

“What We Now Believe is the Truth”: Apologia, Presence, and Narrative in
This American Life’s “Retraction” Episode.

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

John Logie

July 2013

Acknowledgements

Thank you to John Logie for patience, support, and guidance during this prodigal's return.

Dedication

To my family Al and Mei Lie, and public radio workers both on the air and behind the scenes.

Abstract

This thesis explores *This American Life*'s "Retraction" episode as a unique type of apologia, a retraction in the journalistic sense, which uses narrative to correct an earlier broadcast episode containing factual errors. Host Ira Glass attempts not only to set the record straight (and provide a new radio experience to replace the offending one), but also to repair his image, and assert the status of his show as a serious journalistic program. To do so, he uses elements of William Benoit's image restoration strategies to distance himself from Mike Daisey's fictional storytelling, and uses stylistic choices within his narrative to create presence for the audience that reflect values of journalism such as the principle of "eyewitnessing."

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Prolegomenon

"...if we're *not* able to fix the *mistake*, then *what* are we ultimately *repairing*?!?"

"Well, that's simple: we're repairing *ourselves* and our *relationships* with *other people*....That's what it's all *really* about..."

~Hanan Harchol from the animated short "Repair"

In the above dialogue, animator Hanan Harchol explores the Jewish concept of *teshuvah* or “to return” (to God) which is also commonly translated as “repentance.” His explanation of the true objective of an outward verbal or written expression of requesting forgiveness is very much in line with how rhetorical scholars understand apologia. It also reflects another way to understand the role of retraction in media as relationship-building, specifically in journalism. Apologia and retraction are related in an intimate and complex way. Like the quotation above, a retraction acknowledges that a mistake was made and broadcast/printed publicly in the past, but that fact cannot be “fixed” or unsaid once it is read or experienced by a public audience. A retraction must have another function.

When *This American Life*'s (TAL) “Retraction” episode aired in the spring of 2012, the newsroom I worked in was abuzz. I had not even heard of the original offending episode, “Mr. Daisey and the Apple Factory,” this in spite of Glass's statistics that indicates it was their most downloaded podcast to that date. The buzz was about a number of issues: 1) that Glass had made a mistake, 2) they aired something that wasn't true, 3) that TAL were retracting an episode, 4) that TAL were doing so over the course of an hour, where every minute of radio is precious, and 5) they were devoting an entire episode to achieving this. We hoped the public radio giant might reveal a chink in his armor, a reason for this mistake, while expressing sincere, dramatic (in typical TAL style)

penitence. We wanted to know how a model of success for nationally broadcast public radio could air something that wasn't true. Also no other news outlets were reporting on this particular error, so the "Retraction" itself provided our only source. We also hoped to witness the leader of this public radio powerhouse genuflecting with deep regret and sorrow. Listeners definitely got a format-breaker, a whole episode devoted to a retraction that would usually appear only as the final few lines of a script at the end of a program. But we did not necessarily get the apology we hoped for.

Professionally, I also thought it may be a teaching moment. At the time I also worked on a nationally broadcast hour-long radio program. Our host had cited in her script the name of the individual who founded the company IBM from the guest's published book. And a listener wrote in to note that the script (and thus the book) was incorrect; our post-broadcast research confirmed his assertion. Our host decided to make a correction in a later episode towards the end of the program, and thank the listener who caught the mistake, "Finally, a correction to our recent show, *Evolving a City*. I read a passage of David Sloan Wilson's book that cites John B. Watson as the entrepreneur who built IBM. In fact, it was Thomas J. Watson. Thanks to listener Davy Knittle for catching this error" ("Evolving a City"). But what if the error had been more serious? How would she restore the audience's trust in her ability to do "good" journalism? I wanted to know if following similar rhetorical choices to Ira Glass's in crisis communication such as in the "Retraction" episode could benefit our program as well. At the time of this paper, *This American Life* is the top downloaded podcast on iTunes, and his listenership has remained loyal, but was it due to the repair work he did in that "Retraction" episode?

When a journalist makes a mistake, I wondered, what are his/her obligations to the audience in terms of fixing the error and asking for forgiveness? Foremost for Glass, his mistake was a call to do more reporting and storytelling, the work of his genre. What is particularly interesting for journalists to observe and consider is the fine line *This American Life* walks between serious journalism and storytelling, and at what point crossing that line becomes perceived as a mistake requiring correction and/or apology. Glass's definition and self-identification of where his show existed on that spectrum informs the image restoration strategies he chooses. And through these rhetorical choices, especially the use of narrative within the apologia, he reasserts and expresses this identity of *This American Life*. However it is not necessarily this asserted identity his audience is most attached to or expecting from the show. Further, apologia has received much attention in rhetorical criticism, but research on retraction as a related genre and valuable journalistic tool is sparse.

Journal Reviews

I identify three possible journals below which could host a published version of this paper. The first is *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*. This journal sponsored by The Broadcast Education Association, "the professional association for professors, industry professionals and students who are interested in teaching and research related to electronic media and multimedia enterprises." A paper published here would appeal to students of not only radio, but print and other broadcast media. The kind of analysis I'm doing would give a student an informed sense of whether Glass's path is one worth

retracing if they were to experience his error, the plausible situation of being lied to by a source and then presenting that information as true.

This journal is very interested in the timely public conflicts of public media figures such as Juan Williams and Rush Limbaugh, and is quite open in scope, "scholars are invited to submit articles pertaining to any area of radio and audio media." The information and submission guidelines on their website are wide-ranging and includes interpersonal and rhetorical studies among more business-oriented subjects like "policy issues, rating systems, and advertizing/sales." They have in the past published articles on rhetorical topics such as "NPR Under Fire: On the Kategoria-Based Apologia of Juan Williams by Diana Berkshire Hearit and Keith M. Hearit" as well as "Not the Best: What Rush Limbaugh's Apology to Sandra Fluke Reveals about Image Restoration Strategies on Commercial Radio by Joshua M. Bentley." My paper however relevant to these two articles, may be considered too similar to both to be accepted for publication.

The second journal I will discuss is *Journalism Studies*. My approach is far more rhetorical in focus than most articles in this journal, but at times, *Journalism Studies* appears friendly to discursive studies, textual analysis and particularly issues of ethics in journalism. I don't make much use of the latter category because I presuppose that a retraction of some sort should be done following a journalist's mistake, but I do briefly explore the question of what makes an apology morally satisfactory. In my research I've cited, "What Jayson Blair and Janet Cooke Say About the Press and the Erosion of Public Trust" by Maggie Jones Patterson and Steve Urbanski" as another interesting case study to compare Glass's rhetorical choices to major newspapers involved in the Cooke and

Blair scandals. This journal is affiliated with the Journalism Studies Division of the International Communication Association. As the overall purpose of the Interest Group is to promote journalism theory and research as well as professional education in journalism, they could be sympathetic to my rationale of understanding the “Retraction” episode as professional development were a radio producer to encounter a similar situation that would require an apology and/or image restoration.

The final journal of this review, and the journal I’ve chosen to target is *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, published by Routledge on behalf of the National Communication Association. Their recent issue (Vol. 30, Issue 1) demonstrates their interest in popular media/sports figures and TV shows, the top three articles in it feature *Saturday Night Live*, Tim Tebow, and *The Chef Jeff Show* on the Food Network. The most read article of the entire journal online is an autoethnographic account of being on the set of the reality show *Big Brother* called, “You are Not Allowed to Talk about Production”: Narratization on (and off) the Set of CBS's Big Brother.” Ira Glass as host and leading figure in public radio may, for a certain audience, be in celebrity company with the above. CSMC’s published articles on rhetoric appear to require wider discussion of impact on culture and social change. Their cross-disciplinary emphasis for methodological and analytical approaches reflect my own in this paper which examines not only style, but image repair strategy, and narrative use in asserting identity and rebuilding relationship with Glass’s audience. According to the journal’s aims and scope, published scholarship can include, “media audiences, representations, institutions,

technologies, and professional practices” if retraction can be considered a professional practice it surely fits here.

