oing power' is often a way of 'doing gender' too' (Coates, 1993: 13). This approach is important with regards to my research since it focuses on power operating through discourse to reinforce patriarchal constructions such as a culture of sexual assault. Considering previous research on political public discourse and discourse as a site of struggle for gender and power, this dissertation hopes to analyze all parts of language 'from its structure to the conditions of its use [...] to detect [...] the subtle means by which the edifice of male supremacy has been assembled' (Spender, 1980: 5).

3.2 The ideological makings of the patriarchy and rape culture

Purvis and Hunt's careful distinction and linkage between discourse and ideology provides foundation for the concept of the 'patriarchy'. Purvis and Hunt believe ideology comes into play when people 'become conscious of their conflicting interests and struggle over them' (Purvis and Hunt, 1993: 476) while discourse refers to the mode or mechanism through which participants formulate and express ideology. Ideologies are 'mental frameworks' (Hall, 1986: 59) that are characterized as innate and result from discourse (Purvis and Hunt, 1993). Therefore, rape culture, as theorized here, can be seen as an ideological effect of the patriarchy, an ideology that is discursively formulated and reinforced. The term 'patriarchy' has been previously defined, but before reviewing the relevant qualitative research, it's important to recognize that a theory of the patriarchy should not be essentialized; there are, of course,

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

'historical and cross-cultural variations in gender inequality' which have been studied under an intersectional scope (Walby, 1989: 213; Beechey, 1979; Carby, 1982; Hooks, 1984; Molyneux, 1979; Rowbotham, 1981; Sargent, 1981; Segal, 1987). The culture of the patriarchy has been studied across the board from pornography (MacKinnon, 1989) to domestic violence (Bettman, 2009; Sugarman and Frankel, 1996; Dutton, 1994); it has been most usefully interpreted for this paper through institutionally- rooted discourse (Walby, 1990: 227; Gilfoyle, Wilson, and Brown 1993).

This research focuses on one ideology that stems from institutionally-rooted patriarchal discourse: rape culture (this phrase is used interchangeably with 'culture of sexual assault'). Ample work suggests that rape culture is a product of the patriarchy that is used to reinforce patriarchal discourse (Rogers, 1998; Pagelow, 1984; Walby, 1990; Yllö and Bograd, 1988; Fadnis, 2017). In a rape culture, 'sexual violence is a fact of life' (Fletcher, Buchwald, and Roth, 1993: 2); this paper hopes to problematize this notion by recognizing the way discourse legitimizes and disrupts rape culture. Matoesian (1993) and Conley and O'Barr's (1998) work shows 'talk's' role in re-victimizing rape victims (Ehrlich, 2001: 1). What gives patriarchal discourse—specifically discourse reinforcing rape culture—its power is its 'embodiment in particular institutional settings' (Ehrlich, 2001: 2). This study's particular institutional setting focuses on Hollywood and the entertainment industry, and is considered a case study for a larger institutionalized network of the patriarchy. Jovanovski and Tyler's (2018) usage of FCDA in examination of sex buyer reviews of legal brothels demonstrates the pivotal role language plays in normalizing sexual violence.

Another body of literature concerned with patriarchal discourse has focused on the potential of social media platforms, specifically Twitter, as a place of activity for debating and negotiating gender and power. Demirhan and Çakır-Demirhan's study on Twitter's role in the production of patriarchal discourse about women shows Twitter can 'generate discourses which can be functional for [...] dominant powers [and] opponent struggles as well' (2015: 308). However, they concluded that social media's capacity to highlight traditionally subordinate

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

voices is not enough, and therefore Twitter ‘perpetuates the patriarchal discourse on social roles of women’ (ibid: 310) rather than successfully challenging them. Other studies utilizing discourse analysis to address rape culture argue that Twitter provides women and subordinate groups the opportunity to ‘connect, share and find solidarity through tweeting experiences of rape culture’ (Keller, Mendes, and Ringrose, 2018: 33; Rentschler, 2014); however, they still stress that further exploration is needed regarding the ‘radical potential of digital culture’ (Keller, Mendes, and Ringrose, 2018: 34). Past research on Twitter’s potential to reinforce or challenge dominant ideologies can help show how this study’s TA supports the analysis of the apologies’ roles in rape culture.

A 2018 paper considers the specific case of Harvey Weinstein in the context of American rape culture climate, arguing that the explicit effort of ‘Weinstein and of patriarchal institutions in general [...] to shut women up, especially the victims of sexual abuse, is [...] critical to rape culture’ (Peters and Besley, 2018: 6). This research provides justification for examining discourse’s role in dominant patriarchal cultures.

3.3 The language of public apologies

Due to the sudden increase in public apologies over the past few decades, some scholars claim we have entered ‘the age of apology’ (Brooks, 1999; Gibney *et al.*, 2008; Kampf, 2009). Existing literature theorizes the potential reasons for this trend, one suggestion being a growth in victimized groups’ political influence (Schumann and Ross, 2010; Okimoto, Wenzel, and Hornsey, 2015). This argument supports resisting discourse that is used as a tool to reinforce traditional dominant institutions, and serves as a foundational premise for this paper. Much of the groundwork that current scholars in the field draw from originates from Goffman’s work on the apology as a form of remedial interchange (1967). Goffman believed that a person will engage in remedial activity—strategies such as justifications, excuses, denials, and apologies—when he or she feels the need to reinforce a more favorable self-image. This concept of ‘face’ or public self- image was later utilized by Brown and Levinson in their

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

politeness theory, which theorizes that face-threatening acts engender two types of face: positive or negative (1987). Positive face is most relevant to this research as it refers to 'the positive consistent self-image' that participants claim to win others' admiration (Levinson and Brown, 1987: 61); it is the desire to keep positive face that motivates apologizers to employ certain apology tactics. This concept frames one of the study's goals to evaluate if and how the #MeToo public apologies could be an attempt at maintaining 'face' rather than genuine apologies.

In light of this theoretical foundation, an apology can be defined as a 'speech act' (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) that the perpetrator performs to 'admit to fault and responsibility' for a wrongdoing (Shoshana and Olshtain, 1984: 156). Similar to public discourse, public apologies have been mostly studied in the political realm (Kampf, 2009, 2013; Harris, Grainger, and Mullany, 2006; Schumann and Ross, 2010; Ancarno, 2015) as well as in law and justice (Bolivar, Aertsen, and Vanfraechem, 2015; Robbennolt, 2003). Political discourse's public nature allows for the audience to consume and contest speech acts, like apologies, in a mediation fashion.

Even more applicably, Cerulo and Ruane's work on celebrity apologies as 'media events' focused on discursive styles and sequential structures to decode what effects each type of discursive sequencing had on consumer perceptions (Cerulo and Ruane, 2014: 125). One of two types of sequences identified by Cerulo and Ruane are used by all three of the perpetrators's apologies in this paper: offender-driven sequences, which concentrate on the apologizer's 'characteristics, feelings, or intentions' (ibid: 131), and doublecasting sequences, in which the apologizer establishes themselves as both 'victim and sinner [...] to bring ambiguity to the interpretation of the wrongdoing' (ibid: 132). Zohar Kampf is a key scholar in research on apologies, and has identified how common discursive strategies in apologies function to minimize responsibility by creating 'public (non-)apologies' (Kampf, 2009). The apology tactics employed in the CDA portion of this paper were taken from research undergone by Kampf and similar scholars (Steele, 1988; Gill, 2000; Lakoff, 2001; Boyd, 2011; Kampf, 2009, 2013; Smith, 2011; Schumann, 2014).

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

Literature on the topic of gender in public apologies is unfortunately scarce (Holmes, 1989; Park, 2000; Schumann and Ross, 2010; MacLachlan, 2013). However, the rarity of existing apologies for ‘gendered harms’ (MacLachlan, 2013: 131) does not downplay the importance of gender in revealing apologies’ ‘power to challenge or reinforce problematic [...] stories of [...] sexual and gender violence’ (ibid: 246). This small yet significant body of literature directly ties into work on institutionally-rooted patriarchal discourse. Since the Weinstein Effect has incited an explosion in apologies by male celebrities, examining these speech acts in the context of patriarchal institutions was undergone through the example of auteur apologism, which refers to the notion of excusing male artists from acts of misbehavior with the rationale that ‘a problematic identity is a prerequisite for creative genius’ (Marghitu, 2018: 492). This attitude is rooted in the same institutional ideology that cultivates rape culture in western society as a sustainer of the patriarchy. Marghitu stresses that the concept of ‘auteur’ is a discursively created and reinforced ‘product of systematic, cultural, and industrial inequality’ that feminist research continues to challenge (ibid: 493).

3.4 Conceptual framework

This research’s focus on public discourse is framed by Foucault’s theories on discourse and power. Considering language as both a system of rules and an act of performance (Saussure, 1983) sheds light on the power dynamics at play in the apologies, especially considering the speaker’s status in society, and why that status gives him the right ‘to proffer such a discourse’ (Foucault, 2002: 55).

Foucault’s focus on ‘relations of power’ (1980: 114-15) in discourse is critical, as there are systematic levels of power at play with the issuance of patriarchal rhetoric in a public sphere. Viewing discourse as a process in which ‘the production of knowledge through language’ (Hall, 1997: 44) takes place allows my analysis to focus on public apologies in terms of the knowledge and power they produce and reproduce. This, in turn, means considering the context—viewing the apologies not just as language, but as ‘discursive formations’ (Cousins

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

and Hussain, 1984: 84-5) from high-ranking males who have used their power positions over subordinate individuals in a shared institution. This paper adheres to Foucault's belief that power operates 'at all levels of social life' (Foucault, 2002) in considering apology discourse, which is why audience reactions are studied to come to a conclusion on the role each apology plays in a patriarchal culture of sexual assault. Goffman's 'facework' and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory are also crucial to evaluate the authenticity of the apologies by considering how TA of the reactions sheds light on the analysis of the power dynamics at play (Goffman, 1967; Levinson and Brown, 1987).

