Apologies in the discourse of politicians: a pragmatic approach

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities

2014

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<tr>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>Emphasised word or syllable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x:(:)</td>
<td>Elongated sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx-</td>
<td>Abrupt stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx=</td>
<td>Latched utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;xxx&lt;</td>
<td>Delivered slowly (with respect to neighbouring talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;xxx&gt;</td>
<td>Delivered quickly (w.r.t. neighbouring talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>°xxx°</td>
<td>Delivered quietly (w.r.t. neighbouring talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>Delivered loudly (w.r.t. neighbouring talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.3)</td>
<td>Timed pause (in seconds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>Micropause (less than 0.2 seconds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx?</td>
<td>Rising intonation (not necessarily a question)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx.</td>
<td>Final intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx!</td>
<td>Emphatic intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h(hh)</td>
<td>Audible out breath (number of hs indicates respective length)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.h(hh)</td>
<td>Audible in breath (number of hs indicates respective length)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{xxx}</td>
<td>Talk which overlaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{{xx}}</td>
<td>Talk which overlaps (used when there is more than instance of overlap in a turn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[xxx]</td>
<td>Talk from another party within a monologue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((xxx))</td>
<td>Transcriber’s note</td>
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<tr>
<td>⇒</td>
<td>Indicates part of extract under discussion</td>
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Abstract

In this thesis, I analyse apologies produced by British political figures from a pragmatic perspective. In particular, I seek to explain the function of political apologies and describe the form they take. In order to give a thorough account of the speech act of apologising in the public sphere, I look to a variety of genres for data. The set of remedial acts scrutinised in this study come from debates and statements in the House of Commons, the Leveson Inquiry and news interviews.

The differences in communicative practices between these data sources mean that the types of apology that come about within each genre are varied. Many of the parliamentary apologies are monologic, whereas the apologetic actions found at the Leveson Inquiry and in news interviews are dialogic and, to some extent, co-constructed between participants. These differences mean that a variety of theoretical approaches are taken in analysing the data – speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) and generalised conversational implicature theory (Levinson, 2000) feature heavily in the discussion of monologic apologies. Apologies produced within an interactive, ‘conversational’ setting are treated using developments in conversation analysis (amongst others see: Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 2007). I attempt to reconcile these two, quite different, approaches to discourse at various points in the thesis, arguing that conversation analysis lacks a theory of how interlocutors understand what actions are happening in interaction (and this is provided by speech act theory) and speech act theory lacks a detailed focus on what actually happens in language as interaction (provided by conversation analysis).

On the basis of the apology data scrutinised in the thesis, I propose a set of felicity conditions for the speech act of apology (chapter 2) and discuss how the apology (and speech acts broadly) should be considered as prototype entities (chapter 8).

I show that when apologising for actions which they have committed, politicians are more fulsome in their apologies than we are in everyday conversation. I also show that they use more explicit apology tokens than is found in quotidian talk (chapter 3). When apologising for historical wrongs, I demonstrate that apologising is a backgrounded act and the focus of the statement is on being clear and unequivocal about the nature of the offences for which the government is apologising (chapter 6).

I also argue that political apologies in interactive settings are best thought of as action chains (Pomerantz, 1978). That is to say, apologies in these environments may elicit a response from an interlocutor, but do not need to (chapters 4 & 5). This is quite unlike everyday talk (cf Robinson, 2004).

I discuss how apology tokens may be used in the performance of other acts, including introducing dissent and undertaking serious face threat. I suggest that this comes about because apology tokens exist on a cline of pragmaticalisation (chapter 7).
Declaration and Copyright Statement

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree of qualification of this or any other university of other institute of learning.

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Acknowledgements

One accumulates a number of debts of gratitude during the course of a PhD and my debts in Manchester are perhaps longer than most given that I have been here for seven years following various programmes of study. I have enjoyed the vast majority of my time here and that is down to the input of various groups of people, who I list in no particular order.

On starting the PhD the sense of community amongst the postgraduates in the Linguistics and English Language department was, I think it is fair to say, non-existent. That has, I hope, been remedied. At the heart of that have been Mary Begley, Laura Arman, Danielle Turton, James W. R. Brookes, Fernanda McDougall, Míša Hejnà and others who first found a home in Mansfield Cooper where we enjoyed a brew, a wide selection of pickled goods and homemade bread. Our move to Ellen Wilkinson saw the welcome addition of a number of faces and a filter coffee machine (thanks to JWRB!). The community built around somewhere to call our own has led to so many developments led by PhD students: the fantastic mFiL conference; a seminar series, Postgridiots; an abundance of reading groups; a Python working group; amongst many other things. I am glad to have played some small part in developing this community.

Some of my fellow PhDers deserve particular thanks/praise/acknowledgment for their continued friendship, support and encouragement: Mary, Laura, Danielle and JWRB have read chapters, offered suggestions and listened with either well-feigned or genuine interest when I have droned on about current affairs and the political situation. I thank them all also for their kind, but welcomly understated support when I suffered a bereavement. The PhD has been less difficult than it could have been in no small part because of their friendship.

A number of staff in LEL and the School more widely outside of my panel need to be thanked: Wiebke Brockhaus-Grand, Martina Faller and Wendell Kimper all of whom I painlessly TAed for at different points; Delia Bentley who listened to and invariably acted swiftly upon gripes during my time as shop steward for LEL GTAs; George Walkden, Laurel MacKenzie, Yuni Kim and Tine Breban for various pearls of wisdom along the way. For their guidance in navigating the often unnecessarily complex waters
of university administration, I thank Amanda Mathews and her fantastic team in the Graduate School. I am in little doubt that they are both the most efficient and friendly of administrators. To this select group, I must add Boguslawa Brandys who has been a wonder in (re-)organising my teaching timetable to suit me.

During the writing of this thesis I have also had published an article in Pragmatics & Society (Murphy, 2014). I should like to thank the anonymous reviewer and the now not so anonymous Jonathan Culpeper who outing himself to me. Their suggestions, constructive criticisms and encouragement improved that paper, but also have bled into this work. I also thank the editor of the journal, Jacob Mey, who treated me especially well. Audiences at a number of conferences, including IPrA 2013 in Delhi, LIAR III in Urbana-Champaign and EPICS VI in Sevilla provided stimulating discussions; a number of ideas suggested at these conferences have found their way into the thesis, though perhaps not in the way their proposers had in mind. I single out Bruce Fraser for particular thanks for his constructive comments.

In a nod to the future, I must thank my new colleagues at the University of the West of England for showing great faith in me by offering me a position as Lecturer in English Language and Linguistics before this thesis was submitted. I hope to show them that that faith was not misplaced and look forward to working with them in the coming years.

The final academic thanks go to my panel, who have challenged me in various ways. Yaron Matras encouraged me always to think of the bigger picture in terms of the impact of apologies on society and the import of culture. Erik Schleef exhorted me to make life easy for the reader and made suggestions on breaking up some more turgid sections (he is, of course, blameless for any turgidity that remains!). The debt that I owe to my main supervisor, Maj-Britt Mosegaard Hansen, is one that I will struggle to repay. She has supported, questioned, challenged, given ideas, read and commented on draft after draft, given advice on publishing and networking, got me involved conference panels and invited me to publish with her. As well as her direct support, her work and the way in which she carries it out are a model to follow. It goes without saying that any errors or infelicities to be found are mine and only mine.

Outside of academe, I thank my family. My siblings have always shown pride in me and their praise has always given me an ego-boost when it has been needed. John and Barbara McCoy deserve thanks for having welcomed me wholeheartedly into the fold. My mam and dad have always supported me in whatever I have chosen to do; they have shown interest, provided (emotional) support and looked after me when I needed a break. A number of seemingly minor routines in my childhood were probably formative in my writing about politics: the first, the weekly visits to Hemlington
Library where I particularly enjoyed biographies of Gerry Adams; the second, the virtually nightly debates (arguments?) about anything and everything political at the tea table which taught me that politics matters and that indifference in the face of issues which impact on people’s lives is not an option.

Finally, Emily McCoy, has been a constant source of love and support. It has helped that she has gone through the same experience concomitantly (though she beat me to the punch in finishing!). She has understood the highs and lows and has been able to offer encouragement, and stern words to get me out of a slump. Moreover, she has ensured that I don’t run away with myself and keep my feet firmly planted. I could not have done this without her and I am eternally grateful to her. I hope that we can enjoy some security and stability in the coming years.
Chapter 1

Introduction

This is a momentous day for child migrants; it is a day when the pain and loss we have suffered for a lifetime has been recognised and acknowledged. For us, this apology is a moment in history where there can be reconciliation between the government, the nation and the child migrants.

Harold Haig (Child Migrants Trust) speaking after Gordon Brown’s apology for Child Migration.

This thesis is devoted to apologies in part because of my strongly held belief that a well-meant apology can do immeasurable social good. The quote from Harold Haig, who was forcibly removed from his parents and sent to live in terrible conditions in Australia, reflects the positive effects of apologies and should remind us all of the best aspects of the human spirit. I shall explore how politicians in particular attempt to produce these apologies which have the potential to engender such positive feelings. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that also examined will be apologies which may fail to bring about this type of reconciliation and many others which unlikely had this purpose in any case. The apologies which will be scrutinised span the high, moralistic ideal alluded to by Harold Haig to a base, grubby political motivation. Whilst unfortunate, this gamut of speech event is clearly a more accurate representation of political life. The range of function of the apology is something which will be discussed at length at various points in what follows (cf. sections 4.5.2 and 7.4).

A study into political apologies would not be complete without a reference to the adage
‘never apologise, never explain’ which as Tavuchis (1991:149, note 31) explains is an aphorism whose authorship is unclear. What is pleasing for our purposes is that it is an instruction which ever fewer politicians seem to be following, meaning there is a rich seam of political apologies for us to mine. I am not the only prospector exploring political apologies – sociologists (e.g. Tavuchis, 1991; Benoit, 1995; Negash, 2007) psychologists (e.g Lazare, 2004; Cels, 2014) and historians (e.g. Celermajer, 2009; Daye, 2004) have all had something to say about the phenomenon of such public statements. Linguists (particularly interactional linguists) have had less to say (but see for instance Lakoff, 2003; Harris et al., 2006; Kampf, 2009), and this study hopefully will go some way to remedying this relative silence. To that end, the work found here is particularly concerned with analysing the linguistic form and function of political apologies (rather than the political function), but this cannot be done without touching upon the sociological, historical and psychological import of apologising.

1.1 What is a political apology?

It is important before we go much further to identify what I take to be a political apology, as opposed to any other, run-of-the-mill apology (for now, I will take it as given that the definition of the apology itself is uncomplicated, but as we shall see in chapter 2, the reader may be disabused of this comfortable notion).

I describe a political apology as any apology produced by a political actor\(^1\) in public, where it is likely to be scrutinised by the press and the electorate. So an apology made behind closed doors by a politician would not be classed as a political apology, but a politician repeating an apology publicly and perhaps drawing attention to the existence of a private apology makes it public.

The nature of British public life means that there is less scope for private apologies to be produced by politicians and that much of a public figure’s private life bleeds into the public. Consider the case of the then Welsh Secretary, Ron Davies, who was mugged on Clapham Common while seeking out a homosexual encounter. While it is possible that such an event would have cause minor titillation in, say, the French press were this to have happened to a French politician, it is likely to have been treated as a private matter between the politician and his wife\(^2\). As it happened, Davies made a public

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\(^1\)For the purposes of this research which is concerned with the British situation, I take this to mean (former) members of Parliament, members of the House of Lords, members of the European Parliament, local councillors and mayors, as well as senior figures in government agencies and high-ranking civil servants.

\(^2\)Compare the French press’ reaction to the news of President François Hollande’s affair to that found in the British press. Ron Davies’ apology is looked at in chapter 3.
apology (as well as, one would suppose, a private one to his wife) and resigned his post as Secretary of State.

The point I am intending to draw out here is that no matter the realm in which the offence took place that necessitated the apology (whether it was in a political actor’s private life or in her work as a politician), if an apology is made in the public sphere I shall call this a political apology. This means that I do not have to make moral judgements about whether an action was made by the political actor or the private individual. Moreover, one might argue that, if a politician is making a public apology, she is doing this for political reasons – this is a theme which shall be returned to at various points in this thesis.

This broad definition of the political apology means that the types of statements looked at are consonantly varied – from apologies for expenses abuses and hiring a personal assistant suspected of being a spy, for instance, to the forced migration of children over a period of two centuries and the massacre of innocent civilians on Bloody Sunday. Below I will outline the structure of the thesis and how this will allow for such a wide-ranging discussion.

1.2 The nature of the study

This is probably the right point to stress to the reader that this investigation into political apologies does not concern itself with the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) agenda. The task which many CDA analysts set themselves is to:

produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection

(Wodak & Meyer, 2009:7)

While a noble aim, it is not one I share. Firstly because, like Widdowson (1998) and Geis (1987), I think this view contains an unfortunate presupposition, namely that ‘ordinary’ users of the language require the intervention of a CDA practitioner to spot the particular uses of language by politicians. This clearly has the unwanted side-effect of elevating the analyst’s interpretation over those made by other members of the electorate.

The other common critique is summarised by Joseph: ‘because CDA has its own strong political commitments, it does not provide any ‘objective’ analysis of texts

3When referring to a non-specific politician, I use feminine pronouns (she/her/etc.). In addition, where the gender of a speaker/hearer is not clear from the context of an example, I use feminine pronouns to refer to any Speaker, and masculine pronouns (he/him/etc.) to refer to a generic Hearer.
but a politically interested analysis’ (2006:130). Of course, the rebuttal many CDA practitioners would give here is that there is no such thing as objectivity and, as Breeze alludes to in her review of CDA and its critics, it might be suggested that ‘by not taking a critical stance, they [those espousing ‘acritical’ approaches – J.M.] are taking side with the existing hegemonies, guilty of precluding the necessary social critique, and thereby of collusion or of furthering the reproduction of an unjust social order’ (Breeze, 2011:518). Breeze suggests this to be ‘a form of ideological manipulation, a way of disqualifying the competition (Breeze, 2011:519).

Elsewhere the quality of analyses produced in CDA has been scrutinised, with some suggesting that too narrow a range of analytical tools is used and that developments in linguistic theory have been neglected in the textual analyses produced (see for instance: Widdowson, 1998; Billig, 2002; Verschueren, 2001). This has led, in Verschueren’s opinion, to a type of discourse analysis which is ‘the product of conviction rather than the result of a careful step-by-step analysis that reflexively questions its own observations and conclusions’ (Verschueren 2001: 65). I endeavour to use a variety of linguistically informed theories in this thesis, which, it is hoped, will prevent such a criticism being levelled at the analyses contained herein.

So if this work is not concerned with the emancipation of the oppressed, what is its purpose? Here I share Wilson’s view that when it comes to the language used by politicians:

[t]he question that is interesting from the linguistic point of view is how did they do it, not whether they should have done it or not. In classic terms, we are interested in describing what happened, not in prescribing what should happen. In order to understand what politicians do with language it is important to understand what it is possible to do with language in general.

(Wilson, 1990:15)

This work, then, aims to describe what politicians do with language, albeit with a narrower focus than Wilson. In particular, I will spend time looking at the resources used by ‘ordinary’ language users to apologise and whether these are also utilised by politicians or not. Whilst I do not prescribe how politicians should apologise, I do occasionally indulge in a discussion of why a particular apology may have been poorly received and what a politician might have done differently in an attempt to receive a better reaction.

The objectives of the thesis can be summarised thus.

1. to outline the forms of political apologies;
2. to discuss if/how these apologies differ from those found in everyday talk;
3. to explore what political apologies can tell us about the social nature of politics;
4. to analyse how verbal and non-verbal resources are affected by contextual factors.

There is a further theoretical aim of this contribution and that is to explore how seemingly disparate methodologies concerned with the analysis of discourse – namely, speech act theory and conversation analysis – can both inform our understanding of social interaction. I will discuss the theoretical underpinnings of both in the next chapter, but to foreshadow this a little I shall outline how I think that two approaches can be used without contradiction.

Conversation analysis takes an *emic* approach to interaction and has its starting point with data and avoids pre-conceived categories of actions. As Schegloff says:

Instead of starting out from the outcome action (e.g., What would make something a promise? [or an apology, in our case - J.M.]), we start from an observation about how some bit of talk was done, and ask: What could someone be doing by talking in this way? […] We try to ground our answer to this sort of question by showing that it is *that* action which *co-participants in the interaction* took to be what was getting done, as revealed in/by the response they make to it. (Schegloff, 2007:8, italics his)

Speech act theory, on the other hand, sets out to categorise actions on the basis of sets of constitutive rules which describe acts performed in interaction from the perspective of the speaker and the speaker’s intention. In other words, an act is done if (and only if) the speaker intended such an act to be done.

There are problems with both methodologies (and more detail of these will be given in sections 2.3.4 and 2.4.3), but for the moment it will suffice to say how I believe we can temper both approaches. Firstly, conversation analysis, championed by Schegloff, is not always suitable for all types of spoken data; for instance, the apologies which we shall explore in chapter 3 produced in the House of Commons receive no uptake. Without the uptake we cannot have an idea of what those present for the apology ‘took to be what was getting done’. Unless these statements are to remain unanalysed, there needs to be a different approach and I believe speech act theory to be a good option for this. In addition, when we are talking about apologies which are targeted at the general public (i.e. which have the public as recipients), I think it is fair for the analyst to look to the asynchronous reaction of others not heard in the original interaction to see how they interpreted the utterance under discussion – such an approach would not be encouraged in conversation analysis.
There is another aspect of meaning formation which can be overlooked in conversation analysis with its focus on individual data extracts – namely, that there is a ‘bigger picture’ of the underlying linguistic system governing language and interaction. If we look to the apology extracts presented in this study, it seems clear that there are recurrent ways in which interlocutors perform certain actions and there are conditions which do need to be satisfied in order for those actions to be successful. Speech act theory can help to describe these conditions, indeed I suggest that having an inventory of felicity conditions for all speech acts means that hearers are able to use these as heuristics (i.e. quick and dirty compare and contrast rules) to decide which action is being produced by an interlocutor.

But speech act theory on its own is also inadequate for our purposes. This approach looks at acts in isolation and overlooks the surrounding structures within which such acts are embedded. This is acknowledged by Searle himself, who gives an emphatic ‘no’ in answer to the questions: ‘Could we get an account of conversations parallel to our account of speech acts? Could we, for example, get an account that gave us constitutive rules for conversations in a way that we have constitutive rules of speech acts?’ (Searle, 1992:7). But without this, and without insights from conversation analysis in place of this, we would overlook matters such as how apologies can be co-constructed and negotiated between apologisers and apologisees. We would also miss details about where in the discourse (and particularly with an apologiser’s turn) the apology is produced and the effect that this can have on an apologisee’s reaction to it. We will see the importance of these matters in chapter 4 and 5 in particular. I shall return to the advantages and disadvantages of both conversation analysis and speech act theory in chapter 2.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

In order to explore a full range of political apologies each chapter will look at apologies produced in a different setting. Chapter 2 will give an introduction to the theoretical machinery employed in the thesis in order to give an appropriate description and explanation of this wide range of apologies; in particular, I will discuss politeness theory, speech act theory, conversation analysis and neo-Gricean theories of implicature. Interspersed with theoretical deliberations will also be my own proposals for how we can categorise apologies.

Following this theoretical chapter, we arrive at the data proper. Chapter 3 looks at apologies made in the House of Commons. In particular, the apologies looked at (approximately 50 of them) are produced as personal statements – a special type of
parliamentary statement which is made with the leave of The Speaker of the House of Commons who reads and approves its contents in advance of it being produced. The statements are monologic in nature, since they can receive no response from other Members of Parliament (MPs). The triggers for apologies of this type are varied: abusing expenses, insulting another MP, leaking a document, etc. The potential influence of the offence on how an MP apologises is discussed.

Chapter 4 looks at apologies which are much more interactional by focussing on talk produced at the Leveson Inquiry – a recent public inquiry which investigated the practices and ethics of the press and which called a number of politicians as witnesses. We shall explore how apologies are sequentially orded in this setting and the constraints that the institutional setting places on the types of apology produced.

The following chapter on news interviews continues the conversation analytic approach and explores how apologies are invariably a result of a ‘trigger’ and are never produced by politicians without prompting. Also discussed in this chapter is how the neutralistic stance of the interviewer prevents uptake and the implications that this has for participation structure and speech act theory.

Chapter 6 returns to apologies produced in Parliament, but instead sees the focus shift from apologies made by the offender, to apologies for historical wrongdoing where the apologiser is only a representative of those who carried out the original transgression. We see what effect this has on the apologies. Also discussed in this chapter is how the performance of an historical apology is unlike any other genre in parliamentary discourse, and how it seems to form its own activity type (Levinson, 1979). Highlighted, too, is how a description of the offence bears striking similarities to the narratives described by Labov (2013).

The final data-driven chapter (7) explores the metapragmatics of apologising, with a focus on three main issues: i) how apologies can ‘go wrong’ in institutional settings and what does this tell us about the norms of those institutions; ii) what MPs and relevant others claim to be the important features of an apology and what this tells us about how they orient to the action of apologising; and iii) how apology tokens can be used in the performance of other actions, why it is apologies which are used to do this and what this tells us about language change more broadly.

The conclusion in chapter 8 will not only summarise the findings, but tries to bring them together by considering the speech act of apologising from a prototype perspective, with some of the examples discussed being more at the core of the act of apologising (such as some of the more conversational-type apologies found at the Leveson Inquiry) and others being far more peripheral and sharing more with other speech acts like justifying (such as some of the apologies for historical wrongdoing).
I also provide some suggestions for the least risky ways of carry out an apology in the political sphere.
Chapter 2

What is an apology? Theoretical considerations

2.1 Introduction

Before we can get to the main body of this exploration of apologies, it is important to look at two issues: i) identifying what is meant by an apology; ii) explaining what analytical tools will be employed in the description and discussion of political apologies. This chapter will undertake these tasks and is structured thus: §2.2 introduces facework (Goffman, 1967; Brown & Levinson, 1987); §2.3 will revisit the extensively discussed suggestion that apologies can and should be considered as speech acts (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Fraser, 1981). In section 2.4 I will discuss the opposing view which considers apologies as conversational moves whose action value is assigned through negotiation between interlocutors, as well as how this approach can be reconciled with that of speech act theory. Some other aspects of pragmatic theory employed in this thesis (including the neo-Gricean, defaultist view of implicature) are outlined in section 2.5.

2.2 Apologies in terms of face

Apologies have been discussed previously in the literature on politeness as being used in the performance of facework (see i.a. Ogiermann, 2009; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 1990). In this section, I shall introduce the notion of facework, discuss previous work on apologies and face and outline where my thoughts differ from this work. I will also explain how I view face to be relevant to political discourse.
2.2.1 Facework and offence

Goffman’s conception of face focusses on the idea that face is a ‘positive social value [that] a person effectively claims for himself’ (Goffman, 1967:5) and that it is ‘animate of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes’ (ibid.). Face according to Goffman can be maintained, worked on or given (for a more detailed discussion of these aspects see Goffman, 1967:7-19), as well as, most importantly for our purposes ‘lost’. Face loss comes about when the positive social value that an individual has for him/herself is impinged upon – either by his/her own actions (e.g. by committing a social faux pas which others would view negatively) or the actions of another (e.g. a third party making a slight against the individual leaving him/her embarrassed or out of face). Such face-loss can be sought to be repaired through corrective facework (Goffman, 1967:19ff) – of which the apology is a major part of the interchanges designed to repair this potential damage to face.

Brown & Levinson (1987) developing Goffman’s idea of face distinguish between two aspects of face: positive and negative, which I shall restate here:

**Negative face** the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition

**Positive face** the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants (Brown & Levinson, 1987:61)

Offences which might merit an apology may then be described as being actions which threaten (or are perceived to have the potential to threaten) an interlocutor’s face (either aspect: an offence could be levelled at the positive face, say an insult, or negative face e.g. a threat or warning). We will see shortly the importance of distinguishing between positive and negative face. The other important aspect of facework which Brown & Levinson (1987) emphasise more than Goffman is the need to distinguish between threats against the hearer’s and speaker’s face. For instance, the hearer’s positive face might be threatened if the speaker criticises him, but the speaker could threaten her own positive face if she makes a confession.

I think it is fair to say that the majority of apologies are triggered by face-threatening acts (FTAs) directed at the face of the hearer – particularly since the hearer’s face wants are usually prioritised over the speaker’s own. There are situations where an apology may be given following a threat against the speaker’s own face, but it is often the case that these actions also have implications for the face(s) of the interlocutor.
Consider, for instance, an apology following an FTA against the speaker’s positive face which Brown & Levinson describe as ‘breakdown of physical control over body, bodily leakage, stumbling or falling down, etc.’ (1987:68) – I would suggest that an apology for this is aimed at repairing potential damage done to the hearer because of the discomfiture or embarrassment caused by witnessing such an incident.

So apologies are triggered by offences, which are incidents which have caused (or had the potential to cause) damage to an interlocutor’s face (and usually the hearer’s).

### 2.2.2 Apologies as the performance of facework

Moving on from how we consider the acts which trigger apologies and to the apologies themselves, we find two prevailing views informed by politeness theory and the broadly conceived notion of face. The first contends that the apology is a hearer-supportive device intended to attend to the face wants of the hearer (see, for instance Edmondson & House, 1981). The apology serves to remedy any damage done to the hearer by the face-threatening act which necessitated the apology. The second view suggests that the apology is a speaker-supportive act (e.g. Meier, 1998). This arises from Goffman’s idea that the apology is an act by which the speaker splits herself in two - the bad half which caused the offence and the good half which recognises the offence and seeks to remedy it (Goffman, 1971:110ff). The apology brings this good half to the fore and thus is speaker-supportive, since it repairs the negative feelings held by the hearer towards the speaker. A third, and perhaps more reasonable, view is first found in Holmes (1990) and suggests that the apology plays both of these roles: attending to the face wants of both parties.

All of these views are, I believe, overly simplistic. They view the apology as something which speakers have no reason not to produce and as something which hearers always wish to receive: in other words, these treatments view the apology (properly produced) as a ‘no risk’ option. Brown & Levinson’s view is that far from being risk free, apologies actually damage the speaker’s positive face:

\[ S \text{ indicates that he regrets doing a prior FTA, thereby damaging his own face to some degree – especially if the apology is at the same time a confession with H learning about the transgression through it, and the FTA thus conveys bad news. (Brown & Levinson, 1987:68).} \]

To expand on this, and as has been outlined previously, apologies are a tacit admission that the speaker caused offence, pain, damage or committed some other social faux-pas which had the potential to damage the relationship between hearer and speaker. This acceptance can cause damage to the good relations previously held between
apologiser and apologisee\(^1\) and may cause the apologisee to view the apologiser (and her character) in a more negative light. This has implications for the apologiser’s positive face (her desire to be liked and to have good relations with her interlocutors). But it is not only the speaker’s face that is threatened by an apology; the hearer’s (negative) face is also placed under threat on receipt of it. By apologising, the speaker places the hearer under an obligation to respond, and as a result the apologisee’s freedom to do as he pleases is constrained.

The face considerations involved in the production of an apology can be summarised thus:

a) Apologies attend to the (positive) face of the hearer by acknowledging that his wants, desires and/or expectations are important to the speaker and that the speaker regrets having gone against such wants with her previous offensive action;

b) Apologies see the speaker attend to her own (positive) face wants, since apologies are a means of repairing damage done to relations and thus increase the likelihood that the speaker is liked and respected by her interlocutors;

c) Apologies can cause damage to a speaker’s (positive) face, since she acknowledges and accepts responsibility for face-damaging behaviour. Face damage is a particular risk when the hearer was previously unaware of the offensive behaviour (or the apologiser’s responsibility for it). We find an example of this in the parliamentary apologies looked at in the next chapter. At Prime Minister’s Questions (PMQs) on 15 March 2000, an MP called the Prime Minister a liar. At the time nobody came forward to admit to this flagrant breach of parliamentary convention. James Gray, the culprit, ‘came clean’ the following day – despite the Speaker of the House having no way of knowing for certain who shouted the remark. This owning up meant Gray caused himself face damage. Face damage is also highly likely to arise when the speaker’s apology is rejected by the hearer, since the hearer asserts that the speaker is not worthy of the hearer’s attention/respect/friendship (for a period of time);

d) Apologies can cause damage to a hearer’s (negative) face since he is placed in the difficult position of either accepting the apology or rejecting the speaker’s apology and thus causing her face damage.

\(^1\)I use this term interchangeably with recipient of the apology, or the offended party.
2.2.3 How this is relevant to political language

These seemingly abstract discussions about what constitutes an offence and the importance of face when apologising are worthwhile when it comes to discussing political apologies.

In Murphy (2014), I argued that the face wants of politicians in the public sphere were subtly different from the face wants of Brown & Levinson’s (1987) ‘model person’. I justified this on the basis that Members of Parliament inhabited their own community of practice which has its own rules and expectations concerning interaction and individual conduct. Relevant to this discussion on apologies is what I said on politicians’ positive face which can be said to be made up of:

the desire to be thought of as competent, as well as to be popular amongst both other politicians (particularly those from the same party) and, more importantly, amongst the electorate. The desire to have [their] views, actions, proposals and legislation endorsed and supported both within the community of practice (i.e. Parliament) and outside of it (i.e. amongst the electorate) (Murphy, 2014:78).

Given these differing face wants, it may be argued that politicians deciding whether or not to apologise make additional judgements on the face concerns involved in the act of apologising. The potential for face damage/enhancement is likely to also be affected by the nature of the offence. Value is attached, by some in the electorate, to a politician’s preparedness to own up to previous mistakes and apologise for them. This means that a further calculation made by politicians prior to apologising is whether their apology will be viewed by enough people as demonstrating a positive attribute, and thus being beneficial to his/her positive face.

Also relevant is the fact that the importance of one of the face considerations is significantly reduced when apologising for historical events – namely that the apologiser does not damage her own face by acknowledging (personal) responsibility for the transgression precipitating the apology².

So the cost/benefit analysis that we might argue is undertaken when an individual is deciding whether or not to apologise has potentially higher stakes for a political figure than it would in everyday life. A well-meant apology might have the benefit

²It is not eliminated altogether, however. Consider, by way of example, David Cameron’s apology for the lies told about the victims of the Hillsborough disaster, which is covered in chapter 6, and how the truth about the events of that day was covered up by the Conservative government at the time. Given that he is a Conservative Prime Minister, and the events and cover-up happened on the watch of his Tory predecessors in Number 10, this could damage him because of the party association. In other words his (Conservative) views may not be supported amongst the electorate because of the party’s links to these historic misdeeds.
of producing a positive sentiment amongst the recipient, but a refusal to apologise might cost a political career (consider the case of Lord Rennard, the Liberal Democrat peer who had the whip removed when he refused to apologise for allegedly sexually harassing party workers\(^3\)). Whilst there are instances where the stakes are this high in quotidian talk, I think it is uncontroversial to say that it is more often the case that there is much more to lose for politicians than members of the electorate.

### 2.2.4 Problems with politeness theory

#### 2.2.4.1 Issues with defining apologies in terms of face

So we have seen that apologies can be viewed as a means of restoring face damage done following an offence. But we have also encountered the opposite (and non-contradictory) view that apologies can be interpreted as a further face threat – both to apologisers and apologisees. This complex network of face considerations means that we cannot base our identification of what an apology is solely on the notion of face.

A further reason that we need to look beyond politeness alone is that other, distinct, speech acts give rise to virtually the same face considerations. Let’s survey the act of complimenting:

- a) Compliments attend to the (positive) face of the hearer since he is viewed as desirable by his interlocutor (Herbert, 1990:220);
- b) Compliments can benefit the speaker’s positive face since they can strengthen the solidarity/positive sentiment in a relationship (Manes & Wolfson, 1981:124f);
- c) Compliments have the potential to damage a speaker’s positive face, since the compliment may be interpreted as a sign of envy (Shimanoff, 1994:184);
- d) Compliments threaten the hearer’s negative face since his freedom to go unnoticed is impeded upon (for more on compliments and face see Holmes, 1988).

We need to refer to other means of classification in order to distinguish between these two clearly distinct speech act categories. The sections which follow in this chapter will take up this task.

\(^3\)[http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-25804724]
2.2.4.2 Criticisms of politeness theory

In the last two decades there has been increasing disquiet in the field about politeness theory as conceived by Brown & Levinson (1987), the most strident of which can be found in Eelen (2001); Watts (2003); Mills (2003). The most common criticisms can be summarised thus:

i) Brown & Levinson over-emphasise speaker intention, which privileges the analyst’s interpretation over the hearer’s reaction.

ii) Brown & Levinson’s approach focuses on individual speech acts, viewed in isolation and devoid of the context of the discourse as a whole.

iii) Deciding whether positive or negative face is involved in an utterance is not always clear-cut, meaning that politeness theory’s predictive power is necessarily limited.

iv) Negative face is not a concept which carries equal value in Eastern cultures, meaning that politeness theory is not the universal theory which Brown & Levinson claim it to be.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to offer an impassioned defence of Brown & Levinson (1987). However, given that I am happy to continue to use their theory, I think it is incumbent upon me to explain why I think these criticisms are, in some cases, misplaced and, in others, irrelevant to the study at hand.

Firstly, whilst it is the case that Brown & Levinson do privilege speaker intention, it is difficult to avoid this in some of the types of data analysed in this study which lack a immediately present recipient on whose reaction we could base an analysis. Moreover, as Grainger notes, there is difficulty in accessing these arguably preferable hearer evaluations even in ‘normal’ discourse and ‘using hearers’ post-hoc evaluations risks reducing politeness to an account of how members use various words that describe moral behaviour’ (2013:30).

Secondly, while the basic unit of analysis in politeness theory is the speech act, this does not mean that the analysis need be done without reference to other acts within the discourse. Indeed, other speech acts in the vicinity may act as politeness devices (hedges, appeals to positive/negative face, etc.) to the act in question and so must be considered in the analysis. Moreover, politeness theory does not exclude considerations of context. Indeed, one of the innovations of Brown & Levinson’s work was to introduce a formula for the calculation for the weightiness of an FTA:

\[ W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x \]  (from Brown & Levinson, 1987:76) where:
\[ W_x \] is the weightiness of the FTA.
\( D(S, H) \) is the social distance between speaker and hearer
\( P(H, S) \) is the power differential between hearer and speaker
\( R_x \) is the ranking of the imposition in a given cultural context

So Brown & Levinson do not ignore the importance of the context, and they also argue that the variables in the formula in (1) can vary throughout a speech event (such that, for instance, a second request in a discourse will have a higher imposition ranking than the first).

Thirdly, we have already seen for apologies (and compliments, for that matter) that it is certainly true that deciding on what aspect of face is affected by an act can be difficult and indeed, that there are times when more than one face is threatened or enhanced. This is not in and of itself a problem, but I would agree that this has an impact on the predictive power of the theory. I do not think, though, that it denigrates the descriptive power of the observations made by Brown & Levinson and so I am content that it remains of use for this study.

The final issue of the apparent Eurocentricity of Brown & Levinson (1987) is not one which is pertinent to its application to data from British politicians. Moreover, I do not make any claim to the universality of politeness theory, but rather think it offers a plausible account for the situation found in Britain and it would not, I submit, be sensible to replace a theory which offers generalisations with an approach (namely, post-modernist discursive analysis) which is unable to make (m)any generalisations about polite behaviour (and see here Haugh, 2007 for a critique of post-modernist approaches to politeness which he argues also carry with them the issue of imposing the analyst’s perspective on to the data).

2.3 Apologies as speech acts

Towards the end of the last section, I introduced the term speech act to describe the performance of the apology. In this section I will explore what is meant by that, discuss previous work on apologies as speech acts and explain how I think speech act theory can be applied to political apologies and its usefulness in defining the action of apologising.

2.3.1 What is a speech act?

Speech act (SA) theory, first outlined in Austin (1962) and developed by Searle (see in particular Searle, 1969), starts from the idea that language can be and is used to
doing things – i.e. performing an utterance can make a tangible change in the world (cf. the title of Austin’s book How to do things with words). Austin makes an important distinction between the levels at which one is ‘doing’ something in producing an utterance.

**Locutionary act:** The physical act of producing an utterance with a determinate sense and reference.

**Illocutionary act:** The ‘doing’ of the act associated with the locution. Illocutions are intentional; they are what the speaker intends to do in producing the locutionary act.

**Perlocutionary act:** The effects which are brought about on the interlocutor/third parties as a result of the utterance of the locution. Speakers have in mind the perlocutionary effect(s) they wish to produce as a result of their utterance, but these are not guaranteed to come about. So an apology may give rise to the perlocutionary effect of repair to a damaged relationship, but also may cause annoyance on the part of the hearer (as we saw in the previous section).

The other key tenet of speech act theory came about as a reaction to logical positivism – a philosophical movement in the ascendancy when Austin was first formulating SA theory in the 1930s. Logical positivism asserted (in its most strident form, see here Ayer, 1936; Carnap, 1928) that the only utterances which are cognitively meaningful are those which are verifiable – that is, those which can be said to be either true or false. Austin (1962) sets out to show the untenability of this position, in particular by discussing a class of utterance which does not seem to fit into this true/false dichotomy. Consider the following examples:

(2) a. I now pronounce you man and wife  
   b. I name this ship the Mary Rose  
   c. I sentence you to 15 years hard labour

It is clear that we cannot talk about the truth or falsehood of these utterances – it would be odd for a third party to say “that’s untrue!” after any of them. What Austin suggests as a more important concept for these examples is ‘felicity’ and the circumstances that must be in place for an utterance like one of those in (2) to be ‘happy’ (to use Austin’s term) which are described as the felicity conditions. Thus for the sentencing act in (2c), a number of felicity conditions must be fulfilled in order for the utterance to make a change in the world (i.e. the guilty party having perform 15 years hard labour): the speaker must be an approved person (i.e. a judge); the utterance must take place in
an approved setting; the hearer must have been found guilty prior to the statement, etc.

Austin sets out some categories for these conditions (see Austin, 1962:14ff), but it is the development of the notion of felicity conditions which has been taken up by most SA theorists and so it is these which I shall outline here. Searle’s felicity conditions are not merely ways in which a speech act can fail (as is the case with Austin’s) but are actually constitutive rules (Searle, 1969). This means that the felicity conditions of a particular act are definitional for that act and can be used to distinguish acts from one another.

Searle’s felicity conditions fall out into four component conditions:

**Propositional content:** The proposition that must be expressed in the utterance

**Preparatory condition(s):** A state of affairs necessary for the illocutionary force to be expressed

**Sincerity condition(s):** The psychological state S has towards the propositional content

**Essential condition:** The utterance must “count as” the desired illocution

I will outline in §2.3.3 how these conditions may look for the speech act of apologising and the difficulties that may be encountered if we are to uphold the view that such conditions really are constitutive of the act in question.

The final aspect of SA theory which it is necessary for me to introduce at this point relates to the difference between direct and indirect speech acts. Here it seems fitting to fall back on a much-used example sentence:

(3) Could you pass the salt?

Usually this would be treated as a request illocution (speech act), intended to get a third party to pass the salt to the speaker. But the literal force of the utterance is to question the ability of the third party to perform that same action. Indeed this mismatch is often exploited by parents who believe themselves to be humorous; my father always insists on responding to the question in 3 with “I could” while folding his arms with a broad grin on his face. So examples like these are described as indirect speech acts – they have a literal force which is secondary and a non-literal force which carries the intended primary meaning (i.e. it is this non-literal force which is the intended illocution).
Reasons for using indirect speech acts over direct ones are numerous and include:

1. a desire to build common ground (Terkourafi, 2011): by being indirect, the speaker is asserting that the knowledge presented in her utterance is common knowledge held by both speaker and hearer and this may help to make the hearer feel a part of the ‘in-group’

2. plausible deniability (Lee & Pinker, 2010): by being indirect, the speaker gives herself an ‘out’ when performing a potentially delicate act. Lee & Pinker (2010) discuss, for instance, the case of a driver trying to bribe a policeman to prevent getting a ticket. Doing this act indirectly allows the driver to deny that this was her intention should the policeman be ‘straight’ and threaten to arrest her for bribery.

3. perhaps most importantly for our purposes – politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

2.3.2 Previous work on apologies as speech acts

The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) has been the most influential project on studies concerned with the speech act of apologising. The CCSARP, as the name suggests, was interested to see how speech acts (requesting and apologising in particular) were performed in different cultures. The study involved presenting informants with written questionnaires containing scenarios which had within them different social variables and asking them how they would respond in those situations. For instance, informants were presented with a scenario like:

A notoriously unpunctual student is late again for a meeting with a friend with whom she is working on a joint paper. (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984:212)

The informant gives a written answer and a coding scheme was drawn up on the basis of these answers to analyse whether, for instance, an illocutionary force indicating device\(^4\) was used and if it was intensified, or an explanation given for the offence (more details on the coding scheme and my own refinements to it are offered in §2.5.2).

There are obvious limitations to such an approach – elicited data has been found to differ from naturally occurring data, not just in the inevitable ways like giving no idea

\(^4\)Illocutionary force indicating devices are commonly referred to as IFIDs. An IFID is any element of a language which when used in an utterance will mean that that utterance literally performs the illocution conventionally associated with it (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985:2).
of how the acts would be sequentially organised, but also the responses in written surveys are shorter and less varied (for more see Kasper, 2000). This thesis clearly avoids this issue by relying on the naturalistic apologies of political actors.

2.3.3 Felicity conditions of the apology

The CCSARP project did not propose a set of felicity conditions for apologies, instead it focussed on the various strategies used by speakers to perform their apologies and as Trosborg (1994:375) notes ‘[t]he act of apologizing is not among the types of illocutionary acts for which the rules of use have been explicitly formulated by Searle’. There have been, to my knowledge, just two proposals for a full set of felicity conditions for the apology, the first by Owen (1983) and more recently by Ogiermann (2009). They are similar in a number of respects and are both potentially problematic. In this section, I will focus on the disadvantages of those suggested by Ogiermann (2009) though all of the criticisms except the one regarding the timing of the offence could equally be levelled at Owen (1983:117-124) proposals since they share a number of similarities. I will also offer an alternative set of rules.

2.3.3.1 Propositional content

Speaker responsibility Searle & Vanderveken (1985:16) argue that in an illocution of type $F(P)$, the illocutionary force $F$ ‘will impose certain conditions in the propositional content $P$’. One of the implications of this, they suggest, is that ‘if a speaker apologizes for something it must be for something that he [sic] has done or is otherwise responsible for’ (ibid.). By way of example, they propose that a ‘speaker cannot successfully apologize for the law of modus ponens or the elliptical orbit of the planets’ (ibid.). Possibly in light of this statement, Ogiermann (2009:46) suggests that the propositional content of an apology is a ‘past act A done by S[peaker]’. I think that is an inaccurate proposal, even (and, perhaps, especially) in light of Searle and Vanderveken’s definitions of illocutionary force.

This first difficulty with wording the propositional content in this way can be highlighted with an example taken from Holmes (1989:196, her example (2)):

(4) Context: A’s child spills her drink on V’s carpet.
A: Oh look I’m terribly sorry. I’ll clean it up. Have you got a cloth?
V: Don’t worry. I’ll do it. It wasn’t very much.
According to Ogiermann’s propositional content, we would have to contend that this was an infelicitous apology since the speaker (A in this case) was not the person who performed the offensive act. However, V treats A’s utterance as an apology with the response ‘Don’t worry’ which according to Robinson (2004) show be considered a preferred response to an apology called ‘absolution’. Furthermore, it may be the case that A’s child is unaware of the offensiveness of the action and that the child also does not have the necessary linguistic resources available to apologise. In these instances, I think we are able to argue that it is possible for someone to apologise on another’s behalf. Indeed, Searle and Vanderveken leave this possibility open by saying that an action which a speaker ‘is otherwise responsible for’ is a legitimate source of an apology.

Whilst it is fairly uncontroversial to suggest that apologies such as the one in example (4) are felicitous, there has been no real discussion in linguistic approaches to the apology regarding how widely the idea of responsibility for an offence should be interpreted. In their work on political apologies made by British politicians. One apology highlighted was made by Geoff Hoon, the then Defence Secretary, following the death of a soldier (Sgt. Roberts) in Iraq which was, in part, caused by the lack of protective equipment. In that apology, Hoon said:

(5) Hoon: Some 38,000 sets of that enhanced body armour was sent to theatre. We wanted him to have that equipment. I’m extremely sorry that he did not have it. (quoted in Harris et al. (2006:727)).

Harris et al. (2006:727f) go on to discuss the controversy that surrounded the apology which was caused, amongst other things, by Hoon refusing to accept direct responsibility for the death. I highlight the example in (5) to show how responsibility for an action is not the same as having performed it. To satisfy the conditions set out by Ogiermann (2009:46), Hoon would, presumably, have to have been the person who fired the shot which was fatal to Sgt. Roberts. Though Hoon himself attempted to side-step the responsibility for the tragic outcome (by suggesting that he ‘made enough body armour available, but it was not, by implication, properly distributed by those on the ground (the military)’ (Harris et al., 2006:727), we can argue that he is still (indirectly) responsible for Sgt. Roberts’ death. As the minister in charge of the safe deployment of troops to Iraq, it was Hoon’s duty to ensure that troops were receiving the equipment which his ministry was providing. So despite not having performed the action himself, and despite not accepting the direct responsibility either, I think it is still fair to argue that Hoon could apologise felicitously (if he so wished) for the death.

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We will return to the idea of preferred responses in the next section, but for now it will suffice to say that preference does not refer to what the speaker would want to do, but what is expected in a given culture.
of Sgt. Roberts. Indeed, if his apology had been worded in a way which pleased Sgt. Roberts’ wife, she would apparently have welcomed it as a satisfactory apology (Harris et al., 2006:727-8). This leads us to a wider interpretation of Searle and Vanderveken’s ‘otherwise responsible for’ criteria than I believe they intended. I think a speaker need only be indirectly responsible for an action to be able to felicitously apologise for it.

Taking this further, I think there is scope to extend the notion of ‘otherwise responsible’ beyond an apologiser being indirectly responsible. The recent trend of politicians apologising for acts of historical wrongdoing has been widely noted and is fast becoming a cottage industry in linguistic and social psychological research (see Lind (2008); Kampf (2009); Augustinos et al. (2011) for some recent examples of such work). Using Ogiermann’s felicity conditions, and even Searle and Vanderveken’s less strict suggestion of what constitutes the propositional content of apologies, we would have to conclude that modern politicians’ apologies for their nations’ involvement in the Slave Trade, support of military juntas, colonisation and denial of equal rights for women (amongst other things) do not represent well-meant apologies. Many, especially journalists, would agree that such statements cannot be classed as apologies. Let us look at Gordon Brown’s apology to the Home Children\(^6\) by way of example.

\[
(6) \text{ To all those former child migrants and their families, to those here with us today and those across the world – to each and every one – I say today that we are truly sorry. They were let down. We are sorry that they were allowed to be sent away at the time they were most vulnerable. (Gordon Brown, 24/02/2010; vol. 506, col.301)\(^7\)}
\]

There was much debate before and after Brown made the statement. The view taken by most journalists is best summarised by Rod Liddle’s opinion piece in *The Spectator* magazine:

I never knew it was Gordon Brown who sent all those kids off to Australia, packed them off and waved goodbye from the quayside, and now feels terribly bad about the whole thing (http://www.spectator.co.uk/spectator/thisweek/5549753/say-youre-sorry-but-never-apologise-for-anything-youve-actually-done.

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\(^6\)The Home Children were victims of the British Government’s policy between 1869 and 1967 to send children from care homes to live and work in other Commonwealth countries. They faced abuse, neglect and poor living conditions in those countries.

\(^7\)Vol. 506, col. 301 is a reference to where this example can be found in Hansard (the ‘Official Report’ of parliamentary business) which is available online at http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/.
Liddle implies that since Gordon Brown was not actually involved, neither directly nor indirectly, in the policy (he was only 15 years old when the forced migrations ended), he cannot apologise for it. But the response of journalists to the apology does not, necessarily, give us the best indication of what counts as a ‘real’ apology. In this instance, I think we should look to victims and their representatives to see how Brown’s statement was interpreted. Harold Haig of The International Association of Former Child Migrants and their Families said that Brown’s statement was:

a moment in history when there can be reconciliation between the government, the nation and child migrants (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8531664.stm, 24/02/2010)

We can argue that apologies have a perlocutionary effect of restoring good relations between the speaker and the injured party which we could otherwise describe as reconciliation (Turnbull, 2003:106). Since Harold Haig suggested that Brown’s statement (i.e his illocution) gave rise to the perlocutionary effect of an ‘apology’ – that of eliciting forgiveness and reconciliation – I think we should view the statement as a felicitous apology.

**Timing of the offence** Aside from implications for speaker responsibility for offences, Ogiermann’s suggested propositional content also restricts the timing of a felicitous apology. By stipulating that only ‘past acts’ can be apologised for felicitously, the implication is that speech events which pre-empt an offence taking place cannot be viewed as well-meant apologies. Such a restriction seems sensible when we consider an utterance like the one in (7):

(7) *I apologize for not having left by tomorrow (Fraser, 1981:261)

Such an utterance cannot be interpreted as an apology and would strike most native speakers as odd, to say the least. Fraser suggests that (7) does not constitute an apology ‘since there is, at the time of speaking, no relevant act over which to apologize’ (ibid.). I am not convinced by this explanation. I think the unacceptability of (7) lies in ‘having + past participle’ (normally used to indicate a completed, i.e. past, event) being used in combination with a future event and not with the verb ‘to apologise’ being used with a future event. Changing this example so that it still conveys the same message

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8Ogiermann and Owen’s felicity conditions diverge when it comes to offence timing. Owen’s propositional content allows an offence to be a ‘past act, or an act that S is engaged in at the time of speaking, or a future act whose occurrence is assured’ (Owen, 1983:117). As I will explain, I think the caveat that the occurrence of the future act needs to be assured is an unnecessary one.
(i.e. an apology for not leaving until after tomorrow) gives us a seemingly acceptable apology:

(8) I apologise for not being able to leave by tomorrow

A further example from a debate in the House of Commons on school teachers’ pay and conditions may emphasise my point that future actions can be the subject of apologies:

(9) I apologise in advance to the House because I shall not be able to remain for the whole of the debate owing to a long standing and important commitment in another part of the Palace of Westminster. (Bob Dunn, 27/11/1990; vol. 181, col. 771)

In (9) Mr. Dunn apologises because he will leave the debate early, which breaches the parliamentary convention that, when speaking in a debate, one should stay in the chamber to see the conclusion of that debate. Despite being for an act that is yet to occur, Mr. Dunn’s utterance is seemingly accepted as an apology by the other participants in the debate (there is no uptake of the apology as we would find in everyday conversation, but nobody passes comment from a sedentary position about the acceptability or otherwise of his statement. Moreover, we often find utterances similar to that in (9) in everyday talk – we apologise in advance when we are unable to attend meetings; public bodies apologise in advance of closing important services; we apologise before saying something potentially impertinent. Coulmas (1981) also discusses instances of ex ante apologies, as he calls them, for matters such as intruding on someone. Such apologies have led to ‘the derived usage of apology expressions as attention getters’ (Coulmas, 1981:76). I think all of these apologies can be viewed felicitously (provided they fulfil the other felicity conditions).

Reformulating the propositional content Bearing the previous discussions in mind, I propose that the propositional content for a felicitous apology should be thought of as:

An act done, or to be done in the future, by the speaker or someone for whom the speaker is a formally recognised representative.

9We will return to this derived usage in chapter 5 on news interviews.
2.3.3.2 Preparatory condition

Ogiermann’s (2009:46) suggestion for the preparatory condition, ‘S[peaker] believes that [past act] A is an offence against H[earer]’, may also be troublesome, if interpreted strictly. Consider the following example with which many couples will identify:

(10) **Context:** James has just left the bathroom; his partner, Emily, enters to use the toilet.

    Emily: For Christ’s sake, can you stop leaving the toilet seat up?!
    James: I’m sorry – I keep forgetting.

This seemingly frivolous example highlights the problem with wording the preparatory condition in this way. I do not find the act of leaving the toilet seat up to be an offence, indeed if Emily were to leave the toilet in this way I would be pleased rather than perturbed. In this case, then, is my apology infelicitous? Given that I was the speaker in (10), I would contend that it was well-meant and heartfelt. Despite not personally finding the action offensive, I know from my world knowledge and from her utterance that my interlocutor does find my action offensive.

I was party to another instance of apology which gave me reason to reconsider the formulation of the preparatory condition. My brother, Craig (C), and I were visiting our mother (M) and engaging in some friendly back-and-forth when the following took place:

(11) J: ((laughing)) You are a total dick sometimes.

    M: Oi! There’s no need for that. Say sorry.
    C: Mam, it was only a joke.
    J: Sorry mate.

The utterance I produced was not in response to any action which I thought that Craig had found offensive (indeed, his assertion that it was a joke suggests that he did not interpret it as an offence), but instead to my mother’s suggestion that my utterance was an offence. In producing my apology, my aim was to show my mother that I was willing to make good my relations with my brother (even if I did not think they had been damaged) and to some extent, repair any damage to my relationship with my mother. Blum-Kulka & Olshtain conceive of this sort of offence when they note that offences can be ‘perceived by S only, by H only, by both S and H, or by a third party as a breach of a social norm’ (1984:206, emphasis mine).

Both of these matters need to be taken into account so I think re-wording the preparatory condition so that it reads something like:
S believes that the apology recipient (R), or a contextually relevant third party, believes that the act was an offence against R (or someone who R represents)\textsuperscript{10}
gives a more appropriate, albeit slightly more convoluted, proposal.

### 2.3.3.3 Sincerity condition

I think it is certainly true that a speaker must feel some regret to be able to apologise felicitously, otherwise she could be said to be simply ‘going through the motions’ in her performance of the apology (see Wachtel (1980) for a discussion of this). However, regret does not simply stem from the performance of the action as Ogiermann’s (2009:46) wording of the sincerity condition (‘S regrets A’) would imply. Indeed, if we return to example 10, I would not regret leaving the toilet seat up if Emily had made no overt complaint about this state of affairs. As such, I believe that my regret stems not from having performed the action, but instead from the potential damage to an otherwise convivial relationship that may have been caused by the action. As a result, it may be better to say that in a sincere apology, the speaker can regret either the act itself or one of its consequences.

### 2.3.3.4 Summary

To re-iterate then I would argue that the following felicity conditions are able to capture the vast majority of utterances which we would describe as apology speech acts (both in everyday talk and political discourse):

- **Propositional content:** An act done, or to be done in the future, by the speaker or someone for whom the speaker is a formally recognised representative.

- **Preparatory condition:** Speaker believes that the apology recipient, or a contextually relevant third party, believes that the act was an offence against the recipient (or someone whom the recipient represents).

- **Sincerity condition:** Speaker regrets the act or one of its consequences.

- **Essential condition:** Utterance counts as an apology.

\textsuperscript{10}I include the idea that the offence can have happened to a party is not the recipient, but rather someone whom the recipient represents, because of the existence of the historical apologies discussed in chapter 6. A number of the victims of forced migration, for instance, had died before Gordon Brown’s apology but had surviving family members present to hear it.
2.3.4 The limitations of the speech act approach

One of the most common criticisms of speech act research is that too much emphasis is placed on the speaker and her intentions, to the extent that speech act theory precludes the idea that meaning is negotiated between speaker and hearer (see, amongst others: Bilmes, 1986, 1992; Kasper, 2006; Arundale, 2005). Speaker meaning, or intended speaker meaning, is not accessible to the analyst, unless assumptions that the speaker is a rational, model person who thinks in a similar way to the analyst are made; and even then, the analyst can only make a ‘best guess’ at the speaker’s intention since one cannot get into her head. When it comes to deriving a set of felicity conditions for a particular speech act (in our case, for the apology), I think this is less of a concern than is often made out. The truth is that language users apologise everyday, often without particular difficulty in understanding one another. This suggests that there are underlying norms which make this possible. As a competent user of the language, and one who apologises, I feel it acceptable to use my world knowledge – informed by a variety of detailed, real-world examples – to assist in the formulation of a set of conditions which describe the act of apologising.

Another criticism of speech act theory is that it is said to neglect the idea that ‘requests, compliments and apologies [etc.] can be performed using a very wide range of linguistic realisations’ (Mills, 2011:21-2). This is certainly true of the speech act work of Austin, who was particularly concerned with making the link between verbs as they appeared in the dictionary and acts which they could perform. The Searlean approach of starting with the act to be described on the basis of its felicity conditions (rather than starting with the linguistic form) limits the potency of this criticism, since any linguistic form which fulfils the felicity conditions for the act can be said to have the illocutionary force in question.

The issue of using ‘decontextualised and contrived examples’ (Grainger, 2013:30) is a serious one. As Grainger notes, this is clearly less of a concern for Austin and Searle who are particularly interested in the philosophical aspects of speech act theory (ibid.), but in this study, where the focus is on the social and pragmatic import of the act of apologising, contrived examples have been avoided (though I concede that a couple of examples in this previous section have come from unrecorded sources).