The rhetorical and media criticism I offer in the paper is also well-suited to this long-established (since 1984) journal. My exploration of the practice of retracting published misinformation has the intention of application across all media, which suits the scope of CSMC, “It takes an inclusive view of media, including newspapers, magazines and other forms of print, cable, radio, television, film, and new media technologies such as the Internet.” A sample article I've cited from this journal: "Achieving Journalistic Authority Through Narrative" by Barbie Zelizer, a respected former journalist and communication scholar. The links to all three journals are listed below:

Journal of Radio & Audio Media

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/hjrs20>

Journalism Studies

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjos20>

Critical Studies in Mass Communication

<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rasm20/current>

Introduction and Literature Review

The editor-in-chief at *Seattle Weekly*, Mark Baumgarten, asks a question that can serve as a kind of litmus test for anyone attempting image repair after committing an error, let alone a public servant or journalist, "More than a year after his public disgrace, he wants us to listen to him again. Should we?" ("The Fall"). The "he" in question is monologist Mike Daisey who is currently touring with a new stage show. And the state of Daisey's credibility for Baumgarten is testing quite low judging by the allusion to *This American Life*'s "Retraction" episode of 2012, in which host Ira Glass portrays him as a fraud, a storyteller doing the work of journalists with a unverifiable monologue that shames Apple and Foxconn, "Even following his public disgrace, he continued performing the Steve Jobs monologue, eventually logging more than 300 shows" ("The Fall"). That public disgrace served as a key part of not only the narrative of the "Retraction" episode, but of Ira Glass's image restoration strategy after discovering Daisey's fabrications in their original episode that aired as "Mr. Daisey and the Apple Factory" on January 6, 2012.

Today, an online search for that earlier Mike Daisey episode (number 454) in the archives of *This American Life* reveals a non-standard modified version of a typical *This American Life* episode. The audio player bar has gone missing, and after mousing over the download button, an apologetic note pops up to tell the audience that no audio is available that way either. And just below the summary of act two, and just above the photo caption is an unusual note which takes the form of a retraction:

NOTE: This American Life has retracted the above story because we learned that many of Mike Daisey's experiences in China were fabricated. We have removed

the audio from our site, and have left this transcript up only for reference. We produced an entire new episode about the retraction, featuring *Marketplace* reporter Rob Schmitz, who interviewed Mike's translator Cathy and discovered discrepancies between her account and Mike's, and *New York Times* reporter Charles Duhigg, who has reported extensively on Apple. Ira also re-interviewed Mike Daisey to learn why he misled us ("454 Mr. Daisey").

The fact that *This American Life* left the transcript as a statement of record is important, as is the fact that they pulled down the audio. The staff did more than "re-interview" Mike Daisey, they decided to create a new original show, a highly unusual format-breaking episode. It was not only devoted to retracting the previous Mike Daisey episode and setting the record straight, but to creating a brand new audio experience for the listener.

This effort to erase and retract a public radio story is not unprecedented, in the same year, *Marketplace* retracted a commentary by Leo Webb called "Returning Veteran Has Few Marketable Skills" within a few days of its airing, and removed both text and audio from their web site, replacing it with an editor's note. They had published an essay by a man claiming to be account of an Army sniper in Iraq for their "My Life is True" series. Follow up research after airing the piece revealed that "the Army has no record of Webb. Webb also said he pitched for a Chicago Cubs minor-league team. Inquiries to the Cubs and to Minor League Baseball found no record of Webb" (Marketplace.org). What is unusual about the "Retraction" episode is that it is intended to stand in as a replacement for the original episode. Host and executive producer Ira Glass wants this later episode to be the final audio version on record that is accessible to listeners. Can what was said be unsaid or re-said? Can Glass undo the damage to Apple and to his own reputation by airing fabricated information that was presented as factual? I argue that what really

matters is whether or not the public “wants to listen to him [Glass]” again as Mark Baumgarten suggests, and I want to explore the process of a journalist can return from the brink of losing credibility, a key requirement of their profession.

The art and science of modern journalism requires two specialized skills that are sometimes at odds with each other: the ability to merge compelling storytelling with accurate, corroborated information. The Columbia School of Journalism claims that the function of journalism is “finding out the truth of complicated situations, usually under a time constraint, and communicating it in a clear, engaging fashion to the public” (“About the School”). The Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism likewise makes the claim with a further civic impact, “The central purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with accurate and reliable information they need to function in a free society.” The discovery of journalistic fraud in terms of plagiarism or fabrication of scenes or events can be devastating for the integrity of any publication in addition to the journalist themselves, as made clear historically with Janet Cooke’s fabrication of a Pulitzer Prize-winning story for the *Washington Post* in 1980, and the 2003 discovery of Jayson Blair’s “frequent acts of journalistic fraud” as his newspaper, *The New York Times* put it. In fact the discovery of plagiarized and fabricated stories prompted *The New York Times* to reexamine “every one of the 673 stories that Blair had filed during his four years on the Times” (Guardian). Other journalists- turned-fabulists include Stephen Glass, formerly of *The New Republic*, and most recently Jonah Lehrer, formerly of *The New Yorker*.

However legitimate journalists with ethical intentions and good research skills can also make mistakes and unintentionally present erroneous information. For example, his employers, as well as many public critics, gave Time/CNN journalist Fareed Zakaria this benefit of the doubt for his published errors, as he was punished with suspension, but not fired for accidental plagiarism (Madrigal, 2012). And endorsement of a fraudster is another type of journalistic error as seen in 2005 when Oprah Winfrey's values and image were called into question shortly after choosing James Frey's alleged memoir *A Million Little Pieces* for her high profile book club. Denise Oles analyzes her image repair strategy identifying an early misstep of attempting to use denial (before Oprah realized the book was full of falsehoods). She later took corrective action by inviting both James Frey and publisher/ editor-in-chief of the book, Nan Talese onto her show for an interrogation that demonstrates scapegoating to shift the blame and attempting to "set the record straight" and "discover what truth was and what fiction was" (Oles 55); "...the lie of it. That's a lie. It's not an idea, James. That's a lie" ("James Frey" 7) and to Talese, "if you're publishing it as a memoir, I think the publisher has a responsibility because as the consumer, the reader, I am trusting you. I'm trusting you, the publisher, to categorize this book whether as fiction or autobiographical or memoir. I'm trusting you" ("James Frey" 12).

Similarly Elizabeth Blanks Hindman identifies this distancing strategy in *The New York Times'* response to their wayward reporter Jayson Blair. She describes *The Times'* efforts at image repair entailing Blair's portrayal as "a renegade separate from the values of his own newsroom and journalism in general," as "inept," and then "depicting him as

extremely able in his ability to deceive others” (230). Another strategy *The Times* employed to absolve itself from blame is by claiming to be a victim of these duplicitous actions (230), much as Oprah suggests above in asserting her total trust in the publisher to edit a memoir factually. Hindman’s analysis of a second technique of image restoration and paradigm repair, which is “reasserting the value of journalistic routines” during their own coverage of the Blair controversy is also important for noting their argument that if their editing and newsgathering routines had worked properly this would not have happened (231).

For most media outlets however, the typical strategy of image restoration following a mistake is to issue a retraction with a correction of the error and sometimes an apology to accompany the story. Despite the relatively frequent occurrence of this genre of rhetorical communication, very little professional or scholarly literature exists on the rhetoric of retraction (particularly in journalism). However retraction as a stylistic and structural device is not limited only to journalism. Retraction has been examined in literature to inform the reading and intention behind a novelist’s character (Gray 161). Lawrence Souder focused his analysis of apologies on published retraction notices in medical and other scientific literature (176). And it is there, in the realm of apologia, where the most fruitful research on retraction exists.

