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Sex and Politics: The Genre of Apologia in Political Sex Scandals

The genre of *apologia* "has persevered because its function has evolved throughout history" along with the evolution of our societies (Downey 43). Because *apologia* "resembles a catalog of options available to rhetors rather than a unified set of elements," this genre provides innumerable ways to distribute modes of apology and is still extremely relevant and important in our rhetorical lives (Downey 43). There are many contexts in which rhetors have proven to successfully (and unsuccessfully) utilize the tactics provided by the genre of *apologia.* In many official, formal contexts especially, *apologia* is used often, whether consciously or unconsciously.

The genre of *apologia* can be presented and seen through many different realistic contexts. There exists an extensive analysis of *apologia* in corporate settings, for instance. This includes matters of race or religion within corporate situations, other organizational-oriented issues, and matters of historical injustice. *Apologia* has also been studied throughout the realm of international relations and political affairs. Jason Edwards claims that international leaders "articulate community-focused apologia to mend relations between peoples, which may serve to build a common path toward peace and deepen relationships between these actors" (317). Edwards argues that the true goal of international *apologia* is to spread a sense of community; a traditional use of *apologia* as an individualized tactic is not as useful or necessary when discussing international affairs (Edwards 318).

Although *apologia* in politics has been analyzed and discussed, information and analysis specifically surrounding political sex scandals are not abundant. Other than the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, little has been written about the true success or commodity of *apologia* in political sex scandals. Through the analysis of the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, a possible new

category of *apologia* was discovered. Kramer and Olson claim that the success of Clinton's defense derives from his "progressive" *apologia* style—"he employed a graduated apologia strategy that progressed through the stases" (348). His more than 20 public statements during the scandal provided him a new opportunity every time he spoke to recreate and regain his credibility (Kramer and Olson 438). Other than the Clinton-Lewinsky case, there is very little analysis of sex scandals within the political realm. This paper will examine four instances of sex scandals within politicics through the genre of *apologia.*

The notion of political sex scandals specifically plays an important role in rhetoric. With the stress, intensity, and pressure that arise as a result of being the focus of a political sex scandal, *something* must be done to reverse the negative or questionable accusations against the accused. When dealing with a sex scandal, how do politicians successfully rebuild their credibility using tactics of *apologia*? First, *apologia* as a *genre* must be examined. Then, the four controversial scandals will be discussed and the particular tactics used will be analyzed. Finally, a conclusion will show which politicians were successful and which were unsuccessful in their apologia attempts, and will provide understanding for each finding.

Apologia and Sex Scandals

A *genre* is defined by Campbell and Jamieson to be a group of "discourses which share substantive, stylistic, and situational characteristics" (408). The distinctive characteristic of a genre, then, is the "*isolation"* of these unified constellatory forms (408). Ware and Linkugel define the genre of *apologia* as "the speech of defense" (417). Originally from "Ancient Greek *apologia*, from the prefix *apo-*, 'away; off' together with *logos*, 'speech'" ("Apology"), the term has evolved into a genre of rhetoric which "constitute[s] a distinct form of public address, a family of speeches with sufficient elements in common so as to warrant legitimately generic

status" (Ware and Linkugel 417). Unlike other forms of rhetorical genres, *apologia* requires a definite personal element, as the accused attempts to reconcile relations with the audience in order to enhance his or her "moral nature, motives, or reputation" (Ware and Linkugel 418). The goal is to reestablish positive images in the persona of the accused. *Apologia* is necessary in the genre of political scandals because, in order to represent a political ideology, party, or organization, the scandalized "accused" must be able to represent himself or herself in a dignified way. The society must associate positive things with the accused, not negative things. Understanding and participating in *apologia* becomes crucial for any political individual, as well as for any individual who has a certain persona to maintain.

Rhetorical scholar Paul Achter claims that "through its repeated use in media scandals, the apologia—the speech of self-defense—has become a sort of script for the accused figure within the scandal" (319). Scandals, as a societal craze, demand defense. There must be a way for the accused to regain credibility and allow the audience to reconsider perceptions; for that reason, *apologia* is the means to public reconsideration. Achter offers an overview of a sex scandal:

> A comprehensive assessment of sex scandal narratives found in public life, as well as fiction and nonfiction texts, reveals consistent characters, scene, and plot. The narrative begins with the accusation itself—reports of an affair or purported affair, an act of infidelity or impropriety that, by definition, transgresses dominant moral boundaries. Concomitant with an accusation is the assertion of guilt, and subsequent questions about the accused man's moral nature, motives, or reputation. The accused must then respond (324).