Foucault offers a framework for understanding how the gender binary and patriarchy are aspects of western societies that act as mechanisms of control (Phelan, 1989: 427). Adopting a poststructuralist point of view, discourse is a 'historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs' that are analyzed to understand 'how social relations are conceived' (Scott, 1988: 35); many poststructural feminists adopt this viewpoint to analyze how the patriarchy and its byproducts—namely rape culture, which many feminists view as 'political use of violence [to maintain] patriarchal power' (Wilson, 2000: 1494)—are developed and reinforced through language (Weedon, 1996; Lazar, 2005). With a theoretical backing informed by Foucault's theories on power and discourse along with poststructural feminist leanings, I use Fairclough's CDA to analyze how power operates through three male perpetrators' use of a discursive event: the public apology.

3.5 Research objectives

The research carried out in this paper assesses the power dynamic put forth by the discourse used in public apologies from the #MeToo movement, evaluating whether their language validates the patriarchal culture of sexual assault that the movement attempts to dismantle. This topic's relevance and significance is proven through the recent increase in public dialogue concerning male power dominance over western institutions, a conversation instigated by the ongoing #MeToo movement. The first step to addressing the patriarchal dominance that has

led to a pervasiveness of sexual assault in professional spheres is recognizing discourse that reinforces this power dynamic (May and Strikwerda, 1994). Utilizing CDA to evaluate apology discourse from three men in high-ranking positions and TA to measure audience reception, I can gauge the authenticity of each apology and evaluate how this discourse might function to undermine the #MeToo movement or conversely serve as a disruption to patriarchal culture (Fairclough, 2013). With these objectives in mind, my main research question is as follows:

1) To what extent do public apologies in the context of the #MeToo movement serve to legitimate a patriarchal culture of sexual assault?

A set of sub-questions highlight important specificities that my research will cover:

- a) What discursive tactics do the perpetrators use in their apologies? [SEP]
- b) To what extent do these tactics serve to maintain their positions of power? [SEP]
- c) Were the reactions to these apologies mainly negative or positive, and what does [SEP]the apologies' reception indicate regarding the discursive tactics used? [SEP]
- d) What aspects of the apologies did readers focus on most? [SEP]
- e) Does the apologies' language and its reception validate or reject them as reinforcements of patriarchal power structures? [SEP]

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

My research employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze public apologies from three well-known American entertainment figures. The most enlightening method of analysis to evaluate the power that operates through pre-written discourse is discourse analysis, namely CDA due to its concentration on group relations of power (Van Dijk, 1995). CDA's focus on 'discursively [...] legitimated structures and strategies of dominance and resistance in social relationships' (ibid: 18) can shed light on how discursive strategies in the apologies are

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

utilized to uphold a patriarchal culture of sexual assault. Norman Fairclough's CDA offers a framework for looking at how certain discourses 'emerge as hegemonic' and become circulated and established in institutions (Fairclough, 2013: 19). His belief that 'the first step towards emancipation' is awareness of how language can empower one group over another (Ahmadvand, 2009: 4) validates the contribution of this research to discourse and feminist theory. Fairclough's emphasis on power and social institutions makes it more applicable than other prominent methods of discourse analysis. A major problem with Van Dijk's approach was his disbelief in a direct relationship between social structures and discourse (Ahmadvand, 2009: 8), whereas Wodak's discourse-historical approach puts too much stress on the historical aspect (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). Lazar's FCDA and Baxter's FPDA were close contenders, however the methods lacked organized frameworks for operationalization and therefore seminal research often utilized vague and varied methods of textual analysis. Furthermore, the goal of both FCDA and FPDA is comparable to that of other CDA methods: to show, on a gendered level, how 'hegemonic power relations are discursively produced [and] sustained' (Lazar, 2005: 142; Baxter, 2003). This being said, the open-ended nature of my research question ('To what extent...') is most compatible with a method that leaves room for flexibility in analysis while still providing a basis for operationalization. Fairclough's CDA offers three dimensions for analysis: 'social practice, discursual practice (text production, distribution and consumption), and text' (Fairclough, 2013: 59). These three dimensions allow an analysis of the perpetrators' apologies that considers the broader, societal implications of these discursive formations, specificities about their production and distribution such as the position of the author and the method of dissemination, and finally the textual strategies that the writers use. Since this research concerns itself with feminist theories of the patriarchy and sexual assault, it is necessary that the method functions in an interdisciplinary fashion—yet another reason why Fairclough's CDA is utilized since it emphasizes a 'transdisciplinary form' of discourse analysis (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2013).

4.2 Thematic Analysis

To supplement my discussion of CDA, I also apply Thematic Analysis (TA) to a set of ‘tweets’ and threads from Twitter in reaction to the three apologies. Due to Twitter’s concise semantic nature, the data required a method that would simply identify the themes and key words from the apologies that readers tuned into most; the themes would then be analyzed in terms of their frequency and position toward the apologies. Since TA is used to identify and interpret ‘patterns of meaning (‘themes’) within qualitative data’ (Braun and Clarke, 2017: 297), it can add a level of intricacy to the analysis of the apology data that would enhance the overall study (Alhojailan, 2012: 40). My research utilizes Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke’s ‘reflexive/organic’ approach not only because it is the most cited approach to TA in qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2017: 297), but mostly due to its organization. Prior to their work on TA, the method was not defined or well-developed, and did not offer any groundwork in terms of a strategy for analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Nowell *et al.*, 2017; Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016). Braun and Clarke were the first to provide a comprehensive overview of TA as a method and how to use it. Their approach is not tied down to any one theoretical framework, therefore it is applicable for use across a multitude of disciplines and theoretical frameworks (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 78). Although the method’s flexibility is an advantage, Braun and Clarke still provide a thoroughly ordered list of the six phases of TA (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This balance between guidance and freedom, as well as the method’s emphasis on reflexivity, is why Braun and Clarke’s TA is best suited for a restricted research project like mine that wishes to analyze freely the links between qualitative data.

4.3 Sampling and selection of data

4.3.1 CDA Sampling

The multitude of public apologies inspired by #MeToo served as timely inspiration for this research topic. To study the discursive reinforcement of patriarchal rape culture in institutions, apologies from #MeToo were used as case studies to offer ‘cumulative and progressive

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

generalizations about social life' (George and Bennett, 2005: 10). My data collection was accumulated following a systematic set of criteria to increase credibility (Sriwimon and Zilli, 2017). The criteria were as follows: I aimed my focus on the arts and entertainment industry (namely Hollywood since the #MeToo movement was a western-based campaign), therefore my pool of perpetrators was mainly actors, musicians, photographers, etcetera. I also searched for apologies that were (a) public statements (written or spoken), (b) didn't outright deny that the alleged offense happened, and (c) avoided stating the traditional apology phrasing 'I am sorry for [my act]'. This set of criteria was determined because (a) this research focuses on discourse in public institutions and therefore in a public sphere, (b) the statement had to concede some form of admittance for it to be considered an apology at any level, and (c) because apologies that don't directly address the violation (essentially, 'non-apologies') are most useful for an analysis that considers possible reinforcement of patriarchal discourse. Vox Media compiled a comprehensive list of all individuals accused of sexual misconduct since April 2017 under the context of the #MeToo movement (North, 2018); of these 219 apologies, 86 people were listed as influential in arts and entertainment. Of the 86 people who met the above criteria, I then used Google's search engine to type in three phrases—'name of perpetrator', 'metoo' and 'apology'—to see how many 'results' came back for each ('How Search Works', n.d.). The search showed Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey, and Louis C.K. with the most results online (906,000, 882,000, and 481,000 respectively), with Ben Affleck having the fourth most hits at 444,000. Due to length and time constraints, I chose to analyze only the top three apologies.

4.3.2 TA Sampling

The TA portion of my dissertation serves as complementary to my analysis of the apology data; the tweets' positionality is analyzed to shed light on how the discourse from the three apologies was received by the public. Due to the communicative online nature of the #MeToo movement as well as the apologies, my research needed an accessible mediated platform that encouraged open conversation and debate regarding controversial topics. Although Twitter

does not have the highest number of monthly users, its data is accessible at a higher level than other platforms (Ahmed, 2017) and its users are most educated, with 29% of users holding a college degree or higher, more than Facebook and Instagram (Greenwood, Perrin, and Duggan: 2016). Additionally, Twitter employs a character count of 280 characters, whereas other social media platforms do not impose a limit. Since a user can only write a limited amount of words, tweets contain more concise and forthright language which works to my advantage for an analysis of key phrases and themes. Therefore, focusing on Twitter responses, I used the platform's search tool to see all public tweets and threads (a successive conversation between Twitter users in response to one original post) from individual accounts, as in accounts belonging to individual users as opposed to media organizations. Through the search tool, I typed in the name of the perpetrator as well as 'apology', and limited the results to the week following the date that each apology was published online. The search resulted in 29 tweets and/or threads in reaction to Harvey Weinstein's apology, 46 in reaction to Louis C.K., and 39 in reaction to Kevin Spacey. This sample size was large enough for me to get a sense of what themes the audience picked up as most notable in the apologies, but was still small-scale enough to not overwhelm the objective of the TA as supplementary to the CDA.

4.4 Design of research tools

4.4.1 Design for CDA

I use Fairclough's CDA (1993) to analyze the three apologies used as data. Since Fairclough does not outline a specific procedure for analysis, Janks' approach seemed most conducive for my research topic as it emphasizes the interdependence of Fairclough's three dimensions but still allows movement 'between the different types of analysis' (Janks, 1997: 330). Janks embeds three boxes in one another, with the smallest box designated for the first dimension of analysis (text), the second for discursive practice and the third the sociocultural practice (ibid). Each dimension was analyzed using this approach (see Appendix B) by the following criteria.