Kirsten Theye deems narrative to be a particular even essential component within successful apologia “when a negative action cannot be denied outright,” as is the case with a retraction (160). She examines Dick Cheney’s use of narrative in his hunting accident apologia and concludes that his first narrative explaining the shooting and

framing the situation was effective, but his narrative on handling the situation from a public relations perspective was not. President Clinton's 1997 speech apologizing to subjects of the Tuskegee Syphilis experiment utilized narrative in an effort to build trust among African-Americans in the U.S. medical system. By recalling and interpreting events, Clinton's historical narrative of the experiment identifies "heroes, villains, and causal relationships" (Harter et al. 24) and apologizes on behalf of the American people instead of the U.S. government, which can also function to obscure the true villain and create a kind of image repair (25).

Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm opens up the possibilities of storytelling, including the transcript of a public radio program such as *This American Life* as a subject for rhetorical analysis. He identifies narrative as available and essential to all rhetors as humans, "the narrative impulse is part of our very beings...that narrative whether written or oral, is a feature of human nature and that it crosses time and culture is attested" (279). Fisher further suggests that the stories we tell ourselves about an event or situation can be more persuasive than logic or facts, "The narrative paradigm doesn't not deny reason and rationality; it reconstitutes them, making them amenable to all forms of human communication" (273). Fisher illustrates a moral component to storytelling, as "the 'people' have a natural tendency to prefer the true and the just" (280).

Though Fisher himself notes that "the narrative paradigm does not entail a particular method of investigation" (273), Sonja K. Foss has devoted a chapter of her book on rhetorical criticism to the approach of narrative criticism. She says that there are several defining features of narrative discourse, primarily that it is comprised of at least

two events (307). Additionally the events of the narrative should be organized by time order, have a causal (or contributing) relationship with one another, and be about a unified topic or subject.

Studying narrative among journalists is particularly interesting because not only are they experts at the task, their expertise defines their identity and authority as journalists. According to communication scholar and former journalist Barbie Zelizer, “Like all speakers in public discourse, journalists are skilled tellers of events who reconstruct and often displace the activities behind the news. For journalists, the reconstructive work of telling has a particular bearing on the legitimacy of their authority as public speakers and their ability to exert social control through narrative” (“American Journalists” 189). Further, their expertise at constructing narrative and ethos “is instead rhetorically based, with journalists primarily legitimating themselves through the rhetoric they use to tell news-stories” (“American Journalists” 189).

Dale L. Sullivan and Michael S. Martin’s proposed theory of ethical decision making includes a narrative view of ethics called “retrospective narrative justification of ethical actions (260). More simply the application suggests a person faced with an ethical choice should ask “what story will I tell about it when called to give an account before a jury consisting of all affected in any way” (269)? Through analysis of two examples of technical communication from Nazi concentration camps, the authors put their narrative accounts to this test to demonstrate ethical stances such as conflicting ethical behavior, and non-ethical behavior. In the retrospective examination of narrative they note “it is important to notice that accusations always entail the belief that the accused is a moral

agent and could have acted otherwise” (261). For example the narrative of a Jewish prisoner and physician who performed dissections at Auschwitz (but did not support the Nazis) is analyzed as a naive discovery of patients murdered in the name of science, and fear for his own life:

In the exterior coat of the left ventricle was a small pale red spot caused by a hypodermic injection...for what purpose had he received the injection? I would soon know... I was struck by the characteristic odor of chloroform in the heart, so the blood of the ventricle, in coagulating, would deposit on the valves and cause instantaneous death by heart failure (Nyiszli 62 cited in Sullivan and Martin 267).

His fear later in the narrative demonstrates his understanding of this as an unethical act, “On several occasions I have been shocked by my discoveries, but now a shudder of fear ran through me. If Dr. Mengele had any idea that I had discovered the secret of his injections he would send ten doctors, in the name of the political SS, to attest to my death” (Nyiszli 63 cited in Sullivan and Martin 267).

Narrative criticism may be easily applied to rhetoric that is told as a story, but not without several potential pitfalls (Kuypers 139). First of all with a story that exists in the world, the critic cannot know how the audience fills in the details of a story they may be marginally familiar with, and also whether the narrative of the radio program is adequate to fulfill the persuasive function of narrative. Secondly Kuypers notes that "rhetorical critics need to ground their analysis of a narrative in the attitudes of a given audience and recognize that the stories which they find to be credible may not be credible to others” (139). Finally, and the least troublesome for this project, narrative criticism is most appropriate for "stories that support a clear theme and that are grounded in the real world as we know it" pointing out the variation in interpretations for allegory or science fiction.

Apologia and Image Repair

Eric Partridge (as cited in Emil Towner's "What is Apologia?") traces apologia back to the Greek word *apologos* which is translated as "a story," a fitting descriptor as this project will focus on the rhetorical choices the accused make as they craft the story of their apology (Tavuchis 15). Sociologist Nicholas Tavuchis describes the stress and strains of apologies, and additionally their great importance: "they are difficult and potentially humiliating; there is a tendency to resist apologizing that must be overcome; apologies call attention to what we may be as well as what we have done...apology has the power to rehabilitate the individual and restore social harmony" (9). The interest in restoring social harmony calls to mind Chaim Perelman's idea of communion and the way a rhetor "linguistically creates a presence which the audience adheres to...by analyzing how the audience thinks and acts and then stylistically re-creating the resulting information" (Long 107).

In addition to style, scholars have observed that apologetic rhetoric maintains a structure, qualities which make up the genre (H.R. Ryan 254; Volpe 1978; Villadsen 2012; Downey 42) as a distinct form of public address having a "theme of accusation followed by apology (273-274) (Ware & Linkugel 1973). Rather than attempting to rediscover factors that make up the apologetic form, I will examine how retraction stretches that definition and demands its own category within the genre of apologia. Retraction as a subgenre of apologia can both illuminate and offer some challenges to the category. In fact some key image-repair strategies that define apologia may be wholly unsuitable, ineffective, and even offensive given specific circumstances of culpability.

B.L. Ware and Wil Linkugel point out what is really at stake for the rhetor when they create apologetic rhetoric. They define apologia as "a public speech of self-defense" that is issued in response to an attack on one's character and indeed "worth as a human being" (273-274). This sense of existential worth is strongly tied to moral values and community. Apologia provides us with a genre in which to observe language elicit change in a sensitive social situation. As Jeanne Fahnestock notes, "rhetors inevitably select a socially determined language variety, whether that selection matches or attempts to change their actual rhetorical situation....to serve their persuasive goals" (96).

Noreen Wales Kruse notes that role of the speaker's motive in shaping apologetic discourse has often been overlooked by scholars, and focuses on apologists who use non-denial strategies (13). She argues that the type of apology given is shaped by the apologists inner motives and lists three intentions for non-denial strategies that we will encounter with retraction: "1) maintain moral and ethical equilibrium; 2) secure or reaffirm status, mastery, or a place in the groups; or 3) preserve their lives, positions, fortunes, souls, or something of a similar nature contributing to their well-being" (21).

The importance of assessing the speaker's motives for this project is to demonstrate what kind of ethical, and professional positions within journalism/public radio that Ira Glass is attempting to establish or separate himself from. As Halford Ross Ryan notes, "accusations against character stress ethical materials" (256). And retraction provides a unique opportunity to provide insights into the motivation of the accuser. Ross Ryan broadened the definition of apologia to include defenses of one's policies, as well as one's character. This position runs counter to Ware and Linkugel's view that "the

questioning of man's moral nature, motives, or reputation is qualitatively different from the challenging of his policies" (274).

Diana Berkshire Hearit and Keith M. Hearit examine political commentator Juan Williams' response to NPR after they fired him as a kategoria-based apologia (2011). They describe Williams' apologia as fitting the genre of kategoria-based by not seeking forgiveness as an outcome, but rather "a 'proportional humiliation' in which guilt is reassigned" (Hearit and Hearit 66). Additionally kategoria-based apologies have a uniquely journalism-based component making them a good strategy for rhetors to use if they are being accused of guilt by media sources (68). K.M. Hearit explains further how kategoria-based apologia function, "1) contests the authenticity of the charges by reframing said charges; 2) levels new accusations against the accuser; and/or, 3) calls into question the journalistic ethics of the one who levels the accusation" (Hearit 1996 as cited in Hearit and Hearit 71).