This description presents *apologia* as a consistent, almost predictable act in which the accused must react and respond. In a sense, the accused is forced into dealing with the scandal at hand, whether or not it is true. The accused also acts fairly quickly when it comes to responding to a

sex scandal accusation (Achter 325). The issue of a sex scandal is something serious in the eyes of the general public—therefore it is not only awaited but also expected by the community for some sort of rhetoric to follow a serious accusation. Unlike other various accusations, a sex scandal resonates with every citizen because of the personal aspect that is attached to such a scandal and because of the undeniable obsession of our culture with sexual drama.

To further discuss the importance of rhetoric in times of accusation through the genre of *apologia,* one must explore the possible tactics. There is a plethora of ways to initiate and accentuate a feeling of "sorry"; it can be done using many different strategies, depending on how the accused wants the audience to react and respond. There is always a function for *apologia,* as there will always be instances in which one's character needs to be stabilized and maintained. According to Ware and Linkugel, there are four main categories of *apologia,* or four "modes of resolution": (1) denial, (2) bolstering, (3) differentiation, and (4) transcendence (419). *Apologia* acts as a source of relief for the accused by offering denials, by reverting the attention from negative accusations to positive attributions of the accused, and by providing alternative ways for the audience to relate themselves back to the person being accused.

First, there is the strategy of denial. Denial is a way for the accused to remove responsibility or blame for participating in the accusations. "Denial is an instrument of negation" in which the accused attempts to provide an exact opposite interpretation of the accusations, in which he or she had absolutely no part in it (Ware and Linkugel 419). An example of denial is a politician who completely denies any participation in or knowledge about a particular happening within his control or jurisdiction.

The second tactic is bolstering, which "refers to any rhetorical strategy which reinforces the existence of a fact, sentiment, object, or relationship" (Ware and Linkugel 420). The goal of

bolstering is to reestablish good connections with the audience by almost ignoring the accusations, and by focusing instead on other distinguished, relatable factors of the accused that is seen in a positive light. When a rhetor bolsters, it is an attempt to "identify himself with something viewed favorably by the audience" without referring to the accusations explicitly (Ware and Linkugel 420). An example of bolstering is a politician who, in the midst of a scandal, focuses on his or her successes and contributions to the society and how important his or her time in office has been to everyone involved instead of focusing on the scandal itself.

The third strategy is differentiation, which has the purpose of "separating some fact, sentiment, object, or relationship from some larger context within which the audience presently views that attribute" (Ware and Linkugel 421). When a rhetor engages in differentiation as a form of *apologia,* the goal is to provide a distinct reason as to why certain accusations occurred. The rhetor, truthfully or not, alters the story to appear as if these things were done for a different reason than what the audience may think. An example of differentiation is a politician who blames an act on a certain state of mind, a moment of desperation, or another "reason" as to why something occurred, in an attempt to steer the audience's blame away from that person and that person only.

Transcendence is the fourth and final tactic of *apologia.* Transcendence "joins some fact, sentiment, object, or relationship with some larger context within which the audience does not presently view that attribute" (Ware and Linkugel 422). Transcendence moves the audience psychologically away from the particular accusations towards more abstract views of the rhetor's character (Ware and Linkugel 422). The goal of transcendence is to create a feeling within the audience that the accused did what he or she did because of something greater than himself or herself. Unlike denial and bolstering, differentiation and transcendence allow the rhetor to focus

on the accusations and address them; however, the issues are addressed somewhat indirectly by altering the reasoning, logic, or purpose for performing or being a part of the accusations. An example of transcendence is someone who, in the midst of a scandal, focuses on the destinies provided by God in an attempt to direct audience's feelings toward something greater than themselves, and therefore something greater than the accused.

To further Ware's and Linkugel's studies of *apologia* tactics, William L. Benoit introduces several other possible strategies for restoring our image in his book *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies.* The first of these strategies is "evading responsibility" (Benoit 76). According to Benoit, there are four variants of this tactic. The first variant, provocation, "suggest[s] that the actor may claim that the act in question was performed in response to another wrongful act, which understandably provoked the offensive act in question" (Benoit 76). This idea can also be associated with scapegoating and placing blame on another party. An example of provocation is when someone accused explains an act done only because something else had been done previously that lead to that second act. Benoit identifies the second variant as defeasibility. Here, the accused pleads "lack of information about or control over important factors in the situation" (Benoit 76). Instead of fully denying the accusations, the accused instead blames lack of knowledge or understanding. An example of defeasibility is when a politician blames misunderstanding or lack of control over a certain situation to steer the blame away from his or her character. The third variant of this tactic, accidents, relies on the perception of a true accident; "we tend to hold others responsible only for factors they can reasonably be expected to control" (Benoit 76). Rather than simply denying the occurrence of the act, "the accused attempts to provide information that may reduce his or her apparent responsibility for the offensive act" (Benoit 76). An example of accidents is an accuser who blames his servicemen for wrongful

doings because they did not know or understand the situation, therefore creating an appearance of the act being simply an accident. The last variant of the tactic of evasion of responsibility, titled good intentions, is for the accused to suggest, "the action in question may be justified on the basis of motives or intentions" (Benoit 76). Benoit quotes Ware and Linkugel here, noting that this variant can be connected with their denial strategy—the accused should not be held fully responsible because "it was done with good, rather than evil, intentions" (76-7). An example of good intentions is someone who denies that a wrongful act, such as having an affair, was done for anything rather than good intentions; it was not done at all maliciously and the assumed outcome was nothing negative.