Text

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

To make the analysis more manageable, I split up each apology into numbered portions ranging from one to three sentences long. To measure the apology's authenticity, the analysis considered apology and non-apology tactics such as excuse (Gill, 2000; Lakoff, 2001; Kampf, 2009), justification (Fairclough, 2013; Lakoff, 2001; Gill, 2000), labeling the offense (Kampf, 2009) promise for reparation (Boyd, 2011), minimization (Schumann, 2014), forbearance (ibid), reflecting on core values (ibid), admission of wrongdoing (ibid), and apologizing for the outcome or a component instead of apologizing for the deed itself (Kampf, 2009). The textual component looked at connotation (Barthes, 1977), metaphor (Machin and Mayr, 2012), sequencing (Cerulo and Ruane, 2014), presupposition (Machin and Mayr, 2012; Lakoff, 2001; Brown and Yule, 1983), repetition (Tannen, 2007), use of pronouns (Machin and Mayr, 2012), nomination or nominalisation (ibid), and tense and passive voice (ibid) to uncover how they might downgrade responsibility or reinforce positions of power.

I included an annotated version of each apology at the textual dimension of analysis for reference in Appendix A.

Discourse practice

The dimension of analysis concerned with discursive practice centers around 'production, distribution and consumption' according to Fairclough (2010: 59), thus I concentrate on three aspects that encompass these focal points: interdiscursivity (including genre), mode, and mediation. Interdiscursivity is a term Fairclough uses to describe when 'texts [...] draw upon [...] multiple discourses, multiple genres, and multiple styles' (2010: 7); this type of analysis helps to link to 'analysis of practices, organisations and institutions' (ibid). Within interdiscursivity is genre, which generates an expectation about the type of discourse and discussion (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). Mode (Brown and Yule, 1983) refers to the manner of production for the apologies, which in this case was written; I then analyze the implications and advantages or disadvantages of this mode as opposed to other modes such as speaking. The final element is the mediated nature of its distribution and consumption (Kampf, 2013;

Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Harris, Grainger, and Mullany, 2006)—as the apologies were written texts circulated on social media, they saw a level of interaction that involved a large quantity of ‘spatially and temporally dispersed people’ (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 43). Thompson (2013) calls this ‘mediated quasi-interaction’, and it played a definite role in the apologies’ reception and power dynamics. Since this dimension of analysis is concerned with aspects common to all three apologies, it will be addressed following the textual analyses in the portion on comparative analysis to allow me to draw from the textual portions.

Sociocultural practice

This dimension operates in a broader, more overarching style of analysis than the previous two. By using Janks’ method, I am able to insert a discussion of sociocultural practice into the first two dimensions of analysis, evaluating to what extent the textual strategies and discourse practice validated the speakers’ positions of power and in turn a patriarchal discourse. This dimension’s goal is to tie together the three dimensions of analysis in their entirety to show ‘the effect of power relations [...] in producing social wrongs’ (Fairclough, 2013: 8) and even identify ways of mitigating these social wrongs. Following the fluidity of both approaches to CDA and TA, this section of the analysis will be incorporated into the textual and discursive levels of analysis, the CDA and TA comparative analysis, as well as discussed in greater detail in the section on final results.

4.4.2 Design for TA

Braun and Clarke’s design for TA can adapt to various operationalization styles formulated from a range of conceptual frameworks and research topics (Braun and Clarke, 2006). After following the aforementioned criteria for data collection, I adhered to Braun and Clarke’s six steps of thematic analysis as follows.

1. I transcribed the tweets and Twitter threads to familiarize myself with the data.^{[1][2]}_[SEP]

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

2. I generated initial codes by transferring the data to the qualitative data analysis software 'NVIVO' and running a 'Word Frequency Query' to identify recurring words and phrases that appear in the tweets and analyze them for potential themes.^{[1][2]}
3. I examined the data from the completed frequency query. In this step, I also reviewed the data on my own to identify important topics or potential themes.^{[1][2]}
4. Using the assembled data, I formulated a table for each of the three apologies with lists of words and phrases mentioned most in the NVIVO data, as shown in Appendix C. These tables acted as my 'thematic map' for analysis (ibid), making the identification of themes and sub-themes more straightforward and systematic.^{[1][2]}
5. After identifying most popular themes and sub-themes from the tables and my own analysis in the fourth step, I finalized them by generating definitions for each and naming them.^{[1][2]}
6. The final step consisted of the analysis, in which I discussed the most informative themes and sub-themes. I did so without referencing usernames due to the difficulty and unreliability in deciphering users' genders through public profiles.

4.5 Limitations and ethics of responsibility

Although I gained ethical approval from my supervisor at the London School of Economics, there are still elements of reflexivity and limitations to my research to consider. Firstly, it is important to note that #MeToo is still ongoing, therefore my analyses of the apologies are only applicable to details published up until August 2018. Furthermore, the question of whose voices the movement prioritized is of concern, considering #MeToo highlighted many influential, white actresses' stories despite the fact that the very movement was appropriated from a woman of color (Rottenberg, 2017). This research does not wish to align itself with the ideals of white feminism, therefore a distinction regarding use of the term 'patriarchy' will be made. While my research is largely concerned with discursive exhibition of the patriarchy, there is not only one manifestation of the patriarchy—in the global South, the term is often 'seen as inextricable from economic and gender oppression by colonialist, nationalist, and

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

capitalist regimes,' differing from a more western feminist understanding of the patriarchy as male oppression operating at a societal level (Wilson, 2000: 1495). This dissertation focuses on discourse from the west, and patriarchal discourse affects western women of intersectional identities in a more nuanced way than it would affect, for example, me as a white woman from a privileged vantage point. Due to the heteronormative nature of the #MeToo cases, this paper is restricted to a discussion drawing from past research focused on men's sexual violence against women. This is not to discount the occurrence of sexual violence against men or in non-normative or queer relationships, which are independent yet equally as crucial fields of study.

Furthermore, as both a woman and a feminist who followed the movement as it unfolded, I started this project with preconceived thoughts and opinions on the three perpetrators' apologies and the #MeToo movement. It is possible that my biases worked their way into my evaluation of the apologies. This is also a limitation of CDA and TA, as the research in both analyses 'privileges the analyst's viewpoint' (Bucholtz, 2001: 168). In CDA specifically there was a variety of textual characteristics that could have been included in the analysis, therefore the exclusion and inclusion of textual features leads to only one possible interpretation (Fairclough, 1992: 74); the same goes for TA in terms of deciphering and analyzing sets of themes. Finally, there is a slight discrepancy between the methodology and conceptual framework in which this dissertation positions itself. While Foucault sees power as pervasive, Fairclough believes that power relations are asymmetrical, favoring the more dominant group (Ahmadvand, 2009: 6). While Foucault's views on power provide the theoretical backing for this research, the analysis aligned more closely with Fairclough's idea that dominant groups hold more power, especially since the research centers around patriarchal discourse and a movement with exclusionary tendencies.

5 INTERPRETATION AND RESULTS

The next portion focuses on aspects from the numbered sections of each apology that utilized discursive and apology tactics most relevant to the research question. Fully-annotated versions of all three apologies are shown in Appendix A.

5.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

5.1.1 Apology 1: Harvey Weinstein

1. [I came of age in the 60's and 70's, when all the rules about behavior and workplaces were different.] That was the culture then.
excuse, minimization
excuse → deflecting blame

Weinstein starts his apology off with an excuse or justification—an ‘attempt to defend one’s behavior’ (Schumann, 2014: 90; Lakoff, 2001). By using the phrase ‘came of age’, Weinstein makes a reference to the period of time during which he had his most formative years. He minimizes his actions by stating that in the 60’s and 70’s, ‘rules about behavior and workplaces’ were ‘different’, inferring that sexual assault and harassment was a normal and accepted part of the workplace. Blaming his behavior on ‘the culture’ of the time period is an attempt to downplay the severity of his wrongdoings. Even the word ‘culture’ is loaded—the connotation can vary radically depending on the identity of the producer or reader (Barthes, 1977). The way individuals experience and understand a ‘culture’ depends on identity and position in society. A wealthy, white, executive like Harvey Weinstein understands the ‘culture’ of a particular time and setting much differently than a woman of color in a low-level position, for example; the levels of power are skewed not only due to their career standings, but their ranking in society.

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

presupposition;
popular
culture
reference

6. Jay Z wrote in 4:44 "I'm not the man I thought I was and I better be that man for my children." The same is true for me. I want a second chance in the community but I know reflecting on core values I've got work to do to earn it. I have goals that are now priorities.

In this section, Weinstein uses a popular culture reference to draw upon shared ideological values of what he perceives to be his audience base. He also attempts to equate his own situation to the situation that rapper Jay-Z refers to in his lyrics. By doing so, Weinstein uses a presupposition, assuming his audience has prior knowledge of the reference and will thus understand it (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 153). Fairclough called presuppositions 'pre-constructed elements' (2013: 107) that are 'presented [...] as not requiring definition'; thus, they are 'deeply ideological' (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 153). Weinstein is referencing the ongoing, highly publicized infidelity scandal between Jay-Z and his wife, which Jay-Z later addressed in his album, '4:44.' Weinstein alludes to a person and situation that is entirely dissimilar to his own in the hopes that it will make the audience feel ideologically and emotionally closer to him. The two transgressions are not comparable—Jay-Z's is a personal account of betrayal while Weinstein faces numerous accusations of sexual abuse. The fact that Weinstein presupposes people would understand this reference reveals the audience to which he directs his statement. Including this reference implies that his apology is not a personal one directed towards those he violated, but instead a chance to address members of the public who are outraged by his transgressions. This section exposes his apology as a tool to reposition himself with a favorable self-image (Goffman, 1967) rather than address the women he abused.

reflecting
on core
values;
cultural
reference

8. I am going to need a place to channel that anger so I've decided that I'm going to give the NRA my full attention. I hope Wayne LaPierre will enjoy his retirement party. I'm going to do it at the same place I had my Bar Mitzvah. I'm making a movie about our President, perhaps we can make it a joint retirement party.