2.4 Apologies as conversational actions

Conversation analysis (CA) developed in the 1960s as a counter-point to the view expounded upon by Chomsky that actual talk is not worth studying because it tells
us nothing about the underlying structure of language, and is itself bereft of order (Chomsky, 1995:16f). Harvey Sacks (one of CA’s earlier pioneers, along with Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson) set out in his seminal lectures to show that conversation was ordered at every point and that talk was organised around recurrent patterns (see Sacks, 1992 which is an edited version of those lectures).

In this section I will outline the basic premises of conversation analysis and how how it can be used to deal with the issue raised at the end of the last section – namely the idea that speech acts are not performed in isolation and are produced within larger sequences. I will highlight the differences between the CA approach and SA theory and how I believe the two to be (largely) reconcilable. As well as giving details of previous CA work on apologies (which is surprisingly sparse), I shall explain where I intend to apply CA in this study.

### 2.4.1 Conversation analysis

It is not possible for me to describe in detail all of the methodological machinery developed within CA, nor all of its theoretical foundations (and it would not be appropriate for me to do so in any case. I refer the interested reader to Sidnell (2010) for what I consider to be the best primer in all aspects of CA. What I will do here is outline those most important findings of CA research which will be utilised later (in particular in chapters 4 and 5).

#### 2.4.1.1 Theoretical foundations

CA is strongly empirical – it relies wholly on actual conversations (usually recorded and transcribed\(^1\)) and rejects the use of intuition about language and invented examples, which tends to be the staple of work in speech act theory. This derives from the view espoused in other areas of linguistics that our intuitions about the way we speak are fundamentally unreliable (see here Labov (1996) for a more recent exploration of this). CA is also an exercise in inductive reasoning – analysts claim to avoid pre-conceived ideas about what may be found in the data and premature theories about how talk works. Instead, CA practitioners look to the data to see what features

\(^{11}\) Examples which come from the corpus of apologies that I have collected have been transcribed using notations developed by Gail Jefferson explained and justified in Jefferson (2004). Where my transcriptions do deviate from practices employed by other CA practitioners is that I avoid using \textit{ad hoc} orthography to represent features of pronunciation. In the main this is because I have nothing of interest to say about such pronunciation and so transcribing adds little to the point I am trying to make and because such transcription would make the corpus I have collected more difficult for others to search and use. I also reserve capital letters exclusively for louder speech, which means I do not capitalise proper nouns, the first person subject pronoun, or the first word of a sentence.
recur and they focus also on the aspects of talk which interlocutors themselves orient to. This is done in order to avoid the imposition of the analyst’s opinion about what was meant by a particular utterance produced at a particular time (this, of course, means that CA is antithetical to work done in CDA which I mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis).

2.4.1.2 Turn-taking

Sacks et al. (1974) propose that turns at talk are managed by an ordered set of principles which apply at the end of every turn. A speaker has the right to one turn-constructional unit (TCU) on the floor, following which the conversation reaches a transition-relevance place (TRP) – that is to say, a point at which speaker change becomes possible. The following are the principles which apply at the TRP (simplified from Sacks et al., 1974):

1. If the current speaker (S1) has selected a specific interlocutor (S2) in her turn, then S2 must take a turn at talk.
2. If (1) does not apply and S1 has not selected S2, then any (other) party can self-select and the first party to the floor gains the right to speak.
3. If (1) or (2) do not apply and no-one has been selected or has self-selected, then S1 may take another turn at talk. At the next TRP the rules re-apply.

When these rules do not apply (or there is a pause before their application) we can talk about different types of pause. Attributable silences are ones which occur between S2 being explicitly selected to speak and the next turn starting (i.e. the silence is the ‘fault’ of S2). Gaps are pauses which occur before the application of rules (2) or (3), and lapses occur when none of the rules (1-3) are being applied by any of the participants (these are particularly common in shared offices where workers can go for some time without speaking).

2.4.1.3 Sequential structure

So we have seen how turns are shared between participants, but in the first rule of turn-taking it was suggested that a specific interlocutor could be selected by the current speaker and this was not elaborated upon. One intuitive way that this can be done is by using an address term which picks out the next speaker, but another (perhaps more common) way that this is done is by producing a particular structure which makes a response from another party conditionally relevant. Such a structure is termed an adjacency pair.
Adjacency pairs come in a variety of forms: question—answer; greeting—greeting; offer—acceptance/declination. Levinson (1983:303) also suggests apology—minimization as an adjacency pair, but we will explore this in more detail later in this section and elsewhere in this thesis. The first pair part of the adjacency pair (e.g. the question) makes relevant the second pair part (e.g. the answer). If this second pair part is absent, it will be in some way marked and S1 (i.e. the questioner) will pursue a response or the lack of response will give rise to some effect in S1.

Whilst it is the case that the two parts of an adjacency pair are expected to be strictly adjacent, sometimes conditions need to be met before a second pair part can be provided. Consider the following example:

(12) (Example 20 in Levinson, 1983:304)

A: May I have a bottle of Mich?
B: Are you twenty one?
A: No
B: No

Here the first question cannot be responded to until the shopkeeper is satisfied that conditions are met (i.e. the customer is a certain age). As a result another question—answer adjacency pair is opened (and closed) and this intervenes between the orginal Q—A AP. This sort of embedding of APs is called an insertion sequence.

Other types of sequential structure have been identified within CA, including presequences; pre-, post- and insert expansions; and action chains. I will introduce action chains in chapter 4 but other types of sequential structure will have little bearing on the apologies looked at in this study.

2.4.1.4 Preference

One first pair part of an adjacency pair may trigger a number of potential second pair parts – these various second pair parts are not all equally favoured. Indeed, there is a ranking of preference in the production of these parts and there is always at least one preferred and one dispreferred response.

Preference does not refer to what an interlocutor wants to do. Following an invitation to dinner from an obnoxious colleague, one might want to reject the invitation. However, in terms of preference structure, the preferred response is to accept and the dispreferred second is to reject the invite.
Preferred responses are typically produced without delay and are usually simple in form. Dispreferred second pair parts are usually delayed, prefaced in some way (often with the particle *well*), and contain an account for why the preferred response cannot be given. The table below (taken from Levinson, 1983:336) shows first pair parts and their dis/preferred responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Part</th>
<th>Request</th>
<th>Offer/Invite</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Blame</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preferred</strong></td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Expected response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dispreferred</strong></td>
<td>Refusal</td>
<td>Refusal</td>
<td>Disagreement</td>
<td>Admission</td>
<td>Unexpected response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: APs and their dis/preferred second pair parts

Preference organisation, then, is related to cultural norms rather than personal desires. It seems to me that preference is related to facework, but this is something that has not been greatly developed within conversation analysis (though see Lerner, 1996 for a discussion of how facework influences preference structures). Preferred responses will (usually) enhance the face of the interlocutor and dispreferred responses are likely to cause damage to the hearer’s face and it is for this reason that they are found to be hedged\(^{12}\).

### 2.4.1.5 Repair

The final piece of technical apparatus introduced by CA practitioners which will be needed in this study is that of repair work. It is clear that conversationalists can encounter trouble during talk and that trouble is resolved through repair work. We find that there are also preferences in how repairs are initiated and performed – again these preferences can be attested by the rapidity with which they are produced following the trouble, with the most preferred occurring very quickly (even with abrupt cut-offs from the trouble) to the least preferred occurring after a significant delay (see here Schegloff et al., 1977):

1. The preferred way of carrying out repair is self-initiated self-repair. That is to say, the current speaker recognises herself that there may be trouble in her talk and offers a correction or reformulation herself. This can occur within her turn (most preferred), or in the transition space (less preferred).

2. Other-initiated self-repair is the next preferred. This sees S1 fail to recognise the trouble with her talk and so is prompted by S2 to produce a repair in the next

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\(^{12}\)I say usually because there are actions such as *blaming* where the responses are reversed. We find in this case that the preferred second is to deny and the dispreferred response is to admit/take the blame. In this case it is the blamee’s face which is most salient and is protected by the preferred response.
turn. The trigger for the repair produced by S2 is described as a next turn repair initiator (NTRI).

3. Other-initiated other-repair is the least preferred way to resolve trouble in talk. It sees S2 spotting the trouble and offering a repair for it.

Next-turn repair initiators can take a number of forms. Sidnell (2010:118) proposes a typology of NTRIs, which go from weak NTRIs which indicate that there has been trouble in the preceding talk but do not give an indication about what in particular is at issue, to strong NTRIs which not only indicate that there is trouble but also give S1 an indication of what in particular needs to be repaired.

![Relative strength of NTRIs](image)

Figure 2.1: Relative strength of NTRIs, adapted from Sidnell (2010:118)

In example 13, B’s possible responses show instances of the types of repair possible:

(13) A: So we’ve just come back from Acapulco.
B: Eh? ← Open class
Where? ← Wh-word
Where? Acapulco? ← Repeat + Wh-word
Acapulco? ← Repeat
Acapulco, is it? ← Understanding check

We will return to where apology tokens fit into this typology of NTRIs, as well as how they are used in the performance of repair work more generally in chapter 4.

### 2.4.2 Previous CA work on apologies

There have been, to my knowledge, only two in-depth treatments of apologies from a conversation analytic perspective – namely Owen (1983) and Robinson (2004). Apologies do receive mention elsewhere in the CA literature but usually only briefly – for instance, in listing prototypical adjacency pairs, Levinson suggests ‘apology—minimization’ as an example (1983:303). The more detailed studies of Owen and Robinson show that apologies enter into more complex sequential structures than Levinson’s gloss would suggest, I shall explore this previous work here.

Robinson (2004) focusses on apologies which are part of turns which have the primary function of apologising. As a result, he does not look at examples like ‘Sorry, how old are you?’ because in such a turn the primary action is to ask a question and not
to apologise to the interlocutor. He finds that these primarily apologetic turns initiate adjacency pairs, to which the preferred response from the apologisee is to deny the need to have apologised or minimise the seriousness of the offence which triggered the apology. Robinson bases this on the careful analysis of naturally occurring apologies in a corpus of recorded doctor–patient interactions and conversations between friends. He argues that apologies form adjacency pairs because of the markedness of the absence of one of these preferred responses. He also gives examples of interactions where further work is done by the apologiser in the face of a dispreferred second (e.g. a shrug, a topic change, silence, etc.).

Owen (1983) made similar observations about the forms of the preferred response, but did not go so far as to say that apologies trigger adjacency pairs. In addition, she describes responses like ‘OK’ as ‘acknowledging the remedial work as adequate’ (Owen, 1983:97), whereas Robinson would argue that this is a minimising of the offence. Also found in Owen’s study but not in Robinson’s are overt rejections of an apology – she finds that such examples lead to further apologies and negotiations about how the apologiser can remedy the offence.

We will return to questions of sequential organisation of apologies later in this thesis where I will argue that apologies are often found in larger, sequentially organised ‘moves’. I will also demonstrate that this organisation may be less strict than Robinson (2004) suggests.

2.4.3 CA’s limitations

The first issue with using conversation analysis in isolation in this study is that it does not lend itself to some of the types of data which we will be looking at. The parliamentary apologies which I shall introduce in the next chapter are entirely monologic in nature – the statements are heard in silence and are not responded to orally within the chamber. As a result, we cannot talk about adjacency pairs, or preference organisation, nor about turn-taking or any of the other fundamentally important analytical tools found in CA.

If we cannot define what is going on in the apology statement in terms of how it is reacted to by an interlocutor, then how are we to analyse what is happening? In this situation, we require some way of defining the apology in its own terms (if not because that is what language users do, then at the very least because it allows for a delimiting of the types of example to be analysed). Part of the way that defining the apology can be achieved is by the felicity conditions proposed in the previous section. Since many of the apologies scrutinised are not conversational it would be inappropriate to
exclusively use CA to analyse of the data looked at in this thesis.

Felicity conditions have other advantages, aside from providing definitional criteria for the analyst. I suggest that they are used by hearers in ascribing an action value to a speaker’s utterance. That is to say, a hearer who knows that an offence has happened (propositional content/preparatory condition) is able to work on the assumption that the utterance that follows is likely to have the function of an apology. This is particularly true if he believes the speaker’s demeanour indicates that she believes she has been offended (preparatory condition) and the speaker gives the impression of being regretful (the sincerity condition). If language users have a repository of felicity conditions then this is likely to aid their decision making on what action is being done with each utterance. In effect, matching the contextual situation, early parts of an utterance, and indications given off from body language to a set of felicity conditions may act as a ‘quick and dirty’ heuristic for language users to ascribe a particular action to an utterance.

The final limitation of CA relevant to this study may be considered one of CA’s advantages by others. CA tends to ignore details such as the setting of an utterance, the social status of its participants and previous talk involving the participants unless these matters are oriented to by the participants. This derives, in part again from the desire of CA practitioners to avoid elevating their interpretation of the talk. But there is a further motivation, which is that including features of context in the analysis from the outset would treat context as an exogenous matter which cocoons talk. Work in CA (and see here in particular Heritage, 1984) has shown that context is developed endogenously by participants in conversation.

Whilst I subscribe to the view that context is a bottom-up phenomenon (and this is something which I will return to in chapter 6), I think not bringing knowledge of the situation prior to an apology event to bear on the analysis thereof would be a mistake. Without this we would otherwise be unable to talk about the nature of the event which triggered the apology and its influence on the apology form (since many of the apologies looked at in this study are not triggered by offences performed within the same speech event). Moreover, neglecting to use the ‘facts’ about the nature of the offence means that we would not be able to say anything about how politicians on occasion do not apologise for the full offence but just for part of it. In addition, ignoring details about where the apology is produced may mean that we overlook potential links between the setting of an apology and its form.
2.5 How people apologise: The importance of a theory of implicature

So far I have focussed on the social, functional properties of the apology and have had little to say about how apologies can be classified as such by looking at the words speakers use to perform them (see Deutschmann (2003:44-47) for a justification of such an approach). In this section I will remedy this deficiency. This pursuit requires the introduction of another aspect of pragmatic theory, namely the neo-Gricean approach to implicature (Levinson, 1995, 2000). I will show how GCI theory informs the way we analyse (indirect) apology strategies. I shall outline how previous studies (in particular Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) have categorised apology techniques and offer some refinements to this in my own categorisation.

2.5.1 An introduction to GCI theory

2.5.1.1 Grice and implicature

Grice (1975) distinguishes between two types of conversational implicatures – particularised ones (PCIs) and generalised ones (GCIs). These implicatures are arrived at by interlocutors working on the assumption that their conversational partner(s) are following the co-operative principle, and either strategically adhering to, flouting or creating a clash of Grice’s maxims (see Grice, 1975). The main difference between a PCI and a GCI comes from the contexts required in order for the implicatures to be generated: PCIs require special contexts to be derived by the hearer, GCIs on the other hand are so pervasive that they do not require these special contexts, and instead are generated in all contexts. In fact, GCIs are so pervasive that they require a special context for them to be cancelled or would necessitate overt cancellation by the speaker. Compare these examples, for instance:

(14) A: Can we go to Sandinista for dinner?  
    B: I had tapas yesterday. (+\textsuperscript{13} B does not want to eat at Sandinista)

(15) Last week John got paid and bought a new suit (+\textsuperscript{13} he was paid and THEN bought a suit)

(16) Last week John got paid and bought a new suit – he got the suit on Tuesday and was paid on Friday.

\textsuperscript{13}I use +\textsuperscript{13} as shorthand for conversationally implicates.
In the case of example 14, declaring that one had tapas yesterday does not usually give rise to an implicature that one does not want to visit a restaurant called Sandinista – it does so here because of the (world) knowledge which A brings to bear that: Sandinista serves tapas; on the whole, people like to have variety in what they eat; Speaker B is presumed to be co-operative and therefore B’s utterance must be relevant to the question at hand, etc.

Compare this to example 15, where ‘and’ gives rise to an implicature that the two conjuncts happened in the order that they were uttered (i.e. and + > and then). Because ‘and’ so frequently gives rise to this implicature, it goes through by default and requires specific cancellation, which we can see in example 16. Note how the cancelling utterance does not contradict the utterance containing the GCI; that an implicature can be cancelled without contradiction is one of their defining features.

2.5.1.2 Neo-Gricean work on GCIs

Levinson maintains this distinction between PCIs and GCIs in his work (Levinson, 1995, 2000), but in developing the notion of the GCI he argues that they arise by default as a result of three inferential heuristics i.e. ‘rules’ governing how a speaker produces her utterance and, perhaps more importantly for our purposes, instructions to the hearer on how he should process that utterance. Having these processing instructions for the hearer is a possible counter to the view encountered earlier that the speaker is overly privileged in traditional analyses of implicature. Levinson argues for three heuristics, developed from Grice’s quantity and manner maxims:

Q: That which is not said is not the case;
I: For that which is simply said, revert to the stereotype;
M: That which is said in a marked way refers to a marked state of affairs.

So a typical Q-implicature involves a scale of some sort and the use of a weaker (or less informative) member of the scale set implicates that the use of a stronger option from the scale would be untrue. The following are instances of utterances which would give rise to implicatures from the Q-heuristic:

(17) a. Mary has three daughters (+ > Mary does not have four daughters)

A rival neo-Gricean approach proposed by Horn (1984) suggests that only two heuristics are needed. Reasons against this seemingly simpler proposal can be found in Levinson (2000:135ff) and relate to the idea that Horn’s principles conflate semantic minimisation and expression minimisation. Levinson argues that this has implications for the descriptive adequacy of Horn’s proposal. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore this (and the counter-arguments) in any great detail. A further reason for preferring Levinson’s model is due to the speaker and hearer heuristics just mentioned which Horn’s proposal lacks.
b. Some of the students enjoyed the course (+ > not all of the students enjoyed it)

c. Frank tried to complete the Manchester 10k run (+ > he did not succeed in doing so)

In the case of (17a), the set of cardinal numbers form a scale, \(< \ldots, 4, 3, 2, 1 >\), and so if Mary had four daughters one ought to say so because this would be more informative. Because of the Q-heuristic, we can infer that it is not the case that Mary has more than three daughters. By a similar token, in example 17b, there exists a scale \(< \text{all, some} >\) thus if a speaker uses \textit{some} it gives rise to a Q-implicature, \textit{not all}. Finally, (17c) shows an instance of a non-entailment scale \(< \text{succeed, try} >\).

The I-heuristic relies on the idea that ‘one need not say what can be taken for granted’ (Levinson, 2000:37) and this leads to hearers choosing the ‘best’, most informative inference for a simple utterance. Given that these inferences depend on the notion of a stereotype, many of them require extra-linguistic knowledge\(^{15}\). Here are a few instances of I-implicatures:

\[
\begin{align*}
(18) & \quad \text{a. The boxer landed a knock-out blow (+ > the boxer was male)} \\
& \quad \text{b. If you put some petrol in the car, I’ll take you for a drive (+ > if and only if you buy petrol, will I give you a ride)} \\
& \quad \text{c. I don’t think David has finished the exam marking (+ > I think that David has not finished the marking)}
\end{align*}
\]

Example 18a relies on the stereotype that most boxers are men\(^{16}\). Here we can see the importance that extra-linguistic, world knowledge has for I-implicatures. The implicature in (18b) arises from a tendency for conditionals (\textit{if}-clauses) to be ‘upgraded’ to biconditionals (\textit{iff}-clauses), a process described as \textit{conditional perfection} by Geis & Zwicky (1971). Negative raising (Horn, 1989:308ff) is also reached by I-implicature as can be seen in example 18c – this is an operation which sees contradictories given the status of contraries and sees the scope of the negation shift from the attitude verb to the embedded clause.

\(^{15}\)It might also be argued that I-inferences are also usage-based, meaning that the exposure one has received (and continues to receive) is likely to influence the derivation of these implicatures. Low exposure to a particular context which would give rise to a certain I-implicature may mean that a hearer does not derive the implicature (or does so very slowly), but frequent exposure to the context would allow it to be accessed rapidly. This would sit happily with Levinson’s view of GCIs and particularly I-implicatures, since he notes that stereotypes are (sub-)culturally and historically variable. Whilst immaterial to the use of GCI theory in this study, such questions need further exploration in pragmatic theory.

\(^{16}\)Though, of course, in time this may change – especially given that women are now able to box at the Olympic Games.
The M-heuristic requires the use of a marked form to trigger an implicature – this means that hearers must recognise that there is another, less marked way of producing the same propositional content (and as a corollary: speakers must also know this if they intend to produce the effect of the M-implicature on the hearer).

(19) a. Winston went to the church (+> to do something other than pray/attend a service)

   b. I’m not unhappy (+> I’m less than happy)

   c. You are permitted to leave (+> but you may stay)

In (19a) the hearer compares the utterance to a less marked one: ‘Winston went to church’ (which gives an I-implicature +> to do the stereotypical thing that one does there), and is thus able to come to the idea that some marked state of affairs is emergent.

The double negation in example 19b prompts the default interpretation that the speaker lies some between happy and unhappy on the scale of happiness. The final example (19c) relies on a comparison with an unmarked I-implicature generating utterance ‘You may leave’ +> ‘and please do’.

2.5.2 Apology strategies

As discussed previously, the CCSARP project provides the most widely used categorisation of apology formulae, with studies including Trosborg (1987), Holmes (1989, 1990) and Suszcyńska (1999) relying on a more or less adapted version of their categories. Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984:206) find that ‘the act of apologizing can take one of two basic forms, or a combination of both’. Firstly a speaker may use an explicit ‘illocutionary force indicating device’ (IFID), or alternatively she may make reference to one of the factors which precipitated the need for an apology and her responsibility for the offence. I think that these suggestions are fair ones; however, what the CCSARP coding scheme categorises as IFIDs is, in my opinion at least, contestable. The speech act of apology can be carried out with the following performative verbs which Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984:207) classify as IFIDs: (be) sorry; excuse; apologize; forgive; regret; pardon. Whilst it is true to say that all of these verbs can be used to produce utterances functioning as apologies, it seems wrong-headed to argue that they can all explicitly indicate the illocutionary force of apologising. I believe that property is restricted to the verb ‘to apologise’ used performatively and commissives which have ‘apology/-ies’ as a direct object (this is noted by Owen (1983:116) but not discussed further). Indeed, individual politicians and their advisors acknowledge that there is a (fundamental) difference between ‘apologise’ and the other verbs labelled IFIDs in the CCSARP endeavour.
Consider the following thought found in Condoleezza Rice’s memoir about her preparations before giving evidence to the 9/11 Truth Commission:

(20) A part of me wanted to apologize, but the collective view of my advisors was that to do so would overwhelm anything else I said. So instead I expressed regret. (Rice, 2011:xvii)

Here we can see that Rice’s advisors did not want her to apologise but the found a speech act of indicating regret to be acceptable. There are further instances of Blum-Kulka & Olshtain’s IFIDs not acting as such (at least not for the speech act of apology). Consider (21) which Deutschmann (2003:96) discusses and which comes from the spoken component of the British National Corpus:

(21) **BBC Radio 5 Live interview. Interviewer = Nicky Campbell (NC), Interviewee = Michael (M)**

M: \(<\quad −|−\quad >\)\(^{17}\) Well that \(<\quad −|−\quad >\) that is an entirely hypothetical question

NC: \(<\quad −|−\quad >\) But in purely practical terms \(<\quad −|−\quad >\)

M: \(<\quad −|−\quad >\)\(<\text{unclear}>\) \(<\quad −|−\quad >\) but I I’m sorry b– if you would let me answer.

Michael is being interviewed by Nicky Campbell who has interrupted him numerous times prior to this extract. With that taken into consideration we would not argue that Michael’s ‘I’m sorry’ in (21) is an apology, but rather I would suggest that it constitutes a ‘challenge’ or reprimand to the interrupter\(^{18}\). Whilst these non-apologetic functions can be found for the other verbs listed as IFIDs, the same cannot be said for ‘to apologise’ which when used performatively and non-ironically does, indeed, indicate the illocutionary force of *apology* and I would venture cannot carry the force of another speech act.

Because of the inherent differences between ‘to apologise’ and the other verbs which can, but do not always, indicate an apology, I would suggest that ‘to apologise’ and commissives with ‘apology’ or ‘apologies’ as a direct object stand alone as the IFID for English with the other verbs conventionally implicating apology (see Table 2.2 for more details of the categorisation which I propose).

The problems with the CCSARP taxonomy go beyond the easily resolved

\(^{17}\)Indicates overlapping speech in BNC transcription conventions.

\(^{18}\)Deutschmann (2003:96) himself describes this as a ‘challenging apology’ as he uses the terms *apology* as a descriptor of form rather than function and remember Coulmas (1981:76) on apologies as attention getters. We will come back to apologies being used in the performance of other speech acts a number of times in this thesis.
mis-categorisation of some verbs as IFIDs. A further issue arises when we attempt to analyse an utterance of the sort found in example 22:

(22)  **Nicholas Edwards (1 March 1982; vol. 19, col. 21)**\(^{19}\)

NE:  […] i would like to apologise to the right honourable gentleman for the rhondda for suggesting that he might have been drinking […]

Whilst the CCSARP codes for indirectness when looking at requests, no similar categories are proposed for apologies which are performed as indirect speech acts (see Searle, 1975 for a more detailed discussion). As a result, we are to assume that Blum-Kulka and Olshtain would categorise the *apologise* in (22) as an IFID, in the same way as a direct utterance like ‘I apologise’. I do not think this is satisfactory.

In example 22, the apology is performed indirectly through a speech act like ‘statement of intent/desire’. We can say that the utterance gives rise to an implicature of the sort ‘with this utterance, I am performing an apology’. However, as with all implicatures, that inferred meaning is cancellable – Edwards could easily have added ‘but I’ve been advised against it’ as we saw with Condoleezza Rice previously, or something more confrontation like ‘but it was the case that he was drunk’. Neither of these utterances would contradict what had been said before and both would block the potential implicature that Edwards is apologising. This block would lead the hearer to access the literal meaning that Edwards would only *like* to apologise\(^{20}\). That an apology can be performed with what Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984) would call an IFID, but also indirectly through another speech act needs to be acknowledged if we are to have an accurate description of how apologies are performed.

The categories for apology strategies that I propose are not radically different from those found in Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984) but include some refinements; the need for which I have outlined. In some respects, the strategies I suggest are more similar to the distinctions drawn by Fraser (1981) which have sadly been dismissed in some quarters as ‘rather pedantic’ (Schwartz, 1999:24). I think not drawing the distinction between statements of intent (‘I’d like to apologise’) and direct statements of apology (‘I apologise’) – as Fraser does – could lead us to missing nuances in the speaker’s intention. Whilst in everyday conversation these slight differences might have little bearing on the direction of conversation, in political discourse meanings

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\(^{19}\)I thank the Parliamentary Recordings Unit for providing the recordings from which these transcriptions come.

\(^{20}\)Of course, Edwards did not say anything which blocked the inference that he was apologising and so his statement was accepted as an apology by The Speaker of the House of Commons, and the person to whom he was apologising.
which have to be inferred may not always be accessed successfully by the hearer. Indeed, as Gastil (1992:481) notes ‘some listeners will infer the intended meaning, others will take other meanings and some may miss the implicature altogether, thinking the surface structure meaning is sufficient’. It may also be that those implicatures are not accessed deliberately in order to either obfuscate or embarrass an interlocutor. Consider the following example from a session of question time in the New Zealand parliament:

(23) Hon Chris Carter: I would like to ask the Minister why she wrote in the October edition of the New Zealand Educational Institute’s magazine, Rourou—
Hon Rodney Hide: I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. […]
But, once again, the previous Minister failed to ask a question. To say “I would like” to do something is not asking a question.
Mr SPEAKER: Technically, the honourable member is correct. 

In (23) Carter’s statement would, in normal circumstances, be treated as a question and as such responded to by the minister. However, Hide refuses to accept the intended meaning which could be drawn from Carter’s utterance in order to either delay the minister’s having to provide an answer, or to make Carter seem foolish in that he cannot even ask a question properly\(^{21}\). To not draw attention to these indirect strategies for apologising would, therefore, give an incomplete picture of how politicians tend to apologise.

The table below shows the apology strategies which I believe to be most salient, I highlight each of them with an example taken from the corpus of parliamentary apologies analysed as part of this study.

\(^{21}\)Hansen (2008a:1397f) gives further reasons for why otherwise inferable meanings may be rejected in favour of literal meanings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad category</th>
<th>Sub-category (individual strategy)</th>
<th>Example (taken from the apologies analysed in chapter 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Explicit expression of apology</td>
<td>i. A performative IFID</td>
<td>James Gray (16/03/2000; vol. 346, col. 520) […] i therefore apologise to you and to the house […]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. A commissive with ‘apology’/‘apologies’ as a direct object</td>
<td>Nicholas Scott (10/05/1994; vol. 243, col. 155): […] i offer my unreserved apologies to the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Conventional (indirect) apology formula</td>
<td>i. An expression of regret</td>
<td>Michael Trend (13/02/2003; vol. 399, col. 1073): [...] i am sir so very sorry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. A request for acceptance of apology/forgiveness</td>
<td>Tony Baldry (27/07/1999; vol. 336, col. 149): […] i would like to apologise to you (0.3) and to the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Non-conventional indirect apology strategy</td>
<td>i. Explanation</td>
<td>Tim Devlin (19/01/1989; vol. 145, col. 494): [...] i now know that the allegation that i made in the house yesterday was based on untruth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Accepting the blame</td>
<td>Don Touhig (27/07/1999; vol. 336, col. 149): [.] i am sorry for the inconvenience caused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Expressing self-deficiency</td>
<td>Tony Baldry (21/07/2005; vol. 436, col. 1430): [.] my letter to the secretary of state was clearly very poorly written.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iv. Recognising H as entitled to an apology</td>
<td>Ben Bradshaw (20/05/2003; vol. 805, col. 461): mister speaker the honourable gentlemen are both entirely right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v. Expressing lack of intent</td>
<td>Stephen Byers (17/10/2005; vol. 437, col. 639): [...] i did not deliberately intend to mislead the select committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vi. An offer/statement of repair/redress</td>
<td>Michael Forsyth (05/02/1997; vol. 289, col. 1067): [...] and i:: withdraw what i said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vii. A statement of non-recurrence</td>
<td>Theresa May (30/06/2010; vol. 512, col. 863): [...] i will ensure that it will not happen again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: Apology strategies
We can see that there is a hierarchy of explicitness between the broad categories, with category A containing utterances which can only be interpreted as apologies; utterances in category B can be thought of as Generalised Conversational Implicatures in that they require specific contexts for their processing as apologies to be blocked; strategies which fall into category C are best described as Particularised Conversational Implicatures since the idea that the speaker is carrying out an apology is only derivable by the context and is not contained in the utterance itself. Whilst there is this hierarchy in the broad categories, I would not assert that within categories there is an order of explicitness – that is to say that there does not seem to be any basis for claiming that Bi (an expression of regret) is more of a GCI than Biv (A statement of obligation).

### 2.6 Conclusion

What I have sought to draw out in this chapter is that the act of apologising is far from straightforward and that its performance is not risk-free. Apologisers’ faces can (simultaneously) be threatened and enhanced by producing an apology and the same is the case for apologisees. We have seen that the act of apologising can be defined on the basis of a carefully considered set of felicity conditions, but that unlike previous attempts at classifying speech acts (e.g. Searle & Vanderveken, 1985), this should be done on the basis of the analysis of data. I have also set out to show the importance of considering the sequential organisation of apologising, i.e. how apologies are performed in interaction and this is something which we will return to at various points (but particularly in chapters 4 and 5). In addition to this, I have also shown that apologies can be performed in a variety of ways – either explicitly, conventionally or non-conventionally and this categorisation will help to inform the analysis of parliamentary apologies in particular both in the next chapter and in chapter 6.

The variety of theoretical apparatus presented in this chapter is required because of the heterogeneity of political discourse – the settings of the apologies which we will be exploring in this thesis give rise not only to different styles of interaction, but also to situations where interaction is absent. As a result, I do not believe the eclecticism which will be found in what follows to be a form of ‘pick’n’mix’, but rather reflects my views on how political talk works.

Some aspects introduced in this chapter will permeate throughout the whole thesis. Facework, for instance, is a consideration at all times for politicians (as it is for us all). It will be tiresome to constantly refer to an apology as being an attempt to restore face, or as potentially face-threatening to the apologiser and so this will only be noted when
face is adjudged to be particularly relevant.

The importance of GCI theory and its role in describing the forms of utterances used to perform apologies will also be relevant throughout much of the thesis. To foreshadow this a little: we will see that explicit apologies (‘I apologise’ etc.) are treated differently to GCIs which ceteris paribus are treated as apologies in everyday conversation. We will find that whilst the satisfactoriness of an explicit apology is not questioned, GCIs used by politicians in an attempt to perform an apology sometimes are (see particularly chapter 5.5).

Moreover, we will see that that the hierarchy of explicitness which using GCI theory allows us to introduce is something which is (subconsciously) understood and exploited by interlocutors. We shall see this in example 58 in chapter 4.5.4, where a GCI apology is responded to with an explicit apology as a means for the second speaker to show that he believes himself to be most at fault. Finally, in chapter 6 we see that categorising apology forms using GCI theory may also help to reveal more suspect practices. Historical apologies in parliament are only ever performed using GCIs and never explicit apologies (unlike other parliamentary apologies). A possible explanation for this is that one could cancel the implication that one had apologised in a situation where the apology is used as an admission of guilt in a future lawsuit.

So the theoretical apparatus is used, not simply because it is there to be used, but rather because it puts us in a better position to be able to answer the questions of: “why does the politician use this particular form at this particular time?”. Now that much of the theoretical ‘leg-work’ has been done, we can begin to analyse in detail how British politicians apologise.
Chapter 3

Parliamentary apologies*

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of four to analyse apologies in different political settings. We start with apologies which happen in Parliament since this is where politicians arguably do most of their work. The apologies to be scrutinised are for a variety of offences: from leaking a report to the press, to insulting a fellow MP, and even causing damage to The Speaker's chair. Section 3.2 will give an account of the corpus – in terms of its compilation, the types of offence found therein and an explanation of what distinguishes these apologies from other apology events which happen in Parliament but are not looked at in this chapter. The apologies will be looked at mostly through the prism of speech act theory – in the main because of their monologic nature, and this, along with the nature of interaction in parliament more broadly will be discussed in section 3.3. I then present the main findings of how politicians apologise in this setting, how offence type affects the way they apologise and the influence participation structure has on these statements (§3.4). I show that apologies made in Parliament are far more fulsome than those found in everyday conversation and that politicians’ statements tend to use more explicit apology tokens (i.e. I apologise, I offer my apologies) than are found in everyday talk. I suggest both of these factors are explained by the apologisers not having access to immediate uptake for their apologies and so the statements are more extensive in order to given the apology the ‘best chance’ of being acceptable. We also see a link between the type of offence and the (number of) apology strategies used, with the most serious offence (financial wrongdoing) apologised for most profusely. In section 3.5 I offer conclusions.

*Parts of this chapter form the basis of Murphy (forthcoming) and I am grateful to John Benjamins Publishing Co. for allowing its use here.

1I use ‘The Speaker’ as shorthand for The Speaker of the House of Commons. This should not be confused with ‘speaker’ (or S) which is used generically for a person who is speaking.
3.2 Parliamentary business and the data

Some background to the workings of parliament is introduced here in order to justify the choice of apologies which will be analysed in this chapter. We will see how apologies can take place ‘on the fly’ or as pre-planned, pre-approved events given their own place on the timetable of a day’s sitting. The former will be treated qualitatively in chapter 7; the latter will be explored at length in this chapter and will be subjected to some descriptive quantitative analyses.

The House of Commons engages in fives main types of oral business:

1. **Main business (debates)** — these events are the main part of the (oral) work done in the chamber. Debates take place either on general topics, or on legislation proposed by the Government. Motions are laid before the House and these are debated by parties from all sides of the House, and amendments to the motions may be made and also debated. These are then voted on by the House.

2. **Questions** — a Cabinet minister and his/her ministerial team (or the Prime Minister on his/her own) come to the House to answer questions put to them by backbenchers from all sides of the House and from the frontbench of the main Opposition party. The team may have notice of the questions, and may therefore be able to give a more comprehensive answer, or they may be topical (i.e. the Minister has no notice and must respond extemporaneously).

3. **Statements** — oral statements usually follow a major (international) meeting, a decision on a particular policy, or an event of national importance the details of which are to be reported to the House. The statement is usually followed by a response from the Opposition front bench, and questions from elsewhere in the chamber.

4. **Personal statements** — in exceptional circumstances and at the permission of The Speaker, an MP may make a statement to the House. The statement must be viewed in advanced and approved by The Speaker. Personal statements are used by former ministers to explain the reasons behind a resignation\(^2\) and, importantly for our purposes, apologise to the House.

5. **Points of order** — an appeal to The Speaker for a ruling or a clarification of a point of procedure. If an MP believes there has been a breach of procedure, she may interrupt proceedings by standing and declaring ‘Point of order’ and

\(^2\)For instance, the very famous interventions of Geoffrey Howe who denounced Mrs Thatcher in a personal statement following his resignation and the late Robin Cook who explained his reasons for not being able to support the Iraq War and his resultant resignation.
explaining the issue, which will then receive a ruling. Points of order are sometimes used to raise points of debate or other non-procedural matters – in some cases, they are used to apologise.

Apologies can arise during all of these types of debate, but we will focus on apologies arising in personal statements and points of order. There are a few reasons for this. First, these apologies have already been collected in a regularly updated parliamentary publication\(^3\), meaning there is an agreed list of statements which can be classified as parliamentary apologies. Second, in this chapter I am mostly interested in statements which have the sole purpose (or at the least, the main purpose) of providing an apology for an offence against the House (or one of its members); apologies produced in the course of a debate may have other functions which are not our focus here (but which will be discussed at length in the next two chapters). Moreover, the fact that Hansard does not include apologies for repairs, hesitations and other ‘talk offences’ in the transcripts of parliamentarians’ speeches means that getting an accurate picture of all the apologies produced is difficult. Finally, the form of apologies is often changed in the Hansard report. For instance, \textit{can} is very often changed to \textit{will} by the Hansard reporters, as can be seen in example 24 (where (24a) comes from the Official Report, and (24b) is my transcription from the video footage).

(24) Lynne Featherstone at International Development questions, 30th January 2013

\begin{verbatim}
1 a. As discussed with you, Mr Speaker, and as Labour
2 Front Benchers have been advised, my right hon. Friend
3 the Secretary of State is in Kuwait for an international
4 conference on the humanitarian crisis in Syria. I hope
⇒ 5 that the House will accept her apologies for not being
6 here to answer questions today.

1 b. mister speaker! (0.3) as was discussed with you (.).hh
2 and as advised to the front bench opposite, my right
3 honorable friend the secretary of state (.). is in kuwait
4 for an international conference (.). on the humanitarian
⇒ 5 crisis in syria:: i hope the whole house can accept her
6 apologies for not being here to answer (.). questions
7 today?
\end{verbatim}

In light of the importance I showed the form of an apology to have in §2.5.2, this seemingly minor difference in the modal verb uttered and the one written in the official

\(^3\)Namely, Parliamentary Information List SN03169, produced by the Department of Information Services and available here \url{http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN03169.pdf}.\
transcript would impact upon the accuracy of any potential findings based on the Hansard. As as result, there is a need to limit the parliamentary apologies looked at in this chapter because accessing the video footage of every apology produced on the floor of the House would be prohibitively expensive, not mention excessively time-consuming.

So the corpus of apologies scrutinised for the (non-)use of the apology strategies outlined in the previous chapter is made up of the 56 apologies made in the course of personal statements and points of order since 1979. This year was selected since radio broadcasts of House of Commons business began only in 1978. Video cameras were allowed in the House following a close vote amongst MPs in November 1989. Audio/video recordings were provided by the Parliamentary Recordings Unit and as has been outlined previously (§2.4.1.1), transcripts were made of these. Transcripts were produced in order to avoid reliance on the Hansard report which, as shown above, “corrects’ the utterances of members of parliament’ (Chilton, 2004:94) and thus may not give accurate information on MPs’ apologising strategies. This set of apologies is the focus of the next two sections and numerical results relating to the frequencies of certain apology strategies are set out therein.

Two other parliamentary ‘events’ which have apologising as a major focus will be looked at in the latter half of the chapter. Both have a lot to tell us about political actors’ thoughts on how and why apologies ought to be performed. The first event relates to Ron Brown, a Scottish Labour MP, who was forced to apologise to the House for damaging the ceremonial mace when he threw it to the floor in protest against Government welfare cuts. Brown refused to apologise in the form agreed with The Speaker. We will analyse this incident (and its fallout) in order to show the importance of being seen to apologise (i.e. go through the motions) and what standards are expected of the apologister. The second incident relates to an interview the current Chancellor of the Exchequer gave to The Spectator magazine in which he alleged that his shadow, Ed Balls, was complicit in the rigging of a financial market. The debate which followed saw Balls angrily pursuing an apology from Osborne for this slur. The incident reveals much about the face considerations involved in the act(ion) of apologising, and so puts into practice the theoretical discussions of the previous chapter.

3.3 Parliamentary language

As Ilie (2006:190) notes:

the salient rhetorical features that characterize parliamentary interaction
are counterbalanced by explicit institutional constraints, the most important of which are stipulated in Erskine May’s *Treatise on the law, privileges, proceedings and usage of parliament* [Jack, 2011].

The norms of parliamentary language mean that the language used in the chamber can be, at times, very different to that which we find in everyday talk. This section will highlight some of the major differences in the interactional and participation frames in order to acquaint the reader with some of the features of most importance for our purposes (and I shall mention some of the more arcane rules which probably have less of a bearing on the apology statements looked at).

### 3.3.1 The parliamentary timetable

Before anything can be uttered in the House, a timetable of what is to be talked about needs to be set. This is done through the announcement of a Business Statement, which sets out topics for general debate, legislation to be tabled, agreed backbench and opposition business and any question sessions for the forthcoming week. The business of the House is decided upon by the Government, though Opposition and backbench members have an allotted number of days to hold debates on matters of their choosing. This gives a great deal of power to the Executive in deciding what is and is not debated.

That said, however, The Speaker is able to introduce business of his own. The current Speaker, John Bercow, has been much more interventionist in the parliamentary timetable and has granted a number of urgent questions (formerly called private notice questions) and urgent debates, which force the Government to speak about and debate a pressing issue when they had otherwise not volunteered to make such a statement. The Speaker can also force time to be made for personal statements – the main source of apologies in this chapter.

MPs are given usually two weeks’ notice about what will fill parliamentary time, and a definitive schedule is sent to MPs in a circular called the Whip on the Friday before the start of the parliamentary week (on a Monday). The Whip is produced by party managers from each political party and tells MPs which debates and votes are compulsory for them to attend (and instructs them on how to vote). Personal statements may make it into the parliamentary schedule with less notice, since they are usually triggered by unanticipated events, like a resignation or in the case of personal statement apologies, by a transgression of some sort. Nonetheless, The Speaker will usually inform the House that one is to take place ‘through the usual channels’, that is to say by telling the Whips’ Office of each party, who will in turn inform their charges
of the schedule change (by e-mail).

### 3.3.2 Turn-taking

What is common to turn-taking in each of the parliamentary genres outlined in §3.2 is that the majority of the turns are pre-allocated by The Speaker. The turn-taking procedure for question—answer sessions in the House has been summarised quite concisely by Chilton (2004:94):

- **(a)** indicate wish to obtain an oral answer by sending written questions to clerks’ office (supervised by Speaker of the House);
- **(b)** clerks monitor content and form against rules and conventions;
- **(c)** questions selected and ordered by random process;
- **(d)** questions printed and published;
- **(e)** in the debating chamber [T]he Speaker calls the name of the questioner in the randomly decided order;
- **(f)** [The] Speaker stands and gives number of the question;
- **(g)** minister replies;
- **(h)** [The] Speaker calls for supplementary question;
- **(i)** questioner puts supplementary question;
- **(j)** minister replies.

In common with the other types of parliamentary talk, the only person who has a right to the floor is the MP who is on her feet – comments from a sedentary position are strongly discouraged and can earn an MP a serious rebuke (indeed, one of the apologies we shall look at in this chapter is for heckling from a sedentary position). General debates and statements follow a slightly different pattern from question—answer sessions and can be summarised thus:

- **i)** The Speaker calls the minister leading the debate (usually the cabinet minister who is responsible for the area under discussion, or the Prime Minister)
- **ii)** The minister makes the statement (there is usually no time limit imposed on this statement, but there is on the debate/statement as a whole)
- **iii)** The minister can take interventions from other MPs, who try to intervene by standing and asking ‘Will the Minister give way?’. The minister can accept or reject these interventions.
- **iv)** If an intervention is allowed, the minister resumes her seat and the intervener makes a brief comment or asks a brief question.
- **v)** The minister returns to the dispatch box and responds to the intervention and then continues her statement.
vi) At the end of her contribution, the opposition lead takes the floor. Interventions may also be made on the opposition spokesperson (in which case, points iv) and v) will be repeated here). If the activity is a general debate, no questions will be asked of the minister but in the case of a statement questions will be asked and the minister will be obligated to respond.

vii) Following the opposition spokesperson’s contribution, The Speaker (or one of his deputies) announces a time limit for backbench contributions and calls the first backbencher to speak. Unlike for questions sessions, the backbenchers have no idea when or even if they will be called to contribute.

viii) Backbenchers continue to be called by The Speaker to join the debate until the allocated time for the debate has been reached.

It almost goes without saying that these turn-taking rules are completely different from those found in everyday talk – the ‘distribution of turns as well as the turn-order and the turn-length is pre-allocated’ (Bevitori, 2004:87). We will see some of the ways that this affects talk in parliament in chapter 7 – in particular, we shall see how refusing to take interventions allows the current speaker to produce assertions which do not receive an immediate challenge.

Personal statements follow a different turn-taking pattern still.

i) The MP wishing to make a personal statement approaches The Speaker (and his clerks) with a copy of the statement she wants to make.

ii) Its form and content are scrutinised and amendments and additions may be insisted upon by The Speaker at this point.

iii) The Speaker approaches the ‘usual channels’ (i.e. the Whips from the government and opposition parties) to negotiate when time can be made in the parliamentary schedule for the statement to be read.

iv) At the agreed time, The Speaker calls the MP, who reads the agreed statement word for word.

v) The statement is heard in silence and no comments can be passed upon it.

vi) Once it has been read, the House moves onto other business.

This lack of opportunity to respond has been criticised by some MPs, particularly where there is a belief that a frontbench member is using the personal statement to avoid scrutiny by the House. For instance, when Minister of State for Prisons, Ann Widdecombe, made a personal statement for misleading the House about the shackling of women prisoners receiving hospital treatment. MPs reacted angrily to the fact that Widdecombe had been allowed to admit to and apologise for misleading the House by personal statement. Example 25 is just one response to the statement:
ALAN WILLLIAMS – 15 JAN 1996 – VOL. 269, COL. 409-10

AW: MADAM SPEAKER I KNOW THAT IT WOULD BE IMPROPER TO QUESTION THE CONTENTS OF A PERSONAL STATEMENT. WHAT I PUT TO YOU IS THAT WHAT WE’VE JUST HEARD IS ACTUALLY A STATEMENT AND NOT A PERSONAL STATEMENT! AND THAT THE CONTENTS SHOULD’VE BEEN SUBJECT TO QUESTIONING BY THIS HOUSE OF COMMONS AND THAT WE’VE JUST SEEN AN ABUSE OF THE PERSONAL STATEMENT SYSTEM.

We shall explore the implications of violating the turn-taking rules governing personal statements in chapter 7 and the possible effects of a lack of uptake to the apology on its form will also be discussed later in this chapter in section 3.4.3.

3.3.3 Address terms

All talk made from the floor of the chamber of the House of Commons is directed at The Speaker. Thus as Ilie (2010:897) notes, when an MP uses the pronoun you, she is referring, in the vast majority of cases, to The Speaker. Moreover, personal names are not to be used in the chamber except by The Speaker when he is calling a member to speak or to discipline an MP. Indeed, the procedure for reprimanding a member for disorderly conduct is called ‘naming’ – The Speaker first names the MP whose conduct is disorderly and a motion is then moved that the MP be suspended from Parliament for a period (usually 24 hours). Having to refer to other members in the third person and not being able to use their names has implications for the form of apologies, as we will see shortly. For the moment, I shall introduce the sometimes arcane ways MPs get around the prohibition of directly addressing one another.

Firstly, should an MP wish to address all other members present, she will often use the metonymic term of ‘The (whole) House’, in reference to the House of Commons – the organ of the democratic establishment to which all MPs belong.

The clearest way to refer to a particular MP is to reference the constituency which he represents at the time of the utterance. So for instance, if one wished to refer to Tom Blenkinsopp in a debate in May 2013, one would mention him as being ‘The Honourable Member for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland’. There can be no ambiguity about who this refers to, since each constituency is represented by only Member of Parliament.

If the MP holds a front-bench position (that is, she is a minister in a government department, a Secretary of State heading a government department, or is an opposition MP who holds a portfolio), she may be referred to by using the title of her position.
Unlike the constituencies, portfolio briefs may change hands multiple times during a parliament\(^4\) – by way of example, one might variously have referred to Norman Lamb MP during the period 2010–2013 as: The Assistant Government Whip, The Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister, The Minister of State for Employment Relations, Consumer and Postal Affairs or The Minister of State for Care and Support. The fluidity of these titles sometimes leads to MPs using the wrong address term, as in example 26 which comes from a historical apology made by John Reid, then a *junior* minister at the Ministry of Defence and which we will return to in chapter 6:

(26) **First World War (Executions) debate exchange between Tony Benn and Dr. John Reid, col. 1382**

TB: may i join in thanking the secretary of state for defence

[...]

JR: i thank my right honourable friend. (0.3) er er but the reshuffle is not til next week. [...]

Where the indexical target would be clear, MPs tend to use simpler referencing devices: either ‘My (Right) Honourable Friend’\(^5\), for colleagues from their own party or ‘The (Right) Honourable Member’ for those who come from a different political party. During the current parliament (2010–2015), we have a coalition government between Liberal Democrats and Conservatives – whether a coalition MP uses ‘Friend’ or ‘Member’ to refer to MPs from the other coalition party may indicate her contentedness or otherwise with the coalition arrangement. MPs sometimes use these address terms when their target is not inferable – in these cases, the editors of Hansard will send a note to the MP asking them to clarify who she intended to invoke and this will be recorded in the transcript of her speech in the official report.

### 3.3.4 Participation in the Commons

In this section I explore the complex ‘participation structure’ (Levinson, 1988) in Parliament. Put simply, participation structure seeks to describe the various roles carried out by parties in a speech event. Whilst it is certainly important to get away from ‘the primitive notions of speaker and hearer’ (Goffman, 1981:129) in our descriptions of everyday conversation, it is all the more necessary to do this in analyses

\(^4\)A parliament is used as a measure of time – it is the period between two general elections. Since 2010, when fixed-term parliaments were introduced, a parliament lasts five years exactly.

\(^5\)The optional ‘Right’ refers to the fact that the MP is a member of the Privy Council, a group of senior politicians appointed to advise the monarch at her request. Other formal titles used with less frequency are: ‘the Honourable and Learned…’ meaning that the MP is a practising lawyer and ‘the Honourable and Gallant’ meaning that the MP is also a (former) member of the armed forces.
of parliamentary discourse since the number of participants is frequently large and, as we have already seen, talk is influenced by rules and traditions.

Firstly, it needs to be noted that the apologies looked at in this chapter are for offences that an MP has herself carried out or is, in some direct way, responsible for. In this respect the participation structure is less complex than apologies made by MPs for historical acts, which is something we will come to in chapter 6. That said, we saw just previously that all talk in the chamber is addressed to The Speaker, who may not necessarily be the offended party and this adds to the complexity of the footing of parliamentary discourse.

The majority of apologies previously researched have been of a simple, dyadic type. These tend to have a participation framework seen in Figure 1.

![Diagram](image.png)

**Figure 3.1: The structure of simple, dyadic apologies**

In everyday conversation, it is virtually always the case that the speaker is not only the animator (i.e. the person uttering the words), but also the author (the person who planned what would be said and how it would be produced) and the principal (the person whose feelings are being represented by the utterance). In such an apology, the offended party is nearly always the addressee (the person at whom the speaker directs her gaze and to whom the address pronouns used by the speaker refer) as well as the recipient (the participant for whom the speaker’s words are intended). Depending on the situation, there may be other people in earshot of the speech event, in which case there would also be ratified or unratified overhearers as participants in the conversation. A ratified overhearer is one whose presence is known to the speaker and such presence may be referred to by the speaker. An unratified overhearer can either be a bystander (an inadvertent overhearer of the talk exchange) or an eavesdropper (someone deliberately listening in to the talk). The unratified hearer’s potential to hear the conversation may be known by the speaker, in which case the talk may be designed to exclude the overhearer (by using deliberately vague language which the speaker thinks the overhearer won’t understand; speaking more quietly, etc.). The speaker may not, however, realise she is being listened to by this other person and so no changes will be made to the original turn design.

The situation is very different when it comes to parliamentary apologies. Let us consider one of the simplest examples analysed in this corpus. In 1988, a letter written by Sir Anthony Meyer which criticised and insulted a fellow MP was leaked to the
press. Meyer sought to apologise to Donald Coleman, the offended party, by way of a personal statement made on the floor of the House of Commons. Recall that personal statements must be shown to The Speaker in advance and s/he approves their contents and that these statements must then be read word for word. Example 27 is a transcript of Meyer’s apology and Figure 2 shows how we can consider its participant structure.

(27) Sir Anthony Meyer (27/07/1988; vol. 138, col. 413)

AM: mister speaker i wish to make a personal statement (. ) there have recently been reports in the press and on television based on a letter written by me to the chairman of the ways and means in which i make comments about the honourable member for neath in his capacity as chairman of the welsh grand committee. (0.3) that letter was not made public by me: but the views expressed in it have passed into the public domain. (0.3) i recognise that it is not appropriate for me as a fellow member of the chairmans’ panel to be associated with the comments which have become public, (. ) hh i also recognise that what i said in connection with the incident which provoked my letter was based on a misunderstanding. ( . ) hhh in these circumstances i wish to withdraw any reflection upon the chairmanship of the honourable member for neath, (. ) and to apologise to him unreservedly for the embarrassment caused to him by this incident.
Firstly, we can see that the ‘speaker’ roles are split, with the authorship of the apology being divided between Meyer, advisors who are often charged with drafting an MP’s speeches in the Commons, and The Speaker who often asks for changes to be made to a personal statement before s/he allows it to be made in the chamber (House of Commons Information Office, personal communication and see section 7.1 where the Ron Brown case is discussed). Naturally, Meyer acts as the principal and animator since he delivers the apology and is assumed to feel the regret for the offence. The ‘hearer’ roles are also divided between different parties. The Speaker is conventionally the addressee since all talk in the House of Commons is directed at the chair (indeed, Meyer begins his speech with: “Mr. Speaker I wish to make a personal statement”). However, The Speaker is not the ultimate target of the apology proper. The apology is intended for Donald Coleman, who we can label the ‘recipient’ of Meyer’s utterances. Other people either present in the chamber, or those listening on the radio can be thought of as ratified overhearers, since they are not intended by Meyer to be the target of his apology but are known to be listening to his words. There are no unratified overhearers since the apology is made in this highly public setting.

Apologies made in the Commons can be even more complex than the one shown in Figure 3.2. In 1987, Richard Hickmett criticised the then Speaker of the House, Bruce Weatherill, in interviews to the press, accusing him of being biased. He was forced to apologise to The Speaker by way of a personal statement in the House of Commons. Example 28 shows Hickmet’s apology and Figure 3.3 illustrates the
Firstly, we find a metonymical recipient in Hickmet’s apology in that he apologises to ‘the House’, which stands for all those people working in and associated with the House of Commons. *The House* can be found as a recipient in many of the apologies made in Parliament (43 of the 56 in this study) and I would suggest that it is invoked as a recipient as a means of acknowledging any damage caused to the reputation and standing of the House of Commons as a result of the apologiser’s offence. Also significant in Hickmet’s apology (and all those statements where The Speaker is the offended party) is the number of roles The Speaker finds her/himself playing. Not only
is The Speaker the apologisee, but in some respects s/he is also the apologiser because of his/her function in the authorship of the apology. This reflects the ritual nature of apologies made on the floor of the House of Commons – Hickmet will have already apologised to The Speaker in person before his statement, but he must go through the motions of performing the apology in parliament so that the House and the overhearing parties can pass judgement on his statement.

Whilst Hickmet’s apology is interesting, the majority of apologies in the corpus are not targeted at The Speaker for offences against her/him, but instead are for actions which breach the rules of the House or which offend an MP or MPs. Where these apologies are made as personal statements, as most are (40/56), the participation structure looks something like that in Figure 3.4.

**Figure 3.4: Participation structure of a generic personal statement apology**
Some apologies are made as points of order instead of personal statements. This means that they are made after regular business – such as debates or question sessions – by catching The Speaker’s attention. These apologies usually come quite quickly after the offence has occurred (usually less than 24 hours after it) and are often used to correct the record. Apologies made in this way are not scrutinised by The Speaker, can be made spontaneously (though are often written and read aloud) and can be commented upon by members afterwards. The participants in these apologies are similar to that shown in Figure 3.4, with the exception that The Speaker no longer contributes to the role of author, and if the apology is made very shortly after the offence, it may be the case that the MP’s advisors also do not feature as authors.