The second of Benoit's tactics is "reducing offensiveness" (77). In this situation, "a person accused of misbehavior may attempt to reduce the degree of ill-feeling experienced by the audience" (Benoit, 77). There are six variants here discussed by Benoit: bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking one's accuser, and compensation (77). Bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence are already discussed by Ware and Linkugel above. Minimization includes an attempt for the accused to lessen "the amount of negative affect associated with the offensive act" (Benoit 77). According to Benoit, this can be done if the accused can convince the audience that the act is not as bad as it may appear; it is simply exaggerated (77). An example of minimization is a politician who, after being accused of stealing $100,000 from a colleague, confesses to stealing only $10,000 and therefore makes it seem minimal compared to the initial accusation. The next variant, attacking one's accuser, includes reducing the credibility of the source of accusations (Benoit 78). The accuser can use this tactic to take attention away from the actual accusations at hand. An example of attacking one's accuser is a politician blaming the media sources for creating this problem for him or her,

instead of it being the fault of the accused. Compensation, the final variant of the reduction tactic offered by Benoit, is a way for the accuser to offer redress, either in monetary form or otherwise, "for reducing the offensiveness of an action" (78). Benoit essentially calls this tactic a bribe (78). An example of compensation is a politician who, after being accused of a wrongful act, offers money or rewards to his citizens, community, or followers in an attempt to gain support.

Two more tactics from Benoit remain: corrective action and mortification. According to Benoit, corrective action may take two forms: "restoring the situation to the state of affairs before the objectionable action and/or promising to 'mend one's ways' and make changes to prevent the recurrence of the undesirable act" (79). In this tactic, the two things being corrected or fixed must be comparable so that the corrective action "can address the actual source of injury" by "offering to rectify past damage and/or prevent its recurrence" instead of simply counterbalancing the act with a gift (Benoit 79). An example of corrective action is a politician who, after being accused of a wrongful act, offers an action to the community or to his followers in an attempt to regain support. Mortification consists of self-imposed embarrassment by the accused. In this case, the "accused may admit responsibility for the wrongful act and ask forgiveness," but it is up to the audience to either "pardon the wrongful act" or not (Benoit 79). An example of mortification is a politician who takes full responsibility, often to a point of desperation, in hopes that the audience will respect and appreciate that act enough to forgive the initial wrongful act.

***Apologia* Tactics** (based on Ware and Linkugel and Benoit)
1. Denial
2. Evading Responsibility a. Provocation b. Defeasibility c. Accidents d. Good Intentions
3. Reduce Offensiveness a. Bolstering b. Minimization c. Differentiation d. Transcendence e. Attacking One's Accuser f. Compensation
4. Corrective Action
5. Mortification

These many tactics of *apologia* can be used and applied in many different instances in many different ways. When politicians find themselves in the heart of a scandal, *apologia* becomes a necessity if they wish to regain any positive identity or credibility with their audience. Presently, we do not know much about how politicians involved in sex scandals use rhetoric of *apologia* to attempt to regain credibility.

This paper will examine four different controversial figures, analyzed through the rhetorical genre of *apologia.* The first case is a speech delivered by New York Governor Eliot Spitzer in regards to the accusations against him for involvement with a high-end prostitute. Spitzer announced his resignation during this speech. The second case that will be analyzed is a speech by Kwame Kilpatrick, the former mayor of Detroit, Michigan, after being accused of

sending and receiving risqué text messages with an ex-staff member. The third case is a speech delivered by James McGreevey, the former governor of New Jersey, in which he addresses the accusations made against him, confesses his true sexuality, and announces his resignation. The fourth case is two speeches delivered by Anthony Weiner, former Congressman, after being accused of "sexting" other women through Twitter and other means. One is his first apology speech, followed by his official resignation speech given just weeks after the original speech.

Eliot Spitzer

The first artifact is an apology/resignation speech by Eliot Spitzer, the former governor of New York. Spitzer's scandal awakened on Monday, March 10, 2008, "which revealed that he had been the client of a high-end prostitution ring on numerous occasions" ("Spitzer's Resignation Speech: Transcript"). According to an online article by David Walsh of the World Socialist Web Site, "The federal investigation of a New York prostitution ring was triggered by Gov. Eliot Spitzer's suspicious money transfers, initially leading agents to believe Spitzer was hiding bribes."