William Benoit's theory of image restoration, has the most widely used approach to a modern understanding of the aim and function of apologetic rhetoric. Rhetors who have offended, according to Lazare, are primarily attempting to preserve their character and reputation, avoid punishment (2004). Seeking forgiveness is simply not an aim, though it appears to be and is often expected. Though as we will see, compensation can be and becomes one product and requirement of retraction.

Built into a retraction is an admission of error, a reminder to the audience of both the mistake made, and the correction made. Evidence of the misstatements around Apple factories were broadcast nationally in a previous episode of *This American Life*, and the

producers could not deny including the unverified material in the show. Similarly there are strategies of reducing offensiveness which are not available to the retractor. The six strategies that Benoit names include minimization, bolstering, differentiation, attack accuser, transcendence, and compensation (“Accounts, Excuses” 95).

The topics of Benoit’s analysis are often confined to popular celebrities, corporations, or political figures. Much scholarly research using his theory is devoted to political and celebrity crisis communication and their restoration strategies from actor Hugh Grant to the musicians The Dixie Chicks and French politician Dominique Strauss-Kahn (Benoit 1997; Towner 2010; Xifra 2012). Other non-scholarly professional literature takes a particular interest in the success of celebrity apologies, corporate apologies, and even the apologia of foreign nations (Fortunato 2008; Walsh 2011; Peijuan 2009).

Image repair strategy is also the subject of much professional research around major disasters such as the BP oil spill and failed disaster relief management following Hurricane Katrina (Harlow et al. 2011; Liu 2007). On the other hand research which identifies moral failings, as in the case of Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps caught smoking marijuana, or a social faux pas, as in the case of David Letterman insulting Sarah Palin's daughter, are also given a very similar examination of rhetorical strategy (Walsh 2011; Compton and Miller 2011). Such work emphasizes the importance of managing image during a crisis based not necessarily on the level of physical harm, but on the perceived impact on reputation. This management is particularly important for an effective audience response.

The published research is incomplete on the genre of retractions, and inadequate regarding the realm and content of journalism, particularly broadcast journalism. There is one mention of retraction in broadcast journalism among scholarly research from a rhetorical perspective. Armstrong et al. extends the materials for consideration as apologia beyond speeches to a religious talk show as strategized text (2005). Armstrong et al. examine the transcript of televangelist John Ankerberg's weekly television show for institutional apologia, in defense of what he terms "orthodox Christianity" against guests whose beliefs run counter to his own, perceived challengers (2005). Likewise the subject of my analysis will be limited to the transcript of *This American Life's* "Retraction" episode. Also Lawrence Souder's rhetorical analyses of published acknowledgements of scientific misconduct (which he called a "species of image restoration,") gives us the closest example of analysis of retraction in any scholarly literature. Though the medium is quite different, the intent may be similar to Glass's. According to Souder, retractions have a broader responsibility beyond image repair, "published letters of apology and retraction notices are intended to safeguard the integrity of the body of published scientific knowledge" (176). Journalistic retraction in particular may likewise serve in the interest of safeguarding the integrity of not just public journalistic knowledge, but a particular and vulnerable type of journalism - public radio journalism.

Methods

The "Retraction" episode is a unique example of apologia as traditionally understood for several reasons. Though the title of the program is "Retraction" and the sentiment of "unstating" a statement on the official record is behind the effort, the format

of the episode is twofold. This rhetorical artifact includes an interesting interaction of elements: both a scripted apologetic narrative, and news report which attempts to claim journalistic authority while "taking back" a previous journalistic report. Throughout the episode this retraction serves multiple purposes -- truth-telling and image-preservation, and in doing so blurs lines between objective reportage and subjective experience.

Secondly, *This American Life* presents a kategoria which an apologia follows. Philosophers Munn and Smith point to Aristotle's first use of the term in the context of philosophy and in the service of legal discourse. Kategoria refers to the accusation before a judge, whereas its verb counterpart *kategorēin* refers to the process of accusing someone (178). Whereas most apologia follows as an expected response to an external accusation, this kategoria is self-generated. *This American Life* chose to collaborate with the reporter (Rob Schmitz) who discovered the error, and with his help, they deliver the kategoria as well as the apologia.

William Benoit incorporates theories from L.W. Rosenfield, Ware and Linkugel, and Kenneth Burke, but recognizable variations on Ware and Linkugel's themes are included in his five-part typology: denial, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, mortification ("Accounts, Excuses" 95). Three of these also include subcategories as seen in the table below:

Benoit's Image Restoration Strategies (p. 95):

Denial	Evading Responsibility	Reducing Offensiveness	Corrective Action	Mortification
-simple denial -shifting blame	-provocation -defeasibility -accident -good intentions	-bolstering -minimization -differentiation -transcendence -attack accuser -compensation	("attempt to rectify or alleviate the effects of the problem or take action to prevent recurrence" 162)	(admit responsibility, guilt, and express regret 79)

Ira Glass employs several of these five strategies (and substrategies) while avoiding or omitting others, maybe to his detriment. I will argue that some of his choices are dictated by the genre (retraction) of his apology with the intent to preserve his program's standing as a serious journalistic program. Glass does avoid one of these options entirely - which may or may not be dictated by the genre of a retraction, and rather by the social demands of journalism today. It is also possible that this choice is dictated by the tone he wants to set for the program, giving him more agency in the choice to avoid this particular category.

Denial

According to Ware and Linkugel, "one may deny alleged facts, sentiments, objects, or relationships" (275). Benoit identifies quite a few more options for the subcategory of simple denial including committing the act in question, that the act occurred at all (citing Goffman 1971), mistaken identity (citing Semin and Manstead 1983), innocence (citing Schlenker 1980), that the wrongful event was not a failure (citing Schonback 1980), or denial of agency (citing Semin and Manstead 1983) (75). These strategies are quite

difficult to achieve in a media retraction, as a statement of public record exists, and a retraction necessitates an error on the part of the accuser.

However the subcategory of shifting blame does have a role in the “Retraction” episode. On first glance “shifting blame” would appear to fit better in the next category of “evading responsibility,” but Benoit points out that the intent of shifting blame is not just to direct blame away from the rhetor, but to place it on someone in particular. This is not only to exonerate blame (“Glass couldn’t be guilty if someone else is”), but also to create a new recipient of blame to shift any negative feelings away from the accused (“Accounts, Excuses” 75-76).

Evading Responsibility

Benoit’s description of evading responsibility appears well-suited to fill in retraction’s limitations for simple denial: “those who are unable to deny performing the act in question may be able to evade or reduce their apparent responsibility for it” (76). The four subcategories include: provocation, defeasibility, accident, and good intentions. Provocation is a type of scapegoating where the rhetor claims to perform the wrongful act in response to the wrongful act of another actor (76). Defeasibility aims to reduce the perception of responsibility for the act by demonstrating an impairment to one’s self-determination such as “lack of information, volition, or ability” (76). Likewise the third subcategory, accident, attempts not to deny the offensive event, but the actor’s involvement (76). The final strategy of evading responsibility is a “good intentions” argument with roots in Ware and Linkugel’s thinking, they take a cue from “naive psychology” to suggest that people respond differently to an actor depending on how they

perceive an action as intended or not (276). This is similar to the defeasibility subcategory above, though without pointing to a particular reason for the accident to occur.

Reducing Offensiveness

The aim of the category of reducing offensiveness and its six variants (bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attack accuser, and compensation) is to “reduce the degree of ill feeling experienced by the audience” in response to the misbehavior (77). Bolstering as defined by Ware and Linkugel as “any rhetorical strategy which reinforces the existence of a fact, sentiment, object, or relationship. When he bolsters, a speaker attempts to identify himself with something viewed favorably by the audience” (277). Benoit explains further that although the negative impact from the accusation may exist unchanged, those feelings could be offset if the rhetor increases the positive feelings towards themselves; even more so if the admirable traits are related to the accusation (77).