The effects of having an addressee who is not necessarily the ‘victim’ at whom the apology is directed (the ‘apologisee’) can be seen in the low rates of usage of particular apology strategies, such as Recognising that the hearer is entitled to an apology (Civ). This will be discussed further in the following section (cf. §3.4.3 in particular).

3.4 Strategies used in parliamentary apologies

In this section I share the findings from the analysis of 56 apologies performed on the floor of the House of Commons. The main focus here is on coding these apologies for the apology strategies discussed extensively in chapter 2.5.2, with a view to seeing which strategies are recurrent and how their use differs from in everyday talk. The reader may recall that the broad apology strategies found in Table 2.2 were exemplified with statements made in the House of Commons (i.e. the apologies which are the focus of this chapter). To show how the apologies were coded, I shall give a couple of full examples from the corpus marked up for the strategies which they employ; this will also give the reader more of a ‘feel’ for the parliamentary apologies under discussion.

(29) **Kali Mountford (27/07/1999; vol. 336, col. 149)**

madam speaker (. ) with your permission i’d like to make a personal statement. in response to the tenth and eleventh reports of the standards and privileges committee published today, (0.4) |i would like to apologise to you (0.5) and to the house|iii|. |i regret that i find myself in this position and that my actions have caused difficulties both for members of the social security and standards and privileges committees|ii| (0.2) |< what started out as a genuine attempt to be helpful < to the social security committee’s deliberations unfortunately went very wrong. (0.5). hh unfortunately |because of personal and family problems coupled together with a series of health problems
resulting from surgery that was not successful I have not been able to spend as much time as usual in and around the house. Had I been able to be here I might have had a fuller grasp and understanding of the implications of these procedures and not done things on reflection were rather silly. I have of course sent my resignation to the chairman of the social security select committee and apologised to the members.

Madam speaker I fully accept the findings of the standards and privileges committee, I deeply regret my actions and apologise both for my original error of judgement and my delay in being totally forthcoming in this matter.

Key: Ai – A performative IFID; Bi – An expression of regret; Biii – A statement of desire; Ci – Explanation; Ciii – Expressing self-deficiency.

(30) Peter Hain (18/07/1994; vol. 247, col. 35)

Madam speaker with your permission I wish to make a personal statement. On the thirteenth of July during the debate on members’ interests I stated that I’d placed letters on the letter board giving notice of my intention to refer to certain members in the course of the debate. I said that I’d done so earlier that evening and well in time. In fact, although I had every intention of notifying the members concerned I found to my surprise that the letter board was closed when I sought to leave letters there and I handed in the letters at the post office.

Madam speaker I must offer you and the house a full and complete apology in two respects. I inadvertently misled you when I stated that the letters had been left on the board and further I now recognise that the letters left at that stage of the evening provided a totally inadequate warning in this case. I deeply regret my actions on this occasion and repeat my sincere apology to you and the house.

Key: Aii – Commissive with ‘apology’ as direct object; Bi – An expression of regret; Biv – Statement of obligation; Ci – Explanation; Cv – Expressing lack of intent.

### 3.4.1 Overall results

Table 3.1 shows the frequency with which MPs use each of the apology strategies discussed in section 2.5.2, as well as how frequently the strategies are used in the average apology.

Looking firstly at the totals, we find that MPs are often much more fulsome in their parliamentary apologies than they presumably would be in their lives outside of politics. In her study of naturally occurring apologies, Holmes (1989:199) found
that speakers used 295 apology strategies in 183 apologies – that is the mean apology contained roughly 1.6 strategies. The mean apology on the floor of the House of Commons utilised more than twice that, with the average MP using 3.98 strategies in their apologies. This suggests that MPs either feel it necessary, or simply wish, to be fulsome in their apologies. I would suggest that this fulsomeness derives from the lack of uptake for apologies made in Parliament. Whilst in routine conversation speakers receive instant feedback on whether their apology has been accepted (or, rather, acceptable and recall here Owen (1983) discussed in §2.4.2), parliamentary apologies are most often heard in silence and are infrequently responded to. As a result, a speaker must ensure she ‘covers all bases’ in her apology for it to receive the best possible reception.

Also noticeable in the results is the relatively high rate of ‘explicit’ apologies involving the performative ‘to apologise’ or a nominal formulation derived from it. This is in sharp contrast with everyday conversation where ‘apologise’ was found to be disfavoured in four major studies (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981; Owen, 1983; Holmes, 1990; Meier, 1992). We can attribute this low frequency in ‘normal’ talk to the ‘formal sounding’ (Fraser, 1981:268) nature of this sort of utterance. Indeed, using an IFID for many speech acts in regular conversation can seem stilted and oddly distant (consider an utterances like: ‘I request that you open the window’ vs. ‘Would you open the window?’ for the speech act of requesting). Whilst this distance is usually inappropriate, it is perfectly acceptable in the House of Commons where distance/deference is embedded in the interactional rules discussed in the previous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average/ apology</th>
<th>Broad category average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ai. Performative IFID</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aii. Commissive w/ ‘apology’ as D.O</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi. Expression of regret</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bii. Request for forgiveness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biii. Statement of desire</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biv. Statement of obligation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ci. Explanation</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cii. Accepting the blame</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ci iii. Expressing self-deficiency</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civ. Recognising H as entitled to apology</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cv. Expressing lack of intent</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cvi. Offer/statement of repair/redress</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cvii. Statement of non-recurrence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: MPs’ use of each strategy
Strategies which tend to be avoided (that is, we find fewer than ten instances of their use) are Bii (a request for forgiveness), Biv (a statement of obligation to apologise), Cvii (a statement of non-recurrence), and Civ (a recognition of H’s entitlement to an apology). The latter will discussed further in section 3.4.3 on the influence of participation structure in apologies. As for the first three, I would suggest that requests for forgiveness are disfavoured for two reasons. The first is that such a request places a burden upon the hearer; instead of merely having to listen to an apology, he is having to make a decision on whether or not to forgive the speaker. Being burdened in this way is an additional face-threatening act. Secondly, directly asking for forgiveness strikes me as being somewhat desperate, which I doubt is a characteristic the average MP would wish to convey. An MP may avoid stating that she is obliged to apologise because it could give the impression that she is only doing so out of obligation and under duress – rather than because she genuinely feels regret. Finally, one could cynically suggest that MPs shun pledges of non-recurrence for fear that their future actions will be more intensely scrutinised by the press and public to ‘check up’ on such a pledge. Tellingly, Keith Vaz and Jonathan Sayeed’s apologies for financial misdemeanours, which both employed strategies Bii and Biv, have been described as ‘ill-judged’ and ‘blatantly counterfeit’ (Flynn, 2012:208). Whilst other factors may have contributed to this impression, the use of these strategies is likely to have played a role.

Aside from the results shown in Table 3.1, another noticeable difference in politicians’ apology behaviour is the presence of a detailed description of the offence which is being apologised for, which can be found in each of the 56 apologies in the corpus (a description of the offence is different from strategy Ci – explanation – which gives reasons why the offence happened, the description instead merely restates what the offence was). There are obvious contextual explanations for this – a description is (usually) absent in everyday conversation because the parties involved in the apology tend to know what the offence was, since, on the whole, an apology directly follows (or in some cases, precedes) the committing of the offensive act. Apologies in the House of Commons, in contrast, not infrequently come some time after the offence (for instance, in this study Stephen Byers’ apology for providing inaccurate information came almost four years after the incident occurred). In such situations there is a need for speakers to refresh the memory of hearers about what triggered the need for the apology. Furthermore, the extra participants in a Commons apology also dictate the need for a description of the events leading up to it – for instance, not all of the members present for Michael Portillo’s apology for failing to remind the House of his financial interests in a previous debate will have been present at the time this misdemeanour occurred and may not have been aware of it at all. In this instance, they need ‘filling in’ about
these events for them to be knowing recipients of the apology. The same is also true for members of the public who are ratified overhearers and who are even less likely to be aware of the events which led up to the parliamentary apology. The presence of this description of the offence may also be explained by a more underhand motivation. By choosing to describe their actions, MPs can do so on their own terms, which gives them the opportunity to delimit the scale and severity of their offence. Consider the following extract:

(31) **Malcom Wicks (20 May 2003; vol. 405, col. 861)**

   MW: [...] a press release was prepared with the intention that it would be sent out after the written statement had been issued. I very much regret that the press release was mistakenly issued last night [...]  

Here the minister apologises for the offence which he defines as being the premature distribution of a press release. However, the actual action which led to his having to apologise was more serious than that which he describes. In fact, it was not simply a summary of the statement which was given to the press before details were given to Parliament, but instead the whole statement was leaked to the press so that word-for-word quotes appeared in the morning papers before MPs had time to scrutinise the minister’s statement – a much graver discourtesy than Minister Wicks acknowledges. Here one can see that descriptions of offences have the potential to downplay the severity of such actions.

A further strategy found in some of the parliamentary apologies (12 instances in 10 of the 56 apologies) which is seemingly absent in routine conversation is the announcement of a previous apology or intention to apologise again (usually in person). Examples 32 and 33 highlight this strategy:

(32) **Tony Baldry (23 March 2000; vol. 346, col. 1121)**

   TB: [...] this was clearly an error of judgement on my part for which I have already apologised unreservedly in person to the committee for standards and privileges [...]  

(33) **Peter Snape (7 February 1984; vol. 53, col. 772)**

   PS: [...] I intend to communicate that view and also an apology to the general manager of British Rail Southern region today.

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6 Though they must bear in mind that The Speaker has to approve their statement, if they are apologising by way of a personal statement.
I would venture that politicians adopt this strategy as it shows that they are not averse to apologising and that their doing so in person may indicate the seriousness of the regret that they feel for their offensive action(s). This further exemplifies MPs’ desire to be as fulsome as possible in their apologies. I submit that we infrequently find this behaviour in quotidian apologies because referring to a previous apology gives rise to an implicature that the apologisee is viewed as being deficient in some way by the apologiser since she is having to repeat her apology.

### 3.4.2 Influence of offence type

Holmes (1989:201) rightly suggests that ‘the type of offence which appears to require remedial work’ seems to be a major factor in influencing how we apologise. The type of offences which require remedial work in the House of Commons clearly differ from those found in everyday conversation, although there is some overlap with ‘talk offences’ such as insulting or criticising someone which feature in both discourse domains. Looking carefully at the offences which required an apology in the House of Commons, we find the following groups of infractions (numbers in brackets indicate the frequency of such apologies in the corpus):

a) Insulting/criticising another MP/MPs (16)

b) Misleading/providing incorrect information to the House (5)

c) Breaching a parliamentary convention (e.g. not telling another MP that he would be mentioned in one’s speech; leaking a report) (14)

d) Financial irregularities/non-declaration of financial interests (18)

Three other apologies did not fit any of these categories and did not form a homogenous grouping themselves (those apologies were for: hiring an assistant deemed a security risk; seeking out a sexual encounter in a public place; and damaging The Speaker’s chair). These apologies were not included in this analysis. Table 3.2 shows the average frequencies of the various strategies for the apologies in each of the offence categories outlined above (raw figures are given in brackets).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence type</th>
<th>Insulting an MP</th>
<th>Misleading the House</th>
<th>Breaching a convention</th>
<th>Financial irregularities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ai. Performative IFID</td>
<td>0.25 (4)</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
<td>0.57 (8)</td>
<td>1.17 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aii. Commissive w/ ‘apology’ as D.O</td>
<td>0.13 (2)</td>
<td>0.80 (4)</td>
<td>0.14 (2)</td>
<td>0.28 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi. Expression of regret</td>
<td>0.19 (3)</td>
<td>0.60 (3)</td>
<td>0.43 (6)</td>
<td>0.44 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bii. Request for forgiveness</td>
<td>0.06 (1)</td>
<td>0.20 (1)</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
<td>0.06 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biii. Statement of desire</td>
<td>0.81 (13)</td>
<td>0.20 (1)</td>
<td>0.71 (10)</td>
<td>0.50 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biv. Statement of obligation</td>
<td>0.06 (1)</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
<td>0.07 (1)</td>
<td>0.06 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ci. Explanation</td>
<td>0.44 (7)</td>
<td>1.00 (5)</td>
<td>0.36 (5)</td>
<td>0.17 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cii. Accepting the blame</td>
<td>0.06 (1)</td>
<td>0.20 (1)</td>
<td>0.36 (5)</td>
<td>0.83 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciii. Expressing self-deficiency</td>
<td>0.13 (2)</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
<td>0.07 (1)</td>
<td>0.72 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civ. Recognising H as entitled to apology</td>
<td>0.31 (5)</td>
<td>0.20 (1)</td>
<td>0.14 (2)</td>
<td>0.06 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cv. Expressing lack of intent</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
<td>0.60 (3)</td>
<td>0.43 (6)</td>
<td>0.83 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cvi. Offer/statement of repair/redress</td>
<td>0.69 (11)</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
<td>0.07 (1)</td>
<td>0.22 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cvii. Statement of non-recurrence</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
<td>0.14 (2)</td>
<td>0.00 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.13 (50)</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.80 (19)</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.50 (49)</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.33 (96)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: The effect of offence type on apology strategy usage

Taking the results for the total number of strategies used in each apology, we find a large discrepancy between apologies made for financial irregularities and all of the other offence types. MPs apologising for wrong claims on expenses or not declaring a financial interest use roughly two apology strategies more in their speeches in parliament than does an MP apologising for insulting or criticising a fellow member. Olshtain’s (1989:163) finding that Hebrew speakers tend to ‘intensify the expression of apology’ by using more apology strategies when apologising for offences which they consider more serious seems also to be the case for British politicians and their apologies. Of the offences for which apologies were given in the House of Commons, it is certainly the case that financial misdemeanours have the worst possible outcome for MPs (David Laws was forced to resign as a Cabinet minister for his expenses claims, a number of MPs were not given the opportunity to stand for re-election because of their financial irregularities and still more were the subject of highly critical media attention). Because of the ‘high stakes’ involved when it comes to offences of this type, I think MPs feel it necessary to be viewed as being as apologetic as possible, in the hope that this regretful and contrite demeanour saves them from the worst punishments.
which can be meted out either by the parliamentary authorities or the press.\footnote{Whether or not this strategy is successful is another matter entirely.}

The ‘high stakes’ element could also help to explain the very high rates of explicit apology strategies (category A) for expenses abuses. My suggestion for MPs using more explicit strategies for the most serious of offences is that they want to be certain that their utterance is interpreted as an apology and using strategies from category A gives them a fair chance of achieving this. On the face of it, this goes against Bergman & Kasper’s (1993) finding that speakers produce more IFIDs for less serious offences, but it must be noted that I classify far fewer verbs as IFIDs than they do, which may explain this discrepancy.

At the other end of the scale, apologies for insulting or criticising another MP are the least detailed of those in the corpus (though still more fulsome than apologies in everyday conversation based on Holmes’ (1989) figures). It is probable that these apologies are less detailed because MPs expect some ‘rough and tumble’ in the chamber, such that criticisms and insults are to some extent part and parcel of the parliamentary experience (see Murphy, 2014 for a discussion of aggressive linguistic behaviour in this arena). Indeed, the backbench MP, Paul Flynn, in his instructional book ‘How to be an MP’ actively encourages MPs to be critical and insulting of one another in a section entitled ‘How to cultivate enemies’ (Flynn, 2012:190). Not only that, but the repercussions of insulting a member are fairly limited – whilst there may be some damage to the personal relationship between the MPs (if one existed), as long as the offender is seen to apologise then she will face no further punishment from The Speaker.

Looking at some other strategies more briefly, we find that explanations (Ci) form a large part of apologies for misleading the House of Commons. An MP would not wish to get a reputation for being untrustworthy in what she has to say and as a result needs to explain why any misleading or inaccurate information was provided to the House. This need also explains why an expression of a lack of intent (Cv) is often used in these apologies – inadvertence in misleading the House should hopefully absolve the MP of the suggestions that she is unreliable.

It it worth mentioning that an offer of repair (Cvi) mainly comes for the offence of insulting or criticising another MP. The reason for this is that repair is easy to provide for such offences – one need only ‘withdraw’ the insult or criticism, which is relatively easy when compared with what one would have to do to repair the other offences (e.g. paying back large sums of money in the case of financial wrongdoing).

The variation in MPs’ readiness to accept the blame (Cii) seems also to be linked to the offence type. It is found only once in each of the categories of insulting an MP or
misleading the House, but appears in nearly every apology for financial wrongdoing. I would suggest that accepting the blame is used rarely when one has misled the House because to do so would tacitly acknowledge that one is untrustworthy. Another explanation for this relates to the media coverage received by certain apologies. A great deal of media attention is placed on MPs’ financial affairs and the aftermath of an MP being caught in wrongdoing, whereas less coverage is devoted to seemingly arcane matters of breaching parliamentary procedure, or issues which relate only to the ‘Westminster bubble’ such as insults in the chamber. In the case of the latter two offence types, an MP’s words are less likely to be heavily scrutinised by the press and so the particularly face-damaging act of explicitly accepting blame need not be carried out for her apology to be viewed as acceptable. The MP apologising for expenses troubles is likely to encounter more scrutiny (frequently these apologies are broadcast on local new programmes, and in the case of high profile MPs, e.g. Cabinet Ministers David Laws or Jacqui Smith, are covered in the national media). In this case, the MP does not want to appear to be ‘passing the buck’ in any way and thus a strategy of accepting the blame seems a sensible way of appearing contrite and fully apologetic.

To conclude this discussion of the effect of the offence type on apology strategies, I would suggest that it is not necessarily the seriousness of the transgression which influences the apology strategies selected by the apologiser as Bergman & Kasper (1993) argued. Whilst this may explain the high frequency of explicit apology strategies, I think it is the nature of the offence which accounts for the presence or absence of other strategies. For instance, apologisers cannot easily express a lack of intent when apologising for insulting someone (or at least not without sounding dishonest) and it is this fact that explains its absence, not that the offence is viewed more or less seriously. Moreover, offering repair when one has misled the House is not really feasible – providing the correct information during the apology does not expunge the misleading information from the record and there is nothing tangible that an MP can offer to ‘undo’ the damage. A consideration of the context of a transgression needs, therefore, to be primary in our analyses.

3.4.3 The role of participation structure

Participation structure influences the form of parliamentary apologies in a number of ways. The first is that the addressee (The Speaker) is always acknowledged at the start of the apology statement. This acknowledgement usually takes the form of asking permission from The Speaker to make a personal statement, or thanking him/her for calling the apologiser to contribute.
An MP’s constituents, who are always potential ratified overhearers to the apology, can be invoked directly in the apology, which upgrades their status to recipients. This can be found in the apologies for financial misdemeanours (7 of the 18 apologies for this offence type), but is not found in any of the other apologies. In cases where constituents are mentioned, they are not just apology recipients, but are often the subject of flattery from the apologiser. This can be seen in the following example:

(34)  **Harry Cohen (29 January 2010; vol. 504, col. 1044)**

HC:  [. . . ] two further apologies, (0.3) firstly to my constituents, (0.3) the good people of leyton and wanstead do not deserve to have their faith in their parliamentary representative so severely shaken. (. ) they deserve the best untarnished representation also the best of my efforts for the last twenty seven years has been to take up their cases including of injustice to them in the last ten months of the intensive inquiry into me i’ve had to give a lot of time to my own case when i would have much preferred to have been dealing with theirs. [. . ]

That constituents are not recipients of apologies for other offences is clearly partly to do with the nature of the offence. Constituents are not the offended party when an MP has leaked a statement to the press, or insulted another MP, for instance. But the consequences of those actions can impinge upon the constituents in ways similar to those highlighted by Harry Cohen in (34). As a result, it is plausible for an MP to apologise to her constituents if she faces suspension from the House for insulting another MP, because this will impact upon the quality of representation that she can provide. That MPs do not invoke constituents for these other offences may be explained by what I have said previously about the mediated nature of some of the apologies. Given that the apologies for financial misdemeanours are more likely to be seen by an MP’s constituents, it makes sense for her to apologise to them directly.

That the hearer role is split between the addressee and recipient has implications for the viability of one of the apology strategies in particular. **Recognising that the hearer is entitled to an apology (Civ)** is made more difficult because the hearers number more than simply the party who was offended. Acknowledging that the hearer is entitled to an apology is, I would suggest, more difficult to achieve in Parliament where the role of the hearer does not (automatically) correspond to the offended party (i.e. the person(s) who would be deserving of the apology). Moreover, because MPs cannot refer to each other by name and instead are required to use the name of an MP’s constituency or their job title to identify the particular target for the utterance, this makes picking out
an individual referent (in this case, the offended party) more difficult. This is, perhaps, further motivation for avoiding this strategy.

The complexity of the participation structure can be (and is) exploited by some apologisers. The case of George Galloway apologising for calling Ben Bradshaw a liar is a good example of this. In a debate in Westminster Hall (an additional debating chamber used to allow non-partisan adjournment debates), Galloway was described by Minister Ben Bradshaw as ‘not just an apologist, but a mouthpiece for the Iraqi regime over many years’ (an insult for which Bradshaw later apologised). In response to this accusation, Mr Galloway called the Minister ‘a liar’ and refused to withdraw the insult. In his apology, the MP said the following:

(35) **George Galloway (7 March 2002; vol. 381, col. 450)**

GG: […] in the debate in westminster hall yesterday exchanges became frank (.) to the point of being unacceptable and i should like to apologise to the chairman my honourable friend the deputy speaker in westminster hall (.) hh to you mister speaker and to the house for my part in that. […] i would like to say i am sorry for stepping out of parliamentary order and for my failure to withdraw my remarks when asked to do so by the deputy speaker and now to so withdraw them.

Here, Galloway highlights a number of recipients for his apology: the Deputy Speaker who was in the chair and whose order to withdraw the insult was ignored; The Speaker who is ultimately responsible for the orderly conduct of the House, despite him not being present at the time of the offence; and the House which is a metonym for those who work in and for the House of Commons. Notice, however, that Galloway does *not* apologise directly to the offended party, Ben Bradshaw. This refusal to acknowledge the offended party suggests that Galloway is not sorry for the (potential) damage done to the ‘victim’ but instead is sorry simply for the breach of the parliamentary norm (and the possible negative effects this could have on his speaking rights in the House).

This section has described but a few ways in which the complex participation framework in the House of Commons impacts upon the form of an MP’s apology. The MP frequently has in mind not only who is present when she is apologising, but also who may access her apology after it is delivered. Further dissemination and scrutiny of an apology may lead to an MP ensuring that those who are potential overhearers are ‘promoted’ to recipients. Also indicative of MP’s attitude towards performing an apology (her reticence or otherwise to do so) is the absence of recipients who ought to be mentioned in the apology, for instance the offended party.
3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has seen the application of the taxonomy of apology tokens first presented in section 2.5 to parliamentary personal statements and points of order with the function of apologising. We have seen that the pre-planned nature of the statements means that their participation structure is far more complex than the majority of apologies which we find in everyday life. In particular, we have seen that the authorship of the apologies is not the sole preserve of the offender but is also contributed to by The Speaker and an MP’s advisors. Because of the strict conventions governing talk in the Commons Chamber, the recipient of the apology is only the addressee in the rare case that The Speaker is the offended party. In addition, we have seen that there are many ratified overhearers given the public nature of the action, the presence of whom has an affect on the form the apology takes (i.e. constituents who are overhearers may be deliberately invoked in the apology).

Parliamentary apologies also differ from quotidian ones in their length – MPs’ apologies in this chapter contain more than twice the apology strategies on average than an ‘ordinary’ apology. Also noteworthy is that at least one explicit or conventional apology strategy is used per apology. This suggests that there are risks associated with not unambiguously saying that one is apologising or that one is sorry, i.e. that such statements may be rejected as unacceptable apologies. This differs from everyday apologies where particularised conversational implicatures can be used apologetically. The form of the apologies produced in Parliament are, I suggest, influenced heavily by the fact that the apologies do not receive an immediate uptake – this means that the apologiser must be careful to ensure that she does all she can to appear contrite; this may be achieved by being particular fulsome in the apology.

We have seen that other contextual factors have a bearing on the contents of the parliamentary apology. For instance, apologies for financial irregularities are more extensive and tend to both accept blame and express a lack of intent. Apologies for insults are less extensive but offer redress. Some strategies found in everyday conversation, including requesting forgiveness, expressing obligation to apologise and promising non-recurrence, are infrequently found in parliamentary apologies. The potential for misunderstanding in the use of these strategies is a possible reason for their limited use.
Chapter 4

Leveson Inquiry

4.1 Introduction

We move away from the monologic apologies of the last chapter to apologies which are interactive, brief in nature and occur ‘on the fly’. The setting which the apologies occur in – namely, a public inquiry – carries with it its own interactional norms which constrains the nature of the apologies and this will be explored in this chapter. The focus of this part of the thesis is not on the tokens used to apologise, but rather on how the apologies are organised sequentially. In particular, I will discuss how apologies can be, but are not necessarily, triggered by an explicit complaint. I also look at how apologies are responded to – something which was absent in the previous chapter, where parliamentary convention prevented synchronous uptake. Because of the objectives of this chapter, I use conversation analysis to explain the nature of the co-construction of the interpersonally sensitive action of apologising in this setting.

The source of the apologies scrutinised in this chapter is The Leveson Inquiry into the Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press (henceforth, the Inquiry): a major public inquiry in the United Kingdom which ran between July 2011 and November 2012 and was chaired by Lord Justice Brian Leveson, a high court judge. The Inquiry was set up in response to revelations that members of the British press had engaged, over a number of years, in illegal and/or morally questionable practices in order to obtain stories – practices which included: hacking phones and emails, paying members of the police force for details of ongoing investigations, bribing members of the Royal Household and blagging (i.e. duping National Health Service staff, banks, and others into believing that they were the targeted celebrity or politician in order to find out confidential information about the public figure).
The Inquiry was completely open, with witnesses’ oral evidence frequently streamed live on television and recordings and transcripts of all witnesses freely available on the Inquiry website (www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/) and this large, open data source has been exploited for the purpose of exploring the production of apologies by political figures.

In order to do this, searches on the Inquiry transcripts were carried out for a full range of both explicit and conventional apology expressions, i.e. the most frequent ways which politicians apologise as we saw in section 3.4. This gave 106 apology extracts which, along with their surrounding context, were transcribed and are the focus of this study. There are, of course, limitations to this approach. Firstly, sometimes apologies are not produced in a conventional way (though we saw in the previous chapter that every parliamentary apology contained at least one explicit or conventional apology token) and so such instances are overlooked. Whilst unfortunate, this is also the approach taken in the only previous CA study of apologies (Robinson, 2004) and the alternative of (re-)watching approximately 350 hours of oral evidence for what might be but a handful of examples seems a cost too high to outweigh the potential benefits. Secondly, sometimes apology tokens are used non-apologetically in the performance of other actions. This is something which I will look at in some detail in section 4.5.4.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: section 4.2 gives details of previous work on apologies in everyday talk; section 4.3 discusses the turn-taking norms of the Inquiry (which has similarities with other types of courtroom discourse); section 4.4 outlines the types of offence which trigger apologies at the Inquiry; section 4.5 shows the sequential relationships that apologies enter into in this sphere and argues that apologies form action chains (Pomerantz, 1978), rather than adjacency pairs as has been proposed for quotidian conversation (Robinson, 2004); section 4.6 concludes and gives ideas for future work using this large source of interactional data.

### 4.2 Apologies in quotidian conversation

Apologies remain understudied from a conversation analytic perspective – introductory texts state that apologies enter into an adjacency pair either of type apology—minimization (Levinson, 1983:303) or complaint\(^1\)—apology (Psathas, 1986).

\(^1\)It is important to draw a distinction between direct and indirect complaints, as Heinemann & Traverso (2009:2382) and the other contributors to their special journal issue on complaining do. Direct complaints are those which are made against a present interlocutor, whereas indirect complaints refer to a third party. In this chapter we see only direct complaints, and it is these which we would expect to trigger apologies. Indirect complaints would only be followed by an apology if the apologiser is
1995:17) but do not provide detailed evidence for this. There are two studies which have explored apologies in quotidian conversation in much greater depth, both by Robinson (2004, 2006). Robinson (2004), which I discussed in section 2.4 but remind the reader of here, looks at ‘explicit’ apologies and the range of sequential positions which they can occupy, the types of offence they can index and the preference organisation of their responses. Robinson (2006) has a narrower focus and discusses how apology tokens are used in the performance of repair work.

Robinson (2004) argues that a distinction needs to be made between apology tokens used exclusively to perform apology functions and those which perform some secondary action. So for instance, in something like ‘Sorry, how old is your daughter again?’, the apology element is ‘subordinate to the primary action, which is requesting information’ (Robinson, 2004:297, his emphasis). Where apologising is the foregrounded action, Robinson suggests that apologies are ‘first parts of adjacency-pair sequences of action’ (Robinson, 2004:301). In his analysis he finds that the preferred response to an apology is one which promotes social solidarity in mitigating or undermining an apology’s claim to have caused offence; this can take the form of absolution (‘that’s alright’) or disagreeing with the need to have apologised (ibid: 302). Dispreferred responses are ones which cause a pursuit of the preferred response and include silences, shrugs and the initiation of a new sequence. We will see in this paper that while apologies at the Inquiry can receive similar responses, they do not have to and their absence is unmarked, contra Robinson’s argument that apologies are first pair parts of adjacency pairs.

In his 2006 paper Robinson argues that other-initiated repair can be performed using apology tokens in order for the repair initiator to show that they are at fault for the trouble encountered rather than the addressee. Robinson focuses on ‘Sorry?’ and ‘I’m sorry(?)’ which are open-class repair initiators in that they indicate there has been trouble with understanding the previous turn, but not where the trouble lies specifically. In this chapter we will explore this open class, too but we will see that the idea that the apology token embodies a stance of the speaker taking responsibility for the trouble may be not be the whole story, since the addressee can respond with an apology in turn. We will also see how the apology token can also preface a statement requesting a specific repair, thus initiating a closed class of repair.

representative of, or responsible for, the third party.
4.3 Interaction at the Inquiry

The majority of the apologies made at the Inquiry by politicians are much closer in form to those found in everyday conversation than is the case for those produced as personal statements and discussed in the previous chapter. That is to say, the apologies produced at the Inquiry usually occur immediately after the offence, contain just one apology token and can be responded to. Part of the reason for this is that the turn taking conventions in inquiry discourse are less removed from those in quotidian conversation than the interactional rules governing the delivery of personal apologies in the House of Commons. It is also noteworthy that, unlike personal statements in Parliament, the politicians giving evidence at an inquiry are not there (solely, at least) to apologise. This means that the sort of offences which trigger an apology can be of an interactional nature (e.g. interrupting, speaking too quickly, etc.), as well as for tangible offences. Moreover, the apologies that do occur are likely to be spontaneous and not prepared.

The turn-taking system operating during inquiries is very similar to that found in courtroom discourse; this is, to some extent, to be expected since inquiries aim to gather evidence in the same way as a trial and are frequently led by members of the judiciary. The fundamental difference between conversation and (cross-)examination holds true for inquiry discourse; during evidence giving at an inquiry ‘turn order is fixed, as is the type of turn which each speaker’s turn constitutes’ (Atkinson & Drew, 1979:61). Similar to the courtroom, the participants during oral evidence to the Inquiry are the examiner and the examined. In this case, the role of the examiner is filled at any one time by either the lead counsel, who does most of the examining, Lord Justice Leveson (the inquiry chairman), or counsel for interested parties (e.g. the Metropolitan Police, News International, etc.), who are allowed, at the discretion of the chair, to put their questions to the examined after the lead counsel has finished his/her questioning. The role of the examined changes at the end of each evidence session, with politicians, journalists, and others affected in some way by the media acting in this position\(^2\).

As well as restrictions on who can participate, Atkinson & Drew also highlight restrictions on the types of turn which can be produced in the courtroom, which also applies for the most part at the Inquiry. They state that talk is:

\(^2\)There were two instances where two people were examined at the same time – essentially fulfilling the position of the examined concomitantly. The first pair being Kate and Gerry McCann, whose daughter, Madeleine, was kidnapped in Portugal, and who were vilified in some parts of the media. The second were Bob and Sally Dowler, whose daughter Milly’s phone was allegedly hacked by News International newspapers whilst she was missing and before she was found murdered. This joint examination is highly unusual for an inquiry; in fact, I can find no evidence of a precedent for this. Because of this, the full extent testimonies would be interesting to examine, but this is beyond the scope of this thesis which focusses on politicians’ apologies only.
organised into series of ‘question’ and ‘answer’ pairs. Whatever else these utterances may be heard to do, and however else they might be characterised [..] speaker turns should be designed at least minimally as either questions or answers (1979:61-2).

One of the features of witnesses’ answers in the courtroom is that they are required to (and resultantly tend to) strictly adhere to Grice’s (1975) maxims, and particularly of interest for our purposes, the Quantity Maxim. The Quantity maxim can be summarised as indicating that speakers should say as much as and no more than is required (Grice, 1975:45-6). Hansen notes that witnesses must answer only what is asked in the question as ‘counsel will not wish to take into account information not explicitly asked for, if that information points to conclusions other than those the (cross-)examination is leading up to’ (2008a:1399). She finds that speakers will be reprimanded if they provide answers which do not directly answer the question (Hansen, 2008a:1400). However, the application of Grice’s maxims at inquiry discourse seems to be much more ‘conversational’ in nature. Consider the following example:

(36) **Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 26 (Q=Robert Jay)**

1 Q: of course you you were foreign secretary at this time
2 (0.3) we’ve heard evidence (. ) somewhat unclear evidence
3 about three telephone calls between mister blair and mister
4 murdoch in march two thousand and three? are you able to
5 throw any light on those?
6 ⇒ A: i’m sorry mister jay i’m not er er i think i was vaguely
7 aware that they’d taken place but but (0.2) .hh it’s quite
8 hard to get across t- k- (0.2) to those who weren’t involved,
9 the pace of events at this time um i mean i- (0.2) at the
10 beginning of march (0.6) on the fifth or sixth of march i
11 went to new york for what became- what turned out to
12 be the last of the (0.5) the sec- series of security council
13 meetings […]

Within the context of a trial, Straw’s inability to shed light on the telephone calls discussed in Jay’s question would in all likelihood mean that counsel moved on to the next question. However, in this setting, Straw is able to expand on why he is unable to answer the question, giving details of his busy schedule around the time Jay is interested in. Whilst Straw’s utterance is still an answer, it is to a question which

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3Full transcripts can be found at [http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/evidence/](http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/evidence/). I give day, time and page references to the official transcript so that the reader can easily access the example with further context.
was not explicitly asked – resultantly, it is not obvious that examples like that in (36) are instances of question-answer adjacency pairs, as Atkinson & Drew (1979) make clear is the case for the examination of witness at trial. The most obvious explanation for this difference in courtroom and inquiry discourse is that during a trial, counsel knows what its case will be and thus seeks to obtain a confirmation of its constructed version of events. In contrast, counsel has not already made its mind up at an inquiry – it not there to defend or prosecute the witness, indeed in the case of the Leveson Inquiry no-one was on trial. As a result, counsel was seeking to find out as much information for Lord Justice Leveson, in order for him to come up with appropriate recommendations in his report – stymieing a witness by strictly enforcing Grice’s maxims, as in a trial, would not have been conducive to achieving that goal.

In addition to the answer turns following the conversational maxims less strictly, the turn types found at inquiries are slightly more varied; inquiry talk does feature some non-question and answer adjacency pairs which are not found in the courtroom. The first exception to this comes before the examination of the witness, when the lead counsel calls the witness as in (37).

(37) **Leveson Inquiry Day 74 am, Page 1 (LEV = Lord Justice Leveson, Q = David Barr)**

1. LEV: good morning mister barr.
2. Q: morning sir. (0.3) .hh our first witness today is the right
3. honourable (.) tessa jowell.
4. LEV: (0.5) thank you.

Following the exchange of pleasantries and the witness being called, s/he either swears or affirms that his/her testimony ‘shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth’.

A further departure from the question-answer exchanges comes after the witness has been sworn, when Lord Justice Leveson invariably thanks the witness for his or her written evidence, such as the exchange between him and Sir John Major (labelled A. in the extract) in example (38).

(38) **Leveson Inquiry Day 84 am, Page 1 (A = Sir John Major)**

1. LEV: sir john. (0.3) thank you very much indeed for this
2. statement which has obviously been an enormous amount
3. of work. (0.3) i am very grateful to you.

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4This is, to some extent, a crude over-simplification of the role of counsel in trial discourse, but Gibbons (2003:93ff) expands and elaborates on this point more than I am able to here.
5This is also often the case in Coroner’s Courts, where the aim is, usually, to uncover the circumstances surrounding a sudden death and not to apportion blame for it (see Atkinson, 1978).
A third instance where the restriction on turn type is relaxed is when the witness is being introduced to the inquiry. The introduction usually takes the form of an outlining of their previous positions (as in example 39). It sometimes also includes some direct reference to how they have been affected in their daily lives by their dealings with the press and how, as a result, they are in a position to advise the inquiry and make representations to it. (39) gives an instance of this type of introductory exchange, and also provides the first of many examples of apology to be discussed in this chapter.

(39) **Leveson Inquiry Day 76 pm, Pages 145-6 (Q = Carine Patry Hoskins, A = John, Lord Reid)**

1 Q: from nineteen ninety seven in government you held a number of posts including (.) home secretary, secretary of state for defence, secretary of state for health, secretary of state for northern ireland, leader of the house of commons and president of the privy council, chairman of the labour party and cabinet minister without portfolio, secretary of state for scotland, minister for transport and armed forces minister. so a very w- wide variety of positions.

⇒ 9 A: i’m sorry they’re so long!

10 Q: no °not at all°

11 LEV: i hope you found them interesting.

12 A: they were.

In (39) we find John Reid, who, as counsel notes, held a wide variety of positions in the Labour Government from 1997 onwards, being introduced and apologising for the length of his titles. Reid’s apology, and the majority of those found at the Inquiry, has the following features in common with those found in quotidian conversation

i) The vast majority of apologies immediately follow the offence, or an utterance which could be interpreted as a complaint about a prior offence.

ii) It is possible that the apology receives some uptake; that is to say, the apology can be responded to in some way by the other participants in the exchange.

iii) The apologies at inquiries are rarely planned; inquiry apologies are most often spontaneous and arising from the interaction⁶.

⁶This is very unlike the apologies produced in the House of Commons which were discussed earlier, where recall that the apologies are written in advance, have their contents vetted by the Speaker of the House and are then read aloud.
iv) In part due to iii, the apologies are very frequently short; they usually contain just one explicit or conventional expression of apology (e.g. *I apologise; I’m sorry; I’d like to say sorry*; etc.).

The exchange in (39) has all of these characteristics: i) it follows the ‘offence’ of Ms Patry Hoskins having to read out an extended list of Cabinet positions (indeed, her comment ‘so a wide variety of positions’ could have been construed as a complaint about the offence by Lord Reid); ii) there is some uptake of the apology — Patry Hoskins’ ‘No’ seems a rejection of the need to apologise (the preferred response to an apology according to Robinson (2004), we return to this idea in section 4.5); iii) it is unlikely that Lord Reid planned the utterance, and it is delivered in an off the cuff, jovial way; iv) the apology is short containing just the conventional expression of ‘I’m sorry’.

So interaction at the Inquiry (and possibly public inquiries more generally) does have similarities to courtroom discourse, in that the main pattern of exchanges centres on questions and answers. However, we have also seen that answers need not be as strictly wedded to the question posed, unlike in trials. There are also instances of deviation from the question-answer pattern during a witness’ evidence and this taken together gives rise to an atmosphere in which apologies can occur and in which they can be responded to.

### 4.4 Types of offence

Following the close analysis of all instances of exchanges containing an explicit or convention apology token, I have found five broad ‘offences’ which trigger an apology (and one instance which does not fit in any of these categories and is presented in example 52).

#### 4.4.1 Talk offences

Talk offences include interrupting counsel, being repetitious, being verbose and talking too fast, as in the following example.

(40)  
**Leveson Inquiry Day 41 pm, Pages 87-8 (Q = Robert Jay, A = John, Lord Prescott)**

1  A:  > secondly if you want another one (.) the evidence we’ve
2  just received from every newspaper about the legal aid but
there’s a proposal now which we rejected as a government
but this one has accepted it that they-
Q: i’m sorry can i just ask you to go a tiny bit slower.
⇒ A: i’m sorry i’m sorry.
Q: sorry to cut you off in full flow there.
A: now you can feel the sympathy for the hansard writer=
LEV: =well we have one here as well!

Talk offences are particularly problematic in the frame of courtroom-like discourse since an accurate record of the talk needs to be made by the stenographer – this task is made more difficult by overlapping talk (since the talk of two speakers needs to recorded at the same time) and talking too fast (whilst a stenographer can record up to 250 words per minute (Merrill Legal Solutions, p.c.) long stretches at this pace increase error rates, impacting upon the quality of the transcript). Being repetitious and verbose are viewed (by some, at least) as offences since the time of the inquiry is wasted by witnesses not adding ‘new’ information; this is especially a concern when the Inquiry has a large number of witnesses to hear from (650 people testified either in writing or in person). Note that counsel also apologises before and after Prescott – our main focus in this chapter is on the apologies of the politicians themselves, but we will return to counsel’s apologies in section 4.5.2.

4.4.2 Misspeaks

Misspeaks can be viewed as a particular type of talk offence in which the speaker makes an error in her talk which requires repair. I consider misspeaks separately from other talk offences because their sequential positions vary compared to other talk offences and because of the high frequency of their occurrence. The example below gives an instance of a misspeak, the self-initiated self-repair for which is announced with a ‘sorry’ token.

(41) Leveson Inquiry Day 83 pm, Pages 63-4 (A = George Osborne)

A: i guess what i had was (0.4) and i- i:: have been involved
from a very junior level in conservative politics since two
thousand and four (0.2) er sorry ! > nineteen ninety four>
so you know over a long period […]
4.4.3 Document offences

Participants at the Inquiry are provided with swathes of documents intended to help them prepare their written statements and prepare for their examination by counsel and Lord Justice Leveson (if they are invited to give further oral evidence). The collections of documents (‘bundles’) contain relevant sections of legislation, other witnesses’ evidence, newspaper articles and other documents which counsel intends to refer to in the process of the Inquiry. These bundles are often large and cumbersome, and numbered in a variety of ways (i.e. each document has its own evidence number, contains original page numbers and is also numbered with the Inquiry’s own pagination). The unwieldiness of these bundles leads to exchanges such as the one below.

(42) Leveson Inquiry Day 81 pm, Pages 53 (Q = Robert Jay, A = Dr. Vincent Cable)

1 Q: zero one six five eight now doctor cable apparently refers
2 to a meeting with lord clement-jones described as the
3 treasurer of the lib dems and the culture and media
4 spokesman in the lords=
⇒ 5 A: =i’m sorry could you just er give me a second to catch up?
6 Q: i’m sorry
⇒ 7 A: so the number was? what sorry ?
8 Q: zero one six five eight.
9 A: (3.0) i have it thank you.

Virtually every politician appearing before Lord Justice Leveson had an issue with not being able to find the right page in the bundle, or forgetting which page they were supposed to be referring to (although, not all of the politicians apologised for these ‘document offences’). Given that the offence is an understandable one to make, it is interesting that it is viewed as an offence at all by those apologising for it. I would suggest that problems of this nature are viewed as offences as they delay the proceedings of the inquiry (in the same way that being repetitious and verbose do), so despite being understandable, some view it as still requiring an apology.

4.4.4 Clarification requests

Clarification requests are essentially other repair initiators. They can either be open class repair initiators where the witness does not ‘identify the repairable items in the prior turns, or specify the nature of the difficulty which [they] have in understanding
what their co-participants have just said’ (Drew, 1997: 72), in which case they simply take the form of ‘sorry?’ or ‘I’m sorry’ in this data set. If they are closed class repair initiators (as is the case in example 43) the apology token is coupled with an explanation of what the difficulty is – in this case that Campbell is unsure of what the meaning of the previous question is.

(43) **Leveson Inquiry Day 70 pm, Page 65 (Q = Robert Jay, A = Alastair Campbell)**

1. Q: although the terms of the debate having been set. (0.7) .hhh
2. the political response which is to debate policy may flow
3. from that may- er might not it?
⇒ 4. A: (1.2) er wh- er sorry what do you mean by that?
5. Q: if- if- if the newspapers have er set the terms [of the debate]
6. [ . . . ]

### 4.4.5 Evidence offences

Evidence offences may be viewed as the most ‘serious’ of all of the offences encountered in this data set. They see a witness either unable to provide an answer to a question, become confused in their answer or provide incorrect information to the Inquiry. In the example below, Lord Mandelson’s response is inadequate because he did not research a particular aspect of his answer and so this becomes apologisable.

(44) **Leveson Inquiry Day 74 pm, Pages 64 (Q = Robert Jay, A = Peter, Lord Mandelson)**

1. Q: do you think mister brown had an eye on the daily mail and
2. mister dacre’s view in terms of (0.4) policies for which he
3. was responsible?
4. A: hmm (0.4) as prime minister he was responsible in a sense
5. for all policies. (0.3) i’m not sure. i- i- i- i mean the only
6. thing i vaguely remember er (1.0) was (1.0) something to
7. do with data protection. uhh er there was an issue to do
⇒ 8. with data protection. i’m sorry i didn’t research this and
9. my memory is not great on it but there was a piece of
10. legislation, i can’t remember which-
11. Q: we have looked into this lord mandelson.
4.5 Apologies and sequencing

Having looked at the sorts of events which precipitate apologies at the Inquiry, in this section we shall explore how the apologies themselves are sequentially ordered in the talk exchange. The main focus will be on: i) how apologies can be triggered by complaints; ii) how apologies can receive uptake and the forms that that can take; iii) how a lack of uptake is unmarked; and iv) how different functions of an apology can affect how it is responded to.

4.5.1 Triggers for the apology

I noted earlier that Psathas (1995:17) suggests that apologies are second pair parts of a complaint—apology adjacency pair. Some of the examples already shown (39, 40) give support for this view. Indeed, there are further instances where a complaint could be interpreted from the previous (question) turn; some of these potential complaints are more subtle than others:

(45) **Leveson Inquiry Day 82 pm, Page 24 (Q = Robert Jay, A = Jeremy Hunt)**

1 Q: what specifically were you referring to there?
2 A: um (1.5) i- i’m afraid i can’t remember what event
3 happened that day?
4 Q: it was in fact the day before. the third of march was the
5 announcement.
6 A: oh! right. yes sorry it was the day after i’d made the
7 announcement about the uils and um i sent him a text to
8 thank him for his um help and i also sent my other special
9 adviser a text to thank her for her help.

(46) **Leveson Inquiry Day 76 pm, Page 175 (Q = Carine Patry Hoskins, A = John, Lord Reid)**

1 Q: and then at forty two you don’t just deal with the priorities
2 you also deal with the routine ministerial duties that you
3 had to deal with as well.
4 A: i apologise for the length of these=
5 Q: =no
6 A: but basically prioritisation is almost by definition a relative
7 decision.

In (45) the complaint can be viewed as counsel having to correct the witness on the facts of the question being asked, and the ‘in fact’ in Jay’s correction is an explicit
indication that he is providing a repair for Hunt’s previous turn. In (46) counsel states that Reid has provided not just details of priorities but also routine matters he dealt with, meaning that his evidence will be much longer and it is for this that he is apologising – giving an indication that he has interpreted counsel’s turn as (n implicit) complaint. Notice also in lines 6-7 that Reid gives an explanation for the offence – a PCI used to reinforce the apologetic tone.

However, this is not the whole story. Apologies can often be made off a politician’s own bat, as it were. This is naturally particularly true for misspeaks where speakers very often initiate their own repair without prompting. In addition, where the apology is used by the politician to seek clarification, it is clear that this has not been triggered by a complaint, but rather by the trouble encountered. We shall return to the special status of this type of apology later in this section. That said, it is not just in these cases where we find the absence of a complaint. Consider the two following examples:

(47)  Leveson Inquiry Day 80 am, Page 32-3 (Q = Robert Jay, A = Theresa May)
1 Q: so this was now being seen as part of a wider picture where
2 other issues or press regulations might now come into play.
3 (.) is that right?
4 A: yes=may i just take you back er er mister jay to my previous
5 answer because i now realise that there are two lord wall
6 aces in the lords and this may in fact be a reference to lord
7 wallace who was at the time a whip in the lord for home
8 office matters. (0.5) so i apologise if i can’t clarify which
9 of the two lord wallaces it was. […]
10 ⇒ Q: looking at the overall context but i’m not sure whether this
11 point was being made specifically in the house of lords at
12 this time but i’ll make it nonetheless.

(48)  Leveson Inquiry Day 72 am, Page 94 (Q = Robert Jay, A = Jack Straw)
1 Q: unless you’ve got any other points you wish to: develop
2 mister straw in relation in particular to the future (.) those
3 were all the questions i had for you.
4 A: can i just- sorry. it was er triggered (0.3) in my um mind
5 by lord justice leveson’s reference to the times [1 page of
6 evidence]

Table 4.1 gives a summary of the data found at the Inquiry. We can see that not all apologies belong to this adjacency pair of complaint—apology, and that there is another source for them: speakers recognising without prompting that their actions are potential offences and so spontaneously apologising for them. What we can also see
is that the most serious offence type, that of giving incorrect or faulty evidence, is the 
an action which is most complained about by counsel or the Inquiry chairman, indeed 
this is the only category of apologies where more of the apologies come as a result of 
a complaint than without prompting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence type</th>
<th>Complaint</th>
<th>No complaint</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>15% (3)</td>
<td>85% (17)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misspeaks</td>
<td>22.2% (2)</td>
<td>77.8% (7)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>26.3% (5)</td>
<td>73.7% (14)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>86.7% (13)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>52.4% (22)</td>
<td>47.6% (20)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32.4% (34)</strong></td>
<td><strong>67.6% (71)</strong></td>
<td><strong>105</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: showing whether a complaint is the trigger for an apology for each offence 
type (raw figures in brackets)

4.5.2 Reaction to an apology

Having looked to what offences receive apologies and whether they are triggered 
by utterances interpretable as complaints, we now move to looking at how they are 
reacted to by Counsel and Lord Justice Leveson (who are the potential recipients of 
the apology). In this case, the focus is on seeing whether Robinson’s (2004) finding 
that apologies set up an adjacency pair of *apology—undermining an apology’s claim 
to have caused offence* also applies at the Inquiry.

Firstly let’s look to the similarities. We do find uptake of the type described by 
Robinson (2004). Example 49 shows how counsel rejects the notion that Gordon 
Brown needed to apologise for the offence which he describes as moving from the 
point of the question. This, I believe, relates to what I said in section 4.3, that the 
Inquiry had (and inquiries generally have) the purpose of finding out all the relevant 
information before reaching their conclusion and so deviating from a question can be 
inoffensive if important points are raised in the evidence.

(49) **Leveson Inquiry Day 83 am, Pages 115-6 (Q = Robert Jay, A = Gordon Brown)**

1 A: if- if- if i may say, (0.3) i think there’s quite a lot to learn
2 from (. ) america where this is a live debate at the moment.
3 (0.4) i’m sorry i moved from your initial er initial point
4 about self-regulation.
5 Q: (0.3) not at all. (0.6) now er mister brown the- the prime
6 minister as you will know has said that the relationship
7 between the press and politicians .hhl needs to be reset.
An extension of rejecting the need to apologise and not discussed in Robinson’s work is the apologisee taking on blame for the initial offence. This can be seen in the following example in which Kit Malthouse produces an apology following a complaint that he was answering a different question.

(50) **Leveson Inquiry Day 58 am, Page 23 (A= Kit Malthouse)**

1 LEV: hm yes actually i was asking about a slightly different
2 point.
⇒ 3 A: i’m sorry.
4 LEV: no not at all i’m sure it’s my poor question. […]

This ‘taking the blame’ component can be taken further still and sees either counsel or the Inquiry chairman apologising in turn following the witnesses’ initial apology – we saw an example of this in example 40 with Robert Jay apologising in turn to John Prescott for having to interrupt him, as well as in (42) where Jay again responds to Vince Cable’s apology for not keeping up with an apology in kind.

Again from Kit Malthouse’s evidence we find a further type of uptake described by Robinson (2004), that of suggesting that the offence which led to the apology is either inoffensive or irrelevant in the present circumstance:

(51) **Leveson Inquiry Day 58 am, Page 50 (Q = Robert Jay, A = Kit Malthouse)**

1 Q: i think that was in fact the seventeenth of july but check
2 that (0.3) monday was the eighteenth of july.
⇒ 3 A: was it? i’m sorry (.). my apologies.
4 Q: (2.5) it doesn’t matter at all but you can see from the next
5 page you get the date right.
6 A: do i? i’m sorry.
7 Q: that’s the monday.

The example shows a complaint from Jay about the wrong date being used in Malthouse’s evidence – this complaint elicits an apology from Malthouse. Despite making the complaint, Jay asserts that getting the date wrong ‘doesn’t matter at all’; this, I suppose, would usually raise the question why make the complaint if the offence is unimportant? The answer to that, I believe, lies in the importance for evidence to be accurate for the purposes of the inquiry and making the complaint leads to inaccurate evidence being corrected by the witness. The complainer (Jay) then attempts to minimise the face-loss experienced by Malthouse with this assertion that the offence
is merely hypothetical and unimportant (and thus has not been realised). Interestingly, however, a second complaint is made by Jay after the uptake for the apology – the complaint this time that Malthouse has used the correct date later in his evidence, leading to this muddled picture. Though Jay has suggested this type of offence is irrelevant, it still receives a further apology from Malthouse. This second apology could indicate that Malthouse views Jay’s ‘It doesn’t matter at all’ as non-genuine, or he views this second offence of causing confusion as sufficiently different to the first offence of getting the fact wrong to require a second apology.

There is an example of a type of uptake not found at all in Robinson’s data set which might be described as questioning the sincerity of the apology. There is only one instance of this at the Inquiry, but it is a deviant case which merits mention.

(52) Leveson Inquiry Day 86 pm, Pages 59-60 (A = David Cameron)

A: i think they’ve got to be rigorously tested as to whether they can deliver independence (. ) penalties (. ) compulsion (. ) toughness (. ) public confidence and all the rest of it. and i think that’s- er sorry to have given you this umm hot potato ((smiling)) but i think that’s the test.

LEV: i don’t think you sound sorry about doing that at all actually! ((laughter from gallery)) but ummm but there are some contradictions in there because if it has to involve everyone […]

Cameron apologises to the chairman of the Inquiry for having passed on responsibility for devising a new regulatory system for the Press (what he describes as a ‘hot potato’) which leads to Leveson suggesting that Cameron is not really sorry about it. This comment elicits laughter from the gallery but once this dies down, Leveson goes on to suggest that there are contradictions in Cameron’s answer. This coupled with the suggestion that the believability of Cameron’s apology is questionable has the potential to cause Cameron face-damage, since it could be seen to call into doubt an aspect of his personality (i.e. his trustworthiness) integral to his positive public image (see Murphy, 2014:78 for more on the face-wants of political figures). The riskiness for interpersonal relations may explain why this is not found in the quotidian apologies looked at by Robinson (2004), and why it is found but once in this data set.

4.5.3 Absence of reaction to an apology

So far I have provided support for the view espoused by Robinson (2004) (and Levinson, 1983 for that matter) that apologies are first pair parts of an adjacency
pair, albeit I have shown that there are additional possible responses. Here though I will show that a response to the apology itself can be wholly absent and that this is unmarked.

Example 53 (an extended version of 36) shows that some apologies do not predicate the need for a response from the interlocutor (i.e. the absence of a response to the apology will not be commented upon by the apologiser, as one would expect if they did enter into adjacency pairs). In this case, we have an apology as the first turn constructional unit of a speaker’s extended turn.

(53) Leveson Inquiry Day 72 am, Pages 26-7 (Q = Robert Jay; A = Jack Straw)
1 Q: of course you you were foreign secretary at this time
2 (0.3) we’ve heard evidence (.) somewhat unclear evidence
3 about three telephone calls between mister blair and mister
4 murdoch in march two thousand and three? are you able to
5 throw any light on those?
⇒ 6 A: i’m sorry mister jay i’m not er er i think i was vaguely
7 aware that they’d taken place but but (0.2) .hh it’s quite
8 hard to get across t- k- (0.2) to those who weren’t involved,
9 the pace of events at this time um i mean i- (0.2) at the
10 beginning of march (0.6) on the fifth or sixth of march i
11 went to new york for what became- what turned out to
12 be the last of the (0.5) the sec- series of security council
13 ⇒ 13 LEV: (1.0) but how important was it um politically to (0.2) as it
14 were? get a newspaper onside be- because the public had
15 to be convinced?
16
Straw’s apology for being unable to answer is followed by a long (14 further lines in the Inquiry transcript) justification for why he is unable to answer (which constitutes a particularised conversational implicature interpretable as an apology). The apology receives none of the uptake discussed previously, indeed Leveson does not acknowledge it at all and moves on to the next question. One argument for why this occurs is that by the time the speaker has relinquished the floor after the long turn at talk, it is no longer relevant for the hearer to comment upon the apology.