Eliot Spitzer's resignation speech was given on the morning of March 12, 2008, at his Manhattan office. His wife, Silda, stood next to him without emotion and with her eyes rarely on the camera or the crowd. Spitzer's voice is relatively rigid and throughout most of the speech he is faced downwards at his paper. There is very little eye contact with the audience. The speech lasted fewer than three minutes ("YouTube – 'Elliot Spitzer's Resignation Speech'").

Spitzer focuses on himself and his hardships throughout most of his speech. His short, matter-of-fact speech gets right to the point: "In the past few days, I have begun to atone for my private feelings with my wife Silda, my children, and my entire family. The remorse I feel will always be with me. Words cannot describe how grateful I am for the love and compassion they

have shown me" ("Spitzer's Resignation Speech: Transcript"). He dedicates the beginning of his speech to describe his shame and sorrow by using words such as "atone," "remorse," "private," and "deeply sorry" ("Spitzer's Resignation Speech: Transcript"). His first paragraph ends with the word "apologize," which he emphasizes with his voice, also accompanied with a pause ("Spitzer's Resignation Speech: Transcript").

Spitzer's main tactics used in this speech are bolstering, mortification, and transcendence. His main strategy is to advertise his greatness in the service and the successes in the state of New York because of his work as governor. His entire second paragraph, which is one-third of the entire speech, is dedicated to this notion of bolstering. First, he takes a look back at his time as governor: "I look at my time as governor with a sense of what might have been, but I also know that as a public servant I, and the remarkable people with whom I worked, have accomplished a great deal" ("Spitzer's Resignation Speech: Transcript"). He insists that his resigning is not a forced action by an outside party; instead, he stresses the necessity for him to move on and let someone else take over. His taking responsibility is an act of mortification. By fully accepting the fault and allowing his position as governor to end, he is attempting to allow the audience to have confidence and respect for him. He continues with more bolstering by attributing his resignation to his goodwill: "I believe correctly, that people, regardless of their position or power, take responsibility for their conduct. I can and will ask no less of myself. For this reason, I am resigning from the office of governor" ("Spitzer's Resignation Speech: Transcript").

Spitzer's third and last paragraph of his speech relies on transcendence to win over the audience. He states, "I go forward with the belief, as others have said, that as human beings, our greatest glory consists not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall" ("Spitzer's Resignation Speech: Transcript"). By referring to human beings as a whole, Spitzer attempts to

identify with the audience. By relating to the human race as a whole, he is engaging in a form of transcendence. He continues with a promise to "serve the common good and to move toward the ideals and solutions which I believe can build a future of hope and opportunity for us and for our children" ("Spitzer's Resignation Speech: Transcript"). With this, he is in a way asking the audience's permission to continue working for them and for their children. Although he takes full responsibility for his actions, he also hopes that discussing "our" children and not just "my" children will incorporate a commitment of hope and triumph for the future of humanity.

Kwame Kilpatrick

The second artifact is a speech by Kwame Kilpatrick, the former mayor of Detroit, Michigan. Kilpatrick was caught in a mess of personal and legal problems with his Chief of Staff, Christine Beatty. The two had "an affair and lied about it under oath in a police whistle-blower lawsuit" ("Kwame Kilpatrick…"). Kwame gave his live, television broadcasted apology speech on January 30, 2008 in his office. His wife Carlita Kilpatrick was sitting down next to him. Kwame was looking directly at the camera, spoke in a strong, dramatic voice, and made eye contact with the camera (YouTube – "kwame Kilpatrick Addressing Scandal from His Church"). Both of their statements combined were over nine minutes long.

Mayor Kilpatrick begins with an attempt to connect with varying audience members by addressing groups of his peers: "to all of you who have believed in me and my leadership… to all of you who have stuck with me through difficult times…to all of you who have prayed for me… I'm sorry" ("Text Of Kwame Kilpatrick's Speech…"). He continues by addressing other groups who may have been affected by his actions and apologizes to them. This tactic is important because he takes the attention off of him indirectly by addressing "people in the barber shop…," people who heard things "in church last Sunday…," to those who "live in our city"

("Text Of Kwame Kilpatrick's Speech …"). The audience is forced to think about the jurisdiction that Kilpatrick is involved with. This tactic is used to shift attention to his power and influence on the city. He then takes the time to apologize to his family, including his wife and his three young sons.