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

This section is loaded with cultural and ideological references in an attempt to impress and relate to his audience. He starts by referencing the National Rifle Association (NRA) and its executive vice president, Wayne LaPierre. Weinstein presupposes that his audience members—who from his viewpoint (and according to previous references like section #6) are young and active online—know who Wayne LaPierre is and share a similar ideological stance against American gun laws. It is vital to keep in mind that four days prior to Weinstein releasing his apology, one of the deadliest mass shootings in U.S. history had occurred at a Las Vegas music festival (The New York Times, 2017). Therefore, discussions in the U.S. about the NRA and gun control were at a high, and Weinstein capitalized on this by seizing the chance to address a controversial situation in a way that demonstrates his core values and makes him look favorable in the public eye (Steele, 1988). Weinstein's allusion to his cultural and religious background when adding that he will hold LaPierre's hypothetical retirement party at the same place he had his Bar Mitzvah is irrelevant to the apology's rhetoric, drawing attention to his attempt to connect with a certain cultural audience. His final cultural reference in this section makes a jab at President Trump, whose approval rating in the month Weinstein published his apology was averaging at 36%, one of the lowest approval ratings of any U.S. president to date (Kirby, 2017). By joking about a 'joint retirement party' for two popularly despised public figures, LaPierre and Trump, Weinstein tries to develop a connection and affinity with his audience through shared ideological values while also slyly reminding readers about some of the most hated public figures in society, implying that there are worse people to focus hateful sentiments on than him.

5.1.2 Apology 2: Louis C.K.

3. But what I learned later in life, too late, is that when you have power over another person, asking them to look at your dick isn't a question. It's a predicament for them. [The power I had over these women is that they admired me.] And I wielded that power irresponsibly.
- Handwritten notes:*
- use of hypothetical "you" → tries to make audience relate
- W.C.
- focus on power/admiration (1)

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

The first textual aspect of this section that is pertinent to the analysis of Louis C.K.'s apology is his use of a generic 'you'. It has been suggested in discourse theory that use of a generic 'you' as a substitute for 'I' 'when reflecting on negative experiences allows people to 'normalize' their experience by extending it beyond the self' (Orvell, Kross, and Gelman, 2017: 1). Although Louis C.K. is describing a situation he caused, he utilizes 'you' to distance himself from the rhetoric and avoid explicit responsibility. By using 'you' instead of personally addressing himself as the perpetrator, Louis C.K. transfers the point of focus onto a hypothetical person, creating the impression that his offense is a 'shared, universal experience' (Cooper, 2014; Orvell, Kross, and Gelman, 2017: 1). The second part of analysis for this section addresses the connotation and implications behind using the word 'dick' in a formal apology. The word 'dick', which Louis C.K. uses twice to refer to his penis, was first used as a slang term for male genitalia in the 1890's, and its slang usage is generally perceived with a vulgar, impolite and even offensive connotation (Hiskey, 2012; Norman, 2012; Barthes, 1977). Louis C.K.'s use of 'dick' is a distinct lexical decision; using a crude word to refer to male genitalia could generate an uncomfortable, startling read for the audience, particularly for women and arguably most triggering for readers who have been victims of sexual assault. Louis C.K. using a term with an invasive connotation for women and sexual assault victims in an apology directed towards women he assaulted shows his inability to understand the ways his language reinforces offensive patriarchal dialogue.

7. I wish I had reacted to their admiration of me by being a good example to them as a man and given them some guidance as a comedian including because I admired their work.
- focus on admiration (5)* *establishes gendered authority*
establishes professional authority

This section features the fifth instance throughout the apology in which he references women's admiration of him (also in section 3 and three times in section 5). Since the transgressions he describes in his apology were between him and women of lower social positions, his recurring mention of women and the wider community's admiration comes from a patriarchal viewpoint. To properly evaluate his intention behind reinforcing his admiration, it is crucial

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

to keep in mind his position as an influential male figure in the entertainment industry. As Tannen points out, repetition ‘contributes to the meaning of the discourse’ by ‘evidenc[ing] a speaker’s attitude’ (Tannen, 2007: 60); repetition is used here to emphasize a certain point that the writer believes is important. Louis C.K. noted his admired five times in order to draw emphasis to this interpretation. Secondly, there are two parts of this sentence in which Louis C.K. indicates his authority and experience over the audience (Fairclough, 2013). The first is when he establishes gendered authority by stating he should have been ‘a good example to them *as a man*’ and a few words later he establishes professional authority by adding he should have offered ‘some guidance *as a comedian*.’ The way in which he words the first portion—writing he should have provided them a ‘good example *as a man*’ instead of a ‘good example *of a man*’—suggests that it is because he is a man that he is capable of providing them with a good example. Louis C.K. subsequently establishes professional authority over his audience and reinforces his power position in a patriarchal and professional sense through ‘hierarchical means [...and by] claiming specialist knowledge’ (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 42): ‘as a comedian’.

8. The hardest regret to live with is what you've done to hurt someone else. And I can
W.C.: focus on his own struggle
hardly wrap my head around the scope of hurt I brought on them.

This final section examines Louis C.K.’s focus on his own struggle, as well as the diction used in asserting his situation is ‘the *hardest* regret to live with’. Here, again, he distances himself from his offense by using the generic ‘you’ when referencing the fact that he has ‘hurt’ people. He also undermines the damage he has caused to his victims by identifying his own situation as the ‘hardest [...] to live with’. Using the word ‘hardest’ was a choice made ‘for motivated reasons’ (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 32)—the author claims the highest level of hardship when asserting that he is living with the ‘hardest’ regret. This may be in the hopes that the audience will agree with this statement—as its generality and wording is extreme enough to sound sincere—and thus empathize with him. By continuing to concentrate on his own struggle,

Louis C.K. discounts the hardship of those who were assaulted, contributing to rape culture discourse.

5.1.3 Apology 3: Kevin Spacey

5. This story has encouraged me to address other things about my life. I know that there are stories out there about me and that some have been fueled by the fact that I have been so protective of my privacy. As those closest to me know, in my life I have had relationships with both men and women. I have loved and had romantic encounters with men throughout my life, and I choose now to live as a gay man. I want to deal with this honestly and openly and that starts with examining my own behavior.

*Sequencing;
excuse;
minimization;
reflecting
on core
values*

For the third apology, I will analyze only the final section. This section is most notable as Spacey chooses to use his apology statement supposedly addressing an allegation of sexual assault against a minor to publicly announce that he is gay. This choice has serious implications about the extent to which his apology can be seen as genuine. Spacey used five out of the nine sentences that composed his apology to come out; because of this, it could be argued his apology wasn't an apology at all. This is also proven by the numerous avoidance tactics employed in the four sentences he designates to the apology portion, such as section 2's passive voice and minimization ('would have been over 30 years ago') and indirect apology statement ('I owe him the sincerest apology'), as well as use of excuse in section 3 ('drunken behavior'). Spacey placed his coming out statement directly after addressing the allegation, using it as a minimization tactic (Schumann, 2014) and diversion from the statement's former topic of his sexual assault accusation. He shifts the focus from a negative viewpoint on him to a topic he hopes people would react to positively and supportively, especially considering the platform he used and his intended audience—two factors that will be discussed in the second dimension of analysis. Furthermore, Spacey stating he is gay directly after addressing his sexual assault allegation infers there is a relationship between these two statements; the

reinforcement by a powerful public figure of this harmful discursive sequencing could have severe impacts on the LGBTQIA+ community (Cerulo and Ruane, 2014). Sexual assault, as queer academic Michael Bronski points out, is about power. Due to the patriarchy, western women generally have less power in heterosexual relationships, therefore 'it is a gendered dynamic of men against women', whereas gay relationships are 'about different variations of power [between men]' (Kornhaber, 2017: n.p.). By using his sexual identity as an excuse, minimization and distraction from his sexual misdemeanors, the content and sequencing of Spacey's public apology harms the LGBTQIA+ community while painting his offense as inconsequential and therefore contributing to rape culture.

5.2 CDA: Comparative Analysis

Up to this point, I have demonstrated how discursive and apology strategies in the textual dimension of analysis of Harvey Weinstein, Louis C.K., and Kevin Spacey's apologies might have been employed to distance the apologizer from the responsibility of their transgressions (as shown in Appendices A and B). My CDA showed how apologizers reinforced a patriarchal rape culture by discursively excusing their acts of sexual assault. This will now be analyzed further in a comparative analysis of all three apologies and consideration of what roles they play on discursive and sociocultural levels.

To begin, I will identify several recurring textual tactics utilized in each apology. All three apologies showcase indirect apology statements; these are what Kampf called non-performative apologies, and they include 'expressing a will or duty to apologize, promising to apologize, or referring to past apology' (Kampf, 2009: 2262) as well as apologizing for the outcome of the offense or one specific part of it. Weinstein uses this tactic in sections 3, 5, and 7; Louis C.K. uses it in sections 4 and 9; Spacey uses it in sections 3 and 4 (see Appendix A). These tactics are used recurrently as a way of 'lessening the amount of responsibility' (ibid: 2269), however, they show an evident 'lack of sincerity' (ibid) by not directly addressing the offense. Another strategy often used in insincere apologies is excuses. Weinstein's excuse

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

comes in the first sentence of his apology regarding the time period's culture, whereas Spacey's excuse is in section 3 when he blames his actions on 'deeply inappropriate drunken behavior'. Both cases—blaming sexual transgressions on 'not knowing any better' and alcohol—are widely-used discursive tricks in rape culture (Leary, 2017). Only section 2 of Louis C.K.'s apology contains an explicit admission of wrongdoing, which is one characteristic of a genuine apology (Gill, 2000). He also addresses the fact that he had power over his victims that he 'wielded [...] irresponsibly', although it could be argued that he negates that statement by stating that 'the power [he] had over these women is that they admired [him]'. Here, he recognizes an important aspect of his positionality—power—but he misinterprets it as admiration rather than acknowledging the inherent imbalance in gendered power relations. While Louis C.K.'s apology still utilizes what would be deemed as too many 'non-apology' strategies to be considered complete, his apology holds more value than the other two because of his naming of the victims, admission of wrongdoing, and acknowledging his power position. Nevertheless, his apology still lacks what is also missing in the other two apologies: a direct statement apologizing for the transgression. Since none of these apologies contain an explicit apology but are plentiful in avoidance tactics, they cannot be fully considered interruptions to patriarchal discourse or to rape culture.