Other scenarios where the apology receives no uptake is where it is used to apologise for overlapping or interruption, as in (54) and (55)

(54) Leveson Inquiry Day 86 am, Pages 8-9 (Q = Robert Jay; A = David Cameron)
Q: do you think [the-]
A: [but what] it- er sorry what it has leant me towards is
spending quite a lot of the focus er and this is in my
evidence (.) quite a lot of focus on broadcasting. [1 page
of evidence]
Q: yes:: and broadcasters are subject to quite different
regulations of course.

(55) **Leveson Inquiry Day 74 pm, Page 45 (Q = Robert Jay; A = Peter, Lord Mandelson)**

Q: okay well the last point you make if we go back to your
statement at oh six nine oh six. this part of your state[ment]
A: [i mean] i’m sorry i just think that writing me a letter like
that i mean it just showed such chutzpah […]
Q: mm well you’ve drawn it to out attention lord mandelson
so it’s there.

However, it is not just the sequential position of the apology which affects whether or
not it receives a response. There are instances where the apology appears turn-finally
and is the main function of the turn but where uptake from counsel or Lord Justice
Leveson is absent, despite a response being a plausibly relevant response. The example
below highlight this.

(56) **Leveson Inquiry Day 74 am, Page 68 (A = Tessa Jowell)**

LEV: i’m not trying to inquire into your personal circumstances
you understand.
A: no no no this doesn’t take much er invitation for me to start
talking about this i’m afraid so do forgive me.
LEV: (1.5) but uhhh did you pursue anything through the ppc?
A: (1.0) hm i’m sure that this is such an inadequate answer but
really there is much of that that time that i (.) simply can’t
remember.

Note that a preferred response to the apology is not pursued by the apologiser, as is
shown to be the case in Robinson (2004) and which he cites as evidence for his view
that apologies form adjacency pairs in quotidian conversation.

Table 4.2 shows the frequencies with which apologies do not receive a response
according to their sequential position in the Inquiry data. It shows that an apology
being in initial position does not preclude it receiving a response from its recipient, but
also that appearing turn finally or occupying the full turn does not guarantee that the apology will receive a response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence type</th>
<th>Sequential position</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Final</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misspeak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: The uptake received by apologies based on their sequential position and offence type.

Table 4.2 reinforces that the lack of response is a fairly common feature of the apologies at the Inquiry and this taken with the fact that sequential position does not seem to have a great bearing on the uptake the apology receives suggests to me that apologies in the inquiry context do not form adjacency pairs, but instead are part of a looser sequential relationship, which Pomerantz (1978) describes as an action chain. Pomerantz describes action chains as ‘a type of organization in which two ordered actions, Action\textsubscript{1} and Action\textsubscript{2}, are linked such that the performing of action Action\textsubscript{1} provides the possibility of the performance of Action\textsubscript{2} as an appropriate next action’ (Pomerantz, 1978:82). In this case, the action of apologising makes relevant the possibility of rejecting the need to apologise, minimizing the offensiveness of the action which precipitated the apology, or apologising in turn (as well as, rarely, questioning the sincerity of the apology). However, the non-performance of any of these actions will be unmarked, because, unlike with an adjacency pair, there is no ‘compulsion’ for a co-participant to perform any of these actions.

There is a further advantage to considering apologies as part of an action chain which is that one can include a further optional element before the apology, in this case a
complaint which we have seen does trigger some of the apologies. This taken together gives us a ‘pathway’ for apologising at the Inquiry which can be represented as in Figure 4.1:

Figure 4.1: A pathway for apologising at the Inquiry, dashed elements are optional.

4.5.4 Apologies performing repair

So far we have looked particularly at examples of apologies where the main function is, indeed, to apologise. In this section we will look at apologies which are used to indicate that repair work is needed. Robinson (2006) suggests that speakers use apology tokens in the performance of this action in order to make clear that they feel responsible for the need for the repair; this seems a plausible account, but a number of the examples in this data set suggest to me a different interpretation.

(57) Leveson Inquiry Day 84 pm, Page 13 (Q = Robert Jay, A = Ed Miliband)
1 Q: to- to what extent do you give weight to the chilling effect argument and coupled with that i suppose are
2 the unintended consequences of regulation which we’ve-
3 we’ve heard from one or two witnesses?
4 A: (1.8) i’m sorry mister jay would you just explain the qu-
5 the qu- what you’re seeking from the question?
6 Q: sorry! the chilling effect (.) that if you are not careful with
7 regulation you have a:::?=

Miliband’s apology may be used to minimise the imposition of having Jay repeat (or rephrase) what he has already asked, and may additionally indicate Miliband’s regret that his lack of understanding has impeded the ‘flow’ in conversation, which conversational partners aim for. However, rather than interpreting Miliband’s utterance as a ‘usual’ apology and either suggesting the apology was unnecessary or asserting that the action was inoffensive, Jay apologises himself. Jay’s ‘sorry’ indicates that he believes the offence lies with him and that Miliband’s need for clarification derives from his unclear question, rather than a fault on Miliband’s part. Jay’s reaction to Miliband’s initial apology would suggest that these apologies are not interpreted by hearers as indicating the speaker’s regret at her misunderstanding, but instead, are viewed as mitigation of a request for clarification (implicit in which is a complaint about the quality of a prior utterance).

A request for repair can also contain within it contradiction of a prior turn at talk. The following example in which Vince Cable seeks to repair the assertion that he knew the name of another witness found in counsel’s question further indicates this:

(58) **Leveson Inquiry Day 81 am, Page 29 (Q = Robert Jay, A = Vincent Cable)**

1 Q: so you knew his [Frederic Michel’s – J.M.] name at the time. (0.4) did you know what his status was within the company?=

⇒ 4 A: =no i’m sorry! (0.2) i said at the time i didn’t (. ) register who mister frederic michel was, (0.3) i knew who james murdoch was.

⇒ 7 Q: my apologies. (0.2) you did say that.

Here Cable’s apology is coupled with an explicit statement identifying that he is not responsible for the repair, since he has already provided evidence which is contrary to Mr Jay’s question. Also noteworthy is that whilst Cable’s ‘I’m sorry’ is a generalised conversational implicature (GCI) potentially interpretable as an apology, Jay’s response is an explicit apology token only interpretable as an apology (recall the categorisation of apology tokens set out in §2.5.2). Examples like this suggest that it is too simplistic to view apologies doing repair as indicative of the apologiser indexing a sense of responsibility for the need for repair. They may also indicate that apology tokens are undergoing semantic changes, in that they can introduce elements which the apologiser does not feel at fault for, but rather thinks her interlocutor is to blame for. This will be returned to in chapter 7.
4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown the main offences performed by politicians when giving their evidence at a major public inquiry, namely the Leveson Inquiry. We have seen that many of these offences are interactional in nature, rather than being for tangible transgressions and this allows for comparability with previous studies into apologies in quotidian conversation (Robinson, 2004, 2006). Indeed, unlike the parliamentary apologies discussed in the previous chapter, the apologies at the Leveson inquiry are spontaneous and authored by the politician alone. Further comparability comes by virtue of the relatively simple participation structure in that the recipient of the apology is nearly always the utterance’s addressee – most unlike in Parliament, but the same as we find in most cases in everyday conversation.

We saw that the relationship between apology and response is less strict at the Inquiry than in everyday talk, and that responses when not given are not pursued by co-participants. Where we do find responses, they are similar in nature to those found in everyday talk. I suggest that apologies (in this setting at least) form action chains, rather than a stricter sequential relation like the adjacency pair. This allows us to consider apologies as part of larger sequential structures; a structure which has an optional complaint triggering the apology followed by an optional response to the apology. That response can take a variety of forms, including questioning the sincerity of the apology, rejecting the need to apologise, minimising the seriousness of the offence and apologising in turn.

Apologies can be used in the performance of repair work at the Inquiry, as is the case in quotidian talk. However, I suggest that simply because an apology is used does not mean the speaker is taking responsibility for the fault, it may simply be the case that apology tokens have become routinized to the extent that they merely indicate that something ‘unexpected’ has taken place. The idea that apologetic meaning may be ‘bleaching’ will be returned to in chapter 7.4.
Chapter 5

News interviews

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter we continue with the conversation analytic approach of the previous chapter, but here we look at apologies produced in the course of news interviews. Broadcast interviews are a venue in which apologies are sought by journalists and may be provided or resisted by political interviewees. Also different from the apologies at the Leveson Inquiry is that the apologies produced at news interviews are usually for tangible offences and not for the sort of interactional difficulties which were the main focus of the previous chapter. News interviews are also a place where the quality of a previously produced apology (either by the interviewee or a third party) may be discussed – these metapragmatic aspects will be left to one side until chapter 7. The focus in this chapter will, once again, be on the sequential organisation of apologies – their triggers and the uptake that they receive. In addition, I will discuss how politicians perform refusals to apologise.

The chapter will be structured thus: section 5.2 will give background on the news interview and provide details of the data of interest here; section 5.3 will outline how apologies are organised within the interviews; section 5.4 discusses the case of refusing to answer a question and how this becomes ‘apologisable’; section 5.5 returns to the effect participation structure can have on the sequences that apologies enter into; section 5.6 contains examples of a variety of ways in which a politician can refuse to apologise; section 5.7 provides conclusions.
5.2 Background and data selection

News interviews are a venue in which politicians come to discuss policy, criticise opponents, defend their actions and, on occasion, apologise and discuss previous apologies. Clayman & Heritage (2002:2ff) discuss how news interviews have become an increasingly important feature of broadcast news and political life. They make clear that the news interview:

is a locus of direct and essentially unscripted encounters between journalists and a wide range of public figures, including government officials at the highest levels. It is an arena in which journalists perform certain core democratic functions: soliciting statements of official policy, holding officials accountable for their actions, and managing the parameters of public debate, all of this under the immediate scrutiny of the citizenry. (Clayman & Heritage, 2002:2)

In this chapter, we are particularly interested in how the scrutiny of the overhearing viewer has an influence on the way politicians apologise and how such apologies are reacted to by journalists performing this important ‘watchdog’ function.

News interviews share some similarities with inquiry discourse in that the main turn types involved are questions and answers. The quality of those answers is frequently scrutinised by members of the public and interviewers themselves. For instance, in a magazine interview about his questioning style, Andrew Neil\(^1\) decried the stock answers which some politicians produce regardless of the question:

You try to cut them [the politicians] off at the pass. By now you know what the stock answers are going to be to difficult questions so you try to frame the question in a way that allows for that. I have to say it still doesn’t result in getting very clear answers. It’s really frustrating to try and get clear answers from politicians.

So if Grice’s quantity maxim is strictly adhered to when answering questions in the courtroom, but it less important at the Inquiry, then some interviewers would complain that many politicians ignore it almost completely in news interviews.

In his work on broadcast interviews, Montgomery (2007:146) identifies ‘four principal sub-genres’ of interviews, namely: ‘(1) interviews with correspondents (reporting and commenting); (2) interviews with ordinary people affected by, or caught up in, the news (witnessing, reacting and expressing); (3) interviews with experts (informing and

\(^1\)Neil is presenter of the BBC’s Daily/Sunday Politics and This Week and was the founding chairman of Sky TV, helping to set up the 24-hour news channel, Sky News. A number of the examples in this chapter have Neil as the interviewer.
explaining); and (4) interviews with ‘principals’ – public figures with some kind of responsible role in relation to the news event (accounting).

We are interested in this chapter in type 4 – interviews with principals. As Montgomery notes, these types of interview ‘are in practice extremely rare within the context of the standard bulletin news programme’ (Montgomery, 2007:147, his emphasis). Because of this, the main sources of data in this chapter are extended, in-depth current affairs and politics programmes whose focus is on the more detailed analysis of the day’s/week’s news. Examples of such programmes are the BBC’s Andrew Marr Show, Daily and Sunday Politics, Newsnight and Today programmes, Sky News’ Boulton & Co. and Murnaghan slots, as well as Channel 4 News. The data were collected on an ad-hoc basis – transcripts (even rudimentary ones) are lacking for most of these programmes and the transcripts that do exist do not necessarily make note of the apologies contained in the interview. As a result, I recorded as many political interviews as possible and consulted repositories of back-editions of other current affairs programmes and transcribed those interviews which contained apologies or discussion of apologies. This is clearly not ideal as the resulting collection of apologies is not necessarily a representative sample of political apologies at news interviews. It is in part because of this that I treat these data exclusively in a qualitative way and eschew any descriptive statistics which may give a false impression of having statistical significance.

The data collection resulted in 42 transcribed interviews, which compares reasonably favourably to the 250 interviews upon which Clayman & Heritage (2002) base their monograph-length treatment of all aspects of the British and American news interview. The set of interviews discussed in this chapter, whilst not necessarily truly representative of apologies in broadcast media, is certainly a cohesive one – they come from similar programme types (with an interviewer asking the questions, rather than members of the public in a panel debate set-up), they were all produced in the last five years, and are part of unedited interviews which were broadcast either live, or as-live.

5.3 Apologies in sequential structures

5.3.1 Apologies as responses to triggers

Discussed in §4.5 was the fact that apologies can come about at the Inquiry as a result of an utterance interpretable as a complaint, but that such a preceding utterance is not necessary. The apologies in this data set, except those where the apology is for a talk
offence, invariably come about as a result of some immediately prior utterance of the interviewer (‘a trigger’). These triggers can be implicit, taking the form of a complaint, or explicit, invitations or requests for the interviewee to apologise. Consider example 59 in which Andrew Neil comments that tube strikes affect lower-paid people who rely on the Underground as an essential service:

(59) **Bob Crow on The Sunday Politics – 16 February 2014, AN= Andrew Neil**

1. AN: you’ve said that you couldn’t care less if we have a million
2. strikes. (0.4) that the people (0.2) these lowly lower paid
3. people who travel on the tube, who need the tube as an
4. essential service (0.2) they could care.
5. BC: well of course they do and as i’ve said before i apologise to
6. the travelling public for the dispute that took place bu-
7. AN: twenty four strikes in thirteen years?
8. BC: well it takes two to tango. if the employer (0.5) er never
9. imposed terms and conditions upon us against our will=
10. AN: =but you’ve got great terms and conditions!
11. BC: but they are trying to worsen them. (0.2) that’s what they
12. are trying to do.

Neil’s utterance is interpretable as a complaint and this triggers an apology from Bob Crow, the late leader of the Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers. We might postulate that Crow’s apology would not have been produced had the interviewer not made a complaint. The complaint makes relevant an apology and without a slot created by the interviewer for it to happen, it is difficult to see how the interviewee can make such a slot for herself.

Other ways an apology can be made relevant by the interviewer include an invitation to apologise. Example 60 demonstrates this:

(60) **David Cameron appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 2 October 2011**

1. AM: […] and the prime minister joins us now. (0.2) good
2. morning prime minister.
3. DC: good morning
∴ 4. AM: um you’re apologising to women!
∴ 5. DC: yes i mean .hhhhhh i er obviously said some things in the
6. house of commons that er just CAME OUT WRONG and
∴ 7. er caused the wrong impression and de- er i deeply regret
8. and i was asked about it in an interview with the sunday
9. times and i just said what i think.
The interviewer alludes to an interview Cameron gave to the Sunday Times in which he apologised for his use of sexist language in the House of Commons\textsuperscript{2}. This statement invites Cameron to expand on what he said in that interview for the benefit of the audience. Cameron takes this opportunity – he first gives a (vague) account of what the offence was, its effect (components of a fulsome apology) and comments on his regret (a conventional means of apologising).

An explicit request for an apology also ‘opens up a slot’ for the political interviewee to apologise, or at least in the case of (61) to agree that he is apologising.

\textbf{(61) Vince Cable on Newsnight with Jeremy Paxman 19 September 2012}

12 JP: and er you:: (0.4) also want to apologise do you? for what
you said and did before the election? \{when you were
asking for people’s votes\}
15 VC: \{YES (0.3) we-
we are collectively res\}ponsible for- \textsuperscript{6}we all participated in
17 the=\textsuperscript{6}
18 JP: =so it’s not just nick clegg? IT’S THE WHOLE the whole-
the whole parliamentary party wants to apologise?
20 VC: err yes it is (0.6) er he’s said it as party leader but i share
21 the responsibility and i don’t shirk from that.

In example 61 Cable is discussing an apology given by his party’s leader, Nick Clegg, for increasing tuition fees despite an election pledge not to do so. Cable agrees that he is apologising because he shares in the responsibility for making that pledge and voting against it, along with the rest of the party’s leadership.

Whilst an apology request can be explicit, this does not, however, guarantee an equally explicit response and it also does not mean that the interviewee will take the opportunity to apologise, despite it being made relevant. Consider the following exchange:

\textbf{(62) Mary Creagh appearing on The Sunday Politics – 10 February 2013}

5 AN: but (0.3) it turns out labour stopped testing for horsemeat
\Rightarrow 6 in two thousand and three (0.3) would you like to apologise
7 for that?
\Rightarrow 8 MC: (0.4) well um (0.4) food state- sa- st- standards authority
9 tests for the prescence of adulteration on the basis of
10 intelligence and the last tests was done in two thousand

\textsuperscript{2}The article in question can be found here http://www.thetimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/National/article788845.ece. Cameron told a female opposition MP to “Calm down dear!” at PMQs – a comment which attracted a lot of media coverage, and criticism.
and three and since then there has as far as i’m aware there hasn’t been any intelligence that there’s been horsemeat that’s been passed off as beef but that what we do know is that it was found in ireland in the last four week and the question for the environment secretary is why hasn’t he ordered wi::despread tests on the ten million beef burgers have already been withdrawn?

In (62), the question literally asks about the desirability of producing an apology, but this form of question is so conventionalised as to indicate an invitation or request. The ‘positively formulated straight interrogative’ prefers a positive yes-answer, with a fulfilment of the request or invitation (Heritage, 2010). Here we find the dispreferred response – a non-fulfilment of the invitation. Note Creagh’s initial delay in responding to the question, the ‘well’-preface to her first turn which is an indicator of non-straightforwardness (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009), followed by a further hesitation marker and pause. What follows in her answer represents an account of why she feels it unnecessary to apologise – testing for adulteration is done on the basis of intelligence, and no intelligence had been received, which is not the fault of her or the previous Labour government. We shall return to refusals to apologise in section 5.6.

5.3.2 Uptake and apologies

I discussed earlier (§4.5) how apologies initiate action chains, with apologies frequently receiving some uptake (such as thanking, or suggesting the apology is unnecessary) but that the absence of uptake will not be viewed as marked. Uptake in news interviews is much more infrequent and some forms of uptake are not utilised by interviewers. In the following section, I will try to explain why this might be the case.

Firstly, why might uptake be less common in the news interview? Here, as was the case in parliamentary apologies, participation structure is of some importance. As Clayman & Heritage (2002:120) note:

Adherence to news interview turn-taking procedures embodies a special “footing” (Goffman 1981; Levinson 1988) in which the parties treat their talk as geared to the “overhearing” news audience.

This means that, whilst the interviewer may be the addressee of the politician’s talk (and apology), he is not necessarily the recipient of it. To be more explicit: it is rare that the interviewer is the offended party3 and thus the intended recipient of an

3Rare, but not impossible; see example C.37 in Appendix C, where Paul Kenny apologises for calling
interviewee’s apology. As a result, it is not in the gift of the interviewer to provide uptake for the apology. An acceptance or rejection of the apology can only come from those to whom it was directed – in most cases individual members of the overhearing audience.

Uptake, then, is infrequent because of the nature of participation structure in news interviews. However, I think there is more to it than just that. What Robinson (2004) describes as the preferred response to an apology in quotidian conversation, that of rejecting the need to apologise, is wholly absent in the apology exchanges from broadcast interviews which I have analysed. I think this fact stems from the need on the part of the interviewer to aim for journalistic neutrality. In order to achieve this neutrality, interviewers tend to restrict themselves to asking questions and when ‘interviewers do produce assertions, these are generally restricted to a single “legitimate” environment: prior to, and in conjunction with, a subsequent question’ (Clayman & Heritage, 2002:126). This restriction on the turn types usually allocated to interviewers restricts the possibility of uptake to an apology. Moreover, rejecting the need to apologise would greatly impinge on the interviewer’s impartiality and would likely be seen as ‘taking sides’ with the politician – something which journalists would seek to avoid.

Whilst uptake might be infrequent and certain forms of uptake might not be available to the interviewer, it is not the case that politicians’ apologies always pass by without comment. Where uptake exists, it frequently takes a form which was not found in the inquiry data. The interviewer, on occasion, challenges the validity of an apology, or questions whether the way in which an apology is expressed is satisfactory. Consider the following example:

(63) **Douglas Alexander on Newsnight By-Election Special with Emily Maitlis**

– 12 January 2011

⇒ 6 DA: well (0.2) of course we regret what happened an’ phil woolas has paid a very heavy price but my sense is (. ) this election isn’ going to be about what phil woolas did last year [9 lines omitted]

⇒ 18 EM: but is it about (0.3) ok you’ve said it’s a regret but is it an apology? would you like to take this opportunity to ((pointing at audience of local people present)) apologise to the people of oldham for what happened?!

⇒ 22 DA: i deeply regret what happen{ed an’ as i say} phil {NO APOLOGY?}

⇒ 23 EM: has paid a very heavy price= [...]
In (63), we find Douglas Alexander, a senior figure in the Labour Party, expressing regret (a conventional apology token) for his party’s involvement in the production of libellous campaign material used by Phil Woolas, a former Labour minister who was seeking re-election in 2010. Mr. Woolas won the Oldham East and Saddleworth seat at the general election, but was stripped of the result and barred from being an MP when a specially convened election court found him guilty of using libellous materials. In line 18, the interviewer questions whether Alexander’s implicated apology is sufficient; that is, she questions whether the apology has been expressed satisfactorily. Following this, Alexander reiterates his ‘deep’ regrets (line 22) and the acceptability of this utterance is, again, questioned by Maitlis (line 23).4

5.4 Refusal to answer

In their work on answers and evasions in news interviews, Clayman & Heritage discuss the ‘special case of refusing to answer’ (2002:264ff) an interviewer’s question. Explicitly refusing to answer a question represents ‘perhaps the strongest “breach of contract”’ (Clayman & Heritage, 2002:264) between interviewer (charged with asking questions on behalf of the audience) and interviewee (who tacitly accepts that s/he will answer those questions put to him/her in agreeing to be interviewed). One strategy not found in Clayman & Heritage’s data is that of an apology on the part of the interviewee for explicitly refusing to answer a question. An instance of this does occur in my data. Jack Straw in a presumably pre-arranged doorstop interview is asked about the revelation that he has had proceedings brought against him by Abdel Hakim Belhadj. Mr. Belhadj alleged that when Straw was Foreign Secretary he was complicit in his torture by Libyan forces. A transcript of the interview can be seen in (64):

(64) Jack Straw in a pre-arranged doorstep interview for ITN – 18 April 2012

1 IE: mister straw (0.3) what is your reaction to the claims of
2 rendition brought against you by er mister belhadj?
⇒ 3 JS: i’m sorry that i (0.4) can’t say more about this case (.) but
4 with a (0.3) police investigation pending (0.5) and er this
5 intended (0.3) civil legal action (0.3) i’m sorry that’s it not
6 appropriate for me to say any more about it.

4The exchange in (63) adds weight to my suggestion elsewhere that expressing regret conventionally conveys an apology but does not do so explicitly.
5I cannot be certain that the interview was pre-arranged, but I surmise this on the basis that Mr. Straw does not look shocked at the presence of the reporters on his doorstep, and he stops to speak to the TV crew present. The interview is not conducted ‘on the run’ as is usual when a politician has been unexpectedly doorstepped.
IE: can you say how you feel about this action being brought against you personally?

JS: well (0.8) i- i- have no particular feelings er about this ummm they are entitled to bring the action er and it will be dealt with in due course.

IE: mister belhadj has er accused you of being complicit in his torture? (0.5) that’s quite a strong allegation.=

JS: =well as- as i say:: um whilst i would like to say more (. ) i’m sorry that i can’t as it would not be appropriate to do so.

We first see an apology prefacing the announcement of a refusal to answer the question, followed by an explanation of why this refusal is justified/justifiable (since the matter is *sub judice*). This opting out of Grice’s maxims is perfectly acceptable in courtroom discourse – as mentioned in the section on apologies at inquiries – with witness who fear that the response to a question will be self-incriminating being allowed to refuse to answer\(^6\). That the same type of behaviour receives an apology in the context of the news interview shows that the refusal to answer is an offence (i.e. it is non-sanctioned behaviour) which merits explanation. In choosing to participate in the interview, Straw has (tacitly) agreed to answer questions in a way which adheres to Grice’s maxims; by refusing to answer, he has violated this contract.

Given that, one would be forgiven for wondering why Mr. Straw agreed to participate in the interview in the first place. The answer to that lies, I think, in the implications which could have been drawn from Straw remaining silent when he emerged from his house and the same questions put to him by the waiting journalists. I would suggest that that silence would be interpretable (if not interpreted) as some implicit acceptance of guilt. An example of this observation would be the reaction to Bishop John Kirby’s refusal to engage with doorstepping journalists regarding his involvement in the moving of paedophile priests to other dioceses where they re-offended. His refusal to engage with the journalists led to increased speculation about the tenability of his position\(^7\).

\(^6\)This is commonly described as ‘pleading the Fifth’ in the U.S. Legal system, since the protection against self-incrimination is enshrined in the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Amar & Lettow, 1995 provide more information on the legal aspect of this phenomenon). The European Convention on Human Rights offers similar protection against self-incrimination (see Ashworth, 2008 for more on the origins and implications of this clause).

\(^7\)See for instance http://www.irishexaminer.com/archives/2012/0907/world/abuse-groups-call-for-resignation-of-bishop-kirby-206785.html. Schröter (2013:99ff) also discusses the case of members of the German political party *SPD* who remained silent in the face of corruption allegations. Their silence was taken by political rivals as an admission of guilt.
Other noteworthy elements include how the journalist pursues the point by changing subtly the framing of the question – moving from asking about Straw’s “reaction to the claims” to his feelings about the action. Straw considers his response to this question quite carefully – the answer is prefaced by “well” and a fairly lengthy pause. Straw comments on his feelings (or lack thereof), but does not elaborate, choosing to talk in general terms about the legal process. The interviewer tries once more to get Straw to respond to Mr. Belhadj’s claims which she describes as “strong”. This can be viewed as an attempt to almost goad Straw into a more fulsome response, since it is a natural instinct for accused parties to wish to repudiate ‘strong’ allegation (vs. ones without basis). Mr. Straw’s ‘well’-prefaced response again indicates that the second pair part is likely to be viewed as unsatisfactory or in some way uncooperative (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). This further breach of interactional norms receives another apology and an expression that he does not desire this state of affairs (‘I would like to say more’). This can be viewed as an attempt to distance himself from the offence since it is non-volitional (i.e. the committing of the offence is out of his hands).

This extract shows that when interviewees acknowledge that they are not answering the question, they are aware that doing so is an offence and apologise as a result.

### 5.5 Participation structure

I previously discussed how the rules which govern talk in the British Parliament have an impact upon the participation structure of talk in that setting. The effect that this has upon the form of apologies was expanded upon in some detail in section 3.4.3. The participant roles at news interviews are also somewhat different to those found in everyday conversation – in this case this is not caused by any set rules which govern the interaction, but rather this has to do with journalistic norms and the concomitant expectations of interviewees. Moreover, the lack of a physically present apologisee differentiates the apologies at news interviews from those in everyday conversation and many of the parliamentary apologies which were analysed. In this section, I shall explore participation structure of news interviews and its effect on the apologies found therein.

#### 5.5.1 Footing of complaints and responses

In section 5.3.1 I identified that apologies can be viewed as responses to requests/invitations to apologise or utterances broadly interpreted as complaints. However, as I have noted previously, the interviewer’s role means that he strives for
neutrality and so whilst the complaint that he makes may also impact upon him, it is not on his own behalf that the complaint is made, but instead on behalf of the overhearing audience (or a subset thereof).

In example 73, the interviewer makes clear what the offence is (portraying Euro-sceptics as ‘swivel-eyed [...] lunatics’) and who the offence was committed against and who therefore merits an apology (those Euro-sceptics). Note here, however, that Marr is not explicit about who should receive the apology, merely asking Alexander to apologise for his actions – but given that the offence was against a particular group an apology for an action is likely to be viewed as an apology to that transgressed group.

(65) Douglas Alexander appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 18 November 2012

4 AM: [...] and i- i- just wonder if this is the moment for people
5 like yourself > for the labour party> to sort of formally
6 apologise for all those years in which you regarded or you
7 portrayed all euro-sceptics as sort of swivel-eyed (0.3) kind
8 of dandruff-flecked lunatics?
9 DA: no listen (0.4) [...] 

In the following two examples a request is made that the interviewee apologises to a particular wronged group.

(66) Danny Alexander on BBC Breakfast with Charlie Stayt – 4 May 2012

4 CS: are you apologising to those (. ) very hard-working lib dem
5 councillors and people out there who have been walking
6 the streets tryna get votes? ARE YOU APOLOGISING
7 to them because er essentially what people are saying is
8 it’s your fault, (0.2) you and your colleagues that sit in the
9 coalition have caused the problem.

In (66) Danny Alexander is being interviewed the morning after a set of disastrous local election results for his party, the Liberal Democrats. He is asked whether or not he is apologising to those who have lost their seats because of the decisions which he and colleagues in the Coalition government had taken. Here the interviewer makes it clear who the recipient of any apology should be – that is a subset of the overhearing audience (hard-working Liberal Democrat councillors).

We return to example 63 here to further highlight this discussion on footing. I shall repeat the example as (67). What I did not mention earlier about this extract and
what makes it distinct from the two previous examples, is that it comes from a programme broadcast in the run-up to a specially convened by-election in Oldham East and Saddleworth. This programme was broadcast live from the constituency and took the form of a debate between representatives from the main parties, with questions coming from an interviewer and follow-ups and comments from constituents present in the audience.

(67) Douglas Alexander on Newsnight By-Election Special with Emily Maitlis – 12 January 2011

18 EM: but is it about (0.3) ok you’ve said it’s a regret but is it
19 an apology? would you like to take this opportunity to
20 ((pointing at audience of local people present)) apologise
21 to the people of oldham for what happened?!
22 DA: i deeply regret what happen{ed an’ as i say} phil

We can see that the presence of the audience allows the interviewer to directly invoke (some of) those deserving of the apology. This is done by not only a verbal reference, but also by a gesture – in this instance, a sweeping point gesture.

These handful of examples demonstrate what is the case about all interviewer complaints – they are never made on the interviewer’s behalf and instead they either make reference to a particular wronged party or remain vague about who has been affected by the transgression reported in the complaint.

The participation structure of the complaint may be thought of being comprised thus:

**Figure 5.1: Participation structure of a complaint at news interviews**
The principal is that group of people whose feelings are represented by the utterance, in this case the wronged party who might be viewed as deserving of the apology. The author of the complaint will be the editorial team who meet before the news interview, which the interviewer will also be a member of. The authorship of the complaint may also be contributed to by the principal. Consider example 66, where the interviewer references complaints made in the press by various Liberal Democrats councillors and mayoral candidates that the Coalition was the cause of them losing their seats\(^8\). These local Liberal Democrats described the Coalition as being ‘at fault’ and the ‘cause of problems’, and these words have found their way into Stayt’s complaint. The interviewer is the animator because he is the person giving voice to the complaint. The interviewee is clearly addressed (nearly always with a second person pronoun) and is the recipient, i.e. the person who the complaint is intended for.

As was identified earlier, complaints can be met with apologies. The participation structure of the apology (either one which follows a complaint or one which is unprompted) can be thought of as looking like this:

![Diagram of participation structure of an apology at news interviews]

The question of who plays the role of addressee in this scenario requires further attention, because, unlike in the complaint, address pronouns are not used and thus

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cannot guide our interpretation. Goffman suggests that an addressee (addressed recipient, in his terms) is ‘the one to whom the speaker addresses his visual attention and to whom, incidentally, he expects to turn over his speaking role’ (1981:133). Levinson identifies various problems with treating the addressee in this way – in the main because indirect targets where they exist are the ones expected to reply and not the nominal addressees (1988:212ff). The issue at play in this scenario is slightly more nuanced – whilst the interviewer is the person to whom the apologisee gives her attention and who she expects to speak next, it is not in direct response to the apology that the interviewer is expected to answer, and if such a response was forthcoming it would be produced on somebody else’s behalf.

### 5.5.2 Participation and speech act theory

I think our understanding of participant roles (particularly hearer roles) can be aided by introducing notions from speech act theory.\(^9\)

As I discussed in chapter 2.3.1, when speakers apologise they are responsible for the performance of three acts: the locutionary act (that is, the act of uttering the apology), the illocutionary act (the act of showing that one is apologetic and wishes to restore good relations with the interlocutor) and the perlocutionary act (the potential changing of the interlocutor’s feelings towards the apologiser).

The addressee can be viewed as the participant responsible for ‘doing something’ only with the locutionary act – that is to say addressees (if this is their sole role) need only listen to an utterance and act when the utterance has finished. A moderator at a meeting, for instance, allows participants to speak from the floor and when their turn is complete he selects the next person to speak, making no contribution himself to the discussion. In this respect, he is listening to the content of the utterance only in order to work out who the most appropriate person is to participate next and so that he is prepared for the completion of the message – he is the recipient of the locutionary act. The interviewer in a news interview, then, is the addressee of an apology since he must listen to the apology in order to judge its satisfactoriness and/or so that he knows when to ask his next question.

The recipient can be thought of as the person who the illocutionary act is intended for (the illocutionary goal, as this is sometimes referred to) and who will undergo the attendant perlocutionary effects. An example from the British National Corpus may help to clarify my thoughts here:

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\(^9\)Levinson (1988:212) does briefly talk about illocutionary goals, but goes on to dismiss ‘the whole concept of illocution [as] not a possible basis for a theory of discourse structure’.
File F85; Church of Scotland: Report on Baptism

A: Moderator between the eligibility of infant baptism and the confirmation service I find myself unclear […] Who takes the promises of a child of immature years and yet articulate? I don’t know what to do in this situation between the two.

B: Er Moderator I’m sorry I’ve not quite caught the question there. Could I be helped could the speaker just repeat the question?

Mod: Mrs [A]

A: Thank you. Sorry. Case given, you have a child who to ask for baptism, him or herself.

In the example, Mrs. A is asking a question of B, who is offering members in the Church of Scotland legal and pastoral advice. Mrs. A asks her question through the moderator, but the illocution is not directed at him (that is to say, the moderator is not being asked to answer, that is the duty of B. B in asking for repetition addresses the moderator but again it is clear that the moderator is not the person who is required to answer. However, it is necessary for the moderator to respond to the completion of the locution in order to nominate Mrs. A for a further turn. In both instances the moderator is, therefore, the addressee but not the recipient – he is responsible only for reacting to the locution and not the illocution.

The complexity of the participant structure impacts upon the nature of the apology in ways which I have already identified. In section 5.3.2, I noted that accepting or rejecting an apology is not a response available to the news interviewer, in part because of his need to remain impartial. The participant structure also prevents this. Since the news interviewer is not the recipient of the apology, it is not within his purview to decide whether the desired perlocutionary effects have been achieved. However, he can question the satisfactoriness of an apology produced, since this may be viewed as a means of making a further complaint and pursuing the ‘best’ possible expression of apology for those who he is complaining on behalf of.

However, this adds a further complication which warrants explanation. If the interviewer is able to decide that an apology is satisfactory and is therefore able to move on to the next question, does this not mean that he is also in receipt of the illocutionary act? I think that this is not the case. The news interviewer is a competent user of English, and has some experience of which locutions are viewed as felicitously (or infelicitously) performing a given speech act. He is aware that ‘I’m sorry’ or ‘I regret’ (and other potentially implicated apologies) are not always
viewed as performing apologies, or at least, not appropriate ones. He does not, therefore, need to be a recipient of the illocution to decide whether an attempt at an apology is satisfactory or not – he merely needs to ‘monitor’ the way the locution is performed.

5.5.3 Role reversal: The case of Chris Bryant

Having discussed the footing of a ‘standard’ apology exchange, I wish to briefly highlight in this section what can happen if a politician attempts to subvert these usual roles. In example 69, Chris Bryant, a prominent Labour MP, seeks an apology from interviewer, Kay Burley. Bryant was a prominent campaigner against News International newspapers and was one of the first MPs to call for an inquiry into phone hacking; this resulted in the Inquiry which we looked at in the preceding chapter. Burley, who works for the sister company of News International, BSkyB, dismissed Bryant’s allegations in an interview of June 2010.

(69)  

Chris Bryant on Afternoon Live, Sky News with Kay Burley – 9 September 2010

1  CB: now er kay (0.3) you’ll remember that a few months ago you and i er had a: discussion on- on this channel and i said that all of this was endemic in this industry and you attacked me for saying that. (0.4) i hope you’re gonna apologise now=

2  KB: =do you think gordon and sarah brown are going to apologise now?=

3  CB: you going to apologise now?= i’m certainly not going to apologise to you ((chuckles)) mister bry

4  KB: =i’m certainly not going to apologise to you ((chuckles)) mister bry{ant no::} {why not?}

5  CB: {I THINK THEY ARE} they are interested because you have pursued a particular version (0.4) of your own (. on what happened here and too many people i’m afraid, (0.2) dismissed this whole story .hhh and that’s been one of the problems. that too many people have been intimidated into not running this story, too many people have dismissed it, i have to say (0.3) on behalf- er (. ) sky over the last couple of weeks have been absolutely exemplary in this. (0.2)
i think it’s time that you apologi:sed.

KB: okay if i could just hehe continue on with my questioning

if that’s ok? do you think gordon and sarah brown now

regret their close relationship with news international over

the years?

Bryant invites an apology from Burley (lines 4-5), but this is not taken up – instead Burley latches her utterance with Bryant’s preventing him from having further floor time and attempting to bring the interview back to a usual format by asking a question. By trying to produce an expected turn-type, we might argue that she is attempting to re-assert her control over the interview. The implicit rejection of the invitation to apologise is made explicit (lines 8-9) in the face of a request for an apology (line 7). Burley’s chuckle in the reject may index her discomfort at this unexpected turn.

When asked why she will not apologise, Burley makes reference to what was mentioned in the opening to this chapter – journalists should not be ‘the story’ and viewers are not (or ought not be) interested in the interviewee’s beliefs and opinions. The interviewer’s role is to elicit the opinions of the interviewee.

A final invitation is offered by Bryant and resisted by Burley who makes a clear reference to the fact that she is moving on to ask questions, i.e. returning to a normal state of affairs where she and Bryant will occupy the ‘proper’ participant roles. The rarity of a politician taking an interviewer ‘to task’ in this way stems, I suspect, from the fact that politicians wish to appear on the news and behaving in a trangressive way (as in this case, by subverting the participant roles) will likely mean that the politician finds it difficult to obtain a repeat invite to appear again on the show.

5.6 Refusal to apologise

In section 5.3.1, I briefly outlined how interviewees avoid giving apologies. In this section, I will examine in more detail how politicians perform not apologising. Firstly, I will look at how this is done when they have been invited to apologise by the interviewer (i.e. prompted). Secondly, I will explore how politicians announce a refusal to apologise, despite not being asked to perform such a speech act by the interviewer.
5.6.1 Prompted

5.6.1.1 Questioning the ‘apologisability’ of an action

In example 70, the Europe Minister is asked twice (lines 35 and 38) whether he owes his former private secretary an apology. The secretary resigned his post so that he could vote against the Government whip in favour of a referendum on the UK’s membership of the European Union. However, not long after his resignation, the Conservative Party changed its policy to support such a referendum.

(70) David Lidington appearing on The Sunday Politics – 27 January 2012, AN = Andrew Neil
AN: sure (0.2) do you owe your former private secretary an apology?
DL: n-no ADAM and i:: have always got on both before he resigned and {(unclear)}
AN: {SO DO YOU OWE HIM AN APOLOGY}GY
DL: i don’t think it’s a matter of apology! {{i think-}}
AN: {{he lost his job}}
DL: the debates that took place in twenty eleven was over a different matter (0.2) it was over having a referendum AT THAT time there was absolutely no certainty (0.2) we’re talking now about having a referendum in the NEXT parliament at a stage wh- after a negotiation has taken place.

The interruption in line 37 makes it more difficult to analyse Lidington’s response to the first invitation to apologise; however, that he mentions his rapport with his private secretary may indicate that he views the need to apologise as mitigated because of this good relationship. The response to the second question is more clear cut. He explicitly rejects the idea that the act in question merits an apology (line 39). In lines 42-46 he expands on this by describing how the referendum under discussion now is different from the one that his private secretary voted for. Since Lidington views his actions as non-offensive, he does not believe them to require an apology.

5.6.1.2 Highlighting previous apology

In the following example, Andrew Marr invites Ed Balls, the Shadow Chancellor, to apologise for Labour’s role in ‘overspending’ during their time in office.
Ed Balls appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 19 June 2011

AM: um can i start by looking (0.3) er going back if i may to
this whole question. (0.3) of whether you in particular
labour in general have been ready enough to apologise for
and to explain a period of overspending (0.4) in power
(0.2) because last time we talked (0.3) you said um that
there hadn’t been a structural deficit (0.3) >>just going
back >> um the oecd the imf um >>all these international
bodies >> say (0.2) oh yes there was!

EB: well we’ve had this conversation {many times and i’m
going to say the same thing}

AM: {I KNOW but it seems it
seems} to be central

EB: to you as i’ve said before the truth is that there was a
global financial crisis (0.4) hh because of a failure of

⇒⇒

lehman brothers in new york didn’t go bankrupt because of
excessive spending in britain on the nhs (. ) {and in the run
up} to the crisis

AM: {su::re}

Balls explicitly rejects the idea that public spending caused the financial crisis and later in the interview rejects the idea that there was any overspending during Labour’s time in office, matters which Andrew Marr invited him to apologise for. However, mentioning a previous apology (though for a different matter) allows him to demonstrate that he is not incapable of apologising – a trait which would potentially indicate arrogance on his part, since never apologising would suggest that he views himself as infallible.

However, highlighting a previous apology is, to some extent, a risky strategy. By merely reporting an apology, the interviewee does not allow the recipient(s) to judge its sincerity – meaning that the intended perlocutionary effects (forgiveness, a return to normal relations, etc.) may not be achieved through this non-performative realisation of apologising. Moreover, this strategy can lead to further (unwanted) scrutiny of an apology. Consider example 72, in which the Transport Minister, Mike Penning, was asked about the mistaken advice given by a Cabinet Minister (Francis Maude) to store petrol in jerry cans in case there was a strike by fuel tanker drivers:

Mike Penning appearing on Newsnight with Jeremy Paxman – 28 March 2012
are people supposed to have petrol in jerry cans in the garages they may or may not have?

no. cos jerry- you can’t store that amount of petrol or {die} sel. it was a mistake

it was a mistake by the cabinet minister (.) > he didn’t understand the size of a jerry can> (0.2) he’s apologised since (.) but actually what we are trying to do is get a common sense approach .hh if the strike goes ahead we will have shortages, […]

This highlighting of a previous apology led to further embarrassment for the government, because no record of such an apology was actually found, leading the press to refer to the supposed statement variously as a ‘phantom’ apology and an ‘alleged’ apology. Such scrutiny would presumably have been avoided, had Penning performatively apologised for the wrong advice given by Maude.

5.6.1.3 Straight refusal

A straight refusal sees the interviewee reject the interviewer’s invitation to apologise without mitigation – that is, there is no attempted negotiation about why the act does not merit an apology and nor is there a mention of a previous apology. In the case below, the interviewee contests the existence of the offensive act, rather than questioning the offensiveness of it. Example 73 sees Andrew Marr asking Douglas Alexander about an interview he gave to one of the Sunday papers about the rise of the right-wing, Eurosceptic, United Kingdom Independence Party:

(73) Douglas Alexander appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 18 November 2012

[...] about quite a few things (0.2) and i- i- just wonder if this is the moment for people like yourself > for the labour party> to sort of formally apologise for all those years in which you regarded or you portrayed all euro-sceptics as sort of swivel-eyed (0.3) kind of dandruff-flecked lunatics?

no listen (0.4) i think you’re reflecting the views of the headline writer rather than of the leader of the labour party

.hhh the truth is we’re very proud of Britain’s role in Europe over recent decades […]

Alexander straightforwardly rejects the invitation to apologise (‘no’, line 9) and goes on to suggest that the headline writer wrongly characterised the Labour Party as viewing Eurosceptics as ‘dandruff-flecked lunatics’. Since the supposed offensive act is not real (according to Alexander, at least), he cannot apologise for it, hence the refusal.

5.6.2 Unprompted

Unprompted refusals are not triggered by anything said in the preceding talk by the interviewer; that is to say, the interviewer neither requests nor invites an apology, nor does the questioner criticise the matter which the politician then refuses to apologise for. An example of this is found in (74).

(74) Gordon Brown appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 27 September 2009

1 AM: you would say that unemployment has peaked yet (0.4) and
2 the CBI talks about it peaking just under three million
3 GB: er (0.3) < i would say that< the rate of increase has
4 been slowing (.) hh i mean the facts are very- very-
5 very clear but we’ve had to deal with the:: summer
6 school leavers (.) we’ve had to deal with graduates and
7 college leavers leaving to try to get wo::rk (0.5) er but
8 () every month about three hundred thousand people are
9 going back into work (0.4) er thi- this is the er most er
10 co-ordinated employment plan to deal with a recession that
⇒ 11 any government has done and i don’t apologise for the fact
12 that that has meant that we’ve had to raise the deficit to pay
13 for it because I DON’T WANT to return to a situation of
14 the nineteen eighties

Unprompted refusals can also take the form ‘I’m not sorry for/about’ or ‘I don’t regret’. Brown’s outright refusal to apologise is not triggered or prompted by anything said in the interview but relates, I suspect to the criticism of his government emanating from the Conservative Party around the time of the interview. The Tories were arguing that the deficit was out of control and something for which the Prime Minister should apologise (indeed, at the previous two Prime Minister’s Questions, Brown received questions from David Cameron and Tory backbenchers calling on him to apologise for the state of the economy).
Unprompted refusals, then, are a means of questioning an existing opposing narrative that an action is apologisable. It also allows the politician to offer reasons for why she views an act as not warranting an apology. Moreover, if apologising is a means of showing that one is ready to admit one’s mistakes, then it might be argued (especially by politicians and their spin doctors) that refusing to apologise (or questioning the need to) is a way of showing conviction and a belief in the integrity of one’s actions.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed apologies at news interviews. We have seen that most apologies come as a result of a previous utterance interpretable as a complaint or invitation/request to apologise. The presence of such such a potential trigger does not guarantee an apology, however, and apology refusals were also discussed. There we found that an apology could be outright refused with the interviewee denying the existence of an offence, refused by calling into question the apologisibility of an action, or a mention of a previous apology standing in place of a performative apology.

Where a performative apology is produced, the nature of the participation status of the interviewer limits the type of response he can give thereto. Since he is not the recipient of the illocution, the interviewer cannot reject the need for the apology or accept it, but as the addressee (and recipient of the locution) he can question the satisfactoriness of the form of the apology. This type of response we do find.

Also discussed in this chapter was the case of a politician apologising for refusing to answer a question. Opting out of providing an answer breaks the implicit contract the interviewee enters into – that she will answer questions to the best of her ability, and so this behaviour merits an apology. Taking part in an interview when one knows one is unable to answer is done because the alternative of remaining silent can be take to be an admission of guilt.

News interviews often contain within them talk about apologies produced elsewhere. This has been neglected in this chapter, but will be returned to in chapter 7. This means that we have not heard the last of news interviews in this thesis.
Chapter 6

Historical apologies

6.1 Introduction

My goal in this chapter is to discuss how politicians apologise for historic transgressions (an action which I will refer to as an historical apology). As the title of Gibney et al.’s 2008 volume makes clear, we are currently in the age of apology which has been precipitated, it is suggested, by the ‘almost universal recognition that a society will not be able to successfully pass into the future until it somehow deals with its demons from the past’ (Howard-Hassmann & Gibney, 2008:1). In just the last five years, the British Government has made public apologies for the Hillsborough tragedy, the events of Bloody Sunday, the child migration schemes and the treatment of the Kenyan Mau-Mau. The prevalence of these apologies, as well as the legal and political minefield that they frequently have to tread through, makes them of particular interest to study. The above apologies, as well as a handful of others – all of which were made in Parliament – will be the focus of this chapter.

Whilst I do not intend to engage at length in the philosophical and sociological debates about the appropriateness of such apologies, I do feel it necessary to discuss some aspects of this, in the main to outline why I view these historical apologies as felicitous (or at least, worthy of discussion in a thesis which concerns itself with political apologies).

Historical apologies tend to differ from the apologies looked at so far in another way – that is, they are frequently based on consensus rather than emanating from division. Historical apologies are usually the subject of agreement across the political divide (though often face criticism from outside of party politics, as will be seen in section 6.2). Since parliamentary discourse is usually disputatious (or at least: deliberative), it is important to explore what is ‘special’ about historical apologies as events that
they result in agreement and support amongst, if not all, then the vast majority of Members of Parliament. To this end this chapter is structured thus: section 6.2 explores the felicity of historical apologies; 6.3 summarises the apologies which are investigated; 6.4 discusses how historical apologies are best thought of as forming an activity type (Levinson, 1979); we return to participant structure in section 6.5 and explore its peculiarities in this genre; in section 6.6 I will discuss the structure of the apology statements themselves, and how they are mostly taken up with describing the offences in question and other matters rather than simply apology tokens, conclusions are offered in §6.7.

### 6.2 Are historical apologies legitimate?

A number of journalists and high-profile figures have criticised the trend for politicians to apologise for historical wrongdoing – ‘the sins of the nation’. The main contentious issue with these apologies is that the apologiser did not commit the wrongdoing. I touched on this briefly in section 2.3.3, but develop it further here. Further criticisms about politicians apologising for historic wrongs have come from a number of sources (including: Gardiner & Roach, 2009; Somani, 2011). Many of these grievances were cogently discussed by Jonathan Sumption, a historian and leading judge, on BBC Radio 4’s lecture series ‘Four Thought’. In his talk, ‘Don’t Apologise’, first broadcast on 4 May 2011, Sumption argued against historical apologies for a number of reasons. I have included a transcript of the talk Appendix E, but will outline some of his points in what follows, discussing possible arguments against his criticisms.

#### 6.2.1 Apologiser ≠ transgressor

I noted one of the most common issues raised by opponents of these apologies in my formulation of a set of felicity conditions for the apology: they suggest that the apologies are illegitimate because the apologiser was not the transgressor (or, in some cases, even alive when the offences took place). I resolved this by saying that because the perlocutionary goal of the apology had been achieved, the apology was, indeed, legitimate.

There is, however, further justification for believing these apologies to be acceptable, other than their having been accepted by victims’ groups. Goffman suggests that when apologising, the apologiser splits herself into two parts – the wrongdoing part, guilty of the offence and a part which ‘stands back and sympathizes with the blame giving, and, by implication, is worthy of being brought back into the fold’ (Goffman, 1971:113).
Is this is what is going on when political figures perform historical apologies? At an even more abstract level, I think so. In performing an apology, the Prime Minister (or other senior figure) is not splitting himself in two (as would be the case with a personal apology), but rather his position of authority allows him to split the nation in two. The (senior) politician is able to do this because i) (s)he is democratically elected by the members of the nation and ii) (s)he is part of a government which has inherited the laws and deeds of previous governments, meaning that they have some connection to the wrongdoing, albeit a less than substantial one.

6.2.2 The status of the offence

Speaking about the legitimacy of Pope John Paul II’s apology for the Christian wars and Crusades of the Middle Ages, Sumption questions whether the Pope really thought that:

> Medieval crusaders and inquisitors ought to have taken the same view in their own day about morality and religious violence as he himself was taking at the dawn of the 21st Century.

He goes on to say that:

> when we castigate the sins of our forebears as immoral, we are saying, implicitly, that there are some moral principles which are absolute and eternal, not relative and ephemeral by which men may be justly judged in any age.

The problem with this type of argument is that it means the only legitimate apology would be for an action which the apologiser knew was wrong when she performed it. Moreover, it would mean that a person whose moral convictions change at a later date need not apologise for actions which contravene this new moral code, because they did not contravene the old one. In the case of personal apologies, this seems untenable. I am sure that most people will have experienced an occasion when they did something which they thought was right, and only later came to regret and apologise for. The same principle can surely apply to nations and institutions, but given their size (and the difference in the nature of the offences they commit), the timescales involved are correspondingly larger. This almost inevitably means that the people in charge at the time of the offences are no longer alive when the apologies are made. The apology which is then made does not implicitly suggest that there are morals which are absolute and eternal, but merely draws attention to the fact that our morals have changed and gives an opportunity for the apologiser to explain how and why they have changed (I will discuss this feature of the apology in section 6.6.6).
6.2.3 Engaging with responsibility

Sumption also thinks it is wrong to apologise for historical wrongs because to do so ‘depends on a concept of collective and inherited guilt’ and that such apologies seek ‘to engage [his] moral responsibility’. In discussing Tony Blair’s apology for Britain’s role in the Slave Trade he asks:

Yet, in what sense am I responsible? I am descended from nineteenth century Englishmen, I live in the same country they did, and I speak the same language. But I didn’t do it! You didn’t do it! It wasn’t done on our behalf.

As will be seen when I discuss how these historical apologies are carried out, the apologiser frequently references the idea that she is apologising on behalf of the government and the nation. Such a formulation does not, I believe, engage the moral responsibility of the individual but rather abstracts it away to the level of the state.

6.2.4 Victimhood and the absent victims

Sumption views another key component of an apology to be a victim to whom one can apologise. In many instances with historical apologies, such victims are long since dead and Sumption takes issue with others representing the original victim. In the case of the apology for the Slave Trade, he says:

it was suggested [the apology] was due to those dispersed descendants of the original slaves who are alive today. And it is not obvious what injury has been done to them. In what sense, other than a purely genealogical one, do they represent the victims of the original wrong.

He argues that an appropriate victim is important to have because:

We apologise to be forgiven. […] But who is in a position to grant absolution for the sins of my ancestors against a long-dead generation. To promote forgiveness in that situation, you have to create an entirely artificial class of victims.

Whilst it is the case that the purpose of the interpersonal apology is prototypically to be forgiven, does this apply to historical apologies? I do not believe so. It is my opinion, and one held by others (i.a. Weyeneth, 2001:23ff), that historical apologies have a primary purpose of a nation (or government) making clear what its ideals and beliefs are. The apology serves, to some extent, as a firewall between a time when offences
were committed and accepted and the time after the apology, when such actions will be not be carried out or supported (promises of non-recurrence form a major part of historical apologies, as will be seen later in the chapter). Forgiveness is a secondary aim. As a result, it seems to me that there is no real need for their to be a victim for the apology to be directed to. We will return to the implication that having a different primary function has on the speech act of apology in chapter 8, where it is suggested that a prototype approach is the most appropriate way of thinking about (sets of) speech acts.

6.2.5 Summary

I have, I believe, shown why historical apologies are justifiable. This does mean that they are without controversy and their contentious nature will be returned to later in this chapter – particularly, we will see that some Ministers spend some time explaining why they think it is important to carry out an historical apology despite some of the criticisms we have explored in this section.

6.3 Data

I have explained that the focus of this chapter will be on parliamentary historical apologies, but have yet to explain what constitutes an ‘historical’ apology, apart from to say that it attempts to make amends for historic transgressions. But how historic is historic? For the purposes of this study, I think it is wise to describe any apology made by someone completely unrelated to the offence and which occurs at least ten years after the transgression it relates to as an historical one. The first condition of this is, I hope, clear: part of the motivation in exploring historical apologies is to see how the apologiser not being the transgressor influences the form of the apology (i.e. to contrast these apologies with the majority of those which have gone before in this thesis).

The second condition is a little more arbitrary, but I believe not without merit. A decade gap between offence and apology may not seem like a particularly long time relative to the expanse of human history – hardly enough to count as being ‘historical’ – but it eliminates a potentially complicating factor which would have been present otherwise.

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1 In the sense that they were not an actor engaged in committing the offence, or part of the government responsible for the action. They are related to the offence and able to apologise for it merely by virtue of the current (senior) position they hold.
Apologies which fulfil the first criteria but not the second (i.e. made by political opponents of those who were responsible for the transgression and less than ten years after the event(s)) can be used as a stick with which to beat the Opposition, as it were. I have in mind here the case of David Cameron’s apology to the families of patients who needlessly died at the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust hospitals – a scandal which happened while the opposition Labour Party were in power. The apology was a pre-cursor to a number of Conservative attacks on Labour’s record on the NHS (headlines from around the time of the apology, such as ‘Cameron in veiled attack on Labour over NHS Mid Staffordshire report’\(^2\) and ‘Tories set Labour in their crosshairs over Mid-Staffs’\(^3\) indicate this).

This additional motivation for apologising is less likely to be present in apologies which occur at least a decade after the events, since most of the party political ‘heat’ will have gone out of these events and many of the political actors present at the time of the transgression will have since left the political scene.