As the speech continues, Kilpatrick uses bolstering as one of his main tactics to provide support for what he has done for the city of Detroit. Mayor Kilpatrick stresses his credibility by telling the audience: "make no mistake about it. Since 2002 I've been in charge of the city. There have been ups and downs. There have been hills and mountains and valleys. But through it all I remain in charge of the city" ("Text Of Kwame Kilpatrick's Speech ..."). By emphasizing his being in charge of Detroit, he is not even giving the audience a chance to think about other options—Kilpatrick takes it upon himself to take ownership of the city, without necessarily including others in the success or thanking outside sources. The goal of this tactic is to lead the audience to focus on his term as mayor and to accept that it is not ending; he is not going anywhere. He continues his bolstering strategies by saying, "I believe we have built a team here that understands the mission and focus, and the commitment that we must have to serve our citizens. We've done some amazing things, but we have a lot of work to do" ("Text Of Kwame Kilpatrick's Speech…"). Not only does he stress great things that have already been accomplished under his leadership, but he also attempts to convince the audience that his run is not over. He continues bolstering: "Over the past few days there's also been a lot of speculation about me resigning from office. Let me be very clear tonight. I would never quit on you" ("Text Of Kwame Kilpatrick's Speech…"). Kilpatrick words this statement in such a way as to make him seem like a hero—he would never "quit" on the city of Detroit; however, he has failed to address the possibility that the audience may have already quit on him.

The next portion of the address is given by Kilpatrick's wife, Carlita, who was sitting next to him throughout his entire speech. Here, they begin holding hands and having eye contact. This immediately gives the audience a sense of love, family, and commitment, despite the scandal outbreak. Carlita's statement can be seen as a new *apologia* tactic; proving or showing forgiveness by the family or spouse of the accused can have a great effect on the audience. The fact that Carlita spoke gives Kilpatrick more credibility, which could be proof that this was a planned strategy, including the timing in which Carlita would intervene and say her part.

Carlita's statement was filled with tactics of differentiation and transcendence. Her short speech focused on her and her husband's specific problem being intensified because they are famous politicians in the media. Because they are in the limelight, the problem exists. There is a different reason for the scandal existing than what the audience may think. Differentiation is apparent in the following statement: "most couples who work through problems in their marriage are able to do so privately. Unfortunately, that option is not available to us. Our family has endured the most painful and intrusive week of our lives, our most intimate issues have been laid out for all to see or all to comment on and to analyze and dissect" ("Text Of Kwame Kilpatrick's Speech…"). Here, Carlita is blaming outside forces greater than the two of them for their issues, and not necessarily her husband. This tactic is used here to divert attention and give different reasoning as to why the scandal is occurring. In a way, she is using transcendence to suggest that there is a force greater than anyone or anything that is forcing this scandal to be so publically broadcasted. By admitting to the world that the media has created this problem is an act of attacking the accuser. She asks for patience from the audience at the end of her speech: "allow our family the space and the privacy that is essential to anyone when they work through these very personal issues" ("Text Of Kwame Kilpatrick's Speech…"). By ending the statement in this

way, she again places responsibility on the audience to respect and tolerate the future of their family. Here, there is an attempt to attack the accuser; Carlita tactically attempts to put the blame on the media for making this scandal a true issue within society. The text attempts to make the audience feel bad for the Kilpatrick's public humiliation.

Mayor Kilpatrick continues his speech after Carlita finishes hers, continuing his use of bolstering and mortification. He says: "if you have to attack someone, attack me. I would ask that you don't follow my wife. Don't film my kids going to school. I ask that you leave them alone. I am the mayor. I made the mistake. I'm accountable" ("Text Of Kwame Kilpatrick's Speech…"). This statement encompasses both bolstering and mortification, as the mayor attempts to project his power and influence on the situation and also creates a feeling of humiliation in which the audience can feel sympathetic for. The tactic of differentiation is also seen here, as the mayor continues to emphasize the issue being a problem because of its publicity. He states: "our marriage has been opened up for public view. This has been a situation where, yes, it's embarrassing, yes it's been painful" ("Text Of Kwame Kilpatrick's Speech…"). With this, Kilpatrick is subtly attempting to make the audience feel bad for getting "involved" uninvited. Kilpatrick ends his speech with bolstering, as he expresses his success with Detroit as the mayor: "I am determined to continue the tremendous progress we are making in this city" ("Text Of Kwame Kilpatrick's Speech…"). He dedicates the next eight sentences to the different things he has done during his administration. Here, he ends the speech with a request from the audience to move forward. This attempt to distract the audience from the actual scandal and to instead divert their attention to the wonderful doings of Mayor Kilpatrick is, indeed, bolstering.