Benoit returns to Ware and Linkugel for the third variant of reducing offensiveness, differentiation. Ware and Linkugel describe differentiation as a kind of perspective shifting, “strategies which place whatever it is about him that repels the audience into a new perspective can often benefit him in his self-defense” (278). Benoit explains this idea more simply as a matter of comparison to reduce negative feelings toward the actor and the event. If the rhetor distinguishes their wrongful act from other similar, but far worse actions, their act may appear comparatively less offensive (77). Ware and Linkugel point to Edward Kennedy’s “Chappaquiddick” speech as an example

of differentiation of events from the night of Miss Kopechne's drowning to the next morning. Though both events are Kennedy's doing, he differentiates his two actions temporally: actions of the man who suffered shock, a concussion, and narrowly escaped drowning that night, as far worse than the proper actions that Kennedy took the following morning, presumably when he was closer to his "normal" self (279).

The variant strategy of attacking the accuser has its roots in Rosenfield (1968) who gives examples from Presidents Truman and Nixon. Truman's response to charges that he had allowed a Communist agent, Harry Dexter White, to hold a high office in the government entailed direct attacks against accuser Herbert Brownell as a liar, who cheapened his office, acted as a tool of the administration in conspiracy with the Republican National Committee (Rosenfield 445). As Nixon defends his use of a special campaign fund in his "Checkers" speech, the accuser is not directly addressed, and is in fact unclear "I am sure that you have read the charge, and you've heard it..." (cited in Rosenfield 446). Rosenfield argues that this is a shortcoming his image-repair strategy, as compared to Truman, Nixon appears undisciplined and unfocused (447). Benoit argues that the strength of this strategy lies in reducing the credibility of the source of the accusation, which diminishes the damage to the accused's reputation (78).

The final variant of the category of reducing offensiveness is compensation. In this case the negative feelings towards the accused (as a result of the wrongful act) would be offset by remunerating the victim in various ways, with "valued goods or services" and/or "monetary reimbursement" (78). Benoit describes this compensation frankly as a bribe, and if the accuser accepts it, then negative effects of the wrongful act can be

diminished and reputation restored. Benoit stresses that all six of these variants do not aim to deny responsibility or involvement with the wrongful act, rather the aim is to deflect or mitigate negative feeling towards the actor. This can be done either by reducing negative feelings about the action or enhancing positive feelings about the actor (78).

Corrective Action

The fourth trope of Benoit's theory of image restoration, corrective action, entails the accuser vowing to fix the problem. They can "restore the situation to the state of affairs before the objectionable action" and/or commit to "mend one's ways" and implement changes to prevent a future recurrence of the wrongful act (79). Corrective action involves more than compensation as discussed earlier, the corrective action deals directly with repairing the failure, and not just providing a bribe or gift to offset the damage. Benoit uses an example of Tylenol introducing tamper-resistant bottles (citing Benoit & Lindsey, 1987) after customers were poisoned, and notes that an actor can take still corrective action without any admission of guilt (79). I will later argue that rhetors using retraction as a genre are necessarily also utilizing this strategy of image restoration, as the retraction itself is one kind of corrective action.

Mortification

Mortification as the fifth and final strategy of Benoit's image restoration theory, is drawn from Kenneth Burke. Citing his *Rhetoric of Religion* (1970) Benoit speaks only briefly about this category, saying that the accused may engage in mortification by acknowledging their responsibility for the offensive act and asking for forgiveness. The audience may choose to forgive the wrongful act if the apology is believed to be sincere,

and Benoit suggests the pairing of corrective action with this category, possibly to demonstrate greater sincerity (79).

The roots of the word “mortification” comes from Burke’s *Rhetoric of Religion*:

The principle of such mortification would be completed in the idea of Christ as a perfect victim, whose sacrifice is curative absolutely quite as the nature of mortification is curative partially. Thus, Christ would mediate in two senses: From the standpoint of *willing*, He would mediate as a ransom for men's guilt...the role as a ransom would be that of dramatic catharsis (136-137).

The rhetorical catharsis that could result from mortification for one attempting to restore their image may be an absolution of their guilt by the audience. In a typical public apology in which the speaker is asking for forgiveness, we do not have an overt Christ-figure actor to provide a curative sacrifice, but it may provide the psychological model for why the accused (guilty accused, as one wouldn’t admit guilt if innocent) may be able to improve their esteem with the audience by the simple gesture of asking for forgiveness.

These five strategies: denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, correction, and mortification along with several variants provide the method I’ll use to demonstrate *This American Life*’s image-repair strategies within their apologia and the goals sought by their discourse. Most strategies can be operationalized in a number of ways, and Benoit suggests using clues such as the rhetor’s goals, audience reactions, and discursive evidence to determine whether an utterance is actually an instance of one of the above strategies (82, 1995). I will also attempt to merge Benoit’s theory of image restoration with narrative analysis as much of the narration in the “Retraction” episode functions in the service of these strategies.

Some of the more interesting social functions of apologies are identified by philosopher Nick Smith such as helping us recognize harm as victims, and to understand what happened and why it happened (10). Additionally apologies allow the victim to become a person with dignity (and not an obstacle to the offender's self-interest), provides a reason to trust the offender and rebuild a relationship, may provide relief/compensation for an injury, and finally may punish an injustice (10). Apologies can also reflect our integrity and reveal our character for example, "we often demand an apology when we refuse to allow an offender to disregard a moral principle. Apologies flag when someone crosses a line, patrolling the limits of our commitments to shared principles (10).

Analysis: Image Restoration, Narrative, Deixis, and Presence

According to psychiatrist (and author of *On Apology*), Aaron Lazare, "the most essential part of an effective apology is acknowledging the offense," in adequate detail, among other requirements (75). Glass relies on the richness provided by the narrative style to deliver this detail simultaneously with his more formal image restoration strategies. The fairly brief 831-word prologue begins with an ordinary identification "From WBEZ Chicago, it's *This American Life*, distributed by Public Radio International, I'm Ira Glass" and quickly turns to a format-breaking announcement with an intimate confessional seriousness of the upcoming episode "I'm coming to you today to say something that I've never had to say on our program" ("Retraction" 1). This intimate tone is a kind of setup to his storytelling, which brings the audience even closer.

By the third sentence Glass has already begun to tell the story "two months ago..." and identified their mistake, "...we broadcast a story that we've come to believe is not true." The "defensive utterances" as Benoit describes (justifications, excuses, apologies) which begin to fill this prologue can either change another's beliefs about the wrongfulness of the acts in question, or to shift "attribution of responsibility for that act" (Accounts 6). Glass chooses the latter approach, under the restrictive conditions of the retraction (identified for the audience by the title) which requires that the mistake be identified as such. This condition prevents him from using Benoit's first factor of rhetorical self-defense, denial, as a strategy -- as one cannot simultaneously deny and identify, then take back a statement that they have made on public record.

Glass does use evading responsibility as a strategy, which can be successful in lieu of simple denial. Of the four subcategories presented by Benoit, (provocation, defeasibility, accident, good intentions) provocation best describes his strategy. As a kind of scapegoating, the logic of provocation suggests that the motive of the wrongful act is an inevitable response to the wrongful act of another person. In this case, the failure of producers to fact-check Mike Daisey's source was a result of his attempts to hide her by lying about her name, not providing her cellphone number, and being partially credible about other reporting on Apple and Foxconn:

And when we asked for her information he told us her real name wasn't Cathy, it was Anna and he had a cellphone number for her but he said when he tried it, it didn't work any more. He said he had no way to reach her.

And because the other things Mike told us – about Apple and Foxconn – seemed to check out, we saw no reason to doubt him, and we dropped this. We didn't try further to reach the translator" ("Retraction" 2).