Table 6.1 shows which debates containing historical apologies fulfill the above criteria and have thus been analysed in this chapter. A brief note on the transcription of the apologies: since the main focus is on the apology statements themselves, these were transcribed in detail and can be found in Appendix E. Links to the Hansard reports of the rest of the debates which followed the statements have been provided in table 6.1 and any extracts from those ensuing debates referred to in the chapter itself have also been transcribed.

\(^2\) http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/mar/06/cameron-labour-nhs-mid-staffordshire

\(^3\) http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/coffeeshouse/2013/03/tories-set-labour-in-their-crosshairs-over-mid-staffs/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debate title</th>
<th>Date of debate</th>
<th>MP leading debate</th>
<th>Description of offence</th>
<th>Date of offence</th>
<th>Hansard ref</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First World War (Executions)</td>
<td>24 Jul 1998</td>
<td>Dr. John Reid (Minister for the Armed Forces)</td>
<td>Approximately 300 British servicemen were shot as cowards or deserters during the First World War.</td>
<td>1914-1918</td>
<td>vol. 316, col. 1372-1386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Liverpool Children’s Inquiry</td>
<td>30 Jan 2001</td>
<td>Alan Milburn (SoS(^4) for Health)</td>
<td>The organs of hundreds of children who died or were still-born at the Alder Hey Children’s hospital were obtained and kept without parental knowledge or consent. A number of children were given full post-mortems expressly against the wishes of their parents.</td>
<td>1988-1995</td>
<td>vol. 362, col. 175-192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^4\)SoS = Secretary of State, i.e. the most senior minister in a government department.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Migration</td>
<td>24 Feb 2010</td>
<td>Gordon Brown (Prime Minister)</td>
<td>Children between the ages of 3 and 14 were sent from the U.K. to other Commonwealth countries (including Canada and Australia), where they faced neglect, hardship and cruelty. Many were falsely told that they had been orphaned. Most were sent without parental consent.</td>
<td>Late 1800s-1967</td>
<td>vol. 506, col. 301-309</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saville Inquiry</td>
<td>15 Jun 2010</td>
<td>David Cameron (Prime Minister)</td>
<td>On ‘Bloody Sunday’, British Army personnel unjustifiably opened fire on unarmed civilians in Derry/Londonderry. 26 people were shot, 13 of whom died immediately from their injuries.</td>
<td>30 Jan 1972</td>
<td>vol. 511, col. 739-762</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redfern Inquiry</td>
<td>16 Nov 2010</td>
<td>Chris Huhne (SoS for Energy and Climate Change)</td>
<td>Tissue and organs were removed from deceased individuals without family consent and sent to nuclear laboratory establishments.</td>
<td>1955-1992</td>
<td>vol. 518, col. 745-751</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hillsborough Football</td>
<td>12 Sep 2012</td>
<td>David Cameron</td>
<td>96 people died in a stadium crush at the Hillsborough Football Stadium during an F.A. Cup Semi-Final. There were failures in the planning and organisation of the event, poor leadership by the police and unacceptable delays in emergency services reaching the families. The victims were then smeared by the police and the press (in particular <em>The Sun</em> newspaper), falsely accusing the victims of being drunk and disorderly and wrongly asserting that Liverpool supporters picked the pockets of the dead.</td>
<td>15 April 1989, vol. 550, col. 283-306</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Finucane</td>
<td>12 Dec 2012</td>
<td>David Cameron</td>
<td>Prominent Belfast solicitor, Patrick Finucane, who represented a number of IRA members, was shot dead in front of his family. The state colluded in Finucane’s death by identifying and targeting Mr Finucane and supplying his murderer with a weapon and subsequently disposing of that weapon.</td>
<td>12 Feb 1989, vol. 555, col. 295-318</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mau Mau Claims (Settlement)</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 Jun 2013</strong></td>
<td><strong>William Hague (SoS for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Members of Kenya’s Mau Mau were violently repressed with many detained without trial and a number put to death by colonial forces during the Kenyan uprising and so-called ‘emergency period’ which was imposed as a result.</strong></td>
<td><strong>October 1952 - December 1963</strong></td>
<td><strong>vol. 563, col. 1692-1699</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: Historical apologies analysed for this chapter
6.4 Historical apologies as an activity type

In my treatment of apologies, I have so far made use of a number of theoretical notions from interactional linguistics and pragmatics more generally (including: speech acts, uptake, preference structure and conversational implicature). The data analysed in this chapter require the introduction of another, more fuzzy, concept – that of the activity type (Levinson, 1979).

6.4.1 What is an activity type?

Activity types reflect the fact that the setting which talk occurs in greatly influences that talk – restricting who can speak when, and what type of contributions they are allowed to provide. Defining the activity type, and differentiating it from existing terminology (such as Hymes’ (1972) ‘speech event’ and Gumperz’s (1972) ‘episode’), Levinson states:

I take the notion of an activity type to refer to a fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded, events with constraints on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions. Paradigm examples would be teaching, a job interview, a jural interrogation, a football game, a task in a workshop, a dinner party and so on. (Levinson, 1979:368, his emphasis)

Activity types are important because conversationalists are often required to have a knowledge of the features which belong to an activity in order to understand the function of utterances (or more generally, happenings) therein. So for an instance an utterance ‘We seem to all be here’ (Levinson, 1979:317, his example 4) can be seen to initiate the business of a committee meeting which requires a quorum but is understood by its hearers because they have a knowledge that the activity in question has a set of required participants. A further example to illustrate the role that activity types play takes place between a customer (C) and a shop-keeper (S) at a greengrocers’:

(75) C: [...] You’ve just got the one kind of lettuce?
S: Yes. Cos.
C: That’s a nice one.
S: Yes. They are getting proper now aren’t they. Thirty six please. [...] (Levinson, 1979:372, his example 8)

C’s ‘That’s a nice one’ (accompanied by a pointing gesture) counted as an undertaking to purchase a particular lettuce – but it was not the utterance in isolation that allowed
for this understanding to come about. Rather the utterance had this function because of ‘the expectations governing the shopping in small stores, here specifically the expectation that the customer will only pick out and select goods that he intends to buy […] unless there are contrary indications’ (Levinson, 1979:372).

In the rest of this section I will seek to explain the various features which make up the activity type of the parliamentary historical apology and its implications for the interpretation of certain (linguistic) behaviours, as well as noting some areas where my thoughts on the concept of the activity type differ slightly from Levinson’s. It it possible that some of the features which I outline below are actually applicable to other types of parliamentary discourse (i.e. they may be more generalisable than my description would otherwise suggest). I will give some indication about the features which I think are present elsewhere, but this will not be exhaustive and I think applying the notion of activity types to different parliamentary language is an endeavour meriting further work.

6.4.2 Participants and setting

Naturally those who are able to participate in an historical apology are serving Members of Parliament (i.e. elected politicians serving in the House of Commons). Members of the House of Lords may also hold debates in which historical apologies are produced. However, such a debate usually consists of a member of the government benches (usually the Leader of the House of Lords) reading word for word the statement first made in the House of Commons, after which there may be one or two other contributions. It is more usual for a written statement to be placed in the House of Lords’ library noting the apology carried out in ‘The Other Place’ (i.e. the Commons). Only two of the apologies discussed in this chapter had debates conducted in the Lords following the initial apology in the Commons.

There is an important difference between participating in ‘normal’ debates and historical apology debates, too. That is the likelihood that one is called to speak to an historical apology is much higher, since as Speaker Bercow indicated following the Saville Inquiry debate:

(76) **Speaker John Bercow speaking after the Saville Inquiry debate – 15 June 2010**

1  JB: i do try: (0.3) as i think the record shows (0.4) and subject
2  to limitations of time to accommodate everybody who
3  wishes to contribute. (.) it is probably worthy just saying

Namely the statement on Child Migration and Hillsborough.
that this statement ran longer than I ordinarily would allow a statement to run but I think that colleagues would appreciate that there were very special reasons for doing so today.

So, because of the nature of the event, the vast majority (if not all) interested parties are able to contribute to an historical apology, whereas in everyday debate – even when time limits are imposed by The Speaker and his team – there are frequently a number of disappointed MPs who do not get to speak. The order in which the MPs tend to be called in the debate is as follows:

1. Appropriate Minister
2. Appropriate Shadow Minister
3. Backbench campaigner(s) on issue
4. More senior members of the House
5. MP for constituency/constituencies most affected by transgression
6. Member of each of the minority parties (if all present)
7. All other MPs

Sections 6.4.3.2 and 6.6.6 will explore in more detail what each of those speakers does with their contribution, but it is important to say here that this wide variety of party figures is called in order for the House to show that it is united on the issue. As Gordon Brown said in the Child Migration debate:

(77) Gordon Brown speaking in the Child Migration debate – 24 Feb 2010

GB: I thank him [Dr William McCrea, Democratic Unionist Party] um um so that every party in this house has now associated itself with the: er apology and I believe that i can er now tell the child migrants when i- when i meet them that it is the unanimous wish of the house that we wish to er both to apologise and to set up a new fund to help them.

It is important to remember that whilst it is the case that MPs are the only people who are allowed to speak to these apologies, that does not mean that theirs are the only voices heard during these parliamentary debates. MPs who contribute frequently act as

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6Another instance where MPs willing to contribute are virtually guaranteed an opportunity to speak is during special Tribute sessions in the Commons, following the death of a high profile current or former MP, e.g. the then Labour leader, John Smith, in 1994 and former Prime Minister, Baroness Thatcher, in 2013.
a mouthpiece for their constituents or others. Examples 78 and 79 are representative of numerous instances where the thoughts of those outside parliament are clearly and unambiguously brought into the debate:

(78) **Frank Field speaking in the Royal Liverpool Children’s Inquiry debate – 30 Jan 2001**

1 FF: would the secretary of state allow me to express a couple
2 of views which families errr on the wirral have asked me to
3 put forward should i get the opportunity? […] they do not
4 wish to appear as luddites. (0.3) hhh they are not against
5 research (.) what they are anxious is that when research
6 might be carried out that they are key players in deciding
7 whether that research go forward […]

(79) **Steve Rotheram speaking in the Hillsborough debate – 12 Sep 2012**

1 SR: on behalf of the people of liverpool can i thank (.) the
2 prime minister and the leader of the opposition for their
3 statements of support to the families (. ) hh supporters and
4 (.) to the people of liverpool.

In section 6.5, I will discuss the involvement of third parties in the composition of apologies which gives a further indication that, although MPs are the primary participants, others do collaborate in this activity type.

### 6.4.3 Structure of the activity

Here, I will describe the typical structure of the historical apology and explain how ‘these structural elements [are] rationally and functionally adapted to the point of goal of the activity in question’ (Levinson, 1979:369, his emphasis). I will also show how the activity is ‘bounded’ (Levinson, 1979:368), i.e. how it is separated from surrounding non-historical apology talk.

#### 6.4.3.1 Openings and closings

An historical apology begins with The Speaker calling the appropriate Minister to make the statement. MPs will invariably know the ‘gist’ of a statement and that an apology is to be made for a couple of reasons. Either the MP, being a senior

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7This is a strategy also found at Prime Minister’s Questions where it acts as a means of mitigating a face-threatening act (see Murphy, 2014:90).
opposition figure, has received a copy of the statement in advance or for more lowly backbench members, the title of the statement will have been included in the weekly circular referred to as ‘The Whip’ and more details of the statement are likely to have been provided in the daily e-mail sent to each MP by her respective party Whips’ Office.

What separates this activity types from others is what is absent following The Speaker’s calling the Minister. In other types of parliamentary debate, it is very usual for the Minister rising to her feet to be met with cheers (of ‘hear, hear’) from her own side, or jeering from the Opposition benches (sometimes in the form of ironic cries of ‘hear, hear’), or both. This sort of behaviour is wholly absent from the historical apology debates – indeed, the House remains virtually silent throughout the whole debate, with almost no discernible remarks made from sedentary positions made during it. I will have more to say on the ‘tone’ of the debate in section 6.4.5.

On getting to her feet, the Minister then seeks permission to make the statement, usually by saying: ‘Mr. Speaker, with permission I wish to make a statement on X’, where X is the topic in question. These fairly mundane, procedural statements open the activity type of the historical apology. These features are shared with other types of parliamentary activity and so the opening alone does not give a clear indication that such an activity will follow (unlike, say, The Speaker stating ‘Questions to the Prime Minister’ clearly showing that Prime Minister’s Question Time is commencing).

The Speaker closes the activity type by calling for order and usually thanking those who have contributed. He then declares that ‘we [the House] now come to the main business of the day’, which marks the end of this more ‘usual’ business and sees the House return to its more usual function of scrutinising, debating and voting on legislation.

6.4.3.2 Sub-division

The subdivision of an activity type is designed (not necessarily optimally) to reach the goal of the talk exchange. In the case of the historical apology, it is clear that the ultimate goal of the activity is in dispute. I have already discussed where these disputes lie. To some extent what the ‘true’ goal of the activity is moot – its structure

8 ‘The Whip’ also gives information about which debates an MP absolutely must attend and how they must vote (if applicable). Such debates are referred to as ‘three-line whips’ because the title of the business is underlined three times. If an MP misses such a debate without prior approval, there are often serious consequences – including suspension from the party. Two-line whips are given to debates which are important but an MP is more likely to be excused if she seeks permission in advance. A single-line whip means the MP can choose not to attend if she wishes.

9 I thank two MPs who wish to remain anonymous for providing me with this information.
is conducive to achieving forgiveness, the settlement of a controversial issue (i.e. ‘moving on’), or helping to lift ‘inherited guilt’ (Hatch, 2008:61ff) – all possible goals of the activity type.

Following the opening, parliamentary historical apologies are usually structured thus:

**Initial apology statement from the minister** – containing the background to the case, an apology and detailing any other reparations involved;

**Response from opposition** – most often containing an apology as well, but at the very least welcoming the apology;

**Reply from the minister** – thanking the Opposition for their support and answering any questions contained in the response;

**Response from backbenchers** – usually welcoming the apology, less frequently joining in the apology. On some occasions, backbenchers accept the apology on behalf of the transgressed;

**Reply from the minister** – usually praising the backbencher or thanking them for their support.

This subdivision allows for speakers from across the political spectrum to join in and welcome the apology (cf. Brown’s statement in example 77) which raises the prospect of achieving the goals of the statement – a universal apology reflecting the sentiments of all in the House may be easier for victims to accept and forgive, allowing for a settlement of the issue at hand.

That some MPs (particularly those who represent constituents affected by the apology) accept the apology may be viewed as an attempt on their part to bring the historical apology closer in character to the quotidian apology.

### 6.4.4 Conversational maxims

The application of Grice’s conversation maxims varies in ‘marked’ contexts; we discussed earlier how, for instance, in courtroom discourse neither party assumes that the maxims (particularly quantity) are being fully adhered to. How the maxims are applied in parliamentary discourse has not been considered, at least to my knowledge, and if it has, it certainly has not received the kind of attention that courtroom discourse has (Chapter 10 of Tiersma (1999) is a useful introduction to implicature in the courtroom and contains a number of recommendations for further reading).

It may be the case, therefore, that what I have to say about the implicatures generated
(or not generated, as the case may be) in parliamentary historical apologies, is actually applicable to other parliamentary activity types, too. It is beyond the scope of this study to look in detail at other speech events. Here, I will look in particular at how the activity type affects the interpretation of (redundant) questions.

### 6.4.4.1 Questions in the debate

In Murphy (2014) I discussed the case of redundant questions at Prime Minister’s Questions. These were questions where the answer was known to the questioner and was known to be in some way embarrassing. Consider for instance this exchange at PMQs from 2011:

(80) **Exchange between Ed Miliband and David Cameron at PMQs – 4 May 2011; vol. 527, col. 666**

1. EM: Will the Prime Minister tell us how many experienced police officers are being forcibly retired as a result of his 20% cuts to police budgets?
2. DC: The decisions about police officer numbers will depend on the decisions made by chief constables in individual parts of the country [...]
3. EM: I do not know whether the Prime Minister does not know the answer to the question or whether he chooses not to answer it. Let me tell him the answer: 2100 experienced police officers are being forcibly retired.

I argued that questions such as the one found in (80) where the answer was known to both parties in advance constituted a face-attack since it may give rise to an impression that: i) the PM is unable to give a satisfactory answer; ii) the PM is not up on his brief; iii) the PM avoids embarrassing topics. These questions are usually repeated by a number of members later in the PMQs session. This behaviour usually causes further equivocation, reinforcing the implicature that the topic is in some way sensitive for the PM. Redundant questions during historical apology debates do not give rise to such implicatures. Consider this recurrent question which was tagged onto consecutive contributors’ statements in the First World War (Executions) debate:

(81) **Rev. Martin Smyth and Dr. John Reid in the First World War (Executions) debate – Question 5 – 24 July 1998**

1. MS: will the minister share with me and i underline it as a plea that those who have been so treated in the past will now be restored even in books of remembrance and war memorials
so that nobody throughout the nation may withhold that recognition of a pardon which we are seeking to give at this stage?

JR: [...] so far as the war memorials and books of remembrance are concerned. (.) yes. (.) it is not in my power to direct or to dictate but i do hope that the names will be added because that is a symbol of the lifting of the stigma of execution.

(82) Llin Golding (War Graves Commissioner) – Question 6

LG: i ask him, on behalf of all those people who now rest in the graves of the commonwealth war graves if he will indeed WRITE to other commonwealth countries and ask them to have the names of their con- (0.2) comrades restored on the war memorials […]

(83) Margaret Ewing – Question 7

ME: (0.4) in the context of names er being restored to books of remembrance=or being added to books of remembrance and war memorials, (0.3) is it anticipated that this will happen by remembrance sunday of this year?

Were this to have occurred at Prime Minister’s Question (or even Defence Questions), the impression given would be that the answer was in some way politically sensitive or embarrassing and that the questioners were repeating the question (and variations on it) to cause the Minister discomfort. Such implicatures do not arise here though, in the main because (redundant) questions serve a different purpose. Following a few contributions in the WWI Executions debate, the Deputy Speaker made the following intervention:

(84) Deputy Speaker Michael Martin – intervention before question 4

MM: errr order (0.3) can i say that this is a deeply moving matter that we have before us? but the house will understand that i must protect the main business of the house. (0.2) so (. ) i will call other honourable members but what i must remind them is, that they should put a question to the minister and that question should be brief.

The Deputy Speaker reminds the House of what is ‘orderly’ following ministerial statements (of any type) – respondents’ contributions must be phrased as a question (lengthy preambles to questions are usually cut short by the chair). Contributors before
this reminder had focussed solely on welcoming the apology and congratulating the
Minister on making it – questions were not asked. The prompt from the chair means
that individual contributors need to be sure to produce a question to the Minister to
avoid going against the Deputy Speaker’s ruling. Pre-planned contributions may, thus,
need to be amended to include a question – something speakers do by ‘tagging on’
a question to their statements – in this case, MPs ask repeatedly about adding names
to memorials; at the Hillsborough apology MPs frequently asked about re-opening
inquests. By way of example, consider Margaret Ewing’s contribution prior to asking
this ‘tag-on’ question:

(85) Margaret Ewing – Full contribution
1 ME: mister deputy speaker could i also welcome the statement
2 made by the minister today and note the very dignified way
3 in which he presented this? (.) and also the sombre way in
4 which the whole of the house reacted (0.3) and responded.
5 (0.2) and could i: in thanking the honourable member for
6 thurrock for his tireless work on this case say also as well
7 as a historian, (.) i don’t think we can leave history alone.
8 (0.2) as a historian myself with a special interest in the first
9 world war could i say that teaching that to youngsters who
10 are much more used to the virtual reality of hollywood
11 (0.2) found (.) that the reality of man’s inhumanity to
12 man was something which they found extremely emotional
13 and perhaps in the process they recognised that we have to
14 consider (.) all of our actions in society and what it means
15 to all of us. [...] 

It can be seen that Ewing’s statement was not really related to the question which
followed which supports the view that these questions are not initially planned when
the rest of the contribution is written (otherwise one would expect them to cohere more
with the rest of the statement).

In this activity type a repeated question is not intended to be awkward for the
Minister, but rather is a soft-ball produced only so the contribution remains orderly.
A knowledge of the nature of the activity type is needed by participants so that they do
not misinterpret this feature.
6.4.5 Tone or style of debate

Levinson suggests that style or tone is not an altogether important feature of the activity type (Levinson, 1979:369), and whilst it is true that the tone of some activity types is heavily dependent on the participants, for instance a chance meeting in the street will vary in tone depending on the closeness of the interlocutors, length of time between last meeting, etc., with historical apologies tone seems to be a defining feature of the activity type. I would suggest that the nature of the event imposes certain standards in terms of the expected delivery of an utterance and the comportment of the MPs present.

The volatile and often disputatious nature of Parliament has widely been discussed (see Chilton, 2004; Wilson, 1990; Ilie, 2010). What is noticeable about the tone of apology statements is the calm, reserved and sedate nature of the debate and the contributions therein. Consider, for instance, example 86:

(86) **Andrew Mackinlay in the First World War (Executions) debate – 24 July 1998**

```
1  AM: er now er the minister i hope will understand if i do reserve
2       my position in one regard because i: think that there
3       could have been a formal legal pardon an’ er there may
4       well be some legislative opportunity in the future where i
5       still may wish OR OTHERS to raise this(.) however it
6       would be churlish er er it would be .hhh unrealistic not
7       to acknowledge what the minister has done this morning
8       is a major MAJOR statement by this government which i
9       deeply appreciate and which i know will be appreciated by
10      the families
```

Notice that Mackinlay defers any detailed criticism of the statement, suggesting that to criticise and not acknowledge the Minister’s apology as ‘churlish’. If this were any other debate, it would be highly unusual for an MP to defer his criticism – in the main because she would be concerned that a future opportunity to give her opinion would not be forthcoming. As I have mentioned previously, apology statements are occasions for consensus and this is reflected in the tone of the debates.

Changes of this tone can be seen as indicative of a change in the activity type. One way this is noticeable is the silence which descends on the chamber as soon as the Speaker gets to his feet to call the minister. The usual chatter which takes place between MPs stops – this is particularly marked; whispered conversation can be heard during virtually every other type of parliamentary activity but is wholly absent here.
A further change in mood occurs at the end of the apology debate – normal service is resumed, as it were. This is demonstrated especially well in the following example which came after the Saville Inquiry statement and debate:

(87) **Kevin Brennan raises a point of order to Speaker John Bercow following the Saville Inquiry debate – 15 June 2010**

KB: I (0.3) hesitate and er only tentatively raise this point of order with you mister speaker. but it has previously been the practice in the house that (0.2) where a statement is made that honourable members wishing to ask questions on that statement should be present at the beginning and standing throughout. um um when the statement has been made and that preference will be given to those who are.=has there been any change er in er practice in relation to that (. ) mister speaker?

JB: there's been no change! and what i would say to the honourable gentleman is that i don’t want to travel down that route. if i were an uncharitable and ungenerous fellow and of an unusually suspicious frame of mind (. ) none of which things is true:: [hon. members ((laughter)) i would think that the honourable gentleman was challenging the judgment of the chair as to who to call? (0.3) but! as i am none of those things and because he shakes his head in disavowal, ((smiling)) i am happy to accept that that is not so!

As can be seen in (87), laughter and joviality may return to the House following the sombre nature of business during the historical apology, indicating that there has been a change of activity type.

### 6.5 Participation structure

In this section we will explore who is party to an historical apology – in a number of respects the participation structure for these apologies resembles that outlined in section 3.3 on participation in parliamentary apologies. This ought to be expected given that the setting for both ‘classes’ of apology is the same – namely The House of Commons.

In §3.3 we explored an unusual example where the apologisee (in that case The
Speaker) was also involved in the author role, making him to some extent responsible for the form of the apology which he received. This seemingly unusual state of affairs for standard parliamentary apologies seems to be the norm for historical ones. Consider the following examples:

(88) **Mike O’Brien (Minister of State, Dept. of Health), Hansard vol. 503, col. 859 – 14 Jan 2010**

MOB: importantly mister speaker let me make the following statement on behalf of the government. (0.3) i know that many thalidomiders have waited a (. ) long (. ) time (. ) for this. it is agreed with the national advisory council of the thalidomide trust. < the government wishes to express its sincere regret and deep sympathy for the injury and suffering endured by all those affected when expectant mothers took the thalidomide drug between nineteen fifty eight and nineteen sixty one< .

(89) **Gordon Brown, Hansard vol. 506, col. 306 – 24 Feb 2010**

GB: i er assure him that- that the reason the apology has been made now is that we wished to consult the child migrants themselves about the form it should take

This pre-arrangement of the apology (and in particular, the negotiation of its form) may add to the view that such statements are fantastically contrived. Clearly it would be unacceptable in everyday conversation for a potential apologiser to ask of the apologisee “What do you want me to say?”. Such a question would inevitably give rise to the belief that any subsequent apology was non-genuine and forced. What, then, is the motivation for a politician to draw attention to the apparent artificial nature of the apology by mentioning these negotiations which could otherwise have been kept ‘backstage’ (Goffman, 1959:chap. 3)?

I propose that this derives from the desire to show that the apology has been deemed acceptable and has been accepted by the wronged parties – a feature which would add legitimacy to the apology. We saw earlier that some MPs accept (and at the very least, welcome) an apology on behalf of their constituents; by making it clear in the apology that the statement has received input from the offended parties, the apologiser can make clear that the apology has been welcomed by them. This acceptance would otherwise not be placed on the record and could lead to speculation that the apology has not received the support of the appropriate parties (i.e. not making clear the apology has been agreed in advance may indicate that the apology will be rejected by the
apologisee). Such a fate befell one of the apologies explored in this chapter. The family of Patrick Finucane rejected the report which led to David Cameron’s apology, calling it a ‘whitewash’ and a ‘sham’ and they were particularly angered at their lack of involvement in the process that led up to the apology.

6.6 Contents of the apology statement

I hope to have shown evidence for the suggestion that historical apologies form a natural class of parliamentary activity, quite apart from other types of debate or questioning more usually associated with the Westminster democratic system. I have also spent some time explaining why I think these statements for historical offences can be considered to be apologies. I have yet to say much about how these apologies are worded; this section takes up that task. In §6.2.4, when discussing the issue of historical apologies having absent victims, I tentatively suggested that the primary purpose of these statements was for the government to outline what it views as the nation’s (and its) ideals and beliefs. The apologising element might, to some extent be backgrounded. In this section I show that apologising takes up only a small portion of the (Prime) Minister’s statement and that other features including: description of offence, contextualisation thereof, justification of the statement and apology and reports of what has been or is being done to remedy the offence all have a place in historical apology statements. This section will look at these contents, as well as the apology tokens proper.

6.6.1 Description of offence

I noted in chapter 3 the importance of the apologiser outlining what it is they are apologising for, especially when the offence occurred some time prior to the apology. By definition, the time between offence and apology is significant for historical apologies and so this need to be clear about the transgression is all the more pressing. The amount of time that has elapsed between the events and the apology is not the only reason for devoting time to a description of the offence. The contentious nature of some of the events may mean that there are competing versions of the offence. I have mentioned that these apologies often come as a result of independent inquiries and so describing the offence (as reported by the inquiry) seeks to give a true account. Consider, for instance, the case of Hillsborough where The Sun newspaper, on the basis of discussions with senior South Yorkshire police officers, falsely reported that Liverpool fans were responsible for the stadium crush which killed 96 of their fellow
supporters:

(90) David Cameron – Hillsborough – 12 September 2012

DC: mister speaker. (.) because of what i have described as
the second injustice, the false version of events (.) not
enough people in this country understand what the people
of merseyside have been through. this appalling death toll
of so many loved ones lost was compounded by an attempt
to blame the victims. hh a narrative about hooliganism on
that day was created that led many in the country to accept
that somehow it was a grey area. today’s report is black
and white < the liverpool fans were not the cause of the
disaster.<

Describing the offence meriting an apology in some detail, and often not shying away
from the shocking nature of that detail, is a means for the apologiser to get rid of any
variance in the accounts of the transgression(s). In so doing, the apologiser is not only
trying to bring the offended parties ‘back into the fold’, but also those who did not
agree with the account presented now as the truth.

It is not just that events can be disagreed over, but also that the extent of transgressions
may not be widely know. Describing them in detail is necessary so that the general
public (especially those not affected by the offences) know why it is incumbent upon
the Government to apologise. This was true in the case of the Royal Liverpool
Children’s Inquiry, where the extent of organ retention was not (widely) know before
Michael Redfern QC concluded his report. It was believed that only a small number of
hearts had been retained in a handful of NHS hospitals. The Health Secretary described
unequivocally the nature of the offences for which he was apologising.

(91) Alan Milburn – Royal Liverpool Children’s Inquiry – 30 January 2001

AM: but as the inquiry report makes perfectly clear (0.5) <
many of those hearts were obtained without consent < .
according to the report (.) in addition to over two thousand
children’s hearts, there are a large number of brain parts (.)
eyes taken from foetuses, over fifteen hundred stillbirths
or foetuses and, perhaps most disturbingly of all (.) a
number of children’s heads and bodies. the redfern report
reveals what it calls (0.2) a lack of respect and a failure
to appreciate the circumstances which led to the taking of
human material.
for example (.) the report cites entries about foetal material labelled with the words .hhh < neck deeply lacerated. pull it to pieces some time and reject.<

So a description of the offence is important so that there can be no doubt about what the government is apologising for, no matter how unsavoury. I think it is clear that one of the reasons that the descriptions can be so unflinching is that, while representative of the offender, the apologiser did not carry out the offences. This means that, unlike some of the personal parliamentary apologies which we looked at earlier, apologisers do not deliberately attempt to limit the scope of an apology.

6.6.2 Reportability and Credibility

Time in apology statements is also devoted to explaining why it is ‘reportable’, to use Labov’s (2013) terminology, that is to say it is incumbent upon the apologiser to pre-emptively answer the question: ‘why this now?’. In personal narrative, this question needs to be answered because telling a story requires exceptional division of floor-time (see Sacks, 1992:3-5). In Parliament the question needs to be answered because, as I noted in chapter 3, parliamentary time is a precious commodity and so the (Prime) Minister needs to be clear why the statement merits the hearing of the House at this point.

Just previously I highlighted the controversial nature of many of the offences under discussion, meaning that the credibility of the apologiser may need to be built in order that listeners find what she has to say believable. The main way of building credibility in an historical apology statement is also one of the means it can be made reportable – a report from an independent source, usually an appropriately constituted inquiry. The fact that a report has been published justifies a statement being made on it; a statement which contains an apology for the revelations contained in the report.

David Cameron – Saville Inquiry – 15 June 2010

DC: with permission mister speaker i would like to make a statement. (.) today my right honourable friend the secretary of state for northern ireland is publishing the report of the saville inquiry. (0.2) the tribunal set up by the previous government to investigate the tragic events of the thirtieth of january nineteen seventy two. (.) a day more commonly known as bloody sunday. (0.3) we have acted in good faith by publishing the tribunal’s findings as quickly as possible after the general election.
Such reports naturally also assist in giving credibility to the apologiser and particularly salient points from the reports are often directly quoted in this statement.

Other events aside from the publication of a report can happen on the day of an apology statement and these events can be referenced to answer the implicit questions of ‘why this now?’. Gordon Brown, for instance, references a meeting with Child Migrants arranged for after the statement:

(93) **Gordon Brown – Child Migrants – 24 February 2010**

GB: (0.4) shortly i shall be meeting a number of former child migrants here in the palace of westminster to listen first-hand to their experiences. (0.2) .hhh and as prime minister i will be apologising on behalf of our nation.

William Hague, in his historical apology to Mau Mau who were tortured during the Kenyan emergency period, made the statement reportable by announcing that a settlement had been agreed (just earlier in the day) with the apologisees, which had brought an end to the court proceedings against the government.

(94) **William Hague – Mau Mau Claims (Settlement) – 6 June 2013**

WH: with permission mister speaker i would like to make a statement on a legal settlement that the government have reached (.) concerning the claims of kenyan citizens who lived through the emergency period and the mau mau insurgency from october nineteen fifty two to december nineteen sixty three.

Other means of making a statement reportable include announcing a change in the law to be brought forward, or the establishment of a financial package for those affected by the transgressions (I will discuss these aspects further in section 6.6.4).

### 6.6.3 Justifying the apology

I have discussed at various points the idea that historical apologies are not uncontroversial and are often treated with much cynicism in the press. This is something which historical apologisers are clearly aware of and keen to head off. A number of apology statements contain within them explanations of why they are being made. David Cameron’s statement on the events of Bloody Sunday contains one of the more extensive examples of this justification:

(95) **David Cameron – Saville Inquiry – 15 June 2010**
(0.1) i know that some people wonder whether, (0.2) nearly forty years on from an event a prime minister needs to issue an apology. for someone of my generation (0.3) .hhh bloody sunday and the early nineteen seventies are something that we feel we have learnt about rather than lived through. (.) but what happened should never (.) ever have happened. the families of those who died should not have had to live with the pain (.) and the hurt of that day and with a lifetime of loss. some members of our armed forces acted wrongly. the government is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the armed forces and for that and on behalf of the government (.) indeed on behalf of our country (.) i am deeply sorry.

Here, Cameron notes that the Government bears responsibility for the conduct of the Army and so his position as head of the Government means that he is in a position to (and bears a responsibility to) apologise for these actions done by the Army. He also apologises on behalf of the country of which he is the elected leader. In addition, the apology is justified by making clear that the actions, regardless of historical context, should never have happened and this makes the apology necessary.

Potentially more pragmatic justifications are offered by William Hague:

(96) William Hague – Mau Mau Claims (Settlement) – 6 June 2013

the settlement i am announcing today is part of a process of reconciliation. […] we do not want our current and future relations with kenya to be overshadowed by the past. […] although we should never forget history and indeed must always seek to learn from it we should also look to the future strengthening a relationship that will promote the security and prosperity of both our nations. (.) i trust that this settlement will support that process. the ability to recognise error in the past but also to build the strongest possible foundation for co-operation and friendship in the future are both hallmarks of our democracy.

Hague discusses the benefits that can come from producing the apology – continuing efforts at reconciliation between Kenya and the U.K., preventing the past from overshadowing the present ties the nations have, and being able to show that the nation is not impervious to the need to recognise that mistakes were made in the past.
Brown’s apology is justified in similar terms. He argues that facing up to past mistakes shows that the nation is determined to do all it can to make up for them, and try to make good these offences. The idea that the apology is focused on showing that the nation has moved on and is now a different place is a recurring theme in these historical statements.

(97) **Gordon Brown – Child Migrants – 24 February 2010**

GB: mister speaker there are many painful memories as a result of the child migration schemes and for many today’s apology will come too late for them to hear it. (0.3) we cannot change history but i believe that by confronting the failings of the past we are determined- and we show that we are determined to do all we can to heal the wounds.

6.6.4 Redress and non-recurrence

I discussed in chapter 3 how personal apologies for insulting an MP often contain an offer of redress (in the form of withdrawing the insult) but that this strategy is infrequently used for other offence. I also noted that promises of non-recurrence were rare across all apologies in that setting. Historical apologies often contain one of these strategies, if not both and, as we have seen previously, the scale of the transgressions means that the redress and promises of non-recurrence have to be correspondingly more elaborate.

Redress can come in the form of schemes to help deal with the tangible aftermath of the transgressions. This was the case for the Thalidomide Survivors, who had access to a £20 million scheme to help them invest in adaptations aimed at helping with their long-term, complex health needs (lines 14-25 of E.3). Gordon Brown announced a £6 million package for Child Migrants to help them try to reconnect with the families they were taken from (lines 74-80 of E.4.). It is important to note that apologisers make reference to the fact that these financial remedies in no way negate the suffering of the apologisees, consider (98):

(98) **Gordon Brown – Child Migrants – 24 February 2010**

GB: although mister speaker, we cannot undo the events of the past we can take action now to support people to regain their true identities(.) to reunite with their families

Redress may not always be in the gift of the apologiser but reference may be made to what others have to do in order for ‘wrongs to be righted’. I have in mind here the case
of adding the names of executed soldiers to war graves and books of remembrance which I discussed in §6.4.4.1 and which I show below:

(99) Dr John Reid – First World War (Executions) – 24 July 1998
174 JR: thirdly mister deputy speaker we hope that others outside
175 this house will recognise this too. and that they will
176 consider allowing the missing names to be added to books
177 of remembrance and the war memorials throughout this
178 land.

So whilst the redress has not been offered in the apology statement, the form the redress ought to take is mentioned and the baton passed to the appropriate authorities to carry out that redress.

Some potential means of redress are more contestable and there is some overlap with promises of non-recurrence. For instance, the removal from their posts of workers involved in or directly responsible for transgressions may constitute redress for some, since it means the offence has not gone unpunished (see lines 104-130 of E.2). Such an action may also prevent a recurrence of the offence, since those responsible are no longer in place to perform the same wrongdoing.

The main way to suggest that an offence cannot and will not happen again is to either make clear that legislation introduced since the offence would prevent it happening again, or to announce that new legislation will be introduced to prevent recurrence. For instance, John Reid announces that the House will be given the opportunity to vote to remove the death penalty for all military offences (lines 183-6 of E.1) and Mike O’Brien makes clear that the introduction of the Medicines Act 1968 would have prevented Thalidomide going into circulation (lines 80-3 of E.3).

Table 6.2 summarises how redress and non-recurrence are alluded to in all of the apologies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex no</th>
<th>Debate title</th>
<th>Redress</th>
<th>Line no</th>
<th>Non-recurrence</th>
<th>Line no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.1</td>
<td>WWI (Executions)</td>
<td>Request victims be added to memorials</td>
<td>174-178</td>
<td>Vote on removal of death penalty for all offences</td>
<td>183-186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.2 Royal Liverpool Children’s Inquiry</td>
<td>Removal of a number of staff. Referral of staff to medical council for disciplinary action. Referral of Prof. van Velzen to police.</td>
<td>104-30 (As redress?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.3 Thalidomide Survivors</td>
<td>Establishment of a £20 million scheme for addressing long-term health needs.</td>
<td>14-25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.4 Child Migrants</td>
<td>Establishment of a £6 million family restoration fund.</td>
<td>74-80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.5 Saville Inquiry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.6 Redfern Inquiry</td>
<td>The Human Tissue Act 2004 was instituted to prevent further recurrence of organ retention without consent.</td>
<td>21-23, 53-55, 89-94, 96-105</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changes to the coronial service to be introduced to tackle any further instances of unacceptable practice.

E.7 Hillsborough
The Attorney-General to explore whether new inquests will be sought for the 96 victims of the stadium crush.

E.8 Patrick Finucane Report
Changes to rules on agent handling in the security services instituted since the Finucane case should prevent future recurrence.

Policing in Northern Ireland has changed completely, with the Force Research Unit and Special Branch having been disbanded.

E.9 Mau Mau Claims (Settlement)
A settlement sum of £19.9 million shared between over 5,000 Kenyan Mau Mau prisoners.

?The country now condemns torture and ill treatment.
6.6.5 Giving praise

A final aspect contained in historical apology statements, aside from the apology proper, is to give praise to (some of) the recipients and/or overhearers. As far as the assignment of praise is concerned, the objects of praise are numerous and include: parliamentarians who have been involved in (extra-)Parliamentary action to publicise the apologisable events, organisers of victim groups, and any parties involved in any inquiries or investigations into the events. Particular aspects of character which are praised include campaigners’ ‘commitment’ to the championing of a cause, their tenacity or fighting spirit and their indefatigability (see for instance: lines 44-56 of E.3 and ll. 59-73 of E.4.). Victims and/or their representatives may also be the subject of praise; in these cases, it is individuals’ dignity which is marked out as being particularly praiseworthy (lines 256-258 of E.2 and ll. 220-224 of E.7, for instance).

6.6.6 The apology proper

We now come to what might be thought of as the most important part of an historical *apology*; the apology itself. In comparison to the rest of the apology statement, however, we will see that that the apology proper is particularly brief – in most cases it takes up less than 3% of the entire statement (based on a simple line count in the transcript. Brown’s apology tokens are more extensive taking up about 8% of his statement). Table 6.3 shows the forms of the explicit and conventional apology tokens which are found in the historical apologies:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex no</th>
<th>Debate title</th>
<th>Apology token(s)</th>
<th>Line no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.1</td>
<td>First World War (Executions)</td>
<td>we can (.) IN THIS HOUSE which sanctioned and passed the laws under which these men were executed and with the knowledge now available to us:: express our deep sense of regret at this loss of life</td>
<td>137-140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.2</td>
<td>Royal Liverpool Children’s Inquiry</td>
<td>&lt; i am deeply sorry for the wrong that was done to them (0.2) their families and their children.&lt;</td>
<td>101-102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.3</td>
<td>Thalidomide Survivors</td>
<td>&lt; the government wishes to express its sincere regret and deep sympathy for the injury and suffering endured by all those affected when expectant mothers took the thalidomide drug between nineteen fifty eight and nineteen sixty one.&lt;</td>
<td>69-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.4</td>
<td>Child Migrants</td>
<td>i say today that &lt; we are truly sorry. (.) they were let down. we are sorry that they were allowed to be sent away at the time they were most vulnerable.&lt; we are sorry that instead of caring for them this country turned its back and we are sorry that the voices of the- these children were not always heard and their cries for help not always heeded. and WE ARE SORRY that it has taken so long for this important day to come and for the full and unconditional apology that is justly deserved.</td>
<td>49-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.5</td>
<td>Savile Inquiry</td>
<td>the government is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the armed forces and for that and on behalf of the government (.) indeed on behalf of our country (.) i am deeply sorry.</td>
<td>80-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.6</td>
<td>Redfern Inquiry</td>
<td>i would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt regret and to apologise to the families and relatives of those involved</td>
<td>14-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.7</td>
<td>Hillsborough</td>
<td>and so on behalf of the government and indeed our country i am profoundly sorry that this double injustice has been left uncorrected for so long</td>
<td>198-201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.8</td>
<td>Patrick Finucane Report</td>
<td>so on behalf of the government and the whole country let me say again to the finucane family (0.3) i am deeply sorry.</td>
<td>167-169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.9</td>
<td>Mau Mau Claims (Settlement)</td>
<td>the british government sincerely regrets that these abuses took place and that they marred kenya’s progress towards independence.</td>
<td>37-39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3: Explicit and conventional apology tokens found in historical apologies
Throughout the thesis I have drawn a distinction between explicit and conventional apologies. What is curious about the apology tokens within the historical statements is that there are no instances of explicit apologies and all of the tokens which exist are GCIs for apologising.

This lack of explicit apology (e.g. I apologise, I offer my apologies, etc.) seems to clash with what I proposed earlier in relation to the high use of explicit apologies in personal parliamentary apologies – that they are used to prevent apologies being misinterpreted, especially in the face of a lack of uptake. In this respect (and many others), ‘normal’ parliamentary apologies differ from historical ones – I noted in sections 6.4.2 and 6.5 that not only are apologies often negotiated in advance with the apologisees, but also can be accepted by a constituent MP on behalf of the recipients of the apology. This means that the risk that an apology will be misinterpreted or misconstrued because the apologiser used conventional apology tokens is much lower. The apologiser also gets another ‘bite at the cherry’ when responding to questions during the debate, so should the satisfactoriness of the apology be called into doubt (which it is not in any of the cases looked at in this study), she has further opportunity to apologise in a different way. Standard parliamentary apologies have none of these properties.

A more cynical possible explanation for the absence of explicit apologies is that of deniability. In a situation where a victim group was to the Government to court to sue for damages, an explicit apology might be cited as an acceptance of responsibility on the part of the Government. By using an generalised conversational implicature, the Government gives itself a possible ‘out’ in court, and could argue that their statement represented only an expression of sympathy with the victims and that the current government can bear no responsibility (and see the following chapter for further uses of I'm sorry which may support this view). Of course, this would be difficult to argue where statements explicitly take on the responsibility, but the possibility for a legal argument is, at least, there.

What is also surprising about the apology tokens in the historical apologies is how few in number they are. Except for Brown’s apology to the child migrants which contains five conventional apology tokens, the rest of the apologies contain but one such expression. Again, when compared to the ‘ordinary’ parliamentary apologies of chapter 3, this is unusual. It is possible that the apologiser does not want to seem ‘over the top’ (though why this would be a concern of a historical apologiser and a personal apologiser needs to be thought about in more detail). What I suggest instead is that this low rate of apology tokens lends support to what I have been saying throughout this chapter that the apologising aspect of these statements is backgrounded somewhat, and at the foreground of these statements is a desire/need for the apologiser to give full and frank details about the transgressions. Indeed this is alluded to in a number of the
apologies and the two examples below cite this:

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(100) **David Cameron – Saville Inquiry – 15 June 2010**

DC: (0.4) nothing can bring back those who were killed but I hope that as one relative put it, the truth coming out can help set people free.

(101) **David Cameron – Hillsborough – 12 September 2012**

DC: (0.2) while nothing can ever bring back (0.3) those that were lost with all the documents revealed (.) nothing held back. the families at last have access to the truth

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed parliamentary historical apologies and hope to have shown their importance in the democratic workings of a modern, civilised country.

I started the chapter by offering some explanation for why I believed such statements to be justified in the face of criticism and cynicism from some quarters and I ended the chapter by showing how time is devoted in some of the historical apologies to offering similar justifications. Ministers and the Prime Minister are able (and required) to apologise by virtue of being representatives of their predecessors and of the nation as a whole. Apologies may be said to serve as a firewall between the ‘sinful’ nation and the ‘atoning’ one and they may also allow for the restoration of good relations between the offended party and the nation.

I also showed how historical apology statements and the ensuing question period are virtually unique as a parliamentary activity. Rather than being subject to intense debate and division as is often the case in Parliament (as we will see in the following chapter), we have seen that historical apologies see the House come together in consensus. Moreover, the House is quiet with an absence of jeering or heckling from a sedentary position and the questions that are asked are best characterised as being ‘softballs’. These aspects stem from the serious and often moving nature of the statements and what is contained therein.

The statements themselves focus less on apologising (though this, of course, happens) and more on ‘getting the truth out’ in detailed descriptions of the offence(s). This is a necessary component of these statements since the truth has so often been obscured before these apologies and the inquiries which may have triggered them.
The potentially disturbing detail is shied away from in the statements because the apologiser is not the transgressor and so her personal face is not threatened by giving such detail.

Finally, we saw that the apology tokens contained in the statement are invariably conventional in nature. This may be because the apologiser has frequently negotiated the form of the apology in advance with the offended parties and so the risk of the apology being misinterpreted is that much lower.
Chapter 7

Metapragmatics of the political apology

The focus in this chapter is on what we might describe as the metapragmatics of the apology. Metapragmatics concerns itself with how interactants abstract away from conversation, the social meanings arrived at as a result of interaction and what language users claim are the important features of the content and delivery of linguistic actions (whether these are oriented to in conversation or when informants are asked explicitly about them). In relation to this study, the aspects of the metapragmatics of the act of apologising which shall be explored are: i) what linguistic elements are viewed as necessary to constitute an apology by participants in the apology action; ii) issues surrounding the delivery of the apology and how these are used by participants to ascribe sincerity to it; iii) what the act of apologising or refusing to apologise does to how the apologisers are viewed/portrayed; and iv) how an apology token can be deliberately used in a non-apologetic way in order to create a pragmatic effect.

So far we have devoted time to looking at the act of apologising itself, i.e. how politicians actually carry out their apologies. It is my intention in this chapter to analyse instances where the performance of an apology is scrutinised, sought out, or commented upon. To do this, I propose to look at two incidents in the House of Commons which were fiercely debated, both in the House and in the press. The first looks at what happens when an MP refuses to apologise in the prescribed way – the case of Ron Brown. The second explores how an offended party can pursue an apology from the offender and how this can be resisted – the case of Ed Balls vs. George Osborne. In addition, we will explore news interviews which do not contain performative apologies but instead see questions being raised about what constitutes a ‘good’ apology. As well as this, the non-apologetic uses which apology tokens (and in

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1More information about work done in metapragmatics can be found in Hübler (2011).
particular, I’m sorry) can be put to will also be discussed.

Perhaps the best reason for exploring the metapragmatic as well as the pragmatic resources of a given act in an institutional setting is that ‘an institution’s principles of conduct may often be most clearly revealed through violations and disruptions of normative forms of politeness and through negotiated claims about those violations’ (Ilie, 2004:45). That is to say, this chapter will tell us much about what politicians and their watchdogs in the media view as being the important aspects of apologising and why they believe it to be an important action to perform. Moreover, we will also touch upon the reasons why speakers may view an apology as not being the right thing to do in a given situation.

7.1 Getting an apology wrong: The case of Ron Brown

In this first section I will outline the case of Ron Brown who was a backbench Labour MP between 1979 and 1992. Brown was on the left of his party and was particularly concerned with representing the shipbuilding trade and those involved in it in his Edinburgh constituency. A not uncontroversial MP, Brown had been suspended on two occasions before the episode under discussion here – once for calling a fellow MP a liar and one another occasion for placing a banner on the Table of the House. This section looks at the third and final time Brown was suspended.

The situation which led to the Labour backbencher Ron Brown being required to make an apology by way of personal statement is summarised well by The Lord President of the Council, who introduced a motion to censure Mr. Brown (then the MP for Leith) the following day:

(102) The Lord President of the Council, Mr John Wakeham, 20 April 1988; vol. 131, col, 934 (1:31)

JW: the incidents to which the motion refer took place just yesterday and the day before. (0.3) so the house will need little reminding of them. .hh on monday night at the end of the proceedings, (.) the honourable member for edinburgh leith threw some papers on to the floor of the chamber, (0.2) and picked up the mace. he then released it. (0.2) and as it hit the ground it sustained a certain amount of damage.

\footnote{The text from Hansard of the motion to censure Brown can be found as Appendix E. The number in brackets refers to the timestamp of the audio recording from which the example was transcribed.}
(0.3) hhh as you told the house yesterday mister speaker, (. ) the extent of that damage is now being assessed. (0.3) arrangements were made yesterday for the honourable member to make a personal statement at three thirty pm about his conduct the previous night. (0.4) despite being given ample opportunity by you mister speaker to makes that statement and apologise, (. ) he failed to do so in a way which satisfied the house and he had to be asked to withdraw from the chamber.

The mace is the symbol of the royal authority by which Parliament is convened and a symbol of the authority of The Speaker – without it in place, the Commons cannot sit. Tampering with the mace is considered a contempt of the House of Commons, and is treated seriously. That said, Ron Brown’s actions of interfering with the mace are not unique – in 1976, Michael Heseltine famously swung the mace around his head in protest at a bill he disagreed with passing and more recently, in 2009, John McDonnell removed the mace and threw it on one of the Commons benches in protest at a third runaway at Heathrow being approved by his own government.

We shall explore a variety of matters which this case can shed light on – i) how and why Brown refused to apologise; ii) the reactions of other members to this refusal; iii) the proper procedures for apologising in the chamber. All of these areas will give us an indication of the implications for face of (not) apologising.

7.1.1 The ‘apology’ statement

Before I go into any great detail about Brown’s statement, I first wish to issue a caveat. The transcribing of this statement was, at times, extremely difficult for numerous reasons. The first is because of the nature of recording in the chamber – only the microphone closest to the current speaker is used at any time, meaning that while it is often clear that an intervention from a sedentary position is being made, it is often difficult to discern its content. The sheer volume (both loudness and number) of heckles and jeers from (particularly) Conservative MPs also caused difficulties – both because they drowned out the talk of the current speaker, and because they ‘overwhelmed’ the recording equipment meaning that the nature of the heckles was also not discernible at times. That said, the transcript I have produced is, in all modesty, more accurate than that what we find in the Hansard report.

(103) Ron Brown’s Personal Statement 19 April 1988 (vol 131, col 679), SW= Speaker Weatherill, U= Unknown; UU= Multiple unknown parties, CB=
Sir Clifford Boulton, Clerk of the House

SW: A PERSONAL STATEMENT (0.3) mister ron brown!

RB: mister: (. ) speaker (0.2) i’d like to make a statement?

regarding an incident last evening. (0.4) and of course er
(0.3) the press- er the media er have made much of that!
can i sa\{y to you\}

UU: {((groans))}

SW: ORDER the honourable er the ORDER would the
honourable gentleman \{resume his seat\}

UU: \{SIT DOWN::\}

SW: whilst i say to him that he must make the statement which
has been agreed (0.2) with me.

RB: (0.4) well can i just say to you that i can agree many things
\{if i apologise XXX then i apologise to my honourable
friend the member for garston\}

UU: {((inaudible heckles, groaning, jeering))}

SW: ERRRR ORDER ORDER MAY I- ORDE:R=

UU: =SIT DOWN (.) SIT DOWN! \{((jeering, heckling))\}

SW: \{er order. there is a\} er what the honourable gentleman is
about to do now:. (0.3) quite correctly, (0.2) is er- (0.3) laid
down in our st- standing orders. he must make the personal
statement that he has agreed with me please.

RB: well mister speaker with respect i \{say (0.5) that THAT
STATEMENT is not acceptable and the facts in all fairness
to YOURSELF and to others in this place\}=

UU: {((discontended chuntering))}

SW: =order. ORDER ORDER (. ) OR:::D\{ER (0.2) OR\}DER

UU: {SIT DOWN:::} \{(other inaudible heckles for 7s)\}

SW: ORDER (. ) ORDER (0.3) OR:::DER the honourable
gentleman has agreed a statement which he- which he
wishes to make \{to the house\}

RB: {((inaudible))}

SW: well if he does NOT wish to make it to the house that puts
a completely different complexion on it.

UU: {((supportive cheers))}

SW: ORDER please!

RB: on a point of order mister speaker!

SW: ORDER \{i’m on my feet! (0.3) if the honourable gentleman
is prepared to make his- ORDER ORDER (0.3) ORDER\}

if the honourable gentleman is prepared \text{no} to make his
statement which has been agreed and in our- and er in the
proper form then I will hear him. If he seeks to qualify it in any way, I regret, and it would be a regret. That I cannot hear him.

RB: Mister Speaker since you know the grovelling statement I’m not going to read it out and I don’t accept it right?!

UU: OOOOOOOOHhhhhhhhhhh

SW: ORDER I don’t think it’s a grovelling statement. I’d ask the honourable gentleman to make it.

RB: Alright I’ll make a statement. They tell me that this is the place that democracy is so firmly established and it’s simply this and in very few words. If this house is embarrassed and it was certainly true that last evening an incident happened and I was involved.

UU: ((raucous laughter))

RB: I APOLOGISE TO THE HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR GARSTON=

SW: ORDER! If the honourable gentleman wants to say anything to me he must do so privately AFTER he has made his statement. But he must make his statement now.

UU: NO::::::: { (uproar for 5s)}

RB: Obviously if that thing in front of me FELL OUT OF MY HANDS. (0.4) and got dented. SO BE IT

UU: { ((angry, but indistinct, heckles))}

SW: ORDER (0.7) ORDER (1.5) ORDER (1.0) if- if} the honourable gentleman wants to say anything to me he must do so privately AFTER he has made his statement. But he must make his statement now.

UU: for god’s sake ron!

RB: can I say- thank you mister speaker. can I just say to you-
UU: {((angry, but indistinct, heckles))}

SW: ((directed at the Clerk of the House)) clifford! can i suspend the house for five minutes?

CB: (2.5) he must resume his seat if he is not prepared to XXX

SW: ORDER i say to the honourable gentleman now for the last time he either makes his personal statement now WITHOUT QUALIFICATION.

RB: (4.0) MISTER SPEAKER i grovel grovel and say i shouldn’t do it again. how about that?

UU: OH:..........:!!!

SW: ORDER order. i cannot accept that as a personal statement by the honourable gentleman and- PLEASE (0.3) i ask him to leave the chamber while i think about the appropriate course of action.

In what follows I will discuss the ways in which Brown resists apologising and the reaction which it engenders. Before that though, I want to note one feature of the debate which will come up again in the next section looking at a different incident. If we look at lines 57-59 in particular we see how directives produced from a sedentary position (in this case telling Brown to sit down) are group efforts which, though supportive of The Speaker, are not endorsed by him. This relates, I believe, to The Speaker’s wish to remain neutral and above the fray of political argument. Note how this also prefaces The Speaker’s attempts to give Brown ample opportunity to produce his apology.

7.1.2 Instances of resistance

Brown’s statement raises an interesting question: why does Brown resist simply ‘going through the motions’ of being seen to apologise, instead choosing to actively push back against The Speaker’s insistence that he produce the statement as agreed? While we cannot get into Brown’s head (nor can we ask him in retrospect, since he died in 2007), his statement does suggest a possible reason for this resistance – he twice draws a parallel between apologising and grovelling: calling the statement a grovelling one (line 47) and describing his action in apologising as grovelling (line 88). Viewing the apology as being grovelling would suggest that Brown considers its costs as being outweighed by its benefits – that is to say, he views the act of apologising to be so damaging to his own face that it is not worth the positive outcome, i.e. repairing his relationship with some members of the House and preventing his suspension from the House.
Brown resists giving the apology as agreed with The Speaker, but rather than merely refusing outright to apologise he uses a few strategies which are an attempt to remain orderly (or at least, for him to continue to be heard). The first is proposing a partial apology to one member – the MP for Garston, who Brown shoved when he tried to prevent Brown from touching the mace (lines 13-4), which shows his belief that some of his actions were apologisable. In addition, Brown resists producing the apology because its content is already known to The Speaker, to whom he is addressing his apology (line 44-45), this might be viewed as a protest by Brown against the arcane procedural aspect of the performance of the apology. In addition, we can note Brown’s suggestion that him not being allowed to make a truly personal statement runs counter to the idea that the Commons is a ‘place that democracy is so firmly established’ (line 50).