James McGreevey

The third artifact being analyzed is James McGreevey's speech given during a news conference on August 13, 2004, to announce that he would resign after a scandal involving an affair with another man. The speech was about six minutes long and is very personal and quite descriptive about his affair and about his life (YouTube – "Governor McGreevey Resigns"). It begins with an overview of his past confusions, his struggles with his identity, and certain reflective moments that have gotten him to the point that he is at. This could be an attempt to relate with the audience, as most everyone can relate to such life struggles. He admits his true sexual orientation but does not apologize for that; he instead waits to apologize until after he admits he committed adultery. He admitted, "it was wrong. It was foolish. It was inexcusable" ("McGreevey, 'State House Confession,' Speech Text"). He follows this by asking for the forgiveness of his wife but fails to really ask anything of the audience.

Throughout the speech, McGreevey asks for forgiveness from his friends, family, loved ones, and especially from his wife, but he only addresses the citizens of New Jersey once, at the very end of his speech. He does not even quite apologize to the people; instead he humbly thanks them for allowing his administration in New Jersey. This lack of audience inclusion in McGreevey's speech could prove to be a potential downfall of the speech.

McGreevey's main tactic used throughout the bulk of his speech is reduction and correction. He talks about his sexuality in a reduced way: "it makes little difference that as governor I am gay. In fact, having the ability to truthfully set forth my identity might have enabled me to be more forthright in fulfilling and discharging my constitutional obligations" ("McGreevey, 'State House Confession,' Speech Text"). He reduces the consequences that come along with his doings by claiming that by admitting his faults and coming clean, he would be more prepared and competent to fulfill his duties as mayor. Also, he uses this tactic to hopefully

gain the hearts and minds of the audience by relating to them on a personal and even possibly on a spiritual level.

By using the tactic of correction, McGreevey suggests a way for him to "fix" the current scandal: "given the circumstances surrounding the affair and its likely impact upon my family and my ability to govern, I have decided the right course of action is to resign" ("McGreevey, 'State House Confession,' Speech Text"). Instead of waiting for an outbreak by the government to possibly force his resignation in the near future, McGreevey uses the strategy of correction to present his resignation as a means of a thought out choice that will make things better again. Later people discovered that he had other motives behind offering his resignation, which may prove also to be a reason for backlash again him ("The Governor's Secret").

Because of McGreevey's open offer of resignation, one may think that he would be commended for such a courageous action. No one publicly asked him to step down; instead, he decided to resign on his own. However, this proved to backfire, as the true reasons for his resignation became known. McGreevey's speech and resignation "announcement was reportedly driven by the threat of a sexual harassment lawsuit by a former aide, Golan Cipel" ("The Governor's Secret"). This proves that McGreevey had other issues going on behind the scenes that he was not being completely honest about. This most certainly contributed to his failure as a governor in relation to this scandal. Also, the fact that no one opposed to his offer of resignation suggests his lack of success of appropriately using *apologia* as a tactic to diminish his sex scandal.

Transcendence can be seen throughout McGreevey's speech lightly, as he attempts to truly take the audience's attention away from the scandal at hand, and instead put the attention and blame on a personal narrative and a spiritual connection. McGreevey uses words such as

"blessed to live," "tradition of civil liberties," "I do not believe that God tortures any person," "one has to look deeply in the mirror of one's soul" ("McGreevey, 'State House Confession,' Speech Text") to express his thoughts. By doing this, McGreevey attempted to connect with audience members on a spiritual level, which implies that he believed to have had this affair for reasons greater than himself; he almost could not help it.

Bolstering is present once McGreevey begins to contemplate his administration: "I'm very proud of the things we have accomplished during my administration" ("McGreevey, 'State House Confession,' Speech Text"). However, this is the only sentence in which he describes any sort of successes within his term as governor. He does not go into detail or give examples of the accomplishments. Bolstering, although present in the speech, is not a huge element within his *apologia* rhetoric. Instead, he tends to focus on connecting on a personal and spiritual level with the audience, but fails to really include the audience as a crucial player in his speech.

Anthony Weiner

The last and final figure that will be analyzed is Anthony Weiner, the former U.S. Congressman from New York, who was at the heart of a major scandal when it was found that he had been sending explicit pictures of himself to various women who were "following" him on Twitter. Weiner actually gave two *apologia*-based speeches during his scandal: an initial statement confessing to the Twitter photo and past relationships given on June 7, 2011, and his resignation speech given on June 16, 2011.