For this research, the discursive dimension of analysis will first consider interdiscursivity, which looks at genres and styles of discourse in a textual form as previously analyzed, and as acts that serve a specific organizational or institutional purpose (Fairclough, 2013: 7). Genre, as defined by Fairclough, is a 'use of language associated with a particular social activity means' (ibid: 96). The rhetorical genre of apologies has transformed in recent years with special focus on how these speech acts are used as methods of image restoration (Kampf, 2009), and with this objective comes certain expectations regarding content and language. For example, for the 'apology' genre, it would be expected that the apologizer would include in his or her apology the words 'I am sorry' or some equally as direct statement. Important components to genre—'similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience' (Swales, 1990:

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

58)—leads to the second aspect of the discursive dimension's analysis: mode. By mode, I refer to how the discourse was delivered, therefore questions of structure, style, and audience are all relevant. All three apologies were written as opposed to spoken. Speakers have the advantage of their voice, facial, postural, and gestural expressions to emphasize or overlook certain parts, and the ability to change their speech during delivery by evaluating the audience's reactions in real-time (Brown and Yule, 1983). However, speakers are under a considerable amount of pressure during the performative delivery that writers are not. On the contrary, writers can take as much time as they require, choosing specific words, editing their writing, and using notes and resources (*ibid*). The fact that all three apologies were written gave a considerable amount of control and ability for reflection to each apologizer. This control over the discursive aspects of their apologies should be taken into account when considering the extent to which each apology legitimates patriarchal discourse—since the textual dimension of analysis showed that genuine regret and responsibility seems to be lacking in each apology, this begs the question of why these apologies don't come across as sufficiently genuine considering the amount of discursive control and time the authors had to construct them.

Lastly, the mediated nature of the apologies is inevitable because of the platforms through which each written statement was published; Louis C.K. and Weinstein's were published on CNN.com and the New York Times website respectively, whereas Spacey posted his on Twitter. The apologies being published online means that there is a certain intended population of people who read and reacted to them; reading and writing requires a set of skills as it is, but online written discourse adds another layer to this as only those with the ability, knowledge and access to online platforms are able to interact. All three apologies appealed to a younger audience considering their issuance online and certain textual giveaways (Weinstein's pop culture reference). However, Spacey's apology in particular singled in on Twitter as the platform by which its users—mostly young adults (millennials), professionals, and media organizations (Newberry, 2018)—could directly engage with the apology. The

mediated nature of written online discourse allows for ‘time-space distancing,’ allowing for consumers to read these apologies at any time from virtually anywhere in the world with online access (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 42) and thus continue dialogue and debate for weeks or even months. The impact these public apologies have in a public sphere depends on their mediation as the audience decides the validity of the apologies (Harris, Grainger, and Mullany, 2006), which is why reactions will be evaluated with TA to determine the final results.

5.3 Thematic Analysis

5.3.1 Themes identified

To analyze the extent to which discourse in the three apologies legitimate a patriarchal culture of sexual assault, the second part of the analysis features TA on the set of data taken from Twitter formerly described in the section on sampling. It would be unproductive to assess the effect that the apologies’ discourse has without considering responses and reactions from the audience. Although CDA does not often consider consumers the same way it does producers (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002), ‘the reader is just as important as the writer in the production of meaning’ and is an active participant in creating society’s overall positionality towards a discursive formation (Hall, 1997: 23). The relevant themes—some of which are evaluated from the tweets’ negative or positive connotations—were identified from reactions to each respective apology; this allows me to later evaluate how certain themes inform my analysis on the discourse’s role in a patriarchal culture.

For the Weinstein apology, major themes identified from reactionary tweets were titled under gender, culture, excuse, and politics. There are two sub-categories: under gender is power and under politics are the sub-themes of guns and political influence. These themes came about from what Twitter users picked up on from the apologies. For example, of the tweets that mentioned gender a notable amount specifically discussed male power, hence the sub-category of power.

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

For Louis C.K., major themes fit under gender, other apologies, diction, and positive tweets. Sub-themes under diction were use of 'dick,' lack of 'sorry,' and self-admiration. Again, these themes were identified from discourse that the consumers picked up on from the apologies, such as Louis C.K.'s use of the word 'dick' and the absence of the words 'I'm sorry.' Something of note with regards to Louis C.K.'s apology is that 32.6% of the tweets (15 out of the total 46) were positive reactions containing words such as 'honesty,' 'validation,' and 'responsibility.' This is taken into account when analyzing Twitter reactions to Louis C.K.'s apology.

Lastly, the themes identified in reactions to Spacey's apology were categorized as gender, excuse, and predation. Sub-categories under predation were identified as pedophile and victim. Two sub-categories under excuse were sexuality and alcohol, and further sub-categories under sexuality were gayness and homophobic discourse.

5.3.2 TA: Comparative Analysis

All 29 tweets that reacted to the Weinstein apology contained words and phrases carrying negative connotations and denotations such as 'fake,' 'shameful,' 'embarrassing,' and 'bullshit apology' (see Appendix D for featured tweets). A majority of tweets mentioned the theme gender, with NVIVO indicating 24 tweets containing the word 'man' and 12 containing 'women.' One thread showed a Twitter user asking if 'fame and power' are driving forces behind why men violate women. Users responded with opinions that it has to do with power and upbringing, and one tweet asserted that this phenomenon happens 'cross-class' with two characteristics consistent among male perpetrators: that they are most often white and enablers of rape culture. Although Weinstein's apology discourse alone might have reinforced rape culture, it's important to note that his apology instigated a critical analysis of who assaults women and why, and in this way could be understood as a disruption to said culture. Other aspects such as his intended audience were pointed out, with one user tweeting, 'not me...you owe an apology to the women that were sexually abused'.

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

Over one third (37.9%) of the tweets had some mention of Weinstein's pop culture reference (under the theme 'culture'), with a majority reacting negatively; one tweet swore at Weinstein ('Fuck you, bruh') and others displayed general sentiments of disbelief and disappointment. From the backlash at Weinstein's mention of Jay-Z, this analysis argues that his attempt to connect with the audience over a shared pop culture reference was unsuccessful. Twitter users also reacted to Weinstein's use of excuses adversely; the excuse in section 1 was particularly condemned: 'i really hate this narrative of 'something made me do it,' 'we cannot accept excuses like 'I'm from a different time,' 'fuck Harvey Weinstein and his 'I grew up in a different time when it was cool to sexually harass women''. It is notable, however, that more users were outraged by Weinstein's reference to Jay-Z (7 negative out of 11 mentions) than his claim that sexual assault was a normal culture in his time (3 negative mentions). This is one example that shows the importance of the audience in exposing 'hidden meaning' (Hall, 1997: 32), as readers decided that Weinstein's reference to a beloved pop culture star is more egregious than his excuse. In this way, the audience's discursive priorities legitimate Weinstein's use of patriarchal discourse—'That was the culture then'—by neglecting a possibility to address his reinforcement of rape culture and instead prioritizing his mention of Jay-Z.

Despite gender also playing a major role in reactions to Louis C.K.'s apology, some significant sub-themes under the theme of diction noted his use of the word 'dick' and admiration of self. Louis C.K.'s use of 'dick' disturbed some users (4 negative out of 7 mentions); one person noted context when they tweeted 'why does he think it's okay to use the word 'dick' in this context' while others simply referenced the word in their reactions. As previously mentioned, using a crude word to refer to the physical reason behind his apology could be triggering for some readers, specifically those who have been victimized by male assaulters. The availability of this word could have resulted in Twitter users also utilizing that term, spurring insensitive dialogue surrounding his apology and further normalizing patriarchal discourse and sexual assault culture. Five tweets took issue with the amount of times Louis C.K. mentioned his own

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

admiration; one believed that his apology was a tool to assert how admired he was, and said reading it was 'like we're all watching him have a wank.' This interpretation as well as the fact that multiple readers picked up on Louis C.K.'s mention of admiration shows that his audience was not susceptible to the continued reinforcement of his admiration.

The most exceptional aspect of his apology was the fact that one third of the reactions were positive and accepting of Louis C.K.'s apology. Several users reacted by calling the apology 'refreshing aftermath,' asserting that 'what he did here teaches other men' and that it offers 'honesty and validation to victims.' The legitimacy of the last statement in particular is questionable when considering his apology tactics and intended audience, taking into account the diction he uses when referring to his victims in the third-person point of view throughout his apology. The positive reaction spurred a Twitter thread that debated the efficacy of his apology, some arguing this apology was reliable and genuine while others believed his apology should not be accepted. This contention shows how meaning is never fixed and can be interpreted differently 'by the speaker or writer or by other viewers' (Hall, 1997: 32). If the dispute ended at this level of general disagreement, it could be argued that it was a successful interruption to patriarchal discourse since participants cited passages and characteristics of his apology that they saw as either genuine or disingenuous, engaging in a productive dispute. However, the thread became unproductive when one user who was in favor of the apology said, 'Bring it on, feminists; I can take it,' followed by further comments on dissatisfaction with feminists such as 'Feminists come after anyone not totally in lockstep with them.' The thread then turned to antagonistic sentiments between users in disagreement such as 'Get real' and 'Go away.' The thread's discourse became more of a legitimizer of patriarchal discourse when participants used the open discussion to personally attack one another and the ideals of feminism.