Further means of resistance can be seen in the the passivised formulation of the offence: ‘an incident happened and i was involved’ (lines 51-2). This is an even more extreme case of the delimiting of the offence talked about in §3.4.1 and further indexes Brown’s resistance to apologise and belief in the inoffensiveness of his actions. The final means of doing this comes towards the end of the transcript before Brown is ordered to leave the chamber. In lines 77-8, Brown manipulates the description of the offence – ‘if that thing fell out of my hand’, note the conditional description for a realis event as well as the deagentivisation; it wasn’t Brown who actively threw the mace but rather the mace, without his volition, fell from his hands. Clearly these are means of making the incident seem unapologisable (for both humorous effect and, it might be suggested, as a means for Brown to demonstrate his frustration at being made to apologise).

Once again participation structure plays a role – a little further context may be of use before I explain my thinking here. Brown’s action in throwing the mace was in order to protest at the government’s decision to reject supplementary benefit appeals, particularly for recently laid-off workers from the Govan shipyard (Hansard vol. 131, col. 556-8) and the refusal of The Speaker (and the usual channels) to allow an emergency debate on the matter. By apologising Brown might have been concerned that he would be seen by his constituents as going back on his his protest – those constituents are, of course, potential overhearers to the personal statement. Indeed, in the debate to censure Brown which came the following day he said almost as much:

(104) Ron Brown – 20 April 1988; vol. 131, col. 935 (11:45)

RB: if you want an apology (0.4) so be it you can have an apology. (0.5) BUT (0.3) BUT if you apologise also to the working class for what they have to suffer ((groans from
CON) then- then yeah fair do’s (0.2) that’s fair enough with me.

So the knowledge that there exists important overhearers is a possible motivation for Brown to not go through the motions and instead refuse to apologise. It might be thought that Brown believed his actions in damaging the mace were far less of an offence than the actions he was protesting against.

### 7.1.3 The fall-out

Brown’s behaviour was considered so beyond the pale that the following day a motion to censure him was introduced by the Government (drafted in consultation with and agreed to by The Speaker and Brown’s own Labour Party). The motion proposed that Brown: i) be required to pay for the repairs to the damaged mace; and ii) be suspended from the service of the House for a period of twenty days. Two amendments were also tabled and voted upon: a) that Mr. Brown pay for the damage without being suspended and b) that Mr. Brown be suspended for at least sixty days without pay and until such a time as he provide the House with an adequate apology. Both of these were rejected in favour of the Government proposal. The debate tells us much about the value MPs purport to place on apologising.

In the following example, the Lord President of the Council, John Wakeham, suggests that the House is generous in how it treats those who apologise and suggests that an appropriate apology usually precludes the need for any further action – i.e. that an apology is a sufficient action for a wrongdoer to perform and that no other restorative action is necessarily required. Also interesting in Wakeham’s speech is that he makes an implicit distinction between transgressions which are unplanned (‘taken in the heat of the moment’) and those which are pre-meditated\(^3\). Whilst Brown’s actions were not planned, his refusal to apologise for them ‘upgrades’ the status of the offence.

(105) **John Wakeham (Lord President of the Council) – 20 April 1988; vol. 131, col. 934 (4:45)**

JW: the house is generous to those who make personal statements expressing regret (.) for action taken in the heat of the moment […] very often the house may decide that on these occasions no further action is needed but i do not think that anyone who heard the honourable member for

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\(^3\)A number of others also highlight this – see for instance the contributions of Tony Benn, Stuart Bell and Eric Heffer in the debate; the copy of which from Hansard has been provided as Appendix F.
edinburgh leith yesterday could believe that he regretted his action, […]

The Lord President goes further; he suggests that refusing to apologise acts as aggravation to the original misconduct. In not accepting one’s wrongdoing, the events are, in a sense, repeated and so lose their status as unplanned transgressions.

(106) John Wakeham (Lord President of the Council) – 20 April 1988; vol. 131, col. 935 (5:48)

JW: i do not think that many members would disagree with the view that the honourable member for edinburgh (..) leith’s aggravation of his original misconduct by his persistent refusal to offer a satisfactory apologis- er apology justifies a penalty more severe than that which (0.2) would have been received yesterday had he been named.

The mover of the harshest motion to suspend Brown without pay, Eric Forth, draws attention to the participation structure of the personal statement apology and discusses how the refusal to apologise was a particular snub to The Speaker.


EF: the honourable member (0.3) when given the opportunity to apologise to the house deliberately. (0.2) QUITE DELIBERATELY refused that opportunity and set out systematically in my view mister speaker to undermine the authority of the chair. and in doing so and in using a phrase such as? (0.4) < i did not write this rubbish< when referring to the agreed apology, that i believe mister speaker well sums up the attitude of the honourable member to yourself.

It could be argued that Brown’s refusal to apologise is doubly transgressive against The Speaker – naturally in the sense that The Speaker has been denied the apology of which he was to be a recipient, but also because it suggests that The Speaker has done a poor job in the authorship of the apology – equally face-threatening.

7.1.4 Summary

What we have seen in this section is that apologising can be resisted by members who have violated the norms and rules of the House. This resistance can be creative in that
partial apologies may be produced or explanations for the refusal given. Ultimately, though, the refusal to conform to the expected standards of the House (i.e. by not apologising) results in censure. It is also clear from this section that events which go against the usual behaviours of an institution can tell us much about the nature of those very behaviours.

7.2 Pursuing an apology: The case of Ed Balls

In this section, I will look at the importance placed on an apology by the putative offended party and how potential inaction (in this case, simply not apologising) is framed as a wilful action, that of refusal to apologise. In particular, I will focus on the heated debate in parliament involving George Osborne and Ed Balls, in which Balls sought an apology from Osborne, following Osborne’s accusation that the Shadow Chancellor was implicated in the LIBOR scandal. The metadiscursive vocabulary used by the main protagonists will be instructive, as will the contributions made by backbenchers, who frequently seek to ‘fight the corner’ of either Balls or Osborne. Before looking at the debate itself, I will give some background to the LIBOR scandal and the offensive act which triggered the need, in Balls’ view, for an apology.

7.2.1 Background

7.2.1.1 The LIBOR scandal

The London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) is a ‘key benchmark used by banks, securities houses and investors to gauge the cost of unsecured borrowing in the London interbank market’, according to the British Bankers’ Association (BBA) (www.bbalibor.com - accessed 24/04/2013), the group which collated the LIBOR figures until 2012. Banks would submit, on a daily basis, the amount that borrowing on the unsecured markets was costing them at that time (or in the unlikely event that no borrowing had been done that day, the amount that it would have cost them). This rate gives an indication of the stability and health of particular financial institutions, with banks who are having to pay more to borrow money viewed as less secure than those which are paying less.

I am only able to give a very brief overview of the LIBOR scandal here. (Admati & Hellwig, 2013:Part 3) gives a detailed and thoughtful account of what went wrong with LIBOR, and discusses how improvements can be made in the financial sector at large.

Since the LIBOR scandal, the way the rate is calculated has changed substantially. This is not relevant for our purposes.
However, LIBOR was found to be open to market manipulation since it was calculated entirely ‘on trust’, with individual bankers in charge of the submission of their rate to the BBA, meaning that one could lie about the actual rate that one was paying, or collude with individuals within one’s own bank and from external institutions to nudge up or nudge down the rate. From this manipulation, individuals and banking companies were able to profit vastly.

The LIBOR scandal came to a head in 2012, when a large-scale investigation by the US and UK financial authorities uncovered market manipulation on a large scale. This saw Barclays Bank fined $200 million by the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission, $160 million by the US Department of Justice and £59.5 million by the UK Financial Services Authority. The chairman and chief executive officer of Barclays both resigned as a result of the scandal.

7.2.1.2 Osborne’s allegation

Following the emergence of the financial scandal, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, attempted to make political hay by suggesting the Labour Party were complicit in the scandal during their time in office. In so doing, it might suggested that Osborne was seeking to remind voters that the scandal took place when he was in opposition and therefore is not to be blamed for it. Osborne gave an interview to The Spectator magazine in which he alleged:

(108) As for the role of the Labour government and the people around Gordon Brown, well I think there are questions to be asked of them.

(109) They were clearly involved and we just haven’t heard the full facts, I don’t think, of who knew what when.

(110) My opposite number was the City minister for part of this period [May 2006 to June 2007] and Gordon Brown’s right-hand man for all of it, so he has questions to answer as well. That’s Ed Balls, by the way.

These allegations became the focus of the parliamentary debate which came the day after they were made, as Balls suggested that his integrity had been impugned by Osborne’s ‘utterly false and untrue’ interview.

7.2.2 The parliamentary debate

The emergency debate which took place on 5 July 2012 was intended to set out what the Government’s reaction to the LIBOR scandal would be. The Coalition proposed
that a committee of parliamentarians (MPs and members of the House of Lords) be set up immediately to lead an investigation into the LIBOR scandal: how it came about, how it went unnoticed for so long, and what could be done in future to avoid a repeat of it. The Government also allowed an Opposition motion to be debated which was supported by the Labour party, as well as all of the minority parties. Their motion was much more wide-ranging and called for an independent inquiry, led by a senior judge into the scandal itself, but also into the ethics and standards of the banking industry as a whole.

Despite this being the focus of the debate, a great deal of the opening contributions by Balls and Osborne was spent with Balls in pursuit of an apology for and a withdrawal of the allegations made by the Chancellor. The debate was one of the more vicious in recent years, with one columnist stating that:

The two front benches seemed on the point of literally coming to blows. Both Deputy Speakers appeared on the verge of losing control of the House of Commons chamber.

*Dan Hodges, writing in The Telegraph (06/07/2012) [http://goo.gl/xiH6Qw](http://goo.gl/xiH6Qw)*

My focus in what follows will be on the trigger for seeking the withdrawal, how it was pursued and how it was avoided – other aspects of the conflictual atmosphere will be neglected here but are discussed in Murphy (in prep.).

### 7.2.2.1 Restating the offence

One of the key features of the debate was that proxies were frequently used in the repetition of initial allegation made by Osborne and the seeking of a withdrawal and apology. The trigger for Balls’ pursuit of an apology was a question put by loyal, Conservative backbencher Nadhim Zahawi:

(111) **Financial Standards in the Banking Industry Debate, 5 July 2012, col. 1113. NZ= Nadhim Zahawi and EB= Ed Balls (04:42)**

1 NZ: i thank the shadow chancellor for giving way but this is a
2 very important point and it goes to the heart of the issue of
3 trust. can he confirm that in his time in office that no other
4 minister either at number ten or the treasury spoken to the
5 bank of england (.) on libor? (0.2) THAT he knows about?

6The number in brackets relates to the timestamp of the video from which the transcript was produced. The video can be found here: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/hi/house_of_commons/newsid_9734000/9734991.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/hi/house_of_commons/newsid_9734000/9734991.stm).
Here the question asks if ‘no other minister’ knew about the scandal – contain a clear presupposition that there was one minister who knew, and that that minister was possibly Balls\textsuperscript{7}. Notice also that Zahawi frames this as a question of trust, meaning that any semblance of equivocation from Balls in his response leaves him open to the charge of being untrustworthy.

A number of other Conservative MPs repeat the allegations first printed in The Spectator magazine – see for instance the contributions of James Morris, Penny Mordaunt and Elizabeth Truss\textsuperscript{8}. One question that these interventions raise is why do these backbenchers get involved? The possible reasons for this include the idea that they are seeking preferment – by supporting George Osborne in his quarrel with Balls they may be viewed more positively by those who give out the Government jobs (Osborne being one of those in the Prime Minister’s inner circle)\textsuperscript{9}. The idea that there is ‘safety in numbers’ may also play a role – the more people who repeat an allegation, the less dangerous it is for Osborne and any other individuals who have produced it if it turns out to be false. The final reason is related to turn-taking – interventions from backbench MPs are much more preferred during the opening statements than they are from senior MPs. If these backbenchers did not repeat the allegation during an intervention, it would unlikely be referred to until Osborne came to speak (some one hour after the debate started). The relevance of producing the allegations at such a late stage in the debate would, perhaps, be reduced.

7.2.2.2 Seeking a withdrawal and apology

The repetition of the offence triggers Balls’ pursuit of a withdrawal (a possible component of an apology) and apology. In calling for the withdrawal, Balls deliberately manipulates the turn-taking norms found in standard parliamentary debate

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\textsuperscript{7}Presuppositions are propositions which are presumed by the speaker to be in the common ground. The content of a presupposition is not asserted but is backgrounded and its truth taken for granted by the speaker. Presuppositions need not be true however and a presupposition can be denied without contradiction (unlike their near-relation, the entailment). For instance, in this case the presupposition could be denied without contradiction: “No other minister spoke to the Bank of England because no ministers spoke to them” would have been a possible way of rejecting the presupposition.

\textsuperscript{8}The interested reader is directed to \url{http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm120705/debtext/120705-0002.htm#12070562000004} where the full Hansard report can be read. It amounts to over 60 pages of text and so I have chosen not provided it as an appendix.

\textsuperscript{9}Indeed, in the Cabinet reshuffle of 2014, Liz Truss was promoted to the Cabinet as Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Penny Mordaunt was made Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Communities and Local Government. Whilst I do not suggest that this was not due to their intrinsic merits, I do not think it controversial to suggest that building personal relationships in this way did help them secure these positions.
– these were discussed on page 63. Important for the discussion here is point iii) of that list which I shall slightly reformulate here:

The Shadow Chancellor can take interventions from other MPs, who try to intervene by standing and asking ‘Will the Shadow Chancellor give way?’. The Shadow Chancellor can accept or reject these interventions.

In (112) Balls seeks to force an intervention from Osborne:


1 EB: ((heckles continue from LAB)) and if he has any evidence
2 he should produce it now in this house. i will take an
3 intervention now. (1.0)
4 LAB: COME ON NOW! STAND UP! COME ON!
5 EM: WITHDRAW!
6 EB: and mister deputy speaker if he will not provide the
7 evidence now (0.2) he needs to stand up at this dispatch box
8 NOW [((heckles directed at GO from LAB)) and withdraw
9 this utterly false allegation. (2.0)]
10 LAB: COME ON THEN!
11 GO: right. in the last forty eight hours we have discovered
12 two things. (0.3) first that a report was commissioned
13 by ubs that baroness vadera now says that she saw and
14 commented upon […] LET HIM EXPLAIN ((volume
15 of heckles increases further)) < WHAT LABOUR’S
16 INVOLVEMENT WAS? (0.4) WHO WERE THE
17 MINISTERS? (0.2) WHO HAD THE CONVERSATION?

Note that, in the same way that performing the offence was a group effort for the Conservative MPs, the pursuit of the withdrawal is also a ‘team-sport’. Labour MPs jeer Osborne, at some volume, directing him to ‘stand up’ and ‘withdraw’. Balls directs Osborne to either produce evidence for the allegation or withdraw it. In the face of this invitation the Chancellor has at least four options:

1. **Refuse to intervene** – Osborne is under no obligation to respond at this point; just as he has no right to the floor during somebody else’s allocated turn, he is also not required to respond when invited to do so. It is likely that Osborne does not choose this option because, as we saw in §5.4, silence may be interpreted as guilt. Osborne choosing not to respond may, then, be seen as him not having evidence for the accusation. Clearly, this would be face-damaging since
it would give the impression that Osborne was a person who makes up false accusations without evidence. Remaining silent would also see Osborne pass up the opportunity to give justification for making the accusation.

2. **Intervene and provide the evidence** – providing the evidence at this stage may raise questions about why it was not given freely earlier, instead of under duress. As it happened, Osborne could not truthfully have done this since he later withdrew the accusation – admitting that Balls was not personally involved in the LIBOR scandal (see: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-18716828).

3. **Intervene and withdraw/apologise** – this would be extremely face-damaging since it would just implicate that Osborne had made a faulty assertion but would openly admit to that. It might be suggested that Osborne chose to withdraw later outside the debate because it deprived Balls of an immediate opportunity to criticise him as would likely have happened if Osborne withdrew in Parliament.

4. **Intervene and reassert the accusation** – this is the choice which Osborne made. In particular, Osborne specified some of the questions which Balls needed to answer. This ‘doubling-down’ on the accusation led to further pursuit of an apology.

As well as further instances of explicit directions to apologise (one of which we will come to shortly in example 115), Balls makes asides in his speech about the need for Osborne to apologise. For instance, in rejecting an intervention from a Conservative MP, Balls makes clear that he would accept one from Osborne were it to contain an apology:


1 AB: will he give way?
2 EM: don’t give way to him.
3 EB: i need to make some progress because this is a very important issue and others want to speak. i have taken a number of interventions= i have to say i’m still waiting for the intervention i want (. ) the apology from the chancellor!
4 
5 
6 
7 
8 ((LAB: YEAHHHHHH)) it’s not arrived yet mister deputy speaker]

Balls also chides Osborne when he hears him speaking from a sedentary position. The reference to Osborne needing to compose an apology elicits laughter from Balls’ MPs.
So the apology is of the utmost importance to Balls and the pursuit of it permeates his contribution to the debate, and the contributions of many of his colleagues who seek it on his behalf.

7.2.2.3 Refusing to apologise

I have already noted that Balls is unsuccessful in his pursuit of a withdrawal and apology in this debate and how Osborne retracts his allegation only after it. We have seen how Osborne is prepared to ‘double-down’ on his allegation in this face of a request for an apology, in the following example we will see further ways in which Osborne avoids apologising.


GO: i have never seen the labour party and the shadow chancellor so rattled [((cheers, jeers from all sides of the house)) ABOUT THEIR TIME IN OFFICE! WE HAD ONE HOUR- ONE HOUR OF AN ATTEMPT BY THE CITY MINISTER TO DEFEND HIS CONDUCT] when he was in office and (. ) these scandals (. ) happened. (0.2) and we have still not had from him a simple apology for what (0.2) he (0.2) did=his failure of regulation, GET UP AND SAY- GET UP AND SAY NOT (0.2) WE WERE ALL INVOLVED (. ) THERE WERE GOVERNMENTS ALL OVER THE WORLD DOING THIS- JUST GET UP AND SAY (0.2) I WAS THE CITY MINISTER AND I AM SORRY.

EB: °he knows what i have said in the past. (0.2) and i have said that um people on all sides of this house regret what happened°i- i- i have apologised to this house before. (0.2) i have made an apology to this house before for the failures
of regulation. and i’m asking the chancellor to apologise now. (0.2) he has impugned my integrity (1.0) and he has made an allegation in the spectator and all over the newspapers (.) hhh he says they were clearly involved in the two thousand and eight libor scandal and he says “that’s ed balls by the way”. (.) i’m named? he’s made an allegation? he has no evidence because there isn’t any because it’s untrue and he knew there was no evidence because he knew it was untrue but he said it anyway because that is the character of the man madam deputy speaker. (0.3) AND WHAT I AM SAYING TO HIM IS. (. ) if he has any integrity on this narrow point of his allegation “he should stand up now, withdraw the allegation and apologise.”(0.4) and he won’t (. ) “he won’t”. GO: the idea that i am gonna take lessons in integrity from a man who smeared his way through thirteen years of labour government who half the people who ever served with him thinks he was a disgrace in his post is another thing.

Osborne turns around Balls’ repeated requests for an apology into a demand that Balls himself apologise for his failure of banking regulation, which might be seen as the root cause of the LIBOR scandal. This, Osborne would claim, is a far more serious offence than his own of alleging wrongdoing on Balls’ part and one more immediately meriting repair. In demanding an apology Osborne also dictates the form that it should take. Balls resists and relies on a report of a previous apology and suggests that Osborne is lacking integrity by not apologising. Once again, Osborne goes on the offensive and suggests that it is Balls’ integrity which is questionable and asserts that many people who have worked with him believe him to be ‘a disgrace in his post’. It seems that the Chancellor is of the opinion that the best form of defence is attack.

7.2.3 Summary

We have seen in this section how an apology can be pursued and resisted. A significant portion of Balls’ contribution to the LIBOR debate was given over to seeking an apology from Osborne – this shows the seriousness with which he viewed Osborne’s allegations, or perhaps more precisely: it shows how damaging Balls thought those allegations would be were they to be believed by the public at large. Seeking a withdrawal and apology in this public arena, where the apology could be scrutinised by Balls and his fellow (Labour) MPs, would mean vindication for Balls and would see
Osborne’s reputation damaged. Osborne resisted the calls to withdraw and apologise in the debate (though he did withdraw his accusation in an interview in the week following it) and we have seen how this was done: by repeating the allegation, seeking an apology from Balls himself and attacking other aspects of Balls’ character.

7.3 Participants’ beliefs on the necessary contents of an apology

The next aspects of the metapragmatics to explore is the comments which are made about the value placed on apologising and the ways in which language users suggest that they should be carried out. In this section, I shall return to news interviews which are a good source of these metapragmatic comments and I will discuss what interviews reveal about politicians’ (and, to a lesser extent, journalists’) claims of the importance of apologising. It has been argued that such metapragmatic acts may also be used to establish new (probably transient) norms for carrying out an apology (see Hübler & Bublitz (2007:1-12)), we shall see how this may be the case for political apologies. A discussion of these norms is also important in order to show how these can be manipulated when using apology tokens to perform other functions, which will be the purpose of the next section.

7.3.1 Who is the apologiser?

Interviewers are vigilant for apologies which they believe to come from an inappropriate source. I have discussed at length the felicity conditions of apologising, part of which concerned who should perform the apology. I have argued that the offender or someone who is a ratified representative of the offender can felicitously apologise for the offence in question. In (116), Marr questions the sincerity of a previous apology made by Brown, then the Prime Minister. Such an example could be thought indicative that different felicity conditions are being applied. I do not think this is the case here, however.

(116) Gordon Brown appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 31 May 2009

15 GB: -and i’ve said sorry because er be-=
16 AM: =well you’ve said sorry on behalf of all the political parties which is a bit like me
17 saying sorry on behalf of sky news it’s er not appropriate
Brown had previously apologised on behalf of all political parties for the Expenses Scandal. However, Brown held no position which would allow him to apologise on behalf of all political parties. As Prime Minister, he could have apologised for the government and even on behalf of the nation (as was discussed in the chapter on historical apologies). As leader of the Labour Party, he could have apologised on behalf of that party and its affiliates. But he could not have apologised for his rivals (the Conservative Party, the Liberal Democrats, etc.), because he is not part of their party hierarchies and so does not represent them in anyway. As the interviewer (who works for the BBC) alludes to, he would not be able to apologise for the conduct of his rivals at Sky News just because they are in the same business.

Brown’s motivation for carrying out an apology in this way is, I think, clear. If we accept that an apology is frequently interpreted as an admission of guilt\(^{10}\), had Brown apologised just for the Labour Party (as he would be ratified to do) it would suggest that they alone were guilty. In other words, by attempting to apologise for all political parties, Brown wishes to tar his opponents with the same brush.

7.3.2 The contents and performance of an apology

Many of the metacomments on what an apology should contain coincide with the strategies for apologising proposed in Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984) and revised earlier in this thesis. These metacomments give some validity to the components and their continued use. As well as reiterating the potential constituent parts of an apology, the examples below also give us an insight into how politicians believe an apology should be performed.

Example 117 comes from an interview given by Nick Clegg in which he was asked about his YouTube apology\(^{11}\) for making a pledge which he later reneged on to freeze university tuition fees.

\(\begin{align*}
10\text{ NC: } & \text{ and so i just wanted to: kind of make the apology in a} \\
11\text{ simple (. ) direct hhh way which (. ) as you say (. ) of course} \\
12\text{ gets mocked [6 lines omitted]}
\end{align*}\)

\(^{10}\)This seems to be a commonly held lay opinion, to the point that some jurisdictions have laws which prevent apologies being presented as evidence of fault or liability in court (see British Columbia’s 2006 Apology Act (Ho & Liu, 2011)).

\(^{11}\)The original apology can be found here: \url{http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HXak0zKJp4}, it was first uploaded to YouTube and was also used as a Party Political Broadcast on terrestrial television. The apology was ‘autotuned’ (put to music) and reached the Top 40 in the iTunes bestsellers’ chart. A version of the parody can be found here: \url{http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUDjRZ30SNo}.
Clegg’s discussion of his apology highlights frequently found components of (political) apologies, namely, accepting responsibility for the offence (lines 19 and 21) and a pledge of non-recurrence (line 21). Clegg suggests that there is no real difference between a political apology and a quotidian one, asserting that sometimes they are ‘just the right thing’ (line 18). This is perhaps said to engage with some of the cynicism surrounding political apologies (and discussed at length in the chapter on historical apologies). Reducing this cynicism may improve the chances that his apology is seen as genuine, potentially helping it to achieve the desired perlocutionary goals.

Clegg also notes his desire to apologise simply and directly (lines 10-11). We have seen the importance of directly apologising with the fall-out from Mike Penning’s interview (example 72), and we will see this again below in example 119. A simple apology might be seen to be desirable in that the public can see that the apologiser is being up-front about her mistakes, rather than hiding behind obfuscation.

Moving to another example, in (118) Jeremy Hunt is discussing an apology made by the security firm G4S for their failure to deliver the security contract for the 2012 Olympic Games, resulting in Army personnel having to stand in at the last minute.

(118)  **Jeremy Hunt on the Andrew Marr Show – 15 July 2012**

9 JH: [...] actually g4s have been quite honourable (.) they put their hands up (0.2) nick buckles the chief executive has said you know they got it wrong (.) they’ve apologised (.) they’re going to cover all the costs (.) he’s apologised to .hh (0.4) the troops [...]  

As well as accepting responsibility deserving mention by Hunt (line 11), he also notes how a promise to repair/redress has been made (here, G4S covering the costs of their blunder, lines 11-12). In other words, the apology is not just empty words, but is accompanied by tangible action.

Notice the use of the idiomatic expression *to put one’s hands up* which is a feature of a number of apologies. In their work on complaints Drew & Holt provide evidence that
idiomatic expressions are used as a means of seeking affiliation\textsuperscript{12} in situations where the recipient cannot be assumed to be sympathetic or wanting to demonstrate such affiliation (1988:406ff). I would suggest that an appeal for support is to be expected when apologising (or reporting an apology, as is the case here) and that the use of cliché may be being employed for this purpose.

Also noteworthy is Hunt’s proposition that apologising is an ‘honourable’ thing to do (line 9). This also seems to be related to seeking affiliation; if the apologisers have acted honourably as Hunt suggests, then one is more likely to view them sympathetically, resulting in an increased chance that one will accept the apology.

Looking at other examples we gain further insights into how politicians think apologies should be performed. Example 119 contains a reference to apologising in person to the offended party, as well as a mention of making a ‘full’ public apology. In (119), Grayling is talking about the case of his then Cabinet colleague, Andrew Mitchell, who allegedly swore at police officers who would not open the vehicle gate of Downing Street through which he wanted to ride his bike\textsuperscript{13}.

\begin{example}
\textbf{(119) Chris Grayling on Sky News Sunday Live with Dermot Murnaghan – 14 October 2012}

10 CG: and i think really the matter should be left there. he’s issued

\Rightarrow 11 a full (0.2) public apology (.) he’s apologised in person to

12 the police officers concerned (0.2) er er i […]
\end{example}

Apologising in person gives the offender the opportunity to show his/her remorse to the offended parties. Making the effort and taking the time to go and see the apologised might suggest that one is genuinely remorseful. Moreover, seeing the offended party face-to-face reduces the likelihood that an apology, which would otherwise be mediated through a third party, will be misconstrued and possibly rejected. In this respect, a face-to-face apology makes such an incident less like a political apology and more like an interpersonal one. We have seen on other occasions the importance placed on in-person apologies by politicians. For instance, during the 2010 General Election campaign, Gordon Brown went to apologise face-to-face to Gillian Duffy after he was caught calling her ‘a bigoted woman’ on an open microphone. Such was the importance placed on making an apology personally that Brown’s team

\textsuperscript{12}Affiliation can be considered as the hearer’s endorsement of the speaker’s perspective (see Stivers, 2008:35-6

\textsuperscript{13}The episode was widely referred to as ‘Plebgate’, as this was the derogatory term reportedly used by Mitchell. Sadly the chance to christen the incident ‘Gate-gate’ was passed up by the majority of news outlets. Despite protesting that he did not use the term ‘pleb’ and despite his apology, Mitchell was forced to resign. A police investigation is currently underway investigating the officers who reported the incident, as the report submitted may contain false information.
cancelled a number of other campaign events to accommodate the trip to Duffy’s home in Rochdale. Following the meeting, Brown highlighted the importance of the apology:

(120) **Gordon Brown speaking to the press pack outside Gillian Duffy’s home – 28 April 2010**

1. GB: sometimes you er say things that you don’t mean to say
2. and sometimes you say things (0.3) er by mistake and
3. sometimes when you say things you want to er correct it
4. very quickly. (0.2) so i wanted to come here and say to
5. gillian, i was sorry er to say that i’d made a mistake but
6. also to say that i understood the concerns she was bringing
7. to me and i had simply misunderstood some of the words
8. she use- used. so i’ve um made my apology. (0.2) i’ve
9. come here it’s been a chance to talk to gillian about her
10. family […]

So the personal, face-to-face apology allows the transgressor to ‘quickly’ correct the record and to clarify the cause of the offence, according to Brown.

Example 119 raises another interesting issue. Notice that Grayling not only mentions the apology made to the offended party, but also the fact that Mitchell had made a public apology, too. This suggests that a personal apology alone would be insufficient, despite the possibility that all of the wronged individuals were satisfied by the apology. By committing an offence which is then reported to the public at large, the politician (in this case Mitchell) has not only damaged his own private self-image (‘face’), but also his public face – the one he possesses by virtue of being an elected representative (see Murphy (2014:§2) for a discussion of the face-wants and -needs of public figures). A public apology is an attempt, therefore, at the restoration of the public face.

### 7.4 Using apology tokens in the performance of other actions

So far in this chapter I have explored how and why people resist apologising and the implications that has on their face and the face(s) of their interlocutor(s). In addition we have seen how wronged parties can pursue apologies when they are not forthcoming. In this section we will look at instances where apology tokens are produced, but seemingly not in order to perform the action of apologising. This may cause the reader who is interested in the function of apologising (as, indeed, I have been up until now)
to wonder what such utterances have to do with apologies (apart from sharing their form). The question that I think the examples that follow raise, however, is why is it that language associated with the seemingly polite act of apologising is appropriated in order to perform these other actions? Moreover, can we see any relation to ‘normal’ apologies and these utterances? The answer to that will be ‘yes’ and will be explained in terms of a cline of pragmaticalisation.

7.4.1 A marker of dissent

I talked briefly in the chapter concerning the Leveson Inquiry (§4.5.4) about how apology expressions can perform other actions – including the challenging of what is deemed by the hearer to be an incorrect statement put to him by the questioner. What was different in those cases though was that the apology function was also discernable, but was less salient than this other function. The first example I will show here is similar to those found at Leveson but in examples 122 and 123 it is more difficult to argue that the original apologetic meaning is accessible to (or less strongly put: accessed by) the interlocutor.

(121) David Miliband appearing on Sky New Sunday Live with Adam Boulton – 20 June 2010

8 DM: well that’s simply not true i mean the cuts that alistair specified=
9 AB: =WELL he didn’t specify!
⇒ 11 DM: well i’m sorry! (0.7) he pr- promised that we would halve the deficit over the {course of the parlia-}
13 AB: {but he didn’t say HOW!}
14 DM: just a minute (0.3) he did as a matter of fact (0.4) […]

The example in (121), then, has similarities to those seen at Leveson. It comes from an interview given by David Miliband who was at the time running to be leader of the Labour Party. In the interview Miliband was setting out his alternative vision for the U.K. economy, particularly how he would manage the budget deficit.

Here Miliband’s ‘well i’m sorry!’ prefaces his disagreement with Boulton about whether Alistair Darling had specified how he would clear up ‘the mess’ of Britain’s budget deficit (Boulton’s words in an earlier question). The emphatic intonation marks out this apology as being ‘different’ from the run-of-the-mill apology – moreover, Miliband’s previous assertion that a premise put to him by Boulton is not true (line

14 He has since resigned his seat as an MP following his losing of the nomination to his younger brother, Ed.
8) makes the idea that he is challenging the interviewer with his apology token contextually relevant.

However, also possibly retrievable from the surrounding context is that this ‘i’m sorry’ is, indeed, an apology – an apology for the offence contained in Boulton’s complaint that the proposed cuts had not been specified. Supporting the view that this is perhaps how Boulton initially interpreted the apology token is the long silence following it, which he allows possibly in anticipation of an explanation to support the apology. This pause separates the apology token from the challenge itself, which distinguishes it from the next couple of examples. What we can notice is that when Boulton recognises that there is another function to the apology, he returns to his more usual combative style of interviewing (see example 123 for more from this interview).

7.4.2 A marker of face threat

Example 122 shows a number of further instances of apology tokens used in the performance of dissent. They differ from that produced by Miliband inasmuch as it is more difficult to work out what it is that the apologiser, Gordon Brown, would be apologising for if we were to take these as genuine apologies. Given that he disputes the accuracy of Marr’s assertion (lines 23-4), it is unlikely to be interpreted as an apology for the complaint – Britain’s apparent poor showing in green energy.

The apology performing a challenge can also be seen in example 122 (a number of times in fact). Some of these challenges seem to be of a slightly different nature than that found in Miliband’s interview.

(122)  **Gordon Brown appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 3 January 2010**

15 AM: let me just stop you on that actually (0.2) ELECTRIC cars
16 are being you know er that’s er being dominated by japan
17 and the united {states} and

⇒ 18 GB: {i’m sorry} i’m sorry

⇒ 19 AM: we’re getting our wind farms from germany and we are

{getting our nuclear power stations from france}

⇒ 21 GB: {(i’m (0.3) i’m sorry}) we are now the leading offshore

wind power. (0.3) did you know that? (0.5) we are now

.hhh developing in nissan (.) in honda (0.2) in toyota (.) in

er er jaguar (.) in er b m er er {w}

⇒ 25 AM: {these’re} hardly british names

26 prime minister.
GB: i’m sorry but these are the companies based in britain and are developing electric cars or proposing to develop their hybrid cars in britain as a base for europe=

⇒ AM: =but their profits go home!

GB: ”i’m sorry but i think there are jobs in britain and these are um successful car companies that are working here. TALKING DOWN britain andrew is not going to succeed because basically there is huge talent in this country. […]"

Given the sequential position of Brown’s first ‘i’m sorry’ in line 19, i.e. overlapping with Marr’s utterance, I would suggest that this is not only the introduction to a challenge, but it is also acting a placeholder positioned to ‘wrestle’ the floor from the interviewer whilst also giving Brown time to formulate his contradictory response (cf. example 121 in which Miliband’s apology is followed by a pause which gives him further time to frame his response). Marr, in this case, does not yield the floor to Brown and Brown resultantly ‘drops out’ until the interviewer has added further remarks critical of the state of British industry (lines 21-2).

Brown’s second turn initial apology token (lines 23-4) might be considered an instance of what Culpeper (2011:174ff) describes as ‘convention-driven non-conventionalised impoliteness’ and a specific sub-type of this called ‘verbal formula mismatches’. The paradigmatic example Culpeper gives of this type of impoliteness is ‘Could you just fuck off?’ where the expectation of politeness (/conviviality/a healthy rapport) is set up by the conventionalised politeness formula (Could you (just) X?) is violated by the conventionally impolite expression (fuck off). Further examples of this type given by Culpeper (ibid.) include ‘I hate to be rude’, ‘No offence’ and ‘With respect’, all ‘followed by an utterance that could point more in the direction of an impoliteness interpretation’ (Culpeper, 2011:176).

Brown’s turn in lines 23-6 shares similarities with these ‘verbal formula mismatches’. First, as I’ve discussed earlier, I’m sorry and its equivalents, can be considered - as Brown & Levinson (1987:87) suggest - a negative politeness formula. Secondly, as in the ‘challenges’ highlighted previously, Brown clearly contradicts the assertion in Marr’s prior turn (note Brown’s emphasis on ‘leading’ in the assertion that Britain is the leading offshore wind power; this suggests that Marr is not merely a little wrong in his previous statement - but completely wrong). The element which leads me to consider this to be a token of impoliteness (rather than merely a challenge) is Brown’s (rhetorical) question to Marr – ‘did you know that?’ (line 25). This can be taken as being impolite (or at the very least, marked) for a number of reasons: firstly, Brown is violating the turn-taking norms which exist within news interviews (i.e. he is supposed
to *answer* questions not *ask* them); secondly, the question quite clearly threatens the face of the interviewer (it casts doubt on his preparedness for the interview); thirdly, the tone of voice employed would best be described as condescending.

A further example of this use of an apology token in a ‘verbal formula mismatch’ can be found slightly further on in David Miliband’s interview on Sky News (first looked at in example 121).

(123)  **David Miliband appearing on Sky New Sunday Live with Adam Boulton – 20 June 2010**

20  DM:  no it’s not > no no no no no > it’s-

21  AB:  it’s just putting names to the {outline plans?}

⇒  22  DM:  {no no i’m sorry} < i’m sorry you are re-(0.2)-ally not getting this< because the
economic case

Here Miliband’s sorry turn follows some strong disagreement (line 20). Further disagreement begins his turn and the ‘i’m sorry’ prefaces a strongly worded criticism regarding Boulton’s comprehension. The pause midway through the word *really* emphasises this element, making more salient the attack. The slow pace of delivery of the ‘verbal formula mismatch’ also sets it apart from the rest of the turn.

Examples like (122) and (123) are amongst a number which would suggest that the apology is one of the ‘polite’ device[s] […] becoming conventionalised prelude[s] to impoliteness’ (Culpeper, 2011:177).

### 7.4.3 ‘I’m sorry’ on a cline of pragmaticalisation

#### 7.4.3.1 Pragmaticalisation and sympathy

These developments in the use of *I’m sorry* are probably best explained as being part of a cline of pragmaticalisation (Aijmer, 1997). Pragmaticalisation is a process by which expressions are bleached of their propositional content ‘to such an extent that they no longer function as expressions contributing to the truth value of a proposition but begin to function as markers indicating procedural meaning’¹⁵ in verbal interaction’ (Watts, 2008b). Procedural meaning is a term which has been taken up in Relevance Theory (see in particular Blakemore (1987, 1992)). Procedural meaning ‘deals with the way in which elements of linguistic structure map directly onto computations themselves – that is, onto mental processes’ (Blakemore, 1987:144). The distinction between procedural and conceptual meaning is a useful one, but like Fraser (2006) and Hansen (2008b) I do not think the the two are mutually exclusive. As Hansen notes:

¹⁵ so-called content words *vs* function words/constructions do not fall neatly into into a class of purely conceptual meanings, on one side, and a class of purely procedural meanings,
In her study on the pragmaticalisation of the epistemic marker *I think*, Aijmer suggested that ‘*I think* permits, for example, extensions of meaning involving the speaker’s attitudes to the hearer or to the message’ (Aijmer, 1997:3). I shall show how this has clear parallels with apologising.

As we have been concerned with the speech act of apologising, I have, until this point, neglected to mention another non-apologetic use of *I’m sorry* which does occur, though impressionistically fairly infrequently in political discourse, that of expressing sympathy/empathy.

Consider this example from a House of Lords debate:

(124) **The Earl of Listowel, Debate on crime and justice, 8 January 2014, col. 1553**

> EL: perhaps I may conclude by saying how sad I was to learn of the death of Paul Goggins MP […] I am sorry to hear of his early demise and I hope that it will be of some comfort to his family to know of the respect in which he is held by this place.

Clearly, this does not constitute an apology for the death of Paul Goggins, but instead indicates Listowel’s sadness on hearing the news which in turn is an indication of the sympathy he has for Goggins’ family.

The link between this type of *I’m sorry* and an apologetic one is fairly straightforward – to feel sorry in the sympathetic sense one must ‘feel bad’ because of an event that one is aware of; as I have discussed previously, to feel apologetic, one must ‘feel bad’ because of a happening and want to acknowledge and remedy this.

One possible explanation for the different functions of *I’m sorry* may be the syntactic environments in which it appears and there may be a direct correspondence to construction form and function. However, the situation is not that straightforward. Consider the following example, which similarly takes the form [I’m sorry to hear] and comes from an interview in which Michael Gove is asked about Conservatives not being honest about the implementation of public spending cuts:

(125) **Michael Gove interviewed on the Andrew Marr Show – 14 June 2009**

on the other. Frequently, one and the same item may contribute to utterance interpretation at several different levels (Hansen, 2008b:26).

In addition, I do not think that the distinction between conceptual and procedural meaning requires the additional relevance theoretical architecture to support it and it can be straightforwardly added to standard neo-Gricean accounts of meaning. This is a discussion for future work, however.
AM: you always avoid talking about the need for real cuts across public spending. andrew lansley let the cat out of the bag wh-

MG: no he didn’t

AM: but it was honest wasn’t it honest?

MG: andrew didn’t let the cat out of the bag. that’s a line straight from the labour playbook and i’m sorry to hear you repeating it.

Gove’s I’m sorry is of a different nature to that found in (124) – here we return to a type of challenge seen earlier in this section. This suggests that the construction which I’m sorry appears in does not guarantee how it will be interpreted, or to be more precise, what illocutionary force it will convey – rather, the hearer will rely on contextual and pragmatic information in the processing of these utterances. Indeed, in the case of Gove this pseudo-sadness is used to reinforce the challenge that the interviewer is biased in favour of the Labour Party by suggesting that far from being angry about it, Gove is disappointed and because Gove is behaving in a ‘decent’ way, he would have expected better from Marr.

7.4.3.2 The optionality of I’m sorry

One of the reasons that I suggest that I’m sorry forms a cline of pragmaticalisation is that when performing a non-apology function it tends to be an optional element, modifying the force of the at-issue content of the utterance (Aijmer, 1997:3-5). Let us go back to some of the examples introduced earlier in this section in order to explore this further.

In example 121, it was suggested that the I’m sorry token prefaced a disagreement. I repeat part of the example here as (126) for convenience.

(126) From example 121

10 AB: WELL he didn’t specify!
11 ⇒ DM: well i’m sorry! (0.7) he pr- promised that we would halve the deficit over the {course of the parlia-}

Here we encounter some difficulty – if we consider the apology token to be performing an apology in response to Boulton’s complaint then clearly it is compulsory. However, if, as I have argued, we take this to be a preface to dissent then it is optional – it might be interpreted as what Crystal & Davy (1975:72) call a ‘softener’. I will return shortly to why examples like 126 are less problematic than we might imagine.
The optionality of the (more) pragmaticalised *I’m sorry* of examples 122 and 123 is, I think, clearer. Removing the pseudo-apology from Brown’s ‘i’m sorry we are now the leading offshore wind power’ does not change the truth conditions of the proposition.

A further diagnostic for the optionality of the phatic apology is to consider whether it forms part of the at-issue content. One way that this can be done is to consider the markedness of questioning whether the producer of the apology form was really apologising. The imagined exchange in (127) highlights this:

(127) **An imagined continuation of example 123**

DM: no no i’m sorry i’m sorry you are really not getting this
AB: really?
DM: yes you really aren’t getting it/*yes i am sorry.

I think it would be very unlikely that a question interrogating the veracity of the previous utterance would elicit a confirmation of an apology, and instead would see the interviewee reaffirming the assertions that the phatic apology prefaced. This suggests that the *I’m sorry* is not-at-issue and therefore optional (see Tonhauser (2012) for more diagnostic tools for uncovering not-at-issue content).

### 7.4.3.3 The range of functions of *I’m sorry*

I have highlighted the work-horse like qualities of *I’m sorry*, carrying with it a range of senses quite separate from its default one of apologising. What I want to do here is summarise the functions which it has and explain that there may be some dispute as to which function each *I’m sorry* has, or even whether the senses of the phrase can always be separated by interactants. I am sympathetic to this view and I will return to it later in this section and again in the thesis conclusion where I outline my views on the fuzziness of speech act categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Quote from the corpus of apologies</th>
<th>Sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gordon Brown</td>
<td>I’m sorry for your loss</td>
<td>Sympathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Hague</td>
<td>I’m sorry that this happened</td>
<td>Apology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Johnson</td>
<td>(In response to a question asserting that a minister did not take an action) I’m sorry, but he did</td>
<td>Unexpected/ Negative response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Miliband</td>
<td>I’m sorry, you are simply not getting this</td>
<td>Face threat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A stage further of pragmatization not found in news interviews but in everyday conversation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YouTube commenter</th>
<th>I’m sorry but your [sic] a douche</th>
<th>Face attack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 7.1: The functions of I’m sorry

I am not suggesting that the order of the sense in Table 7.1 is how the development of I’m sorry occurred diachronically – much more work would need to be done here\(^\text{16}\). What I do think is clear though is the interrelation between the senses and a layering of meaning. So the sympathy sense contains an element [+sadness], the true apologetic sense then adds a further condition that one feels sad at one’s own actions and wishes to make up for them. The contradiction sense may see the speaker feeling bad that one is about to perform a face threat in contradicting an interlocutor. Once we get to serious face threat, the [+sadness] element is bleached, in the same way that the use of ‘with respect’ prefacing a rude utterance does not convey respect at all. The last instance which introduces face-attack can be seen as an ironical use of the phatic apology token, where there is a clear mismatch between the polite connotations associated with apologizing and the impolite insult which follows. Table 7.2 summarises these interactions between sense, emotion and actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Emotion (1(^{\text{st}})/2(^{\text{nd}}))</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>Sadness/Guilt</td>
<td>Desire for change in relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contradiction</td>
<td>Guilt/(Sadness?)</td>
<td>Desire for Hearer to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack</td>
<td>(Anger?)</td>
<td>Strong desire for Hearer to change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2: The interaction between sense, emotion and action

We have also seen an example in (121) (and there are doubtless many more) where it is not clear whether the apology token is indeed performing an apology or is prefacing a contradiction (or both – it is perfectly plausible to imagine that a speaker may regret that she is having to contradict the hearer). This suggests that the categories are porous and that examples like (121) are bridging contexts, i.e. a ‘context giving rise to an inference to the effect that, rather than the source meaning, there is another meaning, the target meaning, offering a more plausible interpretation of the utterance concerned’\(^\text{16}\)

\(^{16}\)Jucker & Taavitsainen (2008a) do outline some changes in the apology over time, but do not focus on the different senses of tokens like I’m sorry.
(Heine, 2002:86). So the development of the pragmaticalised element comes about from a mismatch between the expectations for the context of the speech act in question (i.e. the apology) and the context in which it is found. So whilst the semantic (apologetic) meaning is bleached, an element of procedural meaning is added which tells the hearer how the utterance as a whole should be interpreted.

Finally, I would tentatively suggest that the finding from Chapter 3 on parliamentary apologies that the explicit I apologise is used with far more frequency in those apologies than I’m sorry, unlike in everyday conversation, may be explained by the multifunctionality of I’m sorry. The potential for ambiguity in the use of I’m sorry, or perhaps a more pressing concern: the potential for it to be deliberately misconstrued on the part of reporters and others, means that it is avoided in favour of an apology token which does not carry other senses with it.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented further evidence that apologising is not the cost-free exercise which some descriptions of it would suggest (e.g. Goffman, 1971; Holmes, 1990; Meier, 1998). In the case of Ron Brown, we saw that apologising was associated with grovelling. In addition, both Brown and George Osborne made comparisons between their offences and other transgressions which they deemed to be more serious. Brown suggested that for him to apologise there would first need to be an apology for these transgressions. Osborne sought an apology for these other offences to draw attention away from the same request made of him.

The LIBOR debate highlighted the importance of an apology for someone who feels they have been wrongly accused. Ed Balls pursued an apology so that his reputation might be restored; Osborne resisted because of the damage his reputation might sustain by admitting to making a false allegation.

We also explored comments on the important aspect of apology statements. Politicians can be challenged on whether the right person has apologised and has apologised in an appropriate way – these challenges lead to negotiations about the way apologies should be carried out. Apologies are also often turned into a virtue by politicians – they are described as being honourable and the right thing to do. This may be thought of as being an attempt to minimise any face-damage associated with apologising and to increase the apologiser’s ethos amongst the electorate.

Finally, we looked at how apology tokens – particularly I’m sorry – can be used in the performance of other actions and how this is suggestive that such tokens exist on a
cline of pragmaticalisation. In particular we saw how apologies preface disagreement and contradiction – initially this might have been a softener to the face-threat contained therein but as this becomes increasingly conventionalised it may in fact be viewed as a ‘verbal formula mismatch’ (Culpeper, 2011:174). These uses of apology tokens can be discerned by assessing whether they are an optional part of the utterance and/or form part of the at-issue content.
Chapter 8

Conclusion

In this study, I have sought to offer both a descriptive account of the apology in British political life and, at a theoretical level, explore what political apologies can tell us about pragmatic theory. I have argued that apologetic meaning can be, and frequently is, negotiated between apologisers and apologisees (or those representing the offended party, such as a news interviewer) and I have provided numerous examples which attest to this. What I also aimed to show was that there are some underlying expectations about the psychological state which apologisers must possess and conditions on how an apology should be performed in order to ‘go through’ as such. Here, felicity conditions (and speech act theory more broadly) come into play.

8.1 Summary of findings

The thesis started with a delimitation of and motivation for the study – the focus being on apologies by British public figures, no matter whether the offence under discussion occurred in their personal or professional life. The decision not to separate public and private apologies dispensed with me having to make subjective decisions about where this boundary lies. British political apologies were chosen because very little work exists here (but see Harris et al., 2006; Jeffries, 2007). These decisions ensure that the data collected was manageable and internally coherent. It also meant that problems of comparability which may have arisen due to differences in culture and/or political tradition were avoided. Despite this deliberate narrowing of the scope of the study, the thesis has still dealt with a sizeable amount of data – more than 200 talk exchanges (parliamentary statements and debates, news interviews and extracts from oral evidence at the Leveson Inquiry). With surrounding context to the apologies I have been interested in, this amounted to in the region of 26 hours – a not insignificant
Chapter 2 presented the theoretical apparatus used in the study. I highlighted the face considerations salient in apologising and noted that producing an apology frequently amounted to a cost-benefit analysis. A potential apologiser decides whether the costs of threatening her own face by implicitly accepting that she has transgressed and of imposing on the apologisee by expecting a return to normal relations are outweighed by the potential benefits of this restoration and of possibly being viewed as humble and being able to accept when she is in the wrong. The complexity of the face considerations and the fact that other act(ions) have very similar (if not the same) considerations led me to argue that we could not rely on face alone for defining apologies. I proposed a redefined set of felicity conditions to capture the wide range of apologies which we find both in everyday talk and in public life and I suggested that these constitutive rules were the best thing that we have in the way of a definition of the apology. I also discussed the importance of the reaction to an apology, where it is accessible to both apologiser and analyst, and the common forms that we find including rejecting the need to apologise and minimising the imposition. Finally in this chapter, I argued for a reclassification of apology strategies, couching this in neo-Gricean implicature. I suggested that only the performative verb to apologise and commissives with the direct object of apology/apologies constitute explicit apologies contra Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984). Other forms like I'm sorry, whilst going through by default as apologies, are cancellable either explicitly or with an appropriate context meaning they are generalised conversational implicatures for the act of apologising. Other utterances like offering redress or promising non-recurrence may alone, given the right context, be interpreted as apologies and so are best viewed as particularised conversational implicatures. These PCIs, however, are always accompanied with an explicit or conventional apology token in the extracts we have looked at; so when they are used, I would suggest that they add to the apologetic tenor of a statement.

Chapter 3 saw the application of these theoretical ideas, particularly the taxonomy of apology strategies, to personal parliamentary apologies. We saw that politicians produce longer apologies with more explicit apology tokens than those found in everyday talk. I also showed that the complex participation structure of the parliamentary apologies – with a co-author who is also an addressee, and recipients who are unable to give a response – has an impact on the strategies used (or not used) by MPs.

Chapter 4 focussed on apologies in a courtroom-like setting, namely at the Leveson Inquiry. I outlined how the offences there tended to be interactional in nature and how, given the interactional norms and relatively straightforward participation structure,
it was possible for them to receive uptake. Based on the fact that an absence of uptake was unmarked, I argued that apologies in this setting form action chains – loose sequential relations in which the apology makes relevant a response but does not make it compulsory. We saw that the range of possible responses to an apology was wide, including rejecting the need to apologise and minimising the seriousness of the offence (as we find in everyday talk), but also questioning the sincerity of the apology and apologising in turn.

Chapter 5 took a similar conversation analytic approach, but had its focus on apology exchanges at news interviews. I showed that apologies came as a response to utterances interpretable as complaints and requests/invitations to apologise. However, there were also a number of instances where politicians chose not to apologise in the face of these triggers. Whilst some flatly refused, others highlighted previous apologies or questioned the apologisability of the action under discussion. I also showed that when it came to responding to politicians’ apologies, interviewers were hamstrung by the need to appear neutral. Because of that, we found that in response to the apology, interviewers only ever question its satisfactoriness, else they move on to their next question.

I believe that chapter 6 presented the first study of historical apologies from a linguistic perspective. I spent some time engaging with criticisms which historical apologies have faced, and suggested that they were justified by virtue of ministers being representatives of the nation and because victims’ groups often welcome and accept them. I demonstrated that historical apologies constitute a unique activity in Parliament – they are points of consensus, rather than the usual disputatious activities found in the House of Commons. I showed that the statements themselves are mostly devoted to detailed descriptions of the offence, as a means of showing that the Government is not shying away from the truth, and that the apology tokens which are found in the statements are invariably conventional ones.

Finally, chapter 7 focussed on the metapragmatics of apologising and on how apology tokens can be used in the performance of other actions. I showed that apologies can have serious costs to face – either because the apologiser does not want to be seen as grovelling, or because implicit in the apology is an acceptance of guilt. Also discussed was how an apology can be pursued because its receipt and concomitant withdrawal of the accusations contained in the offence will vindicate the offended party. This aside, we also looked at how I’m sorry exists on a cline of pragmatisational – performing acts of sympathy, softening face-threat and prefacing strong disagreement or face-attack, as well as apology.
8.2 On the prototypicality of apologies

The summary of the thesis serves as a reminder of the wide range of types of talk which I have analysed in seeking to give a detailed account of the apology in British political life. Some of these apologies, as I have noted at various points, are closer to those we find in everyday life than others. Indeed, some of the events we have looked at seem to have the apology as a backgrounded action. This can be explained, I believe, in terms of prototypicality and this section will explore what makes an utterance a more central or peripheral exemplar of an apology.

8.2.1 Previous work on prototypicality and speech acts

Jucker & Taavitsainen suggest that “speech acts are fuzzy concepts” which “can be analysed in relation to neighbouring speech acts, to their changing cultural groundings, and to ways in which they are realised” and that their fuzziness “requires a prototype approach; individual instances vary in their degree of conformity to their prototypical manifestations and sometimes the group identity is only vague” (Jucker & Taavitsainen, 2008b:6). Not only did we see in chapter 7 that apology tokens can be used to perform other actions whilst retaining some of their apologetic meaning, but we also saw that some types of apology (i.e. historical apologies) carry with them controversy – this might suggest that there are, indeed, more peripheral instances of the speech act of apologising.

This is not, however, the first time that apologising has been considered from a prototype perspective. Jeffries (2007:63ff) proposes fourteen parameters along which the utterance can be more or less like an apology. These parameters include: type of expression use, tense of the utterance, person used therein, seriousness of offence, the responsibility of the apologiser, etc. I believe that some of these parameters are important in deciding whether an act is more or less like an apology, but others less so.\footnote{The full list of parameters is as follows: i) IFID used; ii) tense/aspect of IFID; iii) person of the verb; iv) contents of the following text; v) level/seriousness of the ‘wrong’; vi) timing of the ‘wrong’; vii) sincerity of the apologiser; viii) addressee of the apology; ix) responsibility of the apologiser; x) impetus (whether the apology was solicited or not); xi) best interests of the apologisee; xii) equality of apologiser/apologisee; xiii) whether the apologiser intends the act to be an apology; xiv) whether the apology is accepted.}

For instance, if we think about the tense of an utterance, this can have not just an effect on whether it is a central exemplar of an apology, but can prevent it being an apology at all. I have apologised and I will apologise, for instance, represent changes in tense from the simple present, which Jeffries’ views as the most prototypical way
of apologising, but change the act in question from being an apology to being a report and a commitment respectively. So it is for this reason that I think we need to remove parameters related to form from the discussion of prototypicality of the act.

That aside, Jeffries suggests that an apology which is accepted is more prototypical than one which is rejected. Indeed, she suggests that ‘many of the other [prototypical] features may be lacking if the wronged person is willing to accept the communicative act as an apology’ (Jeffries, 2007:62). I am minded to agree that uptake here is important – indeed it is uptake that lets us have an idea that utterance has been treated as an apology. What I would say, however, is that the central exemplar would not have explicit acceptance of the apology as the uptake but rather the preferred responses which have been outlined earlier. In addition, absence of uptake or even rejection of the apology does not mean that an apology has not happened; unlike, for instance, no uptake to a bet or a dare means that no betting or daring act has happened. Instead, a rejection of an apology simply means that the perlocutionary act has not happened – this naturally makes the apology in question less prototypical, but does not mean that it has not been performed.