Both speeches were poor attempts to reach out to the audience and regain the people's trust. He begins his initial statement by taking on full responsibility for his actions: "I'd like to take this time to clear up some of the questions that have been raised over the past 10 days or so, and take full responsibility for my actions" ("Transcript of Weiner's Statement Confessing to

Twitter Photo, Past Relationships."). This may be the strongest tactic Weiner uses throughout his scandal. Weiner begins to explain himself and spends about half of this short speech (not even a minute and a half in length total) with the back-story of what had happened. He claims: "…I tweeted a photograph of myself that I intended to send as a direct message as part of a joke to a woman in Seattle. Once I realized I had posted it to Twitter, I panicked, I took it down, and said that I had been hacked. I then continued with that story to stick to that story, which was a hugely regrettable mistake" ("Transcript of Weiner's Statement Confessing to Twitter Photo, Past Relationships."). By referring to this "huge mistake" as simply "a joke," Weiner is attempting to use the tactic of differentiation to make it seem as if this issue is not necessarily a "scandal." Weiner also is using the tactic of minimization here; by using the term "joke," Weiner hopes to gain respect and credibility from the audience by portraying the reasons for his sending an explicit picture simply "a joke," versus something that should be taken more seriously.

This small attempt at differentiation and minimization, though, is not enough to win over the hearts of the audience. Weiner states: "to be clear, I have never met any of these women or had physical relationships at any time" ("Transcript of Weiner's Statement Confessing to Twitter Photo, Past Relationships."). Although he does admit to sending the picture, Weiner uses denial in an attempt to deny any more serious accusations that had been made. Weiner denies any physical relationships or any further connection to these women besides the Twitter communication. Weiner is also using minimization here; by claiming that *nothing more* was done besides sending pictures to these women, he is framing the scandal to be "not as bad" as everyone thinks. However, this single use of denial and second attempt at minimization is not strong enough to reverse the negative perceptions of his previous actions.

Overall, Weiner simply takes on the responsibility of his actions, but he does not necessarily go so far as to create a sense of mortification. His first speech is a bad attempt of mortification with other lesser tactics sprinkled in. Overall, that was not enough to save Weiner's career or credibility. The lack of tangible *apologia* tactics suggests that Weiner thought that taking on full responsibility would be enough to be forgiven and forgotten.

The second artifact by Weiner, his resignation speech, was given just weeks after his initial statement. Though he was not forced to resign, Weiner chose to resign—this decision in and of itself can be perceived as a failure, as, in this case, Weiner decided his own fate; it could be perceived as a sort of surrendering. This could have added to his dwindling credibility throughout this scandal.

Weiner begins his resignation speech with a poor attempt at bolstering: "About twenty years ago, I stood in this very same room here at the council center and asked my neighbors for their help to take a chance on me in electing me to the City Council…There is no higher honor in a democracy than to be sent by your neighbors to represent them in the United States House of Representatives" ("Full Transcript Of Rep. Anthony Weiner's Resignation Speech."). By discussing his pride and humbleness in receiving such a high honor as Representative, Weiner is attempting to portray his time in Congress as something special, positive, and noteworthy. Weiner's attempt to identify himself in an almost heroic way here is simply not enough to fully be considered a successful attempt at bolstering, mainly because he does not explicitly tell the audience *what* he has done to truly make himself a hero in their eyes.

Once Weiner officially states his stepping down, he does not explicitly state that his resignation is a direct result of the scandal. Instead, he claims that healing is needed: "…I'm announcing my resignation from Congress, so my colleagues can get back to work, my neighbors

can choose a new representative and most importantly that my wife and I can continue to heal from the damage I have caused. To repeat, most importantly, most importantly, so that I can continue to heal from the damage I have caused" ("Full Transcript Of Rep. Anthony Weiner's Resignation Speech."). Weiner does mention "damage I have caused," but that only implicitly gives audiences a sense of what he means. This could be seen as negative, as he claims that he will resign so that others can get back to work and so healing can take place—healing for not others, but for *him*. This could prove to be extremely harmful to his credibility; by healing only for himself, Weiner is selfishly assuming that he is the only one who needs to heal, although it was he who did wrong. By not addressing the audience in this sense, this potentially only further damaged his credibility.

Weiner continues by thanking and apologizing to various people in his life: his neighbors, his father, his wife Huma, his colleagues, and members of his staff ("Full Transcript Of Rep. Anthony Weiner's Resignation Speech."). There is no clear reason as to why Weiner dedicates most of his speech to this, though; it seems more like an acceptance speech than a resignation speech. By thanking multiple different groups of people and by apologizing to them, Weiner has provided another possible attempt at bolstering by giving these people credit for his service; however it could have the reverse effect and be construed as a failed attempt at bolstering because it highlights the many people he has hurt and betrayed. His mention of the many people associated with him and his service actually counteracts his attempt at bolstering by giving credit to others more than to himself. Weiner lacks any sort of actual defense in this speech, which could contribute to his perceived negative credibility throughout this scandal.