Though in the very next line Glass admits that this very specific choice was a mistake, the reason he provides for the mistake that places the blame on another is already established. In a sense, this admission of not properly fact-checking is also a gesture of defeasibility, as lack of information from the translator would impair one's broader ability to discern truthfulness of Daisey's account. The subcategory of evading responsibility which suggests that the actor had "good intentions" is not something Glass articulates, though Daisey does so himself arguing that "everything I have done in making this monologue for the theater has been toward that end – to make people care" ("Retraction" 18). And in order to fix blame on Daisey, Glass challenges this use of "good intentions" as a strategy of evading responsibility. Glass critiques that defense as unacceptable, "but you're saying that the only way you can get through emotionally to people is to mess around with the facts, but that isn't so" (18) and in fact creates the final segment with Charles Duhigg to counter that argument by example. I would speculate that Glass purposefully avoided using the "accident" subcategory, as to claim a completely unintended behavior in a field which one claims to be an expert would be damaging to his ethos. It is the kind of vulnerability that is maybe riskier than an admission of blame..

The majority of Act One is devoted to discrediting Daisey and distinguishing him from a "proper" journalist using the account of his translator Cathy:

There are other details of Daisey's monologue Cathy says never happened when she was with him: The taxi ride on the exit ramp Daisey says petered out into thin air 85 feet up off the ground. The workers with repetitive motion injuries. The factory dorm rooms Daisey claims they saw. Cathy says they never saw any dorm rooms. The emotional conversation between them, where Daisey touches her hand. Didn't happen that way, she says ("Retraction" 8).

The “Retraction” episode tells the story of Mike Daisey as a slippery liar, with examples of tests of his word not only against his translator Cathy, but also against Glass and Rob Schmitz who describes the process of talking with him about these distortions as “exhausting” and “never simple” expressing frustration that Daisey would never admit to lying (12). By building up the persona of Daisey as a fantastic liar, Glass is also attempting to build up for the audience a visual demonstration of barriers that they experienced when attempting to properly fact check Daisey’s account.

Glass uses half of the six elements of Benoit’s third typology in the table above - reducing offensiveness (specifically he uses: bolstering, differentiation, compensation), but with a fine brush. Excessive use of this strategy can be perceived as insulting to the injury suffered by the victim, though in this apologia the victim is not who one would expect. As the facts in question are slanderous statements about working conditions in factories run by Apple and Foxconn, an apology directed towards them would make sense. Instead, Glass points his efforts at damage control toward the people who he needs the most, his listeners in an attempt to earn back their trust. So his efforts to reduce offensiveness do not involve diminishing the perceived harm of his offense, rather he works to make positive associations and earn goodwill through the narrative *This American Life* is known for and lauded for.

Glass’s version of bolstering is not one that boosts the image of *This American Life* outright in the sense of bragging or inflating one's abilities, this strategy rather more subtly attempts to make a positive association, more explicitly reinforcing "the existence of a fact, sentiment, object, or relationship...something viewed favorably by the audience"

(Ware and Linkugel 277) and a "source of identification" in contrast to denial as an "instrument of negation" (278). In this case Glass remarks on the success of the particular episode "Mr. Daisey and the Apple Factory" that they are retracting: "it's a story that got a lot of attention" and was deemed highly successful in an often-reported quantitative gauge of success in public radio, "more people downloaded it than any episode we've ever done" ("Retraction" 1), which he identifies at his blog as 888,000, up from 750,000 (the typical downloads as of March 2012) which keeps *This American Life* in its usual number one spot among iTunes' Arts and Culture podcasts. One intent may be to demonstrate their success in meeting a public appetite for Daisey's story (a kind of blame-shifting back on to the audience), or more generously my interpretation that this is an admission of the far reach of the episode, the impact of the lies, and his awareness of the severity of the need to retract it.

On the issue of reach and purpose of retraction, Lawrence Souder, in analyzing the rhetoric of scientific retractions, identifies the purpose of published retraction notices and letters of apology as not only repairing the image of the scientist, but "to safeguard the integrity of the body of published scientific knowledge" (176). The safeguarding is done with the intent to stop the spread of misinformation, however "often the retracted research articles continue to be cited and as a result can distort the scientific communities subsequent research and practice" in fact Souder cites Pfeifer and Snodgrass's discovery that published retraction notices in medical literature do reduce citation of the original error-filled papers, but by a mere 35% (176). Likewise Glass is attempting to set the record straight about Daisey's experience in China, and his error as a newspaper or other

media outlet would, however the additional use of narrative, normally absent in a print retraction, does much more to safeguard the practice of public radio journalism and his brand.

Glass further uses bolstering to associate himself with best journalistic practices noting that they did due diligence of attempting fact-checking parts of the show before airing it, and identifies the parts the producers were concerned with as true "our main concern was whether the things Mike says about Apple and about its supplier Foxconn which makes the stuff, were true. That stuff is true" and then he associates himself with other favorably held sources, "it's been corroborated by independent investigations by other journalists, studied by advocacy groups, and much of it has been corroborated by Apple itself in its own audit reports" ("Retraction" 1). Ware and Linkugel point out how people perceive intent around actions, as intended vs. one of a "sequence of events," (Heider cited in Ware and Linkugel 276, 1973) as making a difference in how (un)favorably those actions are perceived. One could argue that Glass intend to be a successful fact-checker, and was able to manage this task, but only in the realm of what content they deemed important.

Glass's argument that their shortcoming was a misidentification of what part of Daisey's monologue needed to be fact-checked is an error that is difficult for me as a public radio producer to understand. Glass never explains this position further in the episode (beyond claiming to trust Daisey), or provides a satisfactory reason for the lapse of editorial judgment (though Roy Peter Clark has an interesting explanation for it to be discussed much later). However merely providing a reason, satisfactory or not provides a

worthwhile function. According to Lazare, by hearing the offender's reason for his or her behavior, those impacted can stop endlessly speculating about what happened"(120). Though the offended party in this situation (the TAL audience) is not likely as obsessed with finding a reason, a reason can remove intentionality. Lazare has an existential sense of why this is so:

The various explanations received in responses to these questions (why did you) help us regain our sense that the world is predictable after all, that there are reasons for such behavior even if we do not accept their validity. These explanations demystify offenses committed against us by telling us whether an offense was a random act of violence or an act of revenge (120).

In other words, if there were complicated reasons, then very likely the offending act was more random, less intentional, and therefore less of a moral shortcoming.

There is some reverse bolstering of Daisey's persuasive skills, a technique the *Washington Post* used with Janet Cooke, and the *New York Times* with Jayson Blair to let their readers know why these reputable organizations were duped by their own staff. They blamed their charismatic, persuasive personalities, the quality of their earlier work, and their abilities to lie, likewise "because the other things Mike told us – about Apple and Foxconn – seemed to check out, we saw no reason to doubt him" ("Retraction" 2). Here Glass provide a rationale for why the producers were unable to act correctly in maintaining journalistic standards by fact-checking with Daisey's translator.

Glass employs the second substrategy of differentiation slightly earlier in the prologue with a brief description of Daisey's monologue that he's been performing "since 2010" in an effort to put the story of the monologue's invention/origins back on Daisey, "we didn't commission the story, we didn't send him to China. We excerpted the stage

show that he's been telling in theaters around the country" ("Retraction" 1). Ware and Linkugel says differentiation attempts to "separate some fact, sentiment, object, or relationship from some larger context" (278). In this case Glass is not only trying to differentiate the show from Daisey's reporting efforts, but to frame the show as a victim of Daisey who has duped audiences "since 2010" with this falsified monologue. Even following the discovery of the falsifications, Glass admits that he doesn't have the full picture of what truth Daisey's monologue contains with this qualifier, "as best we can tell, Mike's monologue in reality is..." ("Retraction" 1).