### 8.2.2 Parameters of prototypicality for the apology

The following, then, are the parameters along which I propose we measure the prototypicality of the apology:

- Identifiability of the offence
- Speaker’s perceived attitude towards the offence
- Speaker’s apparent responsibility for the offence
- Identity of the recipient
- Nature of uptake

Let us take each of these in turn.

#### Identifiability of offence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less prototypical</th>
<th>More prototypical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dubious</td>
<td>Effortful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straightforward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If an offence is easily identifiable, either because it comes immediately after the offence, a complaint, or is referenced by the apologiser, then the apology is a more central exemplar. More effortful offence identification comes about when a speaker uses an apology token to seek clarification (i.e. the question is raised of whether she is at fault for needing the clarification). If the attempt to identify the nature of the offence
results in only a dubious offence or something which might actually be construed as an offence committed by the hearer then the apology in question is least prototypical. This end of the spectrum would cover things like: i) a situation where a speaker says sorry when her toe has been run over by someone dragging a suitcase in a busy train station; ii) apologies which preface disagreement or contradiction; iii) ironical uses of the apology. These three points on the continuum are not the only places at which an apology might be found, so that some offences are more straightforwardly identifiable than others, for example.

**S’s perceived attitude towards offence**

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Less prototypical} & \text{More prototypical} \\
\hline
\text{Feels there was no offence} & \text{Feels indifferent} & \text{Feels bad}
\end{array}
\]

Deciding on how a speaker feels about the offence for which she is apologising is naturally fraught with difficulty, but judging the apologiser’s sincerity is something which recipients do. Hearers may judge whether the apologiser feels bad about the offence on the basis of, among other things, her body language and facial expressions. For instance she may struggle to maintain eye contact (Modigliani, 1971) or engage in self-touching behaviours (Freedman & Bucci, 1981; LeCompte, 1981) – all signs given-off, to use Goffman’s (1959) terminology, which indicate the speaker’s feeling negative emotion. Conversely, Flynn (2012:209) notes that Derek Conway’s broad grin whilst apologising gave the opposite impression, suggesting that he felt indifferent to the offence or felt that there was not one in any case. Even less prototypical would be apologies which are prompted only by the intervention of a third party, where certainly the apologiser but also possibly the apologisee feels no offence has occurred, such as the case with my mother reprimanding me for jocularly insulting my brother (example 11 in section 2.3.3.2).

**S’s apparent responsibility for offence**

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Less prototypical} & \text{More prototypical} \\
\hline
\text{Transportable identity not involved} & \text{T.I. indirectly involved} & \text{T.I directly involved}
\end{array}
\]

One of the main reasons historical apologies are treated sceptically is that they are given by people neither directly nor indirectly responsible for the action. Given that, I think it makes sense to include this parameter in the calculation of the prototype apology. This distant, inherited ‘guilt’ is not only an issue for governments, but also for companies – consider the case of the current board of IKEA in Germany apologising for the company’s use of prison labour from East Germany in the 1970s and 1980s, despite not being involved in that decision.

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2Conway’s apology appears in Appendix A, as A.50.
3http://www.theguardian.com/business/2012/nov/16/ikea-regrets-forced-labour-germany
Here the different identities which speakers occupy during talk – discourse, situational and transportable (Zimmerman, 1998) – will be useful in explaining how responsibility can be viewed on a scale. Discourse identities are those which are assumed by participants ‘as they engage in various sequentially organized activities’ (Zimmerman, 1998:90). For our purposes, the important discourse identities for the act of apologising are apologiser and apologisee. Situational identities are brought into being by being a participant in a certain activity, so in this study these identities would be things like interviewer–interviewee, counsel–witness and politician–member of the electorate. Transportable identities, however, are the aspect which I argue affect the prototypicality of the apology. Zimmerman suggests that transportable identities are “latent identities which ‘tag along’ with individuals as they move through their daily routines” (ibid.). Zimmerman suggests visible indicators such as race, gender, age, etc. as forming part of a transportable identity. To those visible indicators we can also add issues related to participants’ previous experience of the individual in question – whether she is a crashing bore, owes money to a participant, or of most relevance to us, has previously been involved in wrongdoing constituting an offence.

In the most prototypical cases, where the speaker has a discourse identity of apologiser, her transportable identity of ‘offender’ will also be directly oriented to in the action of apologising.

Slightly less prototypical are cases such as a parent apologising for their child, or a boss apologising for an employee in a service encounter. Here transportable identity is still relevant (but less so) because the apologiser’s identity as someone who is bringing up or has trained the offender is what is oriented to. In the political sphere we have seen instances of this where a minister apologises for something which has happened in her department, and so whilst she has not personally committed the offence, she is responsible for it. In those cases it is the apologiser’s transportable identity of being part of the department which has committed the offence which is oriented to.

The least prototypical apologies are ones which do not involve the transportable identity at all, such as historical apologies. Here the apologiser is not identified as being the offender who was involved (either directly or indirectly) in the acts discussed in the apology. She is able to apologise by virtue of her discourse identity (of an apologiser) and, most importantly, her situational identity of a politician called at the dispatch box and who represents her predecessors and the nation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity of the recipient</th>
<th>Less prototypical</th>
<th>More prototypical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportable identity not involved</td>
<td>T.I. indirectly involved</td>
<td>T.I directly involved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This parameter concerns the status of those who the apology is directed at. Here we consider the inverse aspect of transportable identity, where the individual has had a wrong done to them.

The most central exemplars of apology will have the offended party as a/the recipient – in these cases the apologisee’s transportable identity as a ‘victim’ (for want of a better term) is oriented to.

Less prototypical are cases where the recipient of the apology is a close relation or friend of the victim – in these instances the offended party is either absent for some reason, or, more seriously, died as a result of the offence. Transportable identity remains relevant because it is their association with the transgressed party which is involved in the apology.

The most peripheral cases are where a group containing neither the victims themselves, nor close relatives is the recipient of the apology. These apologies are usually for historical transgressions. Here transportable identity is not at issue, since these institutionally recognised representatives of the offended party have not been personally (either directly or indirectly) wronged and are recipients by virtue of their discourse identities (as apologises) and situational identities (formal and/or legal recipients).

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### Nature of uptake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less prototypical</th>
<th>More prototypical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>(Rejection/Question sincerity or quality)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, we come to uptake. The most prototypical apologies have uptake which takes the form of the preferred responses we have discussed (rejecting the need to apologise, minimising the offence). The most peripheral apologies I suggest are ones which have no uptake. This is because no uptake usually comes about as a result of the recipient being absent at the time the apology; in addition, no uptake does not allow overhearers to judge how the apology has been interpreted by the recipient. Between these we have outright rejections and recipients questioning the sincerity or quality of the apology. I place these here because they occur more frequently than does no response at all, but I do not suggest that one of these responses is more prototypical than another.

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4Note that I have not mentioned participants like news interviewers, since I have argued that they are not recipients of the apology proper, but instead are recipients of the apology locution. If we were to include them here, I would suggest they would be less prototypical recipients.
8.2.3 Summary

These are likely not the only parameters along which an individual instance of apology is viewed as being prototypical of the speech act in question. Indeed, other factors such as whether the apology takes place face-to-face or is mediated in some other way may be ascribed importance by some members of the speech community. In addition, it is possible that one of the factors (perhaps S’s perceived attitude towards the offence) is of overwhelming importance, to the extent that an utterance at the most prototypical end of that factor will be invariably interpreted as an apology, regardless of where the utterance lies on the other continua. The same may also happen in reverse. An experimental study might be able to shed light on these aspects.

What can be said with more certainty is that if an utterance occupied the less prototypical end of the spectrum for all (and likely, most) of the factors – a perfect storm, as it were – then it is very probable that the utterance would be rejected as a non-genuine apology.

As well as this, there are neighbouring speech acts which share some properties with the apology and one of these other speech acts may be accessed by a hearer if one of the parameters is less than prototypical. For instance, if S’s attitude towards the offence suggests she feels there was no offence then her utterance may be interpreted as an *apologia* (a justification) by recipients/overhearers.

8.3 Future research

Missing from this thesis has been an extensive discussion of personal, individual reaction by an apologisee to the political apology. This would give us further insight into the efficacy of political apologies and how they are construed by those who are their intended target. This aspect of meaning formation is particularly important for historical apologies. Despite individual MPs welcoming an apology or thanking an apologiser, this does not truly and comprehensively give us access to ‘lay’ interpretations of this important aspect of political discourse.

Stapleton & Wilson argue that political discourse analysis should look not only at ‘molar’ concerns of the positions available to speakers, but also the ‘molecular’ analysis of how these are taken up and negotiated’ (Stapleton & Wilson, 2010:312). It is doubtless a shortcoming of this study that the so-called molecular aspects have focussed on immediately present participants’ uptake and neglected that of non-present recipients and ratified overhearers. Future work, likely taking an ethnographic approach, would do well to remedy this.
Also neglected in this study has been a discussion of the cultural value placed on apologising and the potential variability of this. This is not because I believe apologising to be a speech act carried out in ways which are universal, but rather, because this study has been monocultural in nature, with its focus on the British political situation. Consider, for instance, Long (2010) which showed that Japanese speakers used apology expressions when indicating gratitude (cf Coulmas, 1981). It is an open question of whether these cultural differences in apologising behaviours impact on how apologies proper are performed, particularly in political discourse.

In addition to differences in how apology tokens can be used, it would be important to explore how differences in political system affect how apologies, should they be forthcoming, are framed. I have in mind here extremely rare apologies such as that by Kim Jong-Un, the North Korean dictator, following a building collapse in Pyongyang\(^5\), and by other dictators. In these cases, the balance between taking responsibility for wrongdoing and trying to make good for the offence are clearly extremely delicate and it would be of great interest to explore such statements.

Much more work also needs to be done on elucidating how speech acts work in conversation, i.e. moving away from isolated, often invented examples of acts to a more considered look at how they work in real-life. This study has particularly stressed the importance of using speech act theory where uptake is absent in monologic statements, but I think that full integration of speech act theory into interaction is also necessary and future work will do well to explore this avenue.

That said, I believe this to have been a detailed exploration of political apologies which has added novelty to the field. I have utilised a variety of methodological approaches in order to provide the best description of how British public figures try to remedy transgressions and in so doing, I have sought to offer a number of refinements to our understanding of the speech act of apology.

\(^5\)http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2014/2014045/news18/20140518-05ee.html


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Appendix A: Transcripts of parliamentary apologies

A note on accessing the audio/video recordings from which the transcripts in all of these following appendices come: Parliamentary copyright, Crown copyright and the copyright which lies with the BBC, ITN and BSkyB prevents copies of their content being made and disseminated. However, I am able to provide links to where these videos can be viewed. In the case of the videos in this appendix, the link is to a private hosting service provided by me. Please do not make copies of the videos hosted there as this would be a breach of copyright. Links to videos elsewhere are on public sites (BBC News, Democracy Live, YouTube). Such is the nature of the Internet that these links are not always permanent and so videos may not remain accessible indefinitely. I can only apologise for the effect of having to abide by, sometimes draconian, copyright law.

All apologies in Appendix A can be found here: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yxjcvsmz0y7dda9/AACXbVT0I-XbqPjlgKu6DHova

1  AF: i’m grateful to you mister speaker (0.3) i rise to apologise
2       to you sir (0.2) and to the house (0.3) for my discourtesy
3       and disregard for parliamentary conduct yesterday. (0.3)
4       having looked over hansard column two four of yesterday’s
5       copy, (.) i realise that my words could have been
6       interpreted as a PERsonal accusation against a right
7       honourable member of this house (0.4) and i withdraw
8       unreservedly the phrase in question. (0.2) may i also
9       express my regret that i did not (.) on two occasions (0.2)
10      at once resume my seat when you rise sir.

1  DW: with permission mister speaker i’d like to make a brief
2       personal statement. (.) hh on friday afternoon following
3       some heated exchanges (0.2) i was in the process of making
4       representations to mister deputy speaker during the course
5       of which i accidentally dislodged the hinged wing of mister
6       speaker’s chair. (0.2) hhh this was certainly not intentional
7       but i would wish to apologise to you and to the house
for any discourtesy which may have been attributed to the incident, and give my undertaking that I shall be more careful with the furniture of the house in future!

(A.3) **Point of order. Ivan Lawrence. 16/05/1985. Offence: Asked a question which wrongly criticised another MP.**

IL: thank you mister s-s- erm speaker (.) er on tuesday (.) i asked of the prime mminster er at question time er a question reflecting on the activities of er an honourable gentleman er in the falkland islands. (0.2) i now understand that that question was based upon an erroneous press report. (0.3) hhh since mister speaker we are all men of- and women of honour in this place and since i would never wish to take an unfair point against the honourable gentleman for (.). carrick cumnock and doon valley err if it is possible for me to withdraw a question i unreservedly do so and apologise to him.

(A.4) **Personal statement. Nicholas Edwards. 01/03/1982. Offence: Accused another MP of being drunk; speaking from a sedentary position.**

NE: mister speaker i should like to make a personal statement about an incident that occurred during a series of interventions by the right honourable gentlemen the member for the rhondda during the course of the wind-up speech by my honourable friend the parlimentary undersecretary at the end of the debate on welsh affairs last thursday. (0.2) i would like to apologise to the right honourable gentleman for the rhondda for suggesting that he might have been drinking. .hh (.) a suggestion which was unjustified and which of course i withdraw. (0.2) i would also like to apologise to you mister speaker .hhh for making your task more difficult by a remark from a sedentary position that was out of order (.). i hope that st. david’s day is an appropriate moment to make amends?

(A.5) **Point of order. Nigel Spearing. 26/07/1985. Offence: Produced a report and asked a question which overlooked at MP's previous work and efforts.**

NS: thank you mister speaker. (.) yesterday in business questions after i’d left the chamber (.). the right honourable gentleman the member for ca- cambridgeshire south-east raised a point of order at column one three one three relating in part to a question which i’d asked the prime minister in columns one three oh three to four. (0.2) may i take the opportunity of tendering to the right honourable gentleman my apologies for any embarrassment that my question may have caused him? (0.2) also i apologise to him if he feels that paragraphs five fourteen to five twenty-seven of the mi- minority report itself in my name is less complete and less explicit than it could’ve been.
the evidence submitted by the foreign office published on page one three three of that report also show the great efforts that the right honourable gentleman was making over that period. ( ) i was only too well aware of these since i was present in the house at eleven a.m. on friday the seventh of may nineteen-eighty-two when he reported to the house on the results of those strenuous efforts in washington and new york.

(A.6) **Personal statement. Richard Hickmet. 23/02/1987. Offence: Made critical remarks of Mr Speaker Weatherill outside the House.**

RH: mister speaker ( ) i wish to withdraw my remarks critical of you which i made last friday outside the house. (0.4) i realise now how seriously i have offended you and the house and wish most sincerely to apologise to you and to the house for re- my remarks which i unreservedly withdraw

(A.7) **Personal statement. Sir Anthony Meyer. 27/07/1988. Offence: Insulting comments made about an MP’s chairmanship of a committee in a leaked private letter.**

AM: mister speaker i wish to make a personal statement. ( ) there have recently been reports in the press and on television based on a letter written by me to the chairman of the ways and means in which i make comments about the honourable member for neath in his capacity as chairman of the welsh grand committee. (0.3) that letter was not made public by me but the views expressed in it have passed into the public domain (0.3) i recognise that it is not appropriate for me as a fellow member of the chairmans’ panel to be associated with the comments which have become public. ( ) i also recognise that what i said in connection with the incident which provoked my letter was based on a misunderstanding. ( ) hh in these circumstances i wish to withdraw any reflection upon the chairmanship of the honourable member for neath ( ) and to apologise to him unreservedly for the embarrassment caused to him by this incident

(A.8) **Point of order. Tim Devlin. 19/01/1989. Offence: Made a false allegation about an MP’s conduct.**

TD: mister speaker er yesterday < in the house< during questions to er questions to the chancellor of the er duchy of lancaster ( ) i made comment at column three two one about the conduct of the honourable gentleman the member for middlesbrough. (0.2) i now know that the allegation that i made in the house yesterday was based on uh ( ) untrue information and was untrue in substance and i wish to withdraw the remarks relating to the honourable member and to apologise unreservedly to him for them.

WH: thank you mister speaker ((clears throat)) in last friday’s debate (.) on law and order i made remarks which reflected on the personal conduct of certain honourable members and which must have caused them (.) offence. (0.2) i wish now to apologise to the house and to those members and to withdraw unreservedly the comments i made.


GH: mister deputy speaker earlier during the debate i was pulled up by madam deputy speaker and rightly so because i left the chamber after i had moved the amendment. (0.2) i apologise to her to the chair and to members on both sides of the house.

(A.11) Response to a point of order. Douglas Hogg. 13/02/1991. Offence: Not giving notice to an MP that he was pairing his question with another.

DH: thank you mister speaker further to that er point of er order (.) firstly may i apologise to my honourable friend? (.) what in fact happened was that a er letter was er put on the noticeboard i understand at about er eleven o clock and i’m sorry he didn’t get it it may well have been a fault on the part of my officials and i do apologise to him. (0.2) what i will do mister speaker is to contemplate how we can improve this communication because i do see that it puts my honourable friends and honourable gentlemen opposite at an embarrassing position and i wouldn’t want that to happen again.

(A.12) Personal statement. Robert Hayward. 05/02/1992. Offence: Misleading MPs by saying he would not talk out a bill which he did.

RH: mister speaker i wish to make a personal statement. (0.2) on friday last i spoke in the debate of the second reading on the civil rights disabled persons bill. (0.3) i was called at two sixteen pm and from the outset i did not expect to be able to complete my speech by two thirty. (.) on being asked by the honourable members for langbaugh and workington whether i was talking out the bill i replied, (0.2) i’m not going to talk it out i am going to make my views known (.) i now recognise that the effect of my words was to mislead honourable members and members were entitled to assume that i intended to resume my seat before two thirty pm (.) i deeply regret having misled honourable members in this way and i offer my unreserved apology to you mister speaker and to fellow members.


AF: i should like to apologise to the house madam speaker
and to you in particular (0.4) > you in particular> for
my rudeness yesterday in using a somewhat (.) .hh
inappropriate term when i raised the need for an apology
from the secretary of state for education for his discourtesy
to the house in breaching the budget deadline for which you
reprimanded him. (.) i REGRET my verbal misdemeanour
(.) < they don’t (.) very often happen< .

(A.14) **Personal statement. Nicholas Scott. 10/05/1994. Offence: Misled the house by suggesting that his department had not drafted amendments which they had.**

NS:  madam speaker on friday last during the consideration
of the civil rights disabled persons bill (. ) i stated in
response to a question from the honourable member for
workington that my department had played no part in the
drafting of any amendments tabled by a number of my
honourable friends and that and i quote, (0.2) to the best of
my knowledge nobody in my department has been involved
in the drafting of any amendments in this area. (0.3)
immediately afterwards in response to the right honourable
member for wythenshawe i drew attention to the fact
that the lord president would be replying to a question
from him which asked how many amendments had been
drafted by the parliamentary counsel. (. ) that answer
confirmed that amendments tabled on the third of may had
been drafted in parliamentary counsel’s office. (0.2) my
statement on friday that my department had not drafted
any amendments was true. as i explained in a letter to
the honourable member for workington, the department (. )
with my authority had been involved in their preparation
i there- i therefore felt that i should offer this clarification
of my remarks to the house as a whole (0.2) i very much
regret that my not giving a fuller explanation at the time.
(0.2) the effect of my reply was misleading and i offer my
unreserved apologies to the house.

(A.15) **Response to Madam Speaker Boothroyd’s statement. Lady Olga Maitland. 25/05/1994. Offence: Misled the House by saying that amendments weren’t drafted by the Govt.**

SB:   […] in this respect (. ) i believe that the honourable lady’s
statement fell below the standards that the house is entitle-
is entitled to expect from its members and i strongly rebuke
her (. ) for her conduct on that occasion (. ) > lady olga
maitland!>

OM:    madam speaker (. ) in the light of your statement may i give
an unreserved apology to you and to this house.

SB:   ((nods)) appreciated.

(A.16) **Personal statement. Peter Hain. 18/07/1994. Offence: Not giving members enough notice that has was going to refer to them in his speech.**
PH: madam speaker with your permission i wish to make a
personal statement (0.2) on the thirteenth of july during
the debate on members’ interests, i stated that i’d placed
letters on the letter board giving notice of my intention to
refer to certain members in the course of the debate. (. ) i
said that i’d done so earlier that evening and well in time
(. ) in fact, although i had every intention of notifying the
members concerned (. ) i found to my surprise that the letter
board was closed when i sought to leave letters there and i
handed in the letters at the post office. (0.2) madam speaker
i owe you and the house a full and complete apology in two
respects. (0.3) i ina- inadvertently misled you when i stated
that the letters had been left on the board and further i now
recognise that the letters left at that stage of the evening
provided a totally inadequate warning in this case. (. ) i
deply regret my actions on this occasion and repeat my
sincere apology to you and the house

CS: madam speaker with permission i’d like to make a short
statement. ( . ) hh following the guardian’s successful
defence of a libel action relating to matters concerning a
story about conservative party funding, i am happy to be
able to put the record straight in respect of an intervention
i made on the floor of the house on june twenty second
ninety-three. (0.2) .hhh on that occasion i read from a letter
sent to me by an arab whom i’d known for many years
and related in his letter an alleged conversation between
the secretary of state for trade and industry and prince
bandar. (. ) on the same day the guardian had reported
this allegation as it tended to confirm other reports which
had emanated from an entirely different source. (0.3)
like the guardian i felt that this was an important matter
which deserved er e- examination so far as i’m aware no
dishonesty was involved by any party including none by
myself. ( . ) .hh i was reading ab- out from a letter written
by someone who i believed to be acting in good faith and
i was not lying, (0.3) i am- was however wrong to name
the secretary of state for two reasons (. ) hhhh first he had
just suffered a serious heart attack, (. ) secondly he could
not speak for himself (. ) at that time i believed it was the
responsibility of the tory party to respond as the allegation
was that money was being paid > to the tory party > . ( . ) i
would therefore like to take this opportunity to apologise to
the secretary of state and his family for my insensitivity in
relation to his illness (0.3) at that time (. ) and put on record
that although i know the allegations to have been made in
good faith (. ) i am now satisfied that neither the secretary of
state nor prince bandar was involved in such conversation.

(.) I'm also happy to extend my apologies to prince bandar.

(A.18) Personal statement. Sir Jerry Wiggin. 22/05/1995. Offence: Tabled amendments in the name of another member without his permission.

JW: madam speaker with your permission I would like to make a personal statement. (0.5) I wish unreservedly to apologise to my honourable friend the member for falmouth- falmouth and camborne (.) hh and to this house (0.3) for having tabled amendments for a bill in standing committee in his name but without his knowledge or consent. (0.4) I act as parliamentary adviser to the British holiday and home-parks association (.) a fact which is declared in the register of members’ interests, [[opp member: HOW MUCH?]] and of which my honourable friend is aware (.) I thought that he would be supportive [[opp members: laughter/jeers]] OF THE AMENDMENTS SO I WROTE to him and we spoke [[laughter ends]] the following day (0.3) as soon as he informed me that he was not willing to move them. (0.3) I apologised to him and withdrew the amendments from the standing committee’s order paper. (0.2) They never came before the committee. (0.4) hhh nevertheless I repeat my apologies to the house and to my honourable friend (.) for an action which I acknowledge was at odds with the proper expectations of the house. (0.6) I am aware too that suspicions have been voiced (0.3) that my motive in tabling the amendments in the name of a colleague (.) was to avoid the declaration of a financial interest which I possess and he does not. (0.4) I accept that the amendments would have benefited the association for which I act as parliamentary adviser (0.4) my purpose in putting the amendments down in the name of a member of the standing committee was however to improve their chances of being considered, (0.3) since I was not in a position (.) to move them myself in committee. (0.3) There was NO intention to deceive (0.2) but I accept that my actions were open to other interpretations and I wish to apologise to the house without reservation for any harm that this may have done to its reputation.


AW: madam speaker. (0.4) On Tuesday last the ninth of January I answered a private notice question from the honourable member for Blackburn about the handcuffing of prisoners who attend hospital. (0.3) hhh it was in particular reference to the treatment of a prisoner from Holloway prison (.) who had attended the Whittington hospital to give birth. (0.4) during that answer I told the house that no concerns had
been registered by the hospital about holloway practice. (0.2) i did so on the explicit advice of the prisons service. (.) hh on the eleventh of january (.) i received a letter from baroness hayman, chairman of the whittington hospital trust (.) in which she told me that i had been misinformed about the hospital’s position. hh she said that the chief executive of the hospital had written to the governor of holloway on the thirty-first of august last year (0.2) to convey the concerns of the staff on the maternity unit (0.2) as a result i have personally reviewed all of the correspondence between the whittington and holloway. (0.2) with his letter of the thirty-first of august to the prison, he forwarded a letter he received from his director of women’s health and that letter did express concerns over the practice. (0.2) the letter of the thirty-first of august was followed up by further correspondence and meetings (0.2) the latest exchange was a letter received at the prison last tuesday (.) of which i was unaware until after my reply to the private notice question. that letter was from the chief executive to the new governor offering to discuss a number of options. hh madam speaker i deeply regret that the advice which i had been given about this correspondence and which i in turn gave to the house in all good faith was wrong. and i offer madam speaker my unreserved apologies to the house.

(A.20) **Point of order. Michael Forsyth. 05/02/1997. Offence: Accused an MP of having been to Libya.**

MF: on a point of order mister deputy speaker. (0.2) at scottish er questions er this afternoon the er honourable gentleman the member for glasgow hillhead asked me a question er and in my answer i indicated that the honourable gentleman had been to libya (.) and i referred to him as labour’s man in libya (0.2) the honourable gentleman ha:::s written to me indicating that he has never been to libya and i:: withdraw what i said and i apologise to the honourable gentleman for any embarrassment it might have caused him.

(A.21) **Point of order. Peter Kilfoyle. 08/07/1998. Offence: Not giving way to an MP who he had cited in a speech.**

PK: on a point of order madam speaker. (.) arising from yesterday’s debate when the right honourable lady the member for surrey south-west sought to intervene on my speech i initially resisted her intervention. (0.3) however i had named the right honourable lady and i had intended to give way when i completed that part of my speech .hhhh (0.5) i apologise er um to the house madam speaker for any unintended discourtesy on my part. (.) i wish to reassure the house that i accept unequivocally that i- i- it is right and courteous to give way to right honourable and honourable
members one has named in a speech. (0.2) hhh can i thank
you madam speaker for giving me the opportunity to advise
the house that i intended no discourtesy to it.

encounter on Clapham Common where he was mugged.

RD: thank you very much madam speaker (.) i am very grateful
to you for allowing me this opportunity to make a personal
statement. (0.2) last monday evening i made a severe error
of judgement failing to protect my own personal safety and
i became a victim of what was, (.) for me (.) a frightening
and shocking crime. (0.3) i reported the matter to the police
and the process of law will now take its course, for that
reason i will make no further comment on that aspect of
the matter. (0.3) i do wish however to make my heartfelt
apologies to the house for any embarrassment that i might
have caused. (0.2) on tuesday morning i explained to the
prime minister what had occurred and i apologised for it
and offered him my resignation and he accepted it. (.)
.hhh i want to place on record my thanks to the prime
minister for his personal support and solicitude over the
last few days (.) that has been of very great comfort to me.
(0.3) the events of the last week have been < unremittingly
agonising< i could not have got through them without the
love and support of the two people most dear to me (.) my
wife chris and my daughter (.) without the constant support
of a few other very close friends i cannot imagine how i
would’ve got through this nightmare (0.2) and i offer them
my most heartfelt and profound thanks (0.3) i also want to
thank many other close friends for their endless patience
in the face of a constant barrage of media pressure. (0.4)
finally (.) i am grateful for the messages of support from
former ministerial colleagues (0.3) members in both houses
(.) from all sides as well as the public at large. (0.5) the
shock of the events for me last monday and the sadness of
my resignation have been added to by media intrusion into
my private life, (.) reporting as fact a stream of rubbish
(0.3) rumour and lies have been asserted as truth. (0.2) the
whole of my adult life has been pored over for something
which could be twisted to suit the present prejudice. (.)
ultimately this arbitrary abuse of power is not just an attack
on me but it is an attack on all of our rights (0.2) the right
to privacy belongs to all citizens (0.2) the victims of crime
even if they are in public life cannot be excluded from
that. we all have rights, > we all have responsibilities
too of course> and this applies to the media as well (0.3)
the media has the right to freedom but it must carry the
responsibility to exercise that right judiciously. (0.4) in
my own childhood i learned a very hard lesson at a very
early age, (0.2) you can’t allow powerful people to bully
the weak or to abuse their own power. How willing will
the next victim of a crime be to report it? How eager
will people be to stand for public office in the knowledge
that one mistake might result in the whole of their lives
being picked over and twisted out of all recognition? (0.3)
how can it improve democracy if our lives in this house our
influences and our relationships were all laid out for public
titilation? (0.3) we are what we are. We’re all different both
of the product of our genes and our experiences. Members
of parliament are no different from the society that we
represent. hh since becoming the labour party spokesman
for Wales in nineteen ninety-two the creation for a new
democracy for Wales has been a personal commitment and
a personal responsibility for me. (0.2) I know the process
that I started will go on creating a more tolerant, a more
open and a more mature way of conducting politics.
my experience over the last week could not have provided
for me a more vivid demonstration of the need for such a
tolerant and understanding society. (0.4) the support that I
have received from colleagues, (.) from ordinary citizens
(0.2) and indeed the Welsh media reassures me that this
is a vision which is widely shared. (0.3) not for the first
time in my life I’ve been badly beaten and hurt. I believe
that my defences are strong enough to see me through this
very trying time. From adversity can come strength. That
will be so in my present circumstances. (0.3) I worked
hard to change the face of politics and government in Wales
hh I am more determined than ever to see those changes
through. (0.2) I’m very grateful madam speaker to you and
for the attention of the house.

registration of directorships and shareholdings in companies.

GR: madam speaker I’m taking the earliest possible opportunity
available to me to apologise to the house for my late
registration of my ownership of Stenbell Limited and the
directorships of ADGI UK between nineteen eighty-four
and eighty-seven and Transtec PLC between nineteen
eighty-seven and nineteen ninety. (.) I have apologised
in writing to the committee on standards and privileges
and have amended my entry in the register to include
roll centre Inc which I owned between February nineteen
eighty-eight and January nineteen ninety-two. (0.2) hh the
house will want to be assured that these shareholdings and
directorships were matters < of public record <. (.) no
attempt was made by me at any time to use my position
in this house < to advance any commercial interest < (0.2)
the oversight concerning registration for which I apologise
is entirely my responsibility. thank you madam.


TG: thank you madam speaker. madam speaker i rise to make an apology to the house. (0.3) the committee of standards and privileges has investigated a complaint against me and has found that my entry in the register of members’ interests was inadequate and incomplete. (0.3) hhh i fully accept the way in which the complaint was investigated and the committee’s conclusions (0.2) i am most grateful to the committee for giving me the opportunity to answer their questions in person. (0.2) the omissions in my entry were due to an oversight on my part. i accept the committee’s findings (0.2) i make no excuses and i offer my most sincere apologies to the house.


ER: madam speaker with your permission i wish to make a personal statement. madam speaker the committee on standards and privileges, in its eighth report published on the eighth of june nineteen ninety-nine considered the first special report of the foreign affairs select committee on the premature disclosure of report to the foreign affairs select committee on sierra leone. (0.4) the committee concluded my action as a member of the foreign affairs select committee in making available to the foreign office a draft of the committee report as a serious interference of the select committees system. (.) and my conduct fell below the level of conduct that the house is entitled to expect of its members. (0.3) madam speaker i believe that all members of this house should accept reports of the house that are critical of them and of course i do so. (0.3) i would therefore like to apologise to the house for my actions in this matter. (0.4) with your permission madam speaker i would now wish to withdraw from the house.

(A.26) Personal statement. Donald Anderson. 13/07/1999. Offence: Involvement in the leaking of the select committee report to the government, misleading the House about his conversation with a civil servant in the FCO.

DA: madam speaker with your leave i should like to give a brief personal statement. (.) since yesterday’s debate on the eighth report of the standards and privileges committee i have seen a copy of the minute of the conversation between myself and mr andy henderson of the foreign and commonwealth office which took place on the eighth of february and which was referred to in yesterday’s debate. hh i did not take a note of the meeting and so far as i can
recall nor did mr henderson, however mr henderson’s minute does go beyond what i told the house about our conversation i have no reason to doubt that mr henderson’s minute isn’t an accurate report and it must therefore qualify what i wrote to the clerk of the foreign affairs committee about my knowledge of the premature disclosure of the committee’s report on sierra leone as recorded in the committee’s second special report, i also qualifies the statement i made to the house yesterday, i emphasise madam speaker that when i replied to the clerk AND when i spoke yesterday i spoke in good faith. in yesterday’s debate i relied on the letter which the clerk had received from mr henderson and which i assumed to be the totality of the disclosure. i myself supported the release of mr henderson’s minute however i now understand that my letter to the clerk and my statement to the house were not in fact accurate and in the circumstances i apologise to the house for my discourtesy in revealing to the fco certain aspects of the report and the committee’s deliberations prior to the report’s publication.


KM: madam speaker with your permission i’d like to make a personal statement. in response to the tenth and eleventh reports of the standards and privileges committee published today i would like to apologise to you and to the house. i regret that i find myself in this position and that my actions have cause difficulties both for members of the social security and standards and privileges committees. what started out as a genuine attempt to be helpful to the social security committee’s deliberations unfortunately went very wrong. unfortunately because of personal and family problems coupled together with a series of health problems resulting from surgery that was not successful i have not been able to spend as much time as usual in and around the house. had i been able to be here i might have had a fuller grasp and understanding of the implications of these procedures and not done things on reflection were rather silly. i have of course sent my resignation to the chairman of the social security select committee and apologised to the members. madam speaker i fully accept the findings of the standards and privileges committee, i deeply regret my actions and apologise both for my original error of judgement and my delay in c- be- being totally forthcoming in this matter.

DT: madam speaker with your permission i shall make a personal statement. the committee on standards and privileges in its tenth and eleventh reports published today has made criticisms of my behaviour concerning a draft report of the social security select committee. (0.4) i want the house to know that i accept fully the judgements of the standards and privileges committee and apologise unreservedly to the house for my part in this matter. (0.3) the circumstances which are referred to as mitigating are set out fully in my statement to the privileges and standards committee as are my reasons for declining to name a colleague without that colleague’s permission. madam speaker i believe that members should accept reports of the house that are critical of them it is the duty for each of us to take responsibility for our actions and i do not shirk from that duty today. finally i am deeply grateful to you for allowing me to make this unreserved apology to the house at the earliest opportunity.

(A.29) Intervention during normal debate. James Gray. 16/03/2000. Offence: Called the PM a liar from a sedentary position.

JG: errm madam speaker if i may make a personal statement er during prime minister’s question time yesterday afternoon it was i who from a sedentary position accused the prime minister of (.) er being a leer- of being a liar. (.) i recognise that that was unpar- unparliamentary language and i happily withdraw it. madam speaker when you then asked who the culprit was i- i- i fear that i remained (.) silent and in retrospect er i realise that was inexcusable. (0.2) i therefore apologise to you and to the house both for my remark and for my silence after it.


SP: on a point of order madam speaker in the light of that full statement it is clear to me that my suggestion to the house yesterday that it may possibly have been the honourable and gallant member for blaby who had called the prime minister a liar was wholly unfounded (.) and i wish to express my unreserved apologies to (.) him (.) and to the house.


KL: thank you madam speaker in accordance with the report from the committee on standards and privileges i wish to apologise to the house for breaching the rules on registration of financial interests for not observing the principle of openness which the code of conduct requires. (0.2) when i was elected to the house in nineteen
eighty-seven i checked with the authorities that income
from earnings paid into my firm local action limited did not
need to be individually declared in the register, following
the new code of practice i wrote in nineteen ninety-six to
the parliamentary commissioner for standards to clarify the
position. (0.3) hhh my outside earnings then developed
in such a way that a new register- er that my register
entry was no longer adequate. (.) i ought to have made
a comprehensive entry covering all the services i provide
through local action but i did not in fact do so. as soon as
possible after the issue was raised with me by the present
parliamentary commissioner < i amended my entry in the
register in accordance with the rules< .


TB: madam speaker um the um parliamentary commissioner
(0.2) has held that i er breached the code of conduct for
um members of parliament in not making clear to the
lord chancellor’s department when giving reference for a
person for an honour that the person concerned had not
long before given me a loan (.) this was clearly an error of
judgement on my part for which i have already apologised
unreservedly in person to the committee for standards and
privileges and have made clear that i fully accept that i
deserve to be (.) criticised. the er committee have er
recommended that i apologise in person to the house (0.2) i
wish to say sorry sincerely to the house without reservation
without hesitation of any kind er um i’ve explained in detail
to the committee of standards how the circumstances of
this reference came about (0.2) it was not initiated by me
i responded to a request from a completely disinterested
person but i accept that those are matters of explanation
and not an er excuse. (0.2) er i hope that it will be
appreciated by all concerned that it is not always possible
to have total recall of events and i can only say to the
house that at all times when these matters have been under
consideration i have sought to cooperate (.) fully with the
(0.2) parliamentary commissioner and to give truthful and
accurate responses. (0.3) i also recognise that when there is
criticism of any individual member of parliament it reflects
on members of parliament as a whole and i should thus
wish to apologise to each and every member of the house
for what was an error of judgement and a mistake on my
part and my part alone.


MP: madam speaker on monday twenty-seventh march at the
conclusion of the budget debate i made some remarks
regarding the taxation of petrol without reminding the
house that i have a registered interest as an adviser to an
oil-producing company (.) it was an oversight for which i
apologise to the house.

competition in the automobile industry was given to the media before
parliament.

KH: thank you madam speaker (0.3) er today’s release of
the competition commission’s report on the supply of
new motor cars was undertaken in line with previous
government statements which involved market sensitive
material. (0.2) hhh it was decided to lay the report in
parliament at eleven o clock today and to simultaneously
to inform the stock exchange and to release it to the media.
(0.3) in the event there was a technical problem at the
stock exchange which meant the publication time had to
be delayed. (0.3) because the embargo time for the media
lapsed details of the report began to be published (.) before
the notice was released on the stock exchange. (0.3) my
right honourable friend therefore decided to release the
report to the media at the same time as it was laid in
parliament at twelve fifty this afternoon. (0.3) the secretary
of state has provided a detailed answer as the government
response to the report at three thirty pm this afternoon. (.)
madam speaker we make no apologies for taking actions to
ensure that consumers < get a better deal< when it comes
to buying cars in this country ordinary families are paying
more than < one billion pounds< more than they should
be and we intend to do something about it. madam speaker
on behalf of the department of trade and industry may i
apologise unreservedly for any discourtesy that may have
been shown to the house by this morning’s events.

(A.35) Point of order. Gareth Thomas. 10/05/2000. Offence: Referred to
a matter relating to another MP’s constituency without informing that
member.

GT: madam speaker with the benefit of hindsight and with your
guidance (.) i clearly should have informed the hono-
honourable member and i apologise to him and to the
house. (0.3) i make no apology whatsoever for raising the
issue and if he is serious about protecting the countryside
perhaps he will make common cause with me on this issue.
opp members: jeers Madam Speaker: i- i- i- i accept the
apology the honourable gentleman made in the first part of
his comments.

(A.36) Personal statement. Roy Beggs. 29/03/2001. Failing to declare financial
interests in the register for members’ interests.

RB: thank you mister speaker. (0.2) i:: rise to make an apology
to the house (0.3) in its report published earlier today the
standards and privileges committee has upheld a finding
by the parliamentary commissioner for standards .hhh that
i failed to register my interest in some land and property in
my constituency and that i’d failed to declare that interest
on several occasions. (0.4) i unreservedly apologise to you
mister speaker and to the house for these failures on my
part which i deeply regret. (0.2) my breach of the rules
of the house arose because i did not receive any income
from these interests and because i did not realise (.) that
it was necessary to register and declare them. .hh (0.4) i
have not sought in any way to profit from my position as a
member of parliament i have sought to protect jobs in my
constituency (0.2) i have not sought to conceal my interests
from the house (0.3) this was an oversight on my part for
which i accept full responsibility. (0.2) i am grateful to
the commissioner and to the committee for the speed with
which this matter has been resolved. i am grateful to the
committee < for their recognition that i have< cooperated
fully with the commissioner’s inquiry. thank you.

declare financial interests in the register of members’ interests.

GR:  with er your er permission mister er speaker i should like
to make the following personal statement. .hhh (0.2) i wish
to start by apologising to the house for failing to register
in the year nineteen ninety a conditional contract entered
into in which i expected a company i owned to be paid
(,) and to apologise also for failure to record the existence
of this contract and therefore inadvertently misleading the
standards and privileges committee when asked about a
matter that might be considered er related to it in nineteen
ninety-eight some eight years later (0.2) i apologise to the
house for these oversights and i accept (0.2) absolutely the
committee’s recommendations. (0.3) i want the house to
know that er (0.3) i do sincerely mean that and i apologise
for non-registration of that contract in nineteen ninety but
< i did not receive nor did any company related to me
receive< the payment as alleged. (0.4) it is because the
payment was not made to me despite allegations to the
contrary that i’ve continued to search the company files
archives and records in order to prove my case < and this i
plan to continue< to do. (.) i’m grateful that the committee
did not accept that there was sufficient evidence to find
that i received the money. (0.4) on the issue of registration
members of the house will be aware that no mp in nineteen
ninety was asked in the rules on registration to register
conditional or other contracts between one company and
another, (0.2) far less contracts where payment was not
guaranteed but merely anticipated and no member recorded any contract in that year or any OTHER year (0.4) all of us regarded a statement of their connection (.) with a company as s-s-sufficient. > i repeat that i never attempted to mislead the committee> and have (. ) fully perhaps over fully cooperated with it. (0.2) at no point did i mis-
represent lobby for or speak in debates associated with the company involved and i’m pleased that the committee has accepted my position in that respect. (0.4) i would like to thank my constituents and my local party which have given me their consistent and unstinting support throughout this affair. finally i would like to thank you mister speaker for allowing me to make this apology and in accordance with precedent and with your permission i will now withdraw from the chamber. thank you very much.


BB: mister speaker during the heat of debate strong feelings are expressed on both sides of the house (0.2) i hope in my time here i have always shown proper respect for the chair and observed its rulings. (0.3) hh as you will be aware i was not asked by the deputy speaker in westminster hall yesterday to re- withdraw my remarks at the time that they were made. (. ) however on reflection i accept that it would have been better if i had not used the phrase (. ) that i applied to the honourable gentleman the member for glasgow kelvin and i am sorry for the offence that was caused.


GG: mister speaker with your permission i would like to make a personal statement. (0.2) in the debate in westminster hall yesterday exchanges became frank (. ) to the point of being unacceptable and i should like to apologise to the chairman my honourable friend the deputy speaker in westminster hall (. ) hh to you mister speaker and to the house for my part in that. (. ) the issues under discussion were of grave urgency and importance and were issues which mean a very great deal to me. exchanges on both sides of the argument were (0.2) decidedly robust (0.3) nonetheless i would like to say i am sorry for stepping out of parliamentary order and for my failure to withdraw my remarks when asked to do so by the deputy speaker and now to so withdraw them.


MT: i am grateful to you mister speaker (. ) for giving me this opportunity to give this early response to the report of the standards and privileges committee which was
published this morning (0.3) especially in light of the imminent parliamentary recess and my wish to make my position clear. (0.4) "I accept unreservedly the committee’s report which finds me muddled and naive in my negligent understanding of the additional costs allowance (0.3) I apologise again unreservedly to you, Mr Speaker, to the house and to my constituents (.) I am so very sorry.

(A.41) Response to a point of order (which complains about the offence). Malcolm Wicks. 20/05/2003. Offence: Briefing the press about a policy before the statement was laid in the House.

MW: Mr Speaker, the honourable member opposite has raised a very serious and fair point. Mr Speaker, I wish to offer my sincere apologies and those of my right honourable friend the Secretary of State that news of our announcement on housing benefit sanctions became public before Parliament had been informed (0.3) this was a genuine error. Laughter from opposition members and I assure the House this was a genuine error, Mr Speaker, and I assure the House that there was no intention to be discourteous (.) Mr Speaker, we gave notice yesterday that we would be making a written statement this morning to announce that we would be issuing a consultation document on these proposals. A press release was prepared with the intention that it would be sent out after the written statement had been issued (.) I very much regret that the press release was mistakenly issued last night. We take our obligations to Parliament very seriously indeed and normally as I hope you will agree when we make announcements of this kind we do of course observe the protocols of the House (0.2) I can only say how sorry I am that on this occasion this did not occur.

(A.42) Response to a point of order (which complains about the offence). Ben Bradshaw. 20/05/2003. Offence: Wrongly alleging that the Opposition had not used their full time in a debate.

BB: Mr Speaker, the honourable gentlemen are both entirely right and perhaps I could take this opportunity to apologise to them to you and to the House (.) the debate on the criminal justice bill did indeed go the full six and a half hours last night and in response to the last point made by the honourable member for Somerton and Frome er it er does er remain the case er Mr Speaker that three full days debate on the floor at a report stage is unprecedented for a bill of this kind.


CB: Mr Speaker, with your permission I would like to make a personal statement with regard to a report about
my conduct by the standards and privileges committee.

(0.2) hhh this was the first time that an mp has referred
allegations about his own conduct to the parliamentary
commissioner for standards. (.) i am grateful to
the standards and privileges committee for authorising
the parliamentary commissioner to investigate (0.3) i
fully cooperated with the parliamentary commissioner's
investigations. (0.2) the parliamentary commissioner
concluded there had been no misuse of public funds by
me i had not used my position as an mp in any way
to influence a visa decision (0.3) i wish to add that
AT NO TIME DID I MISLEAD or seek to mislead
a customs official. (0.3) the standards and privileges
committee concluded that i made two errors of judgement
the committee determined that the first of these required
no further actions (0.2) the second of these was made
when i was under enormous personal pressure (0.5) i have
unreservedly apologised to the committee mister speaker
and now do so to the house in respect of these matters and
acknowledge the full recommendations of the committee
which i accept. (0.4) finally mister speaker, i am grateful
for the tremendous support i have received throughout
recent months from family (0.2) friends (0.2) parliamentary
colleagues "from both sides of the house" local party
members and constituents.


DA: mister speaker the committee on standards and privileges
published its second report of this session yesterday and it
directed that i should apologise to the house for my failure
to register my work for the bbc television programme this
week (.) i accept that i should have registered my work
for the programme, i take full responsibility for the failure
to register, i have cooperated fully with the parliamentary
commissioner for standards in his investigation, and i have
apologised to him for my oversight. (0.2) hhh and i am
glad to take this early opportunity to apologise to the house
(.) as the commissioner notes in his memorandum my
involvement in the programme could hardly have been
concealed given its nature and most people aware of it
might have assumed that i was being paid for it (.) but
the house of commons quite correctly has < a strict
code of conduct< in these matters and the committee of
standards and privileges is rightly vigilant on this (.) i
well remember the debates about the conduct of mps in the
nineteen nineties and for the house of commons to retain
the confidence of the public it is right that there should be
the utmost transparency and once again (0.2) i apologise to
the house.


JS: mister speaker i wish to make a personal statement the content of which has been agreed with you. on the eighth of february the third report of the committee on standards and privileges was debated. i apologised to the house for the mistakes i made but suggested there were a few errors in the committee’s conclusions (0.3) .hh at the request of the clerk to the committee i amplified and evidenced er my remarks (0.2) the committee have rejected that evidence and has invited me to make a fuller apology by way of a personal statement (. ) i therefore offer my unreserved apology in respect of my conduct and accept the findings of the committee in respect of this and my improper use of commons stationery (. ) i also accept and unreservedly apologise for inadvertent but incorrect aca claims (0.2) however it occurred the responsibility is mine and it has become apparent that i claimed for some items that i should not have and did not claim for some items that were permissible (0.2) < i will replay [sic] any discrepancy < ( . ) for all these mistakes i apologise to you mister speaker < and to the house< .

(A.46) **Personal statement. Tony Baldry.** 21/07/2005. Offence: Lobbied on behalf of a diamond mining company using Commons stationery in breach of the code of conduct for committee chairmen.

TB: er: mister speaker er with your permission i should like to make a personal statement um the::: (0.6) committee on standards and privileges have today published a report concerning me um the committee has requested that i make an apology to the house by way of a personal statement and this i readily do at the earliest possible opportunity. (0.2) um the um complaint to the parliamentary commissioner followed the publication of two articles in the sunday times last march which made a number of allegations about my conduct (0.2) by far and away the most serious allegation was that i had sought to use my parliamentary position as chairman of the commons select committee for international development to obtain or attempt to obtain some personal financial gain. (0.2) .hh in respect of this matter the parliamentary commission in his report found that < there had been no indication whatsoever< in the course of his enquiries that i had sought to exploit my position as chairman of the international development select committee to- to further my private interests. the commissioner did however find that i had breached the code of conduct in a number of respects (0.2) that in certain instances i got it wrong. (0.3) no-one is sorrier than i for
that for wh- what i got wrong i said in person on tuesday
to the committee< on standards and privileges that i was
very sorry and i repeat to the whole house i am very sorry.
(0.3) the committee in their conclusions say that my case
illustrates the important- importance not least in terms of
public perception of members scrupulously separating (.)
and being seen to separate their public role from any private
business interests. the ParliAmentary commissioner in
his report says that he does not believe that i set out to
exploit my public position for personal advantage (.) but
he took the view that i failed to exercise sufficient care
in distinguishing my public concerns from some of my
private interests (.) hh i accept that judgement. (0.3)
the committee in particular was concerned about a letter i
wrote to the secretary of state for international development
which they ruled breached the advocacy rule (.) MAY I
say that i apologised in person to the secretary of state
(.) face to face BACK in april for anything that i may
have got wrong in my letter to him and i am confident
that the secretary of state accepted that apology in the
spirit in which it was given (0.4) in respect of my letter
to the secretary of state and other matters of concern i
have been given the opportunity to explain my actions
that i have done in detail my explanations are there in
the report for the house and for anyone to see (0.3) my
letter to the secretary of state was clearly very poorly
written as it has led to a number of misunderstandings but
i have to accept that as i wrote the letter the Consequence
of those misunderstandings fall to me and AS i said
to the parliamentary commissioner i fully accept that
the perception of an mp’s conduct is important. (.)
the parliamentary commissioner and the committee have
concluded from the reading of my letter that i breached
the rules and i of course accept their judgement that was
certainly- most certainly not my intention. (0.5) i do
not believe that there is anything in the commissioner’s
findings or the committee’s report that suggests that i have
done anything ignoble (.) dishonest (.) or discreditable
insofar (0.2) that i got matters wrong i have at the earliest
possible opportunity (.) apologised in person to the
secretary of state, apologised in person to the committee
on standards and privileges and i say sorry to the house
and i hope the house will accept this as a heartfelt and
unconditional apology for what i got wrong and i hope
that any fair-minded person reading the commissioner’s
report will conclude that what i got wrong was by way
of inadvertence and omission rather than any deliberate
attempt in any way to abuse my position as a member of

SB: with your permission mister speaker i would like to give a personal statement concerning the evidence i gave to the transport select committee at its hearing on the fourteenth of november two thousand and one. hhh as the house will be aware the high court has recently heard the case of weir and others and the secretary of state for transport and the department for transport (0.2) the case was brought on behalf of the railtrack private shareholders action group (0.2) their claim was for misfeasance in public office and concerns decisions i had taken in relation to railtrack when i was secretary of state for transport (0.4) the central allegation made was that by refusing to grant further taxpayers’ money to railtrack and by petitioning the court for its administration (.) hh i had shown targeted malice towards those holding shares in railtrack (0.3) it was claimed (.) that as a result (0.2) i had committed a deliberate (.) and dishonest abuse of my powers as secretary of state by impairing the value of their shares in railtrack without paying them compensation and without the approval of parliament. last friday (0.3) the high court delivered its judgement in the case (0.2) and found in favour of the secretary of state for transport and the department for transport == (0.2) mister speaker (.) in the process of giving my testimony to the high court i was cross-examined (0.2) on the evidence i gave to the transport select committee < at its hearing on fourteenth of november two thousand and one < in particular (.) my attention was drawn to the reply i gave (0.2) to a question from the honourable member for epsom and ewell it was question eight hundred and fifty-seven of the select committee evidence (0.2) the honourable member asked (0.2) was there any discussion (.) theoretical or otherwise (.) in your department before the twenty-fifth of july about the possibility of a future change in status for railtrack whether by nationalisation (0.2) whether the move into a company limited by guarantee (.) or whatever? (0.3) in reply i said (.) < not that i am aware of < . (.) it was pointed out to me in court that this answer was inconsistent with the documents that had been disclosed to the court (.) and MISTER SPEAKER (.) i must inform the house that my reply was factually inaccurate .hhh but i must also tell the house that i did not deliberately intend to mislead the select committee and i would like to explain to the house what happened. (0.3) on coming into office after the two thousand and one general election i received a
wide range of briefing papers covering all aspects of my
departments responsibilities (0.2) a number of these related
to the railways (0.3) as a consequence i asked for an options
paper of the future of railtrack to be drawn up (.) < initially
(0.2) this was to be done solely by my department< but
subsequently i asked that it be carried out jointly with
the number ten policy directorate and the treasury. (0.2)
at the time i regarded the commissioning of this work as
simply sensible contingency planning (0.3) but it is my
request for this work to be carried out (.) which i now
recognise could be interpreted as a discussion, and that
would make my reply to the select committee factually (.)
inaccurate. (0.3) a critical meeting did take place on the
twenty-fifth of july when the chairman of railtrack outlined
to me the financial difficulties the company faced (.) it
was only after that meeting that substantive discussions
began about the possibility of changing the status of the
company (.) since the court hearing i have thought long
and hard about why i gave the answer i did to the select
committee (0.4) having reviewed the documents that were
put before the court it would've been because i considered
the meeting of the twenty-fifth of july to be the moment at
which discussions began and that the work carried out on
the future options for railtrack did not represent discussions
in the true meaning of that word. (0.2) mister speaker
i want the house to know that i did not lie to the select
committee (.) that i did not deliberately mislead the select
committee but that due to an inadvertent error i gave
factually inaccurate evidence to the select committee (.) i
deeply regret that this has happened (0.3) and i wish to offer
my sincere apologies to you (.) mister speaker and to the
whole house.

(A.48) Personal statement. Stephen Byers. 01/02/2006. Offence: Providing inaccurate evidence to a select committee (following investigation into his conduct).

SB: mister speaker in my personal statement-
Spk: don’t walk in front of the honourable gentleman ((clears throat)) stephen byers.
SB: mister speaker (.) in my personal statement on the
seventeenth of October two thousand and five i apologised
to the house for the factual inaccuracy in my answer
to the transport subcommittee held on the fourteenth of
november two thousand and one to the honourable member
for epsom and ewell (.) i am grateful (.) to the committee
on standards and privileges for its investigation into my
evidence (.) and in particular for its finding (.) that i did
not lie to the select committee as alleged (0.2) as i told the
committee an accurate reply at the time would have caused
me no problems either politically or legally. (0.3) the committee recognised that whilst in my personal statement of the seventeenth of October i had accepted that i gave a factually inaccurate answer they concluded that i should’ve apologised unreservedly for having done so. (0.2) mister speaker (0.3) i accept the committee’s conclusion and i therefore offer (.) my unreserved apologies to the house.

(A.49) Personal statement. Elfyn Llwyd. 11/05/2006. Offence: Not informing an MP that he was going to cite them in his speech, misleading the Speaker that he had informed the MP.

EL: thank you mister speaker (0.2) mister speaker with your permission i wish to make a personal statement. (0.3) on the fourth of may during business questions i was asked by you if i had given notice to the secretary of state for wales of my intention to name him. (. ) i said that contact had been made at five minutes to eleven (. ) my personal assistant in my presence and hearing telephoned the secretary of state’s office at that time and was told that he was away on a private (. ) family matter. (0.3) the member of staff at the wales office then offered to put me through to the parliamentary undersecretary (. ) < i did not take up that offer< . (0.3) i recognise that i did not make this clear and that by not doing so i inadvertently misled you and the house for which i sincerely apologise.


DC: mister speaker with your permission i wish to make a personal statement to the house. (0.2) the committee on standards and privileges has today issued its report on the complaint made against me for employing my son as a researcher and parliamentary assistant (. ) i will not delay the house by going through the contents of that report as it is publically available. (0.2) the committee was entitled to reach the conclusions it did and i have accepted their criticisms in full. (. ) i unreservedly apologise to the house for my administrative shortcomings and the misjudgements i made (0.2) in my submissions to the committee and the commissioner i set out my case and i leave it to honourable members to form their own judgement of my conduct. (0.2) i would like to make clear that throughout the investigation the commissioner acted with absolute courtesy and the committee afforded me every opportunity to explain my position (. ) . hh in apologising to the house i would also like to apologise to my constituents and the old bexley and sidcup conservative association which has been so very supportive of me and my family throughout a very difficult period. (0.3) the house will comprehend the impact this matter has on me personally but also on my family (. ) i
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have let them down very badly indeed and no judgement
from any quarter could be more harsh than that which i
apply to myself.