Conclusion

These four figures, although all different, have very similar elements. All four utilize the tactics of transcendence, differentiation, and bolstering to some degree. Spitzer's speech, although not immediately successful, was eventually successful because of the long-term conclusions of the scandal. Although the scandal was surprising and disgusted most people, he was a host of his own political television show on CNN until July 2011, when he was replaced with another correspondent on his program. Despite his prostitute troubles years ago, evidently he has been able to build his image back up to a point where he is still regarded as an intelligent, credible man in the political realm. Spitzer's taking on of responsibility could have been the tactic that gave him his success; the audience evidently viewed him as a man who simply made a mistake who was willing to admit it, apologize, and move forward.

Kilpatrick, who was the only one out of the four men who did not resign, was clearly successful. The fact that he did not have to resign proves that his audience still found him competent to complete the job of mayor, despite the scandal. His emphasis on the mediated presence within his scandal clearly proves to be a successful strategy. Putting the blame on the mediation of his personal life and faulting the story itself encouraged the audience to somewhat sympathize with him. Having his wife Carlita there to give a statement was definitely a successful strategy—other future critics of *apologia* should investigate this as a possible tactic. The audience having the spouse there with Mayor Kilpatrick to actually witness the repercussions of his actions is important. Because Carlita stood as a backbone for Kilpatrick, despite his apparent wrongful act towards her, the audience became aware of her acceptance of the issue. If Carlita can forgive her husband and back him up on live television, this encourages the audience to also forgive Kilpatrick.

McGreevey's scandal and speech was viewed as extremely shocking. No one would have imagined this sort of an affair or this sort of a conclusion happening, but he is still viewed as a scandal-ridden politician even today. His speech, filled with personal dialogue, thankfulness, and a limited apology was possibly not enough for the audience to engage in and relate to. He could have used stronger tactics to regain his credibility; instead of making the speech about *him,* he could have focused more dearly on the audience and on New Jersey. The audience reactions were negative and shocking, which possibly could have been avoided with a bit more comfort from McGreevey.

Somewhat similar to McGreevey's limitations, Weiner uses poor attempts at bolstering and minimization along with many "thanks." Weiner's only attempt to move on was focused only on himself, with his comment "…so that I can heal from the damage I have caused" ("Full Transcript Of Rep. Anthony Weiner's Resignation Speech."). Without reasonable appeal or "wooing" of the audience, Weiner gains nothing by offering to heal himself. His small attempts to reduce the wrongfulness of the act and to put forth the good people and things he has done through bolstering was not enough to save his political career or his credibility as a U.S. State Representative.

Ware and Linkugel emphasize the fact that "the questioning of a man's *moral nature, motives,* or *reputation* is qualitatively different from the challenging of his policies" (418). This emphasizes the implicit significance of separating the person's character from their political stance. This idea must be remembered and realized, as it is the basis for the need for *apologia*-type rhetoric. Both Spitzer and Kilpatrick provide extensive evaluations of themselves as true men and as true characters. McGreevey and Weiner, on the other hand, remained somewhat

neutral in their responses. They both had insufficient attempts at bolstering, as their audience failed to realize the great deeds that were done by these men for their communities.

The presence of Spitzer's wife and Kilpatrick's wife during their speeches greatly increased their credibility. Within the text of Carlita Kilpatrick's statement lies a possible new tactic, which includes the support, forgiveness, and active participation of the spouse or family of the accused in the scandal rhetoric. Carlita's speech interjecting within Mayor Kilpatrick's speech is a tactic in and of itself because of its immediate implications. Carlita says in her statement "as a wife, I know how committed he is to the city of Detroit" ("Text Of Kwame Kilpatrick's Speech…"). Having his wife's forgiveness and support gives Kilpatrick an upper hand and makes the audience feel better about the situation. This sort of tactic was also slightly apparent during Spitzer's speech with the presence of his wife by his side, but it was not nearly as powerful as Carlita actually making a statement about the scandal herself.

When dealing with a sex scandal, politicians successfully recover their credibility by using the tactics of bolstering and differentiation. For McGreevey and Weiner to be as successful as Spitzer and Kilpatrick, they could have explored alternative tactics, such as differentiation, to view the scandal from a completely different perspective that even the audience may not have seen before. The idea of the problem transcending the normal means and involving a greater good or a greater cause is very powerful. The inclusion of an active spouse or family member during the speech could have really increased McGreevey's or Weiner's image during and after the speech was given. Future critics should further investigate the possible existence of a new tactic involving the forgiveness of the spouse of the accused throughout the scandal rhetoric. Also, diving deeper into personal and political achievements with bolstering seems to be a promising tactic when it comes to the rhetoric of sex scandals. Focusing on a man's "moral

nature" should be considered to truly explain oneself in front of an audience. The audience must be able to *feel* the politician's remorse, appreciation for the audience, and desire for forgiveness from others before the audience can then forgive and forget.

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