The final of the three variants to reduce offensiveness that Glass employs, compensation, I would argue comes in the retraction itself as another episode, a kind of gift to listeners as a direct message of explanation and effort to right a wrong. Philosopher Nick Smith argues that this possibility is important as the absence of compensation or punishment leads to a lack of closure which creates problems for our moral sensibilities as we "attempt to make narrative sense of our lives and overcome wrongs against us" (83). In a sense, the "Retraction" episode is an attempt to open up the problem, repair it, and then close the case with a like for like offering - a repairing episode to "undo" the previous offending one.

The fourth typology, corrective action, requires the speaker to vow to fix the problem, and take actions to prevent the wrongful act from happening again. Glass does not do this explicitly, and I would very generously argue that the presentation of the retraction itself is corrective action in practice. He provides a new hour of radio as compensation. Because this retraction for *This American Life* episode is unprecedented in

their show's catalogue (even though they have been duped before by journalist-fabulist Stephen Glass who appeared on their show several times), it is understood to be a one-time event, not likely to happen again. If the retraction won't happen again, then it would follow that a mistake of this nature should not happen again - this is Glass's implicit promise, but by not making it an explicit one, he has lost an opportunity.

The absence of the fifth and final of Benoit's typologies, mortification may be related to the thin expression of corrective action above. As Lazare suggests, one important part of an apology is "communicating remorse and the related attitudes of forbearance, sincerity, and honesty" (107). Forebearance, a resolution to not repeat the offending behavior, is an important result of remorse. Whereas remorse acknowledges the harm, forbearance offers a better future (108). There is only admission of guilt throughout the prologue, "that was a mistake," not for failing in journalistic duties, but for a highly specific error of not trying to contact Daisey's translator despite his efforts to hide her ("Retraction" 2). However the true agent absorbing the guilt is the complex string of events leading to "that" poor decision rather than an individual or collective human actor associated with *This American Life*.

Because Glass does not employ individual mortification by expressing regret, or admitting guilt/responsibility, he does not allow himself an opportunity to demonstrate reform and promise different future behavior to his audience. Glass offered a far more satisfactory apology in an interview by Alison Cuddy the following month after "Retraction" aired saying:

To be clear, he [Mike Daisey] did lie to us. And to the audience, but it's our jobs as the journalist, lots of people lie to journalists. We're supposed to catch that and

see that those lies don't make it to the audience. While what he did wasn't right, I don't want to back away from the fact that we are the ones who messed up ultimately, and me in particular as the one who made those decisions (Cuddy 31).

Again we see Glass using an earlier substrategy of denial, shifting blame, but the final sentence is the more direct expression of guilt or mortification that would have served Glass well in the "Retraction."

Narrative and Deixis

Professor of Communication (and former journalist) Barbie Zelizer says that the primary way journalists legitimate themselves is through "the rhetoric they use to tell news-stories" (189). This ability to "exert social control through narrative" is evident throughout the "Retraction" episode. Glass then begins to use narrative that is easily identified with the deictic phrase "at that time." Jeanne Fahnestock expands the linguistic definition of deictic i.e. "features in the discourse that refer to physically present people and objects" to include *imaginary deixis*, "the skillful transport of rhetor and audience to a scene from the past or future, described in a way that will influence attitudes and beliefs" (16). Glass uses imaginary deixis to explain the producers' actions in a sequential, but slightly confusing way using grammatical and stylistic tools. Specifically, the confusion comes from the excessive use of pronoun modifiers plus coordinating and subordinating conjunctions:

At the time that we were factchecking his story we asked Mike for the contact information for the interpreter that he used when he was visiting China, who he calls Cathy in his monologue. We wanted to talk to her to confirm that the incidents that he described all happened as he describes them. And when we asked for her information he told us her real name wasn't Cathy, it was Anna and he had a cellphone number for her but he said when he tried it, it didn't work any more. He said he had no way to reach her. And because the other things Mike told

us – about Apple and Foxconn – seemed to check out, we saw no reason to doubt him, and we dropped this. We didn't try further to reach the translator (“Retraction” 2).

Additionally the pace of the narrative, mixing the rapid sequence of what the producers did with what Daisey said, and the speedy move to a clear conclusion of the action, has an air of authority despite its lack of clarity; as if the sequence and logic of events is so apparent to all, that it must be told quickly so as not to bore the audience. Glass will use this strategy again later in the episode.

Zelizer further notes, "Narrative practice allows journalists to 'authorize' their versions of events and reify their authoritative status to audiences" (“Achieving Journalistic Authority” 366). By compressing time and leaving out other context around these events, Glass is clearly using narrative for persuasive ends, to provide some explanation for their error that sounds plausible if not sensible. Another aim of narrative practice is not just to attain and reify authoritative status to their audiences, but to build presence and communion among them in the spirit of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca.

The importance of presence for Perelman's theory of argumentation in *The New Rhetoric* is far more established (Karon 1976; Jenkins 2007) than his reasons for valuing it so highly (Tucker 397). Despite being “the single most consequential and fruitful idea in *The New Rhetoric*” (Tucker 396), more is said about how to create presence (most simply by “repetition”) than what it actually is. However if as Perelman suggests, discursive form and substance are necessarily entwined, then clues may be found in such stylistic techniques. Jeanne Fahnestock reviews how deictic elements of time can be used in arguments as one technique for giving presence to interactive discourse. Her notion of

temporal and imaginary deixis can serve us well in analyzing act two of the “Retraction” episode in the context of an epideictic text.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca have noted the importance of time as a reference point and rhetorical tool related to presence, both that “things present, things near to us in space and time, act directly on our sensibility” (Bizzell and Herzberg 1395), and that “an audience can also be influenced by the use of tense” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 160). According to Fahnestock, “deictic features bring the participants, the setting, and the time into the actual wording” which can be physically immediate to the imaginary (325). This term is taken from linguistics, “deictic elements relate an utterance to its person, space, and time coordinates. *Now* and *then* are time deictics because they convey a relationship between the time at which a proposition is assumed to be true, and the time at which it is presented in an utterance” (Schiffrin 228). Other adverbs that function as deictics include *here* and *there* to make reference to the time and place of speaking.

These deictics are used in Glass’s interview with Daisey as he is simultaneously discovering his lies and revealing them for the audience like a forensic speaker would for a jury. The temporal space Glass brings this reader into stretches from the present all the way back to before the first show with Daisey aired. Glass does so using the deictic adverb *when* which also signals/creates a narrative by placing events on a continuum in time, in this case pre-broadcast of the offending episode:

Ira Glass: “When we were getting ready to go on the radio, in the weeks leading up to it, I and Brian told you and we wrote emails, like I have an email here Brian wrote you at some point with a list of like, wait, is this stuff [content of Daisey’s story] exactly, you know, right? And then you wrote back to him, you said, ‘I totally get that’” (“Retraction” 15).

Here, the deictic “here” functions both spatially and temporally, to demonstrate extant evidence of a clear demand for journalistic accuracy. “Then” indicates Daisey’s reaction to that demand and a damning response, his clarity about the expectations of the show. In the text below “at that point” is used as a more specific substitution for the adverb “then:”

And, and at that point you could have come back to us and said ‘oh no no no I didn’t meet these workers, you know, this is just something I inserted in the monologue based on things I had read and things I had heard in Hong Kong’ um, but instead you lied further...Why not just tell us what really happened at that point? (“Retraction” 14).

Glass uses “at that point” twice not only to place the listener in the time before the show aired when the problem could have been averted, but more concretely identifying the turning point at which Daisey could have rescinded his claims, thus illustrating and increasing Daisey’s agency in the crime.