Only two of the 39 reactions to Spacey's apology used as data were positive. The most pertinent reactions are in response to the excuse theme, which was the main aspect of Spacey's apology. Under this umbrella theme, users addressed the two excuses Spacey utilizes:

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

sexuality and alcohol. This analysis will focus specifically on the sexuality part of these sections, which is split into the two sub-categories of gayness and homophobic sentiments. Twenty-six out of all 39 reactions addressed the fact that Spacey came out in his apology statement, with 20 of those holding negative connotations, 4 neutral and 2 positive. In terms of the general sub-section of tweets that reacted to his sexual identity, reactions varied from mild disappointment ('wrong place wrong time old man') to more extreme feelings of anger ('So being gay and drunk means you're bound to be a pedophile and predator? FUCK YOU and your apology, Kevin Spacey!'). Various users picked up on Spacey's use of his sexuality to deflect from the topic at hand and described this behavior as a 'poor attempt at excusing [his] actions,' 'classic sociopath,' 'narcissistic,' 'opportunistic,' and 'careless.' Importantly, several people also noted how Spacey's discourse encourages homophobic rhetoric. One person tweeted about the effect Spacey's linking of his sexual predatory behavior with sexuality has on 'queer abuse victims,' asserting that this type of dialogue is why they stay 'silent [because] they don't want to contribute to homophobic tropes of the gay pedophile,' while another person called it 'dangerous' and a third added it is being used to '[bolster] anti-gay sentiment.' The audience dissected how this discourse harms the LGBTQIA+ community by merging the idea of being gay with being a pedophile; in this way, the apology created an interruption in rape culture discourse. It constructively challenged his discourse, pointing out its harms from a sociohistorical position. However, one person responded to the tweet, 'just saw a 'Christian' saying [Spacey's apology] 'proves gays are paedos' by pronouncing 'gay men have two options other gay men, or children. Simple math.' These examples show that although there was a decent amount of people who pointed out the harm in Spacey's discourse, there were still some who used the discourse to further detrimental homophobic rhetoric, perpetuating patriarchal discourse with Spacey's language as validation.

5.4 CDA and TA: Final results

My study analyzed data sets with two separate methods of analysis, hoping to supplement the CDA portion with TA on audience reactions for proper evaluation of each apology's role in

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

rape culture. The patriarchal power relations that live within language are fostered 'in the institutions and social practices of our society' (Weedon, 1996: 3) and are dissected in all three apologies 'both explicitly and implicitly' (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 24). The CDA portion exposes how certain ideological interests function through the language of Weinstein, Louis C.K., and Spacey's apologies regarding their sexual assault misconduct (ibid: 25). My analysis found that each statement contained discursive and apology tactics like excuses, justifications, indirect apology statements, and diction utilized in an attempt to avoid responsibility and deflect blame. It would not be constructive to rank the apologies from which played the biggest to least role in legitimating rape culture through discourse as all analyses are subjective and open to debate. However, this particular dissertation argues that in considering the apologies as isolated discursive formations, they contain enough deflection strategies for all three to serve as legitimators of a patriarchal culture of sexual assault. Louis C.K.'s features sections with a deeper level of authenticity, but these instances are considered with skepticism given the context of his apology. This being said, considering the apologies after conducting TA on Twitter reactions makes for a slightly different analysis. The discourse in Weinstein's apology — although definitely a reinforcer of rape culture on its own accord — was reacted to with conversations that problematized its patriarchal language. Its backlash gave the apology a pivotal role in disrupting rape culture. Louis C.K.'s apology's role was more ambiguous. Since his discourse had a varied range of supporters and opponents, as well as due to the personal attacks and problematic language about feminism instigated by difference in opinions, this apology had only a limited level of disruption. Not only was its discourse authoritative and untrustworthy, but its reception fostered problematic conversations. Spacey's apology had a similar complex role, since both his own language harmed a marginalized community as well as fostered adverse dialogue in reactions.

6 CONCLUSION

This research was written in light of the #MeToo movement and the subsequent 'Weinstein Effect'. Employing CDA to study three perpetrators' public apologies and TA to examine their mediation online, the research evaluated the role that public apologies have in legitimating patriarchal discourse and, in the case of #MeToo, leading to a culture of sexual assault. The results concluded that although each apology contained language that reinforced rape culture, their roles in a public sphere varied according to audience reception. Specifically, I argued that Weinstein's apology was disingenuous and patriarchal, however this discourse prompted responses that initiated a conversation regarding the pervasiveness of sexual assault in western institutions. Louis C.K.'s apology contained an angle of legitimacy while still exhibiting a substantial amount of non-apology features, but the reception was far more mixed and resulted in an exchange that partially upheld rape culture. Spacey's apology made damaging assertions about the LGBTQIA+ community, giving way to a varied set of comments, some of which condemned his language and others using his dialogue as leverage for their own homophobic remarks. This analysis showed the diverse effect that apologies can have in a public sphere, particularly on online formats like Twitter where users are generally younger and more active (Newberry, 2018). While this case study serves as only one interpretation of the data, its focus emphasizes the pervasiveness of sexual assault in western institutions. This paper contributes to a growing body of literature highlighting the importance of public discourse in relation to patriarchally-constructed social systems like rape culture. During the final stages of writing, Weinstein was taken into police custody and charged for rape and multiple accounts of sexual abuse (Samuelson, 2018); this development arguably would not have occurred without the #MeToo movement and online activism that challenged his and other attempts at patriarchal remedial discourse. Future research on apology discourse for sexual assault misconduct could build from the limitations of this paper by considering case studies with a more intersectional and cross-cultural focus, as well as examining rape culture's impact on queer and trans individuals. Additionally, further research

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

should consider the role that online activism or 'slacktivism' has in movements like #MeToo, since this study only considered the impact discourse has on rape culture from a theoretical standpoint.

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Eleanor Dierking

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52

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

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Eleanor Dierking

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The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

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The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

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The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

APPENDIX A: THE APOLOGIES

HARVEY WEINSTEIN

- [I came of age in the 60's and 70's, when all the rules about behavior and workplaces were different.] That was the culture then.

excuse; minimization
excuse → deflecting blame
- I have since learned it's not an excuse, in the office - or out of it. To anyone. I realized some time ago that I needed to be a better person and my interactions with the people I work with have changed.

past tense
- I appreciate the way I've behaved with colleagues in the past has caused a lot of pain, and I sincerely apologize for it.

W.C.
indirect apology statement → apologizing for victim's pain instead of offense
- Though I'm trying to do better, I know I have a long way to go. That is my commitment. My journey now will be to learn about myself and conquer my demons.

metaphors
- Over the last year I've asked Lisa Bloom to tutor me and she's put together a team of people. I've brought on therapists and I plan to take a leave of absence from my company and to deal with this issue head on. I so respect all women and regret what happened. I hope that my actions will speak louder than words and that one day we will all be able to earn their trust and sit down together with Lisa to learn more.

presupposition
forebearance
indirect apology statement
use of pronoun "we"
- Jay Z wrote in 4:44 "I'm not the man I thought I was and I better be that man for my children." The same is true for me. I want a second chance in the community but I know I've got work to do to earn it. I have goals that are now priorities.

presupposition
popular culture reference
W.C.
reflecting on core values

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

7. Trust me, this isn't an overnight process. I've been trying to do this for 10 years and this is
vague w.c. *vague w.c.* *vague w.c.*

a wake-up call. [I cannot be more remorseful about the people I hurt] and I plan to do right

apologizing for people instead of offense

by all of them.

forebearance

8. I am going to need a place to channel that anger so I've decided that I'm going to give the

NRA my full attention. I hope Wayne LaPierre will enjoy his retirement party. I'm going

to do it at the same place I had my Bar Mitzvah. I'm making a movie about our President,

perhaps we can make it a joint retirement party.

9. One year ago, [I began organizing a \$5 million foundation to give scholarships to women

compensation/reparation

directors at USC.] While this might seem coincidental, it has been in the works for a year.

It will be named after my mom and I won't disappoint her.

*nomination;
names family
member for
empathy appeal*

*reflecting
on core
values;
cultural
reference*

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

LOUIS C.K.

1. I want to address the stories told to the New York Times by five women named Abby, Rebecca, Dana, Julia who felt able to name themselves and one who did not.
labeling offense with less derogatory term
nomination
2. These stories are true. At the time, I said to myself that what I did was okay because I never showed a woman my dick without asking first, which is also true.
admission of wrongdoing
w.c. *justification*
3. But what I learned later in life, too late, is that when you have power over another person, asking them to look at your dick isn't a question. It's a predicament for them. [The power I had over these women is that they admired me.] And I wielded that power irresponsibly.
use of hypothetical "you" → tries to make audience relate
w.c. *focus on power/admiration (1)*
4. I have been remorseful of my actions. And I've tried to learn from them. And run from them. Now I'm aware of the extent of the impact of my actions.
passive voice; past tense; reference to past apology
5. I learned yesterday the extent to which I left these women who admired me feeling badly about themselves and cautious around other men who would never have put them in that position. I also took advantage of the fact that I was widely admired in my and their community, which disabled them from sharing their story and brought hardship to them when they tried because people who look up to me didn't want to hear it. I didn't think that I was doing any of that because my position allowed me not to think about it.
vague w.c. → avoids explanation *focus on admiration (3)*
focus on admiration (4) *vague w.c.*
6. There is nothing about this that I forgive myself for. [And I have to reconcile it with who I am.] Which is nothing compared to the task I left them with.
vague w.c. → avoids explanation *second sentence: focus on his own struggle*

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

7. I wish I had reacted to their admiration of me by being a good example to them as a man and given them some guidance as a comedian including because I admired their work.
8. The hardest regret to live with is what you've done to hurt someone else. And I can hardly wrap my head around the scope of hurt I brought on them.
9. I'd be remiss to exclude the hurt that I've brought on people who I work with and have worked with who's [sic] professional and personal lives have been impacted by all of this, including projects currently in production: the cast and crew of 'Better Things,' 'Baskets,' 'The Cops,' 'One Mississippi,' and 'I Love You Daddy.' I deeply regret that this has brought negative attention to my manager Dave Becky who only tried to mediate a situation that I caused. I've brought anguish and hardship to the people at FX who have given me so much The Orchard who took a chance on my movie and every other entity that has bet on me through the years. I've brought pain to my family, my friends, my children and their mother.
10. I have spent my long and lucky career talking and saying anything I want. I will now step back and take a long time to listen. Thank you for reading

focus on admiration (5)

establishes gendered authority

establishes professional authority

W.C.: focus on his own struggle

nominalisation
names family members
for empathy appeal

indirect apology statement

labeling of tense with less derogatory term (labeling as a "situation")

passive voice

forebearance

The Weinstein Effect and mediated non-apologies

Eleanor Dierking

KEVIN SPACEY

1. I have a lot of respect and admiration for Anthony Rapp as an actor.

nomination

2. I'm beyond horrified to hear his story. I honestly do not remember the encounter, it

deflecting blame

would have been over 30 years ago.

passive voice → minimization

labeling offense with less derogatory term/labeling as a "situation"

3. But if I did behave then as he describes, I owe him the sincerest apology for what would

W.C. → suggests it might not have happened

indirect apology statement

have been deeply inappropriate drunken behavior,

W.C.

excuse

4. and I am sorry for the feelings he describes having carried with him all these years.

apologizing for victim's feelings instead of offense

5. This story has encouraged me to address other things about my life. I know that there are

stories out there about me and that some have been fueled by the fact that I have been so

protective of my privacy. As those closest to me know, in my life I have had relationships

with both men and women. I have loved and had romantic encounters with men

throughout my life, and I choose now to live as a gay man. I want to deal with this

honestly and openly and that starts with examining my own behavior.