Perelman notes that “the effect of figures relating to presence is to make the object of discourse present to the mind” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 174). Not only does Glass make the pre-broadcast days of the first Mike Daisey episode (the setting of the crime) more salient to the audience, but also provides an example of how easily Daisey could have made a correction. “The more specific the terms, the sharper the image they conjure up, and, conversely, the more general the terms, the weaker the image” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 147). Certainly conjuring both what could have been said at this previous moment or place in time of the show’s production is more impactful for the listener than simply asking Mike Daisey why he lied and leaving the listener to decide on his word. In a more temporally complicated step below, Glass asks Daisey about his mental state after the show aired, but before the present interview to elicit an

admission of worry/guilt from his answer, which Daisey later does admit to feeling, “And then since, since the show went out over the radio, did you worry that all this would come out?”

Perelman says this is the common work of the orator, “The orator’s endeavors often consist however, in bringing to mind things that are not immediately present” (Perelman 1395 reprinted in Bizzell and Herzberg). This is a particular challenge for Glass in that the audience is given two conflicting accounts from Daisey and Glass. Zelizer notes in fact that “eyewitnessing has been used to make a claim of journalistic presence, even when that presence has been questionable” (“On Having Been There” 412).

Fahnestock identifies such rhetorical time travel as *imaginary deixis*, or “the skillful transport of rhetor and audience to a scene from the past or future, described in a way that will influence attitudes and beliefs” (16). By walking the audience through Daisey’s opportunities to come clean, and his poor choices during the production process, Glass employs this technique via verbal construction of what was once a real place in time, though in the minds of the listener it is told in the form of an imagined flashback. As Fahnestock notes, “The linguists’ notion of deixis highlights verbal cues to an actual physical and temporal setting. But in rhetorical discourse, the actual setting can be less important than a scene recreated for persuasive purposes (Fahnestock 334). More details of the actual time and place of these events would be superfluous and boring for the listener, his recreation is enough to flag its importance and presence.

Furthermore, by revisiting these moments in time, Glass demonstrates that he is reliving the situation in which the debacle could have been avoided, and reflects on his own role (in addition to Daisy's) as a responsible agent or character in the narrative of the (R)etraction, "We should've killed the story right there and then" again, deictic adverbs ("Retraction" 20). The auxiliary verb "should've" expresses verb tense as well. Acceptance of responsibility for failure and expression of regret ("should've") is also in character with the intent and genre of retraction/apologia rhetoric. Glass also uses the deictics "here" and "there" at the end of Act Two to bring his journalistic credentials to the mind of his audience, demonstrating that the values he held in the past presently hold as well, "I was a reporter and a producer for the big daily news shows before I started this program, and we follow the same rules of reporting here that I followed there" ("Retraction" 20).

Zelizer connects these journalistic values intimately with not only symbolic, but literal seeing "although a reporter's ability to hear, feel, or even taste also builds the authority drawn from on-site presence, seeing nonetheless plays a particularly central role in journalistic work" ("On Having Been There" 410) and the greatest strength of Glass's use of journalistic narration and deictic elements is also a key truth about eyewitnessing according to Zelizer, "What is most salient about eyewitnessing - its ability to convince publics of the distant experience or event in a seemingly unmediated style" ("On Having Been There" 424).

A precursor to the psychological impact of reconstruction of time is found in Aristotle's Rhetoric, "One term may describe a thing more truly than another, may be

more like it, and set it more intimately before our eyes” (Bizzell and Herzberg 239). In a sense, these rhetorical choices Glass makes helps to map the visual to the mental. If the listener could imagine an idea, then it would feel more real and consequently have more persuasive impact for them. In *The New Rhetoric*, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca points to actuality as a goal: “the concrete term increases the sense of actuality (147).

Fahnestock says “There is a presumption that physical immediacy, being on the spot, [and presumably being (on the imagined) spot in time] confers credibility” (327). This notion is also in line with Ira Glass’s effort to define *This American Life* as a reputable journalistic program.

Though I have focused my analysis on deictic elements in this text, elements like place, frequency, and duration are hard to avoid, which demonstrates that many stylistic aspects of an argument can contribute to presence. In fact, Eric Jenkins explains that “presence is not simply bringing one element to the foreground as the figure of our attention. Presence depends on the timeliness and proximity of the arguments to the audience and the relationship and investments of the audience to the arguments” (407). Jenkins’ use of the terms “relationship” and “investments” also calls to mind Perelman’s idea of communion and presence as a means to achieving it. And there is a role for the use of elements of time, place, and visioning in “the mind’s eye” in creating presence.

One challenge to my analysis is the possibility that Glass is not necessarily using figurative techniques, and is instead simply describing the sequence of events. However the effect of imaginary deixis is far too complex and specific to simply be considered a coincidental perfunctory explanation of events. Glass is a Peabody award-winning,

skilled storyteller who can condense hours of audio and information into a successful hour-long episode or a short 4-minute piece. That his selection and curation of this particular audio with so many deictic elements attest to their effectiveness for argumentation, in this case gaining support from his audience and “ex-communicating” Mike Daisey as a threat to the standards of the nation’s public radio community.

Conclusion

Glass’ apologia is stylistically and argumentatively sophisticated but morally unsatisfactory because he fails to include what Lazare, and Smith deem to be elements of a successful apology, namely accepting responsibility and promising not to commit future offending behavior. What he has done in this Retraction episode does utilize other key elements of successful apologia. William Benoit does note that not all of his strategies must be used to effectively restore one’s image. Through narrative and deictic elements he vividly not only acknowledges and explains the offense, but describes it in rich narrative detail in acts one and two.

The remorse he expresses is vague, more angry than penitent, and certainly not Benoit’s mortification in its Burkean sense of admission of wrong-doing or requesting forgiveness; as intimate and confessional-sounding as the episode it, he does not outright ask the audience for anything. What it should ask for trust that they will do high-quality journalistic work in the future. However the distinctiveness of this situation is that despite these omissions in the apologia, Glass is still able to save face. The “Retraction” episode was widely heard and positively viewed by critics. This American Life remains at the top of iTunes top 10 charts for all categories over a year later. The reasons have to do with

the role the show carved out for itself, the definition of the show that Glass initially established, and the obligations implied for a show that tells stories.

When Rob Schmitz began to break down the journalistic fabric of “Mike Daisey and the Apple Factory” very few listeners it seemed were outraged at Glass and the other producers for committing such an error. Media critic Roy Peter Clark notes that “There is investigative journalism, but no such thing as investigative theater” highlighting the earlier view the public has of *This American Life* as a storytelling program first, and serious journalistic program second (Poynter). Glass would like to reverse those priorities for his show’s identity, and is thus required to make this apologia to do so. But he is not apologizing to keep listeners, rather an image. Clark also argues that listeners wanted the original episode to be as true as Glass did:

I have a theory and nothing more. Here it is: Ira Glass wanted the story to be true. He let down his guard – and his audience, who also wanted the story to be true. They wanted it to be true primarily for good reasons, because its exposure might lead to reforms and saved lives. That purpose would link them to Daisey’s chain of intent. But they also wanted it to be true because a badly bruised Apple fits neatly into a master narrative about corporate greed in America, a story that will continue to play itself out in presidential politics (Poynter).

Most listeners may be content to categorize *This American Life* on the other end of the serious journalist to dramatic storytelling spectrum, just as they describe themselves on their website “about” page, “There’s a theme to each episode, and a variety of stories on that theme. It’s mostly true stories of everyday people, though not always.” Listeners are not likely to be outraged at inaccuracies in the stories of beloved monologists like David Sedaris sharing stories of his days working as an elf at Macy’s or Molly Shannon’s recollection of traveling the country at age 12. There is in a sense no

need for promises not to fact-check every claim of every monologue, because the audience does not really care about validity in that setting. And as Clark mentioned, if they want the story to be as true as Glass does, they won't fault him for erroneously falling into a trap around it, though if he wants to be considered a serious journalist he should know better. Glass has already established a communion with his audience, and the epideictic nature of the retraction afforded him not only an apologia, but an opportunity to reestablish his place in the public radio community despite his journalistic ambitions for *This American Life*. The listener is already on Glass's side, because they already think like him. They forgive his moral failing in the apologia, because he appears to share their moral values elsewhere.

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