*sequencing;
excuse;
minimization;
reflecting
on core
values*

APPENDIX B: CDA OPERATIONALIZATION (THREE-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS)

HARVEY WEINSTEIN

Dominant culture: Patriarchal discourse; rape culture; Weinstein Effect
Institution: Hollywood
Perpetrator: Executive film producer

Interdiscursivity (genre): Apology; public discourse; face-negotiation

Discursive strategies:

- Metaphor: “My journey”; “conquer my demons”
- Presupposition: “Lisa Bloom to tutor me”
- Pronoun usage: “we will all”
- Word choice: “together”; “this”
- Nomination/Nominalisation: “my mom”
- Tense: “I realized some time ago that I needed”

Apology strategies:

- Excuse: “That was the culture then”
- Indirect apology: “I sincerely apologize for it”; “I cannot be more remorseful about the people”; “regret what happened”
- Reflect on core values: “give the NRA my full attention”; “place I had my Bar Mitzvah”; “making a movie about our President”
- Forbearance/Reparation: “I plan to do right by all of them”
- Popular culture reference: “Jay Z wrote in 4:44”

Mode: Written; Online publication through news website
Mediation: Twitter; time-space distancing
Audience reception: Negative and rejected

Conflict: Media mogul versus employees, actresses; media mogul versus public

LOUIS C.K.

Dominant culture: Patriarchal discourse; rape culture; Weinstein Effect

Institution: Hollywood

Perpetrator: Comedian

Interdiscursivity (genre): Apology; public discourse; face-negotiation

Discursive strategies:

- Nomination/Nominalisation: “five women named Abby, Rebecca, Dana, Julia”
- Word choice: “dick”
- Use of universal ‘you’: “when you have power over another person”
- Passive voice: “I have spent my long [...] career”
- Presupposition: “their community”
- Repetition: [Sections 3, 5, 7]

Apology strategies:

- Labelling of offense: “the stories”; “a situation”
- Admission of wrongdoing: “These stories are true”
- Reference to past apology: “I have been remorseful of my actions”
- Justification: “never showed [...] my dick without asking first, which is also true”
- Indirect apology: “I deeply regret”
- Forbearance: “I will now step back”
- Focus on admiration: “The power I had over these women is that they admired me” x5

Mode: Written; online publication through news website

Mediation: Twitter; time-space distancing

Audience reception: Majority negative; one third of responses positive; problematic language about feminist and personal attacks ensued

Conflict: Media figure versus female media figures; media figure versus public

KEVIN SPACEY

Dominant culture: Patriarchal discourse; rape culture; Weinstein Effect

Institution: Hollywood

Perpetrator: Actor

Interdiscursivity (genre): Apology; public discourse; face-negotiation;
coming out statement

Discursive strategies:

- Nomination/Nominalisation: “Anthony Rapp”
- Passive voice: “it would have been”
- Word choice: “if I did behave then as he describes”
- Sequencing: [Section 5]

Apology strategies:

- Deflecting blame: “his story”
- Labeling of offense: “the encounter”
- Indirect apology: “I owe him the sincerest apology”; “I am sorry for the feelings he describes”
- Excuse: “deeply inappropriate drunken behavior”; “I choose now to live as a gay man”
- Reflects on core values: “protective of my privacy”; “I want to deal with this openly and honestly”
- Minimization: “would have been over 30 years ago”

Mode: Written; online publication on Twitter

Mediation: Twitter; time-space distancing

Audience reception: Mostly negative and rejected; rhetoric used to justify homophobic comments

Conflict: Media figure versus 14-year old actor; media figure versus public

APPENDIX C: NVIVO TOP THEMES ON TWITTER

Top quoted phrases and terms, not including names of perpetrators or the word “apology”

	TOP 10 MOST USED PHRASES	NEXT TOP 10 MOST USED
HARVEY WEINSTEIN REACTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. man (24, 4.03%) 2. women (12, 2.02%) 3. jay (10, 1.68%) 4. woman (10, 1.68%) 5. quotes (10, 1.68%) 6. sexually, sexual (9, 1.51%) 7. letter (5, 0.84%) 8. harass, harassment (5, 0.84%) 9. power (5, 0.84%) 10. fuck (4, 0.57%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. men (4, 0.67%) 12. statement (4, 0.67%) 13. assault (3, 0.50%) 14. different (3, 0.50%) 15. time (3, 0.50%) 16. wrong (3, 0.50%) 17. issue, issuing (3, 0.50%) 18. needs (3, 0.50%) 19. abuse, abused (2, 0.34%) 20. class (2, 0.34%)
LOUIS C.K. REACTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. woman (68, 3.02%) 2. man (59, 2.62%) 3. kevin spacey (30, 1.33%) 4. Weinstein (27, 1.20%) 5. sexually, sexual, sexuality (26, 1.16%) 6. women (24, 1.07%) 7. assault, assaulted, assaulting (14, 0.62%) 8. gay, gays (14, 0.62%) 9. fuck, fucking (12, 0.53%) 10. gender (11, 0.49%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. people (11, 0.49%) 12. admit, admits, admitted (11, 0.49%) 13. quote, quoted, quotes, quoting (10, 0.44%) 14. jay (10, 0.44%) 15. power, powerful (9, 0.40%) 16. year, years (9, 0.40%) 17. men (8, 0.36%) 18. now (8, 0.36%) 19. sorry (8, 0.36%) 20. excuse (7, 0.31%)
KEVIN SPACEY REACTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. man (21, 3.04%) 2. woman (16, 2.32%) 3. gay, gays (14, 2.03%) 4. sexual, sexuality, sexually (14, 2.03%) 5. people (6, 0.87%) 6. rapp (5, 0.72%) 7. gender (5, 0.72%) 8. vulnerability, vulnerable (4, 0.58%) 9. predation, predator, predators (4, 0.58%) 10. pedophile (4, 0.58%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. old (4, 0.58%) 12. fuck (4, 0.58%) 13. excuse, excusing (4, 0.58%) 14. year, years (3, 0.43%) 15. statement (3, 0.43%) 16. sorry (3, 0.43%) 17. minor (3, 0.43%) 18. love (3, 0.43%) 19. homophobic (3, 0.43%) 20. deflect, deflection, deflects (3, 0.43%)

Parentheses: (number of times used, weighted percentage used)

APPENDIX D: KEY TWITTER REACTIONS

Below is a selection of relevant Twitter reactions to each apology the week following their release. Names, icons, and Twitter handles were masked for user confidentiality and to avoid judgments based on potential gender identification.

HARVEY WEINSTEIN: Twitter reactions from October 5th to 12th

The image shows a vertical scroll of six tweets. Each tweet is enclosed in a thin black border. The tweets are as follows:

- Tweet 1:** Posted on 9 Oct 2017. Text: "Harvey Weinstein's 'don't fire me' letter is just as pathetic as his fake apology. Pervert".
- Tweet 2:** Posted on 7 Oct 2017. Text: "Replying to @ [redacted] I've heard a few stories from a few female friends that blew my mind. They're not even my stories to tell and I'm afraid to speak out." Engagement: 4 replies, 5 retweets, 69 likes.
- Tweet 3:** Posted on 7 Oct 2017. Text: "For clarification, they all involve different men. It seems to be a common theme. Does fame and power do this to people?" Engagement: 3 replies, 4 retweets, 50 likes.
- Tweet 4:** Posted on 7 Oct 2017. Text: "Personally, I think upbringing first -- then power gives them permission, and that permission perpetuates the problem." Engagement: 6 replies, 7 retweets, 174 likes.
- Tweet 5:** Posted on 7 Oct 2017. Text: "...obviously it's really an alliteration issue." Engagement: 5 replies, 1 retweet, 218 likes.
- Tweet 6:** Posted on 7 Oct 2017. Text: "Was gonna say. Spot the writer!" Engagement: 2 replies, 32 likes.
- Tweet 7:** Posted on 10 Oct 2017. Text: "It's true, tho - it happens in blue-collar circles (& families) & in middle-class white-collar ones too. What this 'missing stair' syndrome shares cross-class is 1. male, esp white male, privilege over (most) women, 2. enablers, esp 'nice guys' who rugsweep & laugh at rape jokes."

The screenshot shows a vertical scroll of three tweets. The top tweet, dated 5 Oct 2017, quotes Jay Z's 4:44 and criticizes Weinstein's apology. The middle tweet, dated 10 Oct 2017, says 'Not me.. you owe an apology to the women that were sexually abused by Harvey Weinstein that you said remained silent to "get ahead".' The largest tweet, dated 6 Oct 2017 at 4:18 AM, reads 'Harvey Weinstein's apology letter is so trash lmao. why does he make sexual harassment sound like a mental illness'. It has 18 retweets and 90 likes, with a 'Follow' button and a reply box. The bottom tweet, also dated 6 Oct 2017, says 'i know i have to conquer my demons" dude what type of demon is it that makes you wanna show your dick to shrinking women. kindly explain'. The final tweet, dated 6 Oct 2017, says 'i just, i really hate this narrative of "something makes me do it" IT'S NOT AN INVOLUNTARY THING. sexual harassment is carefully planned'.

[Redacted] @ [Redacted] · 5 Oct 2017
Harvey Weinstein quotes Jay Z's 4:44 and taunts NRA in the most embarrassing sexism **apology** this year so far. [nytimes.com/interactive/20...](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/10/05/us/politics/weinstein-apology.html)

[Redacted] @ [Redacted] · 10 Oct 2017
Not me.. you owe an **apology** to the women that were sexually abused by **Harvey Weinstein** that you said remained silent to "get ahead".

[Redacted] @ [Redacted] · 6 Oct 2017
Harvey Weinstein's apology letter is so trash lmao. why does he make sexual harassment sound like a mental illness
4:18 AM - 6 Oct 2017
18 Retweets 90 Likes
2 18 90
Tweet your reply

[Redacted] @ [Redacted] · 6 Oct 2017
"i know i have to conquer my demons" dude what type of demon is it that makes you wanna show your dick to shrinking women. kindly explain
1 3 46

[Redacted] @ [Redacted] · 6 Oct 2017
i just, i really hate this narrative of "something makes me do it" IT'S NOT AN INVOLUNTARY THING. sexual harassment is carefully planned
1 9 46

The image shows a vertical list of six tweets from October 2017, each with a blacked-out profile picture and name. The tweets are as follows:

- Tweet 1:** 7 Oct 2017. Text: "As a society, we cannot accept excuses like 'I'm from a different time' and 'I really do respect women.'" Interactions: 2 replies, 12 retweets, 30 likes.
- Tweet 2:** 5 Oct 2017. Text: "fuck **Harvey Weinstein** & his 'I grew up in a different time when it was cool to sexually harass women' bullshit **apology** all the way to hell." Interactions: 1 retweet, 10 likes.
- Tweet 3:** 5 Oct 2017. Text: "**Harvey Weinstein** quoted 4:44 in his **apology** statement. Fuck you, bruh." Interactions: 2 replies, 2 likes.
- Tweet 4:** 5 Oct 2017. Text: "**Harvey Weinstein** dropping a Jay-Z lyric in his sexual harassment **apology**(?) letter. Our society is truly through the looking glass." Interactions: 1 reply, 1 like.
- Tweet 5:** 5 Oct 2017. Text: "omg **Harvey Weinstein** quotes Jay Z in his **apology** letter! I cannot [nyti.ms/2fNGNQu](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/us/politics/harvey-weinstein-apology.html)" Interactions: 4 replies, 5 retweets, 3 likes.
- Tweet 6:** 5 Oct 2017. Text: "You can tell **Harvey Weinstein** truly regrets and understands the seriousness of his actions because he quoted Jay-Z in his **apology**." Interactions: 4 replies, 9 retweets, 78 likes.

LOUIS C.K.: Twitter reactions from November 10th to 17th

The image shows a vertical list of five tweets from November 10, 2017, reacting to Louis C.K.'s apology. Each tweet is enclosed in a light blue border and includes a profile picture placeholder, a verified account icon, a timestamp, the tweet text, and interaction icons (reply, retweet, like, and direct message).

Tweet 1: [Redacted] @ [Redacted] · 10 Nov 2017
God, I can't stand **Louis C.K.** Stans acting like his statement is some fountain of wisdom. Don't put this abuser on a pedestal! Also, why does he think it's okay to use the word "dick" in this context? Also also, remorse is one thing, but where's the, you know, **EXPLICIT APOLOGY?**
4 replies, 6 retweets, 20 likes

Tweet 2: [Redacted] @ [Redacted] · 10 Nov 2017
I'm having a hard time with **Louis C.K.'s apology** statement. An **apology** should not include multiple mentions of how admired you are.
8 replies, 16 likes

Tweet 3: [Redacted] @ [Redacted] · 10 Nov 2017
How many times does **Louis C.K.** use his **apology** to assert how admired he is?
In a way, it's like we're all watching him having a wank
2 replies, 4 retweets, 23 likes

Tweet 4: [Redacted] @ [Redacted] 10 Nov 2017
Louis C.K.'s apology is just him making the jerk off motion while we watch.
4 retweets, 9 likes

Tweet 5: [Redacted] @ [Redacted] · 10 Nov 2017
Dear **Louis C.K.** -- You're **apology** blows. "I never showed a woman my dick without asking first" -- you're missing the part where they "sure" or apparently "no".
4 replies, 13 likes

██████████@██████████ · 10 Nov 2017
Louis C.K. starts off his "apology" by claiming that he somehow just didn't realize it was wrong to take his dick out in front of women who he had power over

██████████@██████████ · 10 Nov 2017
So, I really liked Louis C.K.s apology letter. He took complete responsibility and showed a deep understanding of the pain he has caused. He didn't make excuses. Now, I have never been a fan, still not a fan, but he did set a standard for an appropriate public apology. #LouisCK

██████████@██████████ · 10 Nov 2017
"Comedian Louis C.K." Have to give it to him for being the only one who has admitted to it nd meant his apologies. It doesn't mitigate what he did, but, it's a refreshing aftermath. Bring it on, feminists; I can take it.

██████████@██████████ · 10 Nov 2017
He doesn't owe you or me an apology. The press reports he apologized to the victims directly.

██████████@██████████ · 10 Nov 2017
I disagree

██████████@██████████ · 10 Nov 2017
Why does he owe you an apology? That's like saying every person whose ever wronged another person entitles you to an apology. That's messed up.

██████████@██████████ · 10 Nov 2017
Jesse, please be my spokeswoman.

██████████@██████████ · 10 Nov 2017
This message was brought to you by common sense and reason. Common sense and reason: it's the RIGHT thing to do.

██████████ @ ██████████ · 10 Nov 2017

Feminists come after anyone not totally in lockstep with them. I still am glad he spoke out now. Don't agree? That's your right.

██████████ @ ██████████ · 10 Nov 2017

Ok, be glad. I'm glad he admitted to it too but it feels like you're forgetting the victims. He silenced his victims for years. He shouldn't get a cookie for coming clean. And we don't know if he meant his apologies because apologies are expected of wrong doers.

3 1

██████████ @ ██████████ · 10 Nov 2017

Get real. He asked grown women if he could expose his penis and they didn't say "NO." I seriously doubt the sight of a penis has traumatized any of these women. This wasn't rape & they weren't 14 years old.

2 1

██████████ @ ██████████ · 10 Nov 2017

Never said he traumatized anyone but now you're trivializing his actions even after admitting you don't know shit about the ordeal besides him apologizing today? Not even recognizing the abuse of power that's enabled a environment of sexual misconduct?

1 1 1

██████████ @ ██████████ · 10 Nov 2017

Because I don't believe his actions are as serious as rape, I'm trivializing them? No; I'm saying we've all seen penises we didn't want to see. It isn't life changing. And adults can say "NO." Now go away.

KEVIN SPACEY: Twitter reactions from October 29th to November 6th

The image shows a vertical scroll of five tweets. The first tweet is from a user with a cherry profile picture, stating that Kevin Spacey's apology about assaulting a 14-year-old boy is in the wrong place and time. The second tweet, from a verified user, asks if being gay and drunk means one is a pedophile and predator, and expresses anger. The third tweet is a reply to @KevinSpacey, expressing disappointment and hurt over the perceived half-hearted nature of the apology. The fourth tweet, also from a verified user, criticizes Spacey for not denying the assault and instead coming out as gay, labeling it as sociopathic behavior. The fifth tweet is a larger text block that says '1/ Kevin Spacey making his apology all about him, gives a perfect insight into the narcissistic mindset of a predator.' It includes a timestamp of 10:37 PM on Oct 29, 2017, and shows 186 retweets and 543 likes, with a row of profile pictures of users who interacted with the tweet.

██████████ @██████████ · 29 Oct 2017
kevin spacey coming out as gay in an **apology** about sexuality assaulting a 14 year old boy 30 years ago. wrong place wrong time old man

18 84

██████████ @██████████ · 29 Oct 2017
So being gay and drunk means you're bound to be a pedophile and predator? FUCK YOU and your **apology**, Kevin Spacey!

20 463 2.4K

██████████ @██████████ 29 Oct 2017
Replying to @KevinSpacey
I am so disappointed, so hurt. And this "**apology**" is half assed and a poor attempt at excusing your actions.

3 9 256

██████████ @██████████ 29 Oct 2017
Kevin Spacey issues an **apology**, doesn't deny assaulting a 14-yr-old then deflects by coming out as a gay man. Classic sociopath behavior. 🍕

1/ Kevin Spacey making his apology all about him, gives a perfect insight into the narcissistic mindset of a predator.

10:37 PM - 29 Oct 2017

186 Retweets 543 Likes

6 186 543

[REDACTED] @ [REDACTED] · 30 Oct 2017

With everything that is going on today it's **Kevin Spacey's** opportunistic, heartless "**apology**" from last night on which I dwell.

10 3 34

[REDACTED] @ [REDACTED] · 30 Oct 2017

Cannot believe that **Kevin Spacey** has used his SEXUAL PREDATORY ADVANCES toward a MINOR to come out of the closet, stigmatising the LGBTQ+ community and totally devaluing his "**apology**" towards Rapp. Selfish, careless and disappointing.

1 4 34

[REDACTED] @ [REDACTED] · 29 Oct 2017

also, can we someday talk abt queer abuse victims stayin silent bc they dont want to contribute to homophobic tropes of the gay pedophile

12 33

Kevin Spacey deeming it appropriate to "come out" as gay to deflect from a quarter-assed apology for being a pedophile is dangerous.

9:22 AM - 30 Oct 2017

3 Retweets 10 Likes

[Profile icons]

[REDACTED] @ [REDACTED] · 30 Oct 2017

Kevin Spacey's "**apology**" is being reported in Russia & is bolstering anti-gay sentiment — it plays directly into homophobic stereotypes. FYI

1 16 29