(A.51) **Personal statement. Peter Hain. 26/01/2009. Offence: Failure to declare in good time donations made to his campaign for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party.**

PH: with your permission mister speaker i wish to make a
personal statement. (0.2) i’m grateful to the parliamentary
commissioner for his fair and accurate report and to the
committee on standards and privileges for their equally
fair conclusions (. ) my failure to declare to the registrar
of members’ interest within the time required all of the
donations to my deputy (. ) leadership (. ) campaign to the
labour party was wrong (. ) i note that the committee fully
accepts that i acted with commendable speed to rectify
this once i’d discovered the problem (. ) indeed a month
before any complaint was made against me and that there
was no intention to deceive. ( . ) i’ve always accepted
full responsibility for this honest mistake and i apologise
unreservedly to the house.

(A.52) **Point of order. Bernard Jenkin. 12/03/2009. Offence: May have breached rules on use of Commons dining facilities.**

BJ: thank you mister deputy speaker. would it be in order for
me to use this opportunity to apologise to the house as
i may have breached the new rules on commons dining
facilities in relation to political fundraising? (. ) i hosted
a lunch for a leading charity in a commons dining room on
the nineteenth of october two thousand and seven hhh (. )
i have written with a full explanation to the parliamentary
commissioner for standards asking for his advice and for
him to take whatever action he considers appropriate (. )
however it is my understanding that he can neither give me
advice nor investigate this matter at my instigation and this
may raise an issue which the house may wish to consider
(. ) but i wish to acknowledge (0.2) though the new rules
were not fully in force at the time it was a mistake for me
not to have taken proper advice at the time so i apologise
without reservation to the house for any breach of the rules
and i will place a copy of my letter to the parliamentary
commisioner in the library.


JS: with permission mister speaker i’d like to make a personal
statement (0.2) i’m grateful to the committee on standards
and privileges for their consideration of the detailed
report from the parliamentary commissioner on standards
following his seven month investigation. (0.4) i want
...to apologise unreservedly to the house as I have to my constituents for wrongly claiming for the cost of films alongside my broadband and cable connection. This claim should never have been made and as the committee notes, I paid back the claim in full as soon as it was brought to my attention. On the issue of second home allowances, the commissioner and the committee recognised that my London home is indeed a home and they dismissed the most usually repeated newspaper descriptions of my living arrangements and I welcome this judgement as the report makes clear, I sought and received written advice from the parliamentary authorities that supported my main home designation and indeed I spent more nights in London than in Redditch for three of the four years in question. I have never flipped my designation and I only own one home. The committee recognise that there is no evidence that the taxpayer would be any worse or any better off as a result of me having made a different decision, however in retrospect the commissioner concludes that I should have used my discretion to change my main home designation. I accept the committee's conclusions and I therefore apologise to the house and I want to say sorry too to my constituents as they are my number one priority and for too long this investigation has overshadowed the work I do for them. Thank you.

(A.54) **Personal Statement. Tony McNulty. 29/10/2009. Offence: Breached expenses rules.**

1. **TM:** Thank you very much er Mister Speaker er with permission Mister Speaker I would like to make a personal statement (0.3) I should like to thank the Parliamentary Commissioner on standards and the Committee on standards and privileges for the memorandum and report published this morning. (0.3) I should especially like to thank the Commissioner for his courtesy and diligence throughout this hhh investigation. (0.3) I am grateful that the Commissioner recognised that I was in the rules of this House in establishing and claiming parliamentary allowances for my constituency home and I welcome his acceptance that my claims were necessarily incurred and I er I consistently claimed significantly below the maximum allowed. (0.4) I accept fully that I made careless mistakes on both mortgage interest and council tax claims for which I apologise unreservedly to this House but I identified these errors and repaid them in full in April May two thousand and nine. (0.3) I further accept the admonition from the Commissioner about the informal nature of my arrangements. (0.3) I regret that I did not recognise that...
a more formal arrangement would have been wis•se and
preferable so that i would avoid the risk of an appearance
of benefit (.) and i apologise for this (.) hhhhh the
commissioner has accepted that my claims had the benefit
of abating all cost except mortgage interest and council tax
and were therefore in line with the advice given to me by
the department for resources and repeated as recently as
THREE months agoB (0.3) he has HOWEVER challenged
that advice that mortgage interest as a fixed cost need
not be abated and has determined that that advice was
to narrow (0.2) hh the commissioner has recognised that
his conclusion is (0.2) at odds (0.2) with the department’s
advice (.) advice that he accepts i followed (.) i accept that
this investigation has been an opportunity to shine further
light on both the advice given and the advice as it pertained
at the time (0.2) and that the commissioner has every
right to re-define such advice AND apply it retrospectively
(0.2) indeed had the advice been given to me in terms as
suggested by the commissioner then i would of course have
acted differently (0.3) nonetheless mister speaker i accept
the report’s conclusions in full including the requirement
to repay with NO COMPLAINT and apologise without
reservation to the house (0.2) hhh i should’ve been much
clearer about my arrangements and taken steps to ensure
that i was not open to any charge of benefit AND
SHOULD’VE HAD MUCH MORE CONCERN for how
these rules were perceived by the public rather than just
following them (.) i apologise for any part i played in
the diminution of the standing of this house in the eyes
of the public (.) < it is however time to move on< (0.4)
i apologise once again to this house without reservation
mister speaker thank you for allowing to make this personal
statement and helping me to set a course to do everything
i can in the future to restore the trust and faith of my
constituents (.) and the public generally (.) in our politics.


HC: thank you mister speaker (.) i am here to apologise to the
house and i do so without proviso in my statement to the
committee’s members i said i would concur with whatever
decision was made by them and i stand by my word (0.2)
hhh there was no intention of wrongdoing on my part and
i’m sorry for my assumption that i was eligible to claim
as i did this was wrong (0.2) two further apologies, (0.3)
firstly to my constituents, (0.3) the good people of leytont
and wanstead do not deserve to have their faith in their
parliamentary representative so severely shaken (.) they
deserve the best untarnished representation also the best
of my efforts for the last twenty seven years has been to
take up their cases including of injustice to them in the
last ten months of this intensive inquiry into me i’ve had
to give a lot of time to my own case when i would have
much preferred to have been dealing with theirs. (.) i’m
sorry for any shortfall as a result (.) hhh secondly i publicly
apologise to my wife ellen who is taking a lot of the flak
(0.2) this situation is not her fault and she has suffered as a
consequence (. ) i am deeply sorry about that (0.4) finally i
have the greatest respect for parliament and would not have
intentionally wanted to do anything to tarnish its reputation
(. ) i am sorry if i have done so.

(A.56) **Response to Mr. Speaker’s statement. Theresa May. 30/06/2010.**
**Offence: Gave report of her statement to the press before the House.**
TM: thank you er thank you mister speaker. mister speaker i
deeply regret the fact that– i deeply regret the fact that in
my attempt to assist the house by moving from a written
ministerial statement to an oral statement the:: copy of the
statement that would’ve been made in writing to the house
was handed to the press before i made my oral statement.
(.) i take
full responsibility for that mister speaker (0.2) and
i have no hesitation in APOLogising to the house and in
assuring the house that i will ensure that it will not happen
again.

(A.57) **Personal Statement. David Laws. 12/05/2011. Offence: Breached
expenses rules.**
DL: mister speaker thank you for giving (. ) me this early
opportunity to respond to the report of the standards
and privileges committee regarding my expenses (. ) i’m
also grateful to the parliamentary commissioner and his
staff for their thorough and professional handling of this
inquiry following my self-referral (0.3) THE INQUIRY
HAS FOUND that i broke a number of important rules and
i take complete and personal responsibility for the mistakes
i made (. ) and apologise without reservation to the house
and my constituents (. ) the commissioner found that there
was a conflict between my personal interest in privacy
and the public interest in openness and accountability
(.) he concluded that i should’ve immediately resolved
that conflict in the public interest and i agree with that
judgement (0.3) hh i’ve made clear since this matter first
became public that my sole motivation was to protect my
privacy and not to benefit in any way from the expenses
system and i’m pleased that the commissioner has clearly
supported my view of my motivation and he has stated
that there is no evidence that i made my claims with the
intention of benefiting myself or those close to me (. ) the
commissioner has also concluded that if i kept to the rules
including by correctly designating my main home (.) the 
financial consequence of this would have been (.) that my 
expense claims would’ve been considerably higher than 
they were (.) this is NOT as the commissioner has made 
clear in any way an adequate justification for breaking the 
rules but it does demonstrate that there was no adverse 
consequence to the taxpayer (0.2) this last year has been a 
difficult one for me and i am grateful for all of the support 
i have received particularly from my constituents in yeovil 
who have been extremely generous in their understanding 
tolerance and encouragement (0.3) EACH OF US should 
be our own sternest critic and all of us in this place want to 
see the reputation of this house restored after the last few 
disastrous years hh if by my actions i’ve contributed in any 
way to further undermine the reputation of this house then 
i can only apologise without reservation.
Appendix B: Transcripts of apologies at the Leveson Inquiry

As noted in the main text, all the videos from the Leveson Inquiry can be found at http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/hearings/

(B.1) Alan Johnson (A), Leveson Day 75 am Page 97-8 (Q=David Barr)

Q: you would’ve expected either er the police to have done something er about that or you would have wanted to (0.4) take action yourself. (0.3) is that right?

A: yes and er let’s be clear about what i was told. (0.2) i was told that (0.4) there was a body of evidence there in the inquiry that yates hadn’t dealt with=hayman had dealt with. err they had um selected er um (0.5) the most- the clearest evidence to kind of if you like provide (0.4) what they needed (.) to deal with goodman and mulcaire and yes there was lots of other stuff there but < actually it was immaterial to the< fact that goodman and mulcaire had been found guilty and had been imprisoned. then came the- and er you know (0.4) yates was the head of counter-terrorism. (0.3) we had lots of things going on at the time in counter terrorism. it wasn’t so much saying .hh look you know we could go a bit further and look for a bit more, (0.5) stuff (0.3) err but we’ve got other things to do. it {was a very clear-}

LEV: misunderstood mister barr (0.2) he’s not saying that was happening in oh nine. (0.2) what he’s suggesting is, (0.5) and i’ll slightly change your question mister barr. that er you might have been told, there- there’s a lot of material here (0.2) errr there are some difficult legal issues, there may be other people invo::lved but er we (0.3) took a stance- we took a decision on what we had to do in oh six BECAUSE (0.4) THEN there were all sorts of terrorist (0.4) concerns.

A: AHH i see. i see. yeah yeah yeah.

LEV: and that was a reasonable decision at the time? (0.4) i think that’s what mister barr was driving at.
(B.2) Alan Johnson (A), Leveson Day 75 am, Page 104

1 A: for senior officers i think there has to be, (.) in this twenty
2 four seven media age (.). when the police need the public
3 to help them on so many different police inquiries (0.2) it’s
4 very important that there’s a relationship with the media
5 ummm (0.3) but it should be people who: (0.4) are senior
6 enough to take the can for problems that might occur in that
7 who deal with the med{ia OR- OR-}
8 LEV: {but it’s not-}
9 A: sorry- sorry sir=
10 LEV: =no no please
11 A: well it’s- (0.2) if there are junior people doing it then
12 they’re doing it with the author{ity of senior police offices.}
13 LEV: well there you are you’ve answered what i was just about
14 to raise [. . .]

(B.3) Alan Johnson (A), Leveson Day 75 am, Page 120

1 LEV: so does that mean that there has to be:: (0.4) some
2 structure somewhere umm that (0.3) sets up an independent
3 regulatory regime .hhh which obviously has appropriate
4 representation from the press upon it? does that really
5 encapsulate what you’re saying?= =yes. if the
6 A: press were (0.3) i’m sorry.
7 LEV: because that MEANS, once i talk about a structure (.). that
8 probably means that the structure has to have been set out
9 (0.3) however far back from the front line it is (0.2) by
10 parliament.

(B.4) Alastair Campbell (A), Leveson Day 70 pm, Page 65. (Q=Robert Jay)

1 Q: although the terms of the debate having been set. (0.7) hhh
2 the political response which is to debate policy may flow
3 from that may- er might not it?
4 A: (1.2) er wh- er sorry what do you mean by that?
5 Q: if- if- if the newspapers have er set the terms {of the
6 debate}
7 A: {oh yes sorry}
8 Q: {{then the political response}}} which is the setting of
9 policy? may have been determined by the terms of the
10 debate.=would you agree?
11 A: {{i get the point yeah}}

(B.5) Alastair Campbell (A), Leveson Day 70 pm, Page 86. (Q=Robert Jay)

1 Q: the government’s constant attempts to repackage old
2 announcements, stories and news and put the best
complexion on figures create a legitimate thrust in what you were saying?

A: umm i think in ((coughs)) excuse me (0.2) again. sorry to keep going on about the treasury, but i think there was a time when there was so-called double-counting which was frankly stupid. {1 page of evidence}

Q: okay paragraph sixty mister campbell. (0.2) page zero zero eight two nine where you deal with special advisers.

(B.6)  Alastair Campbell (A), Leveson Day 70 pm, Page 94. (Q=Robert Jay)
1 A: so forgive me if i don’t take this as seriously as the people who wrote it at the time, but the story was total nonsense.
2 Q: although black rod for better or worse on the last page says (0.3) i find it rather difficult to fault the mail on sunday insofar as its articles dealt with my experiences?

(B.7)  David Cameron (A), Leveson Day 86 am, Page 8. (Q=Robert Jay)
1 Q: do you think {the-}
2 A: {but what} it- er sorry what it has leant me towards is spending quite a lot of the focus er and this is in my evidence (.) quite a lot of focus on broadcasting. [1 page of evidence]
3 Q: yes:: and broadcasters are subject to quite different regulations of course.

(B.8)  David Cameron (A), Leveson Day 86 am, Page 56. (Q=Robert Jay)
1 Q: could i just ask you please? (0.3) mister rupert murdoch. was he at the dinner then? is that correct?
2 A: no i think he was at the dinner then. (.) i don’t think this is correct. i’m extremely sorry i don’t think that is (0.3) right. (.) ummm (0.4) i think you’ve spotted an error for which i’m very sorry.
3 Q: i’m not saying it’s the biggest point {but it’s}
4 A: {no no well} basically it- it- it er it looks like. (0.2) um well i deal with it in my evidence.

(B.9)  David Cameron (A), Leveson Day 86 pm, Page 8-9. (Q=Robert Jay)
1 A: gus o’donnell the cabinet secretary looked into this < and he’s judged that ed llewellyn responded absolutely correctly to this<
2 Q: did you have any further conversations with mister (0.3) coulson be{fore his}
3 A: {i think er sorry to} er john yates said er the offer was properly and understandably rejected (.) hh those were the words that he used. so i think he understood that um while it can be appropriate to brief ministers on operational issues (.) it wouldn’t have been on this occasion. (0.3) sorry.
4 Q: =did you have any further conversations with mister cousin about these matters before his resignation or not?
(B.10) David Cameron (A), Leveson Day 86 pm, Page 26. (Q=Robert Jay)
1 A: so i- i- i think it was a perfectly rational decision.
2 LEV: my question wasn’t directed to that {really at all} 
3 A: {sorry sorry i know} i’m 
4 banging on 
5 Q: well we can see mister hunt’s overall view from the minute.

(B.11) David Cameron (A), Leveson Day 86 pm, Page 47. (Q=Robert Jay)
1 A: […] so i’d hate it if at the end of all of this we killed off
2 the idea of a good special adviser helping out their minister
3 and and helping to keep the separation of politics and- and
4 the civil service=sorry sorry it’s rather a long answer but
5 it’s an important point.
6 LEV: no no i take the point entirely because what you’ve done
7 is to identify why there is a difference. (0.3) why there are
8 special advisers and there are civil servants.

(B.12) David Cameron (A), Leveson Day 86 pm, Page 59-60. (Q=Robert Jay)
1 A: i think they’ve got the be rigorously tested as to whether
2 they can deliver independence (. ) penalties (. ) compulsion
3 (. ) toughness (. ) public confidence and all the rest of it.
4 and i think that’s- er sorry to have given you this umm hot
5 potato ((smiling)) but i think that’s the test.
6 LEV: i don’t think you sound sorry about doing that at all
7 actually! ((laughter from gallery)) but ummm but there are
8 some contradictions in there because if it has to involve
9 everyone […]

(B.13) David Cameron (A), Leveson Day 86 pm, Page 67. (Q=Robert Jay)
1 A: but the point is it doesn’t work for the dowlers or the
2 mccans. that’s the test.
3 LEV: i understand that.
4 A: i’m sorry i don’t have the whole answer but i think the
5 question you’ve challenged the industry with is the right
6 one […] because i totally accept we can’t say it’s the last
7 chance er er saloon all over again. (0.3) you know we’ve er
8 already done that.
9 LEV: it’s quite difficult to see how the government can:: er
10 withdraw favours as it were (0.3). like the lobby. (.) unless
11 you tell me differently?

(B.14) David Mellor (A), Leveson Day 88 pm, Page 16. (Q=David Barr)
1 Q: section four. (0.2) under paragraph four point two, there
2 are thirteen subparagraphs setting out the main complaints
3 which were made to the committee. i am not going to read
4 them all out (0.5) but er- when you’ve got the page
5 A: actually i’m looking at the:: er:: areas of complaint? sorry
6 sorry yes i was looking at the summary recommendations.
Q: do you have the areas of complaint? (0.3) what i would like you to do is cast an eye over paragraph four point two.

David Mellor (A), Leveson Day 88 pm, Page 39. (Q=David Barr)
A: otherwise the press can strut heroically through any street because < the press are telling us things we need to know! < you know i revisit the point ° sorry tedious and repetitious. [1 page evidence]
Q: before we come very briefly to that can i ask you about the third paragraph on page five?

Ed Miliband (A), Leveson Day 84 pm, Page 13. (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: to- to what extent do you give weight to the chilling effect argument and coupled with that i suppose are the unintended consequences of regulation which we’ve- we’ve heard from one or two witnesses?
A: (1.8) i’m sorry mister jay would you just explain the qu- the qu- what you’re seeking from the question?
Q: sorry! the chilling effect (.) that if you are not careful with regulation you have a:::?=
Q: =yes i think that is always something that whenever we are scrutinising:: proposals that we must look very carefully at.

Ed Miliband (A), Leveson Day 84 pm, Page 21. (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: fair enough and there are further discussions with mister dacre that we can see on first november two thousand and eleven and then on first december two thousand and eleven. (0.2) .hhh this is page zero six five eight six. (0.3) the first appears to be a phone call and the second may well have been a meeting. {XX}
A: {i’m s}orry could you just say those two again? first of november and the other one was::?=
Q: the first of december (0.3) last year.

Ed Miliband (A), Leveson Day 84 pm, Page 40. (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: you- you collect together the: the key events under paragraph fourteen of your (0.2) statement but we can- we can probably confine ourselves to the highlights (.) in the annexes themselves which are under tab three in this bundle.
A: i’m sorry mister jay i’m being slower than you. (0.3) it’s annex three is it?
Q: =it’s tab three and it starts with annex b one and there are a whole collection of annexes {XXXX}
A: {yes i’m with} you now. (0.2) thank you.

Ed Miliband (A), Leveson Day 84 pm, Page 48. (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: page zero six eight three (1.2) you pick up on a number
of points most of which we’ve already covered=
A: =i’m sorry mister jay would you mind giving me=
Q: =sorry this is question fifteen on page zero six eight three
zero.

(B.20) George Osborne (A), Leveson Day 83 pm, Page 31. (Q=Robert Jay)
A: [...] broadcasters who we wanted to have good relations
with (0.4) if it was rejected er sorry if it was accepted
and if it was rejected it was going to offend another bunch
of people. [...] Q: so aside from the inconvenience of all of it surely your-
your own political viewpoint might have informed in
general terms your attitude to the bid?

(B.21) George Osborne (A), Leveson Day 83 pm, Page 63-4. (Q=Robert Jay)
A: i guess what i had was (0.4) and i- i: have been involved
from a very junior level in conservative politics since two
thousand and four (0.2) er sorry! > nineteen ninety four>
so you know over a long period [...] Q: can you remember when you spoke to mrs brooks to get
her professional opinion about him?

(B.22) Gordon Brown (A), Leveson Day 83 am, Page 112
A: but all- all- all i’m saying sir (0.2) sir if you’ll forgive me
for doing- for doing so is that you can deal with this issue
(0.3) about (. ) what i think errrr is a terrible injustice done
to the dowler family. [...] Q: one needn’t err just look at the example of national
newspapers. [...] LEV: one needn’t err just look at the example of national
newspapers. [...] [ . . . ]

(B.23) Gordon Brown (A), Leveson Inquiry Day 83 am, Pages 115-6 (Q = Robert
Jay)
A: if- if- if i may say, (0.3) I think there’s quite a lot to learn
from (. ) america where this is a live debate at the moment.
(0.4) i’m sorry i moved from your initial er initial point
about self-regulation.
Q: (0.3) not at all. (0.6) now er mister brown the- the prime
minister as you will know has said that the relationship
between the press and politicians .hhh needs to be reset.
(0.8) what would you recommend- if anything (. ) in that
regard?

(B.24) Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 26 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: of course you you were foreign secretary at this time
(0.3) we’ve heard evidence (. ) somewhat unclear evidence
about three telephone calls between mister blair and mister
murdoch in march two thousand and three? are you able to
throw any light on those?
A: i’m sorry mister jay i’m not er er i think i was vaguely aware that they’d taken place but but (0.2) hh it’s quite hard to get across t- k- (0.2) to those who weren’t involved, the pace of events at this time um i mean i- (0.2) at the beginning of march (0.6) on the fifth or sixth of march i went to new york for what became- what turned out to be the last of the (0.5) the sec- series of security council meetings […]

LEV: (1.0) but how important was it um politically to (0.2) as it were? get a newspaper onside be- because the public had to be convinced?

(B.25) Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 34-5 (Q=Robert Jay)

Q: the immediate genesis to section twelve if you just look mister straw under tab nine of the debate?

A: (0.4) i wonder if i could- sorry (.) i- i- um to reduce the bundle i left er some of these er (0.2) if i could just ask someone to pass me the other tabs? would that be alright?

LEV: of course of course of course!

A: my my researcher there can- will pass them to me. (2.5) i made a very poor judgement that i’d never be asked about ((sniggering)) what was said in them! (4.0) ((receives bundle)) thank you very much.

Q: this is the second reading of the bill obviously in the commons on the second of july nineteen ninety eight. it’s an internet printout from hansard. (0.3) it runs to twenty one pages.

A: anyway if you don’t mind if you just go on and no doubt i’ll find it in due course.

LEV: no no no i’d rather you had it=

A: i’ve got number nine

LEV: well let me give you mine.

A: i’m very sorry about this.

LEV: no no don’t worry it’s just XX

A: i’ve got ten and i’ve got three.

LEV: (4.5) they’re normally in order numerically.

A: er er sir what i did was-

LEV: it doesn’t matter!

A: to reduce the bundle on the train i thought oh i don’t need those but that was a really stupid thing to do and i’m very sorry.

Q: you were debating what was then clause thirteen. […]

(B.26) Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 39 (Q=Robert Jay)

LEV: but it does raise a question? um ongoing for the future as to whether that is an appropriate position for somebody who holds that position in whatever body?

A: yes oh i see sorry sorry i’m- i’m being slow and yes i agree […]
Q: some fairly sophisticated points were made by mister garnier.

(B.27) Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 43 (Q=Robert Jay)

A: i regret the fact that in the data protection act which is also a bill which i put through that we had no spotted that this penalty was umm (0.3) too low but we hadn’t.

LEV: but if i pick up the point that was made when errr we were discussing this i think with mister graham.

(B.28) Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 51 (Q=Robert Jay)

A: i regret the fact that i didn’t then bring in (0.6) the amendment to section fifty five before the election (0.7) and i think it ought to (.) have been brought in by now but er er (0.5) there we are.

Q: i’ll come back to that point in a moment about activation.

(B.29) Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 56

LEV: then the risk of course is that the newspaper say (0.3) oh it’s going to cost us half a million pounds to fight it therefore we’ll buy it off for a very small sum

A: yeah you know it’s a- it’s a- it’s a very small subset of the abuse of the costs system which we’ve ended up in motor insurance of course it was never intended but it’s the way it’s er come out. and so- (0.5) er just going back to lord justice jackson and i’m sorry i haven’t Briefed myself on this but my recollection is that- that whilst discussing whether it was appropriate to make this change then (0.5) that lord justice jackson took a different view from me.

[. . .]

LEV: i think that’s right [. . .]

(B.30) Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 59 (Q=Robert Jay)

Q: paragraph hundred and nineteen which is our page zero two five five nine where you refer to periods when pressures from the press can be intense (.) and then you mention sarah’s (0.3) law (0.4) which i think was a news of the world campaign {to be XX}

A: {you’re} right about that sorry. um er both were pursued by rebekah (0.5) um wade as she was then but on the first occasion when she was editor of the news of the world. (0.2) °so that was wrong.°

Q: in terms of the intensity of the pressure. (.) can you expand on that please?

(B.31) Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 72

LEV: in other words there is some (1.0) ummm not merely umm i think i used the word yesterday, not merely a ____ but
there’s actually something much more serious underlining a failing?

A: well! (0.5) i’m sorry i did read mister boulton’s err written statement but i haven’t studied the oral evidence but-

LEV: i think it came from a book he had written.

Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 84 (Q=Robert Jay)

Q: and i’ve (0.7) later {on}

A: (0.3) sorry?

Q: page eight.

A: er yeah yeah.

Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 94 (Q=Robert Jay)

Q: unless you’ve got any other points you wish to:: develop mister straw in relation in particular to the future (. ) those were all the questions i had for you.

A: can i just- sorry. it was er triggered (0.3) in my um mind by lord justice leveson’s reference to the times [1 page of evidence]

LEV: it bears the weight of history.

Jack Straw (A), Leveson Day 72 am, Page 103

A: my observation (1.0) we are far more open than many (0.4) not all but many european jurisdictions. i don’t think anything’s going to change in respect of this.

LEV: (4.0) well you mean our society isn’t going to change?

A: well no i mean- i’m sorry my sentence rather tailed off but- but no i don’t think the the pluralism (0.2) will change because you’ve got a press commission that’s got a (0.3) back- (. ) got a few powers and enjoys public confidence as the current arrangement palpably doesn’t.

LEV: (3.5) i think that’s probably a very convenient moment at which to conclude mister straw. thank you very much.

Jeremy Hunt (A), Leveson Day 82 am, Page 50 (Q=Robert Jay)

Q: it’s paragraph thirty six really. (3.5) our page zero five six zero three. (1.5) you set aside your personal views and make your decision objectively and impartially on the evidence—

A: sorry? which err page are we mister jay?

Q: sorry it’s your paragraph thirty six on page zero five six zero three.

A: yes.

Jeremy Hunt (A), Leveson Day 82 am, Page 85

A: [2 pages of evidence] then (0.3) and i’m sorry to be a bit lengthy but i just think it’s important to understand why i wrote the final letter that i wrote to ofcom. {1 further page follows}
LEV: is that advice available?

(B.37)  Jeremy Hunt (A), Leveson Day 82 am, Page 106 (Q=Robert Jay)
1 Q: turn over the page to oh seven six nine seven. (0.3) this
2 is mister michel again to mister smith (. ) twenty ninth of
3 may.
4 A: sorry i haven’t got it yet pardon me. (0.2) ah there we are.
5 Q: it’s been- been redacted for some reason.

(B.38)  Jeremy Hunt (A), Leveson Day 82 pm, Page 11 (Q=Robert Jay)
1 Q: but at all events your- your response to it is recorded at- at
2 the email above that mister hunt isn’t it? secretary of state
3 has said he would like to see the note before it goes.
4 A: um. (0.4) yes. i’m sorry which is the note we’re talking
5 about? i’m not familiar with this material mister jay.
6 Q: well i- i had inf- (0.3) deduced but it may be incorrect, that
7 the note that is being referred to is in fact the text of the
8 email which starts halfway down page oh seven eight three
9 zero and is not in fact a separate document. (0.3) but it may
10 be that that inference is incorrect. (2.5) i’m not sure that we
11 could take it any further.
12 A: (3.0) no i- i’m sorry i can’t.
13 Q: (5.0) later that afternoon there was a conference with
14 counsel and others.

(B.39)  Jeremy Hunt (A), Leveson Day 82 pm, Page 15 (Q=Robert Jay)
1 Q: SSB page zero eight one zero five. (0.2) it’s an email you
2 sent to your (0.4) special adviser sue beeby on the twentieth
3 of july. have you:: (0.3) found that one?
4 A: eight oh one five?
5 Q: zero eight one zero five.
6 A: sorry.
7 Q: (6.0) just wonder if you could explain this for us please.

(B.40)  Jeremy Hunt (A), Leveson Day 82 pm, Page 18 (Q=Robert Jay)
1 Q: on the twentieth of january which was the date of your
2 second meeting with news corp do you um do you er see
3 that?
4 A: sorry which date was that mister jay?
5 Q: the twentieth of january two thousand and eleven. it’s the
6 very bottom of page zero one eight four seven.
7 A: sorry i’d turned over the page=
8 Q: =sorry you have to turn over
9 the page to see the time. it’s at twenty fifty three.

(B.41)  Jeremy Hunt (A), Leveson Day 82 pm, Page 24 (Q=Robert Jay)
1 Q: what specifically were you referring to there?
2 A: um (1.5) i- i’m afraid i can’t remember what event
3 happened that day?
Q: it was in fact the day before. the third of march was the announcement.

A: oh! right. yes sorry it was the day after i’d made the announcement about the uils and um i sent him a text to thank him for his um help and i also sent my other special adviser a text to thank her for her help.

Q: thank you.

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Q: the most sensible inference mister hunt is that um (1.5) the discussion was the:: (0.4) the:: (0.5) along similar lines to his- his other calls. namely what we s- what we see here. namely the bid. do you follow that?

A: i’m sorry i’m not sure i do mister jay.

Q: okay.

---

Q: first of all was there a meeting between you and the prime minister that day?

A: um (4.5) i did have a meeting with the prime minister to discuss inquiries. um i’m afraid i can’t recall whether it was that day. but i certainly did have a meeting and we can certainly find that information out for the inquiry if that would be helpful.

Q: at that stage was the policy thinking along these lines? one of the inquiries would be into the police and led by a judge? and the other into media practices? um (0.3) well not with a judge and led by dcms? is that broadly speaking right?

A: um (2.0) i think that we at that stage. (0.5) “i’m just sort of looking at the date here⁴. um i think there were lots and lots of options floating around at that time and i don’t think that er (. ) and < i don’t believe that we had concluded. < i seem to remember and i’m sorry i’m sort of trying to remember here but um but the um prime minister made a statement to parliament? (0.4) which i think was the day before um (2.0) about having an inquiry and ermm perhaps we should cross-reference whether this information was (1.0) in the prime minister’s statement=

Q: =yes er we think it the eighth of july? the statement.

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Q: =the eighth of july? the statement.
A: we began to make real progress with the um (0.5) downing street declaration in ninety three i think. with john bruton then the irish prime minister and then the frameworks agreement. hh (0.5) sorry with albert reynolds and then the frameworks agreement with um john bruton.

(B.46) John Major (A), Leveson Day 84 am, Page 43 (Q=Robert Jay)

Q: now sir john. (0.2) are there any points we have failed to cover in the course of the last two and a half hours which you’d like to- to address?

A: i shall probably remember them at about thirty if there are. i can’t immediately think what they are at the moment. (0.4) um i think i made the point earlier that i would like to make. if i didn’t make it earlier and if i repeat myself i apologise (.) but i do think at the end of this inquiry. (0.6) it is very important that we finally put this subject to bed and we put it to bed by having a system that is acceptable.

LEV: sir john could i just pick up one of the points you made?

(B.47) John Prescott (A), Leveson Day 41 pm, Page 54 (Q=Robert Jay)

Q: a letter also went to the dpp by your solicitors at page 9.

A: this is under the appendices is it?

Q: yes your exhibit.

LEV: do you have these lord prescott?

A: yes yes i do now sorry.

LEV: thank you.

(B.48) John Prescott (A), Leveson Day 41 pm, Page 59 (Q=Robert Jay)

Q: do you see the fourth line of the second paragraph?

A: on the::? sorry?

Q: page twenty one.

A: (4.5) from the met police yeah.

(B.49) John Prescott (A), Leveson Day 41 pm, Page 62 (Q=Robert Jay)

A: [...] the data commissioner told me that he couldn’t do anything. had no power and said why don’t you write to the legal arm of the metropolitan police? (0.3) so i did.

Q: so at this time you were in contact (1.5) behind the scenes as it were, with the information commission who i think had er had now become sir christopher graham? is that correct?

A: yes sorry it is the information commissioner.

Q: now page twenty three some more and some different information comes back from the police.

(B.50) John Prescott (A), Leveson Day 41 pm, Page 64 (Q=Robert Jay)

Q: thank you now you say in paragraph nineteen of your statement (0.5)
A: paragraph? sorry?
Q: paragraph nineteen. (1.0) sorry to dart around from your statement to the exhibit.

(B.51) John Prescott (A), Leveson Day 41 pm, Page 67 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: you refer in your statement to the evidence given by mister yates to the home affairs select committee this time on seventh september two thousand and ten which we may need to-
A: sorry can you give me the number?
Q: yes it’s paragraph twenty two lord prescott.
A: oh i’m sorry i’ve got it.
Q: (8.0) where his statements and obviously they are all in the public domain […]

(B.52) John Prescott (A), Leveson Day 41 pm, Page 71 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: and we are now back to paragraph twenty seven of your witness statement (0.6)
A: thirty seven or twenty seven?
Q: twenty seven.
A: sorry.
Q: (9.0) you had a meeting with officers from operation weeting.

(B.53) John Prescott (A), Leveson Day 41 pm, Page 75 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: he went to a restaurant (. ) a well known restaurant, third bullet point. again that’s something picked up on to ask him about on thursday.
A: hm that was probably what was taken as an ((unclear: ?interjection)) by myself for which i apologise but er i just thought- i thought it was just mention it quite common but it was really about er if you are investigating somebody do you go out an have a meal with them? but i think that was answered by mister paddick earlier.
Q: hm (8.0) well again i’m just putting a marker down. it’s- it’s um arguable of some note.

(B.54) John Prescott (A), Leveson Day 41 pm, Page 79 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: there is one very interesting document at paragraph thirty three of your statement where you refer to it. this is the interview of mister mulcaire on eighth of august two thousand and six.
A: sorry? paragraph? i missed you.
Q: paragraph thirty three. we needn’t turn it up but it’s on page six sixty of our bundle.

(B.55) John Prescott (A), Leveson Day 41 pm, Page 88 (Q=Robert Jay)
A: > secondly if you want another one (. ) the evidence we’ve just received from every newspaper about the legal aid but
there’s a proposal now which we rejected as a government
but this one has accepted it that they-
Q: i’m sorry can i just ask you to go a tiny bit slower.
A: i’m sorry i’m sorry.
Q: sorry to cut you off in full flow there.
A: now you can feel the sympathy for the hansard writer=
LEV: =well we have one here as well!

(B.56) **John Reid (A), Leveson Day 76 pm, Page 146 (Q=Carine Patry Hoskins)**

1 Q: from nineteen ninety seven in government you held a
2 number of posts including (. ) home secretary, secretary of
3 state for defence, secretary of state for health, secretary of
4 state for northern ireland, leader of the house of commons
5 and president of the privy council, chairman of the labour
6 party and cabinet minister without portfolio, secretary of
7 state for scotland, minister for transport and armed forces
8 minister. so a very w- wide variety of positions.
9 A: i’m sorry they’re so long!
10 Q: no not at all
11 LEV: i hope you found them interesting.
12 A: they were.

(B.57) **John Reid (A), Leveson Day 76 pm, Page 161**

1 A: […] it wasn’t a very enlightening briefing if you can call
2 it that and then i’m afraid i called (. ) and it was quite late
3 at night, (0.2) i picked up the phone and called the met
4 commissioner and said to him (. ) what the hell’s going
5 on? (0.5) and the met commissioner was kind enough to
6 confirm the media stories (0.4) um ah including the fact
7 that a (0.5) friend (0.3) of a cabinet minister (0.6) was a
8 suspect. (0.4) ER SORRY a suspected {victim of phone
9 hacking}
10 LEV: {a suspected
11 victim}
12 A: yeah. and my memory is that it wasn’t the cabinet minister.
13 it was the friend.

(B.58) **John Reid (A), Leveson Day 76 pm, Page 175 (Q=Carine Patry Hoskins)**

1 Q: and then at forty two you don’t just deal with the priorities
2 you also deal with the routine ministerial duties that you
3 had to deal with as well.
4 A: i apologise for the length of these=
5 Q: =no
6 A: but basically prioritisation is almost by definition a relative
7 decision.

(B.59) **John Reid (A), Leveson Day 76 pm, Page 215 (Q=Neil Garnham, Counsel for the Met Police)**

1 Q: there’s three questions i’d like to ask lord reid if i may do
2 so?
LEV: yes.
A: i’m very sorry could you just? i really should know this but would you be kind enough?
LEV: {mister garnham acts for the metro}politan police
Q: {neil garnham (. ) met police}
A: oh okay thank you.

(B.60) John Reid (A), Leveson Day 76 pm, Page 218 (Q=Neil Garnham, Counsel for the Met Police)
Q: is that thames house?
A: sorry?
Q: is that thames house? from the context? […]
A: no idea.

(B.61) Kit Malthouse (A), Leveson Day 58 am, Page 3-4 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: […] is this your formal evidence to the inquiry?
A: it is with one further amendment if i may? i’m very sorry but in the flurry of paper i missed one correction sir which is on er (0.3) one one five six two {details given of correction}
LEV: thank you
A: apologies.
Q: (5.0) you are the statutory deputy mayor for policing and crime.

(B.62) Kit Malthouse (A), Leveson Day 58 am, Page 6 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: how (. ) if at all is that tested by the mpa and to what end?
A: well er there were a series of meetings every summer as part of the budget process where the mpa’s proposals er er sorry the met’s proposals around how they were going to address particular priorities […]

(B.63) Kit Malthouse (A), Leveson Day 58 am, Page 23
LEV: hm yes actually i was asking about a slightly different point.
A: i’m sorry.
LEV: no not at all i’m sure it’s my poor question. […]

(B.64) Kit Malthouse (A), Leveson Day 58 am, Page 29 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: did they start in july of two thousand and nine follow the guardian article? or was it more after the new york times article in september two thousand and ten?
A: hhhh (0.3) i’m afraid i don’t recall specifically. (0.4) from memory- from memory um um er john yates would normally throw in a reference to the hacking investigation towards the end of the meeting and my guess would be that that would in response to something that was in the media. (0.4) so it would be something like (. ) you might have seen something about phone hacking and this is just
to say how we are addressing it. but i don’t specifically remember when it started. i’m sorry.

Q: you explain at the end of paragraph forty four that your role at the mpa was strategic direction and governance.

(B.65) Kit Malthouse (A), Leveson Day 58 am, Page 31 (Q=Robert Jay)
LEV: it might be more helpful if we try to do it chronologically so that we build up a picture.
Q: sure
A: ok fine (.) absolutely (.) sorry. at that stage i don’t think we err umm (0.5) we asked any- er i don’t recall asking specific questions in those private briefings. […]

(B.66) Kit Malthouse (A), Leveson Day 58 am, Page 3-4 (Q=Robert Jay)
A: obviously if they had information that people on that list has been hacked (0.5) that they would contact them or that they would take reasonable steps to contact them < then i presume that that’s what they’d do.< sorry if i’m being unclear (.) i’m not quite sure what the question is asking me to-
Q: no no i think that’s a very fair answer mister malthouse.

(B.67) Kit Malthouse (A), Leveson Day 58 am, Page 37 (Q=Robert Jay)
A: it’s obviously the case that if mister yates was aware of that list and decided not to reopen the investigation then he obviously assumed that the list was not- not indicative. (0.5) i’m sorry that i can’t be more helpful. you might have to ask him because i don’t recall the specific exchange.
Q: i’m really asking you to comment on what someone else said but i’ve been asked to put that question to you and i have.

(B.68) Kit Malthouse (A), Leveson Day 58 am, Page 39 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: is that the mpa’s response or the mps’s response?
A: sorry which paragraph?
Q: it’s in the middle of paragraph forty eight of your statement.
A: (6.0) sorry that’s the general response from the mps. (2.0) um when sir paul stephenson was questioned about this ummm in public and in private he put up a robes defence that i think you heard in his evidence when he appeared here.
Q: (3.0) what was your view about it? or the mpa’s view about it?

(B.69) Kit Malthouse (A), Leveson Day 58 am, Page 50 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: i think that was in fact the seventeenth of july but check that (0.3) monday was the eighteenth of july.
A: was it? i’m sorry (.) my apologies.
Q: (2.5) it doesn’t matter at all but you can see from the next page you get the date right.
Michael Gove (A), Leveson Day 80 pm, Page 15
A: so if one newspaper - forgive me one political party over time benefits then that’s a consequence of the free decisions of individuals and it shouldn’t be seen as the exercise of power on the part of newspapers but instead it should be seen as the exercise of millions of individual preferences by readers.
LEV: you have to be a bit careful about that.

Nick Clegg (A), Leveson Day 85 am, Page 50 (Q=Robert Jay)
A: i was sort of asking questions about the timing - sort of open-minded to see how the process proceeded but - but - skeptical about the dangers of an excessive concentration of power in the hands of news international.
Q: (2.0) and thirdly -
LEV: that would be news corp wouldn’t it?
A: er yes news corp of course sorry.
Q: the third general question […]

Nick Clegg (A), Leveson Day 85 am, Page 77 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: so you wouldn’t be advancing even for consideration or instinctively a percentage threshold beyond which at least there should be an investigation?
A: no no no sorry i meant to say that i’m open to that but i don’t have a particular figure in mind […]
LEV: and you have to do some comparing of like with like.

Peter Mandelson (A), Leveson Day 74 pm, Page 15 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: the lowest level is perception which is um which you deal with in the third paragraph.
A: sorry and the highest was?
Q: an express deal.
A: an express deal er yes clearly expressed between two parties.

Peter Mandelson (A), Leveson Day 74 pm, Page 15 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: but i’m most interested in an implied deal lord mandelson. (.) whether you think there’s any basis for that?
A: i’m sorry to be precise but so i clearly understand. (0.3) you are talking about a deal between who and who and over what?
Q: senior politicians and media proprietor where although nothing is expressly stated, it is understood by each of them what may (0.4) or will be delivered in exchange.
Q: did the wooing of particularly mister murdoch’s titles between nineteen ninety five and march nineteen ninety seven fill you with any distaste at the time?
A: any?
Q: distaste.
A: about? i’m sorry about?
Q: the wooing of mister murdoch’s titles.
A: the wooing.

Peter Mandelson (A), Leveson Day 74 pm, Page 45 (Q=Robert Jay)

Q: okay well the last point you make if we go back to your statement at oh six nine oh six. this part of your statement {i mean} i’m sorry i just think that writing me a letter like that i mean it just showed such chutzpah [. . . ]
Q: mm well you’ve drawn it to out attention lord mandelson so it’s there.

Peter Mandelson (A), Leveson Day 74 pm, Page 52

LEV: it does raise sort of an interesting question about the nature of the relationship between proprietor and editor.

Peter Mandelson (A), Leveson Day 74 pm, Page 64 (Q=Robert Jay)

Q: do you think mister brown had an eye on the daily mail and mister dacre’s view in terms of (0.4) policies for which he was responsible?
A: hmm (0.4) as prime minister he was responsible in a sense for all policies. (0.3) i’m not sure. i- i- i- i mean the only thing i vaguely remember er (1.0) was (1.0) something to do with data protection. uhh er there was an issue to do with data protection. i’m sorry i didn’t research this and my memory is not great on it but there was a piece of legislation, i can’t remember which-
Q: we have looked into this lord mandelson.

Peter Mandelson (A), Leveson Day 74 pm, Page 65 (Q=Robert Jay)

A: well i mean the tone of the daily mail?
Q: no the tone of policy.
A: um sorry the tone? our tone of policy?
Q: yes your tone and rhetoric.

(B.80) Simon Hughes (A), Leveson Day 42 am, Page 18-9 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: may i ask you to deal with the suggestion that the increase
in er the- the sanction to embrace the possibility of a prison
sentence would have a chilling effect on journalism?
A: (1.5) yes. sorry. (. ) i come from a political tradition that
doesn’t like locking people up if you can deal with things
by other er er routes and i hold to that view.

(B.81) Simon Hughes (A), Leveson Day 42 am, Page 21 (Q=Robert Jay)
Q: may i ask whether there’s a typographical error in the
penultimate line in paragraph fourteen? (0.2) do you mean
two thousand and nine there?
A: err yes i do. (. ) i beg your pardon. (. ) i’m sorry.
Q: so you=
A: so you=called a debate in parliament.

(B.82) Tessa Jowell (A), Leveson Day 74 am, Page 13 (Q=David Barr)
Q: this document is a briefing note which was actually written
a little later in er early two thousand and two? a letter to
the prime minister=
A: =i’m sorry could you give me-
Q: tab thirty eight
A: oh tab thirty eight.

(B.83) Tessa Jowell (A), Leveson Day 74 am, Page 20 (Q=David Barr)
A: oh i don’t think that i have page five three seven.
LEV: it’s tab forty three.
A: oh! oh yes i do. (0.2) sorry.
Q: (1.5) it’s addressed to the prime minister and it’s referring
back to the meeting.

(B.84) Tessa Jowell (A), Leveson Day 74 am, Page 28 (Q=David Barr)
A: that is right. (0.2) well when er when the act recede its royal
assent in july of two thousand and two- er two thousand and
three. (. ) i’m sorry=
Q: =that in itself is a politically
controversial development right?

(B.85) Tessa Jowell (A), Leveson Day 74 am, Page 68
LEV: i’m not trying to inquire into your personal circumstances
you understand.
A: no no no this doesn’t take much er invitation for me to start
talking about this i’m afraid so do forgive me.
LEV: (1.5) but uhhh did you pursue anything through the ppc?
A: (1.0) hm i’m sure that this is such an inadequate answer but
really there is much of that that time that i (. ) simply can’t
remember.
(B.86) **Theresa May (A), Leveson Day 80 am, Page 32-3 (Q=Robert Jay)**

1 Q: so this was now being seen as part of a wider picture where other issues or press regulations might now come into play.
2 (.) is that right?
3 A: yes=may i just take you back er er mister jay to my previous answer because i now realise that there are two lord wall aces in the lords and this may in fact be a reference to lord wallace who was at the time a whip in the lord for home office matters. (0.5) so i apologise if i can’t clarify which of the two lord wallaces it was. [..]
4 Q: looking at the overall context but i’m not sure whether this point was being made specifically in the house of lords at this time but i’ll make it nonetheless.

(B.87) **Theresa May (A), Leveson Day 80 am, Page 82 (Q=Robert Jay)**

1 A: it is a difficult one to properly analyse- in your terms i should say to analyse properly (.). i do apologise. in this matter because obviously the media will pick it up. […]
2 Q: when you deal with this issue in your statement in particular in paragraph one four three you rightly refer to immigration and criminal justice policy.

(B.88) **Theresa May (A), Leveson Day 80 am, Page 89 (Q=Robert Jay)**

1 LEV: this wouldn’t be a specific regulatory structure of any sort […]
2 A: then in that case i apologise sir. i misunderstood mister jay’s question=
3 LEV: =no no no we’re testing it. or maybe i did too?

(B.89) **Tony Blair (A), Leveson Day 79 am, Page 23 (Q=Robert Jay)**

1 Q: then they say in the next paragraph, (0.2) the bbc is still the best=
2 A: =sorry you are on the guardian are you?
3 Q: i’m still on the guardian mister blair.
4 A: yeah.

(B.90) **Tony Blair (A), Leveson Day 79 am, Page 42-3 (Q=Robert Jay)**

1 Q: according to mr neil he this is gus fisher had strung up- sorry struck up a relationship with you?
2 A: mrs gus fisher?
3 ?? ((laughter))
4 Q: i think it’s- ((laughing)) i’im afraid i- i’im sorry i don’t recall that one but-
5 A: {which isn’t to say it didn’t happen!}
6 Q: no nothing {of that nature here!}
7 A: {which isn’t to say it didn’t happen!}
8 Q: no it’s mister fisher (.). mister blair.
9 Q: sorry?
10 A: it’s mister fisher mister blair.
Q: oh! i thought you said mrs fisher.

(B.91) **Vince Cable (A), Leveson Day 81 am, Page 51 (Q=Robert Jay)**
1 Q: but on other issues would that be a correct characterisation of lord oakeshott or not?
2 A: sorry? what would be correct?
3 Q: the most influential person?
4 A: umm no no i don’t think so.

(B.92) **Vince Cable (A), Leveson Day 81 am, Page 53 (Q=Robert Jay)**
1 Q: zero one six five eight now doctor cable apparently refers to a meeting with lord clement-jones described as the treasurer of the lib deems and the culture and media spokesman in the lords= 
2 A: =i’m sorry could you just er give me a second to catch up?
3 Q: i’m sorry
4 A: so the number was? what sorry?
5 Q: zero one six five eight.
6 A: (3.0) i have it thank you.

(B.93) **Vince Cable (A), Leveson Day 81 am, Page 71 (Q=Robert Jay)**
1 Q: but the decision you made did not um as it were (0.2) grate with your private view. (0.2) or did it?
2 A: it didn’t. (0.2) but (.) sorry at the risk of being boring and repetitive (.) i was conscious of the need to keep the two things separate.
3 Q: thank you.

(B.94) **Vince Cable (A), Leveson Day 81 am, Page 29 (Q=Robert Jay)**
1 Q: so you knew his [Frederic Michel’s – J.M.] name at the time. (0.4) did you know what his status was within the company?= 
2 A: =no i’m sorry! (0.2) i said at the time i didn’t (.)
3 register who mister frederic michel was. (0.3) i knew who james murdoch was.
4 Q: my apologies. (0.2) you did say that.
Appendix C: Transcripts of apologies in news interviews

Sources for audio/video in this appendix can be found in the title of each extract.

(C.1) **Peter, Lord Mandelson on The Andrew Marr Show – 8 March 2009**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FSo_dDdfyM

- AM: so that is a mistake. (0.3) and when people say actually it
  would be frank it would clear the air for the government to
  say SORry about that. it would be plain dealing=

- PM: but- but andrew (0.4) of course er it er lessons have
got to be learned but the lesson that’s got to be learned
(0.3) is that the entire finan- international financial system
was changing in a um er more quickly and in a more
far-reaching way=

- AM: =than was realised here=

- PM: =than our the
  regulatory system in every (. ) single (. ) country in the
  world recognised and kept pace with but {((unclear)) but
  but but (sighs)}

- AM: {but but when
  people say er can i just er interrupt you for a second?) but
when people say (. ) we’d like the government to say sorry,
{ {it’s NOT it’s not er}}

- PM: { {but this is exactly (sighs)}}

- AM: IT’S NOT THAT we want the government um (0.3) to say
  sorry on behalf of the international regulatory system but
just for those things that happened here! lots of people are
to blame including the government.

- PM: i know (0.4) but the way in which this sort of (. ) ((air
  quotes)) apology (0.2) story is being driven by your
political reporting staff .hhh makes out that you know this
is some sort of political story for which the government is
to blame. or this- this is some sort of national crisis.=

- AM: =but the
  government is partly to blame {surely lord mandelson?}

- PM: {let me let me} finish making
my point if i may. that this is some sort of national crisis
that- for which the government has to offer an apology.
if it were as simple as that, i think that we would be- i think that we would be
not focusing on the (laughing) right issues (laughing ends)
at the right level and i think that the government and the
prime minister himself have been absolutely right to say,
you know (. ) we should have gone further, the regulation
should have been tougher, we should have kept it up and
its pace of change er er should been kept up with the way
in which the international financial system was changing.
we have to learn lessons from that, we have to see what
went wrong and that is precisely why we are making the
proposals now and why we are leading the debate in the
g20 to make sure that these lessons are learned and to make
sure that we avoid any such crisis emerging in the future.

(C.2) Gordon Brown appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 31 May 2009 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tOJPsJtVTI

AM: do you regret not getting on top of this earlier though?

GB: well i:: proposed that kelly look at this a few months ago

{[i- i al]} so

AM: {[yeah]} yeah but this has been going on for many years-

GB: you remember that i went to the house of commons even

before the telegraph began to talk about it and i said we
should change the system. (0.2) now we’ve got the kelly
committee looking at it (0.2) these things were going to
be published er anyway. the key thing now is well it really
doesn’t matter how it happened because CLEAN it up (0.2)
CUT IT out (0.2) MAKE sure that you- er you open it up
for good and change the system in a way that public er the
public {has confidence.}

AM: {[and perhaps]} say sorry-

GB: -and i’ve said sorry because er be-=

AM: =well you’ve said sorry

on behalf of all the political parties which is a bit like me
saying sorry on behalf of sky news it’s er not appropriate

GB: well- well- well sorry but er um i feel that i have managed
my affairs personally with the utmost integrity er er i feel
that-

AM: but what about your party? that you le{ad?}

GB: {[i er]} i feel that where

people have made mistakes they’ve got to answer for them?
(.) hh and i feel as well that where punishment has got to be
meted out it will be meted out. (0.3) hh we’ve already had
two:: members of er our party been suspended (0.4) we’ve
also had er one er minister who has stepped down (0.2) and
i don’t think any other party in that position at the moment
where they’ve suspended people from their parliamentary
party and erm ah a sitting or shadow minister has had to
step down in er this way and THAT is what we have done
(C.3) Gordon Brown appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 27 September 2009
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuPP86EnVk8

AM: you would say that unemployment has peaked yet (0.4) and
the CBI talks about it peaking just under three million
GB: er (0.3) < i would say that< the rate of increase has been slowing (.). hh i mean the facts are very- very-
very clear but we’ve had to deal with the:: summer school leavers (.). we’ve had to deal with graduates and
college leavers leaving to try to get wo::rk (0.5) er but (.). every month about three hundred thousand people are
going back into work (0.4) er thi- this is the er most er
co-ordinated employment plan to deal with a recession that any government has done and i don’t apologise for the fact that that has meant that we’ve had to raise the
deficit to _pay_ for it because I DON’T WANT to return to a situation of the nineteen eighties where we had a generation of young people who were unemployed for years and we
had a culture of unemployment hhh that to some extent we are still having to deal with two thousand and nine (0.2) family after family child after father and then the
next generation unemployed because there was a culture of unemployment created that long recession and the long term (0.3) unemployment (.). we don’t cardboard cities (.)
we don’t want young people on the streets as a result of this (.). we want every young person to get back into work (0.4) and that’s why we’ve spent money to do:: so (.). < we are dealing with the recession in a completely different way< from what happened in the thirties and the eighties.
AM: mmm you used to _not_ to talk about cuts and you now talk about cuts. […]

(C.4) Gordon Brown appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 3 January 2010
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQNv4C5hdmk

AM: i: remember you very well during the thatcher years as an opposition politician (0.3) um (.). ferociously attacking the
then government for de-industrialisation. (0.2) .hhh and yet our manufacturing industries have shrunk (0.3) much (.). faster in the last ten years under new labour than they did under margaret thatcher?
GB: but that’s er not actually correct= one point nine percent
AM: average a year
GB: um yeah um but that’s quite incorrect (0.3) because um if you look at the balance between er the er (0.4) if you look at pharmaceuticals we are now clearly a world leader (0.3)
if- if you look at what we are doing on low carbon from
the electric car to renewables to wind power to all the new
small companies that are being formed {and (0.4) can i
just?-}

AM: {let me just
stop you} on that actually (0.2) ELECTRIC cars are being
you know er that’s er being dominated by japan and the
united {states} and
GB: {i’m sorry} i’m sorry
AM: we’re getting our wind farms from germany and we are
{{getting our nuclear power stations from france}}
GB: {{i’m (0.4) i’m sorry}} we are now the leading offshore
wind power. (0.3) did you know that? (0.5) we are now
.hhh developing in nissan () in honda (0.2) in toyota () in
er er jaguar () in er b m er er {w}
AM: {these’re} hardly british names prime
minister.
GB: i’m sorry but these are the companies based in britain
and are developing electric cars or proposing to dere- er
develop their hybrid cars in britain as a base for europe=
AM: =but their profits go home!
GB: ¨i’m sorry but i think er er their profits mean° er er that
there are jobs in britain and these are um successful car
companies that are working here. TALKING DOWN
britain andrew is not going to succeed because basically
there is huge talent in this country. […]

(C.5) Alistair Darling appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 21 March 2010
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXJOq3AY0gE
AD: […] and you know i er-
AM: the question i suppose is er is that enough of a contribution?
AD: well i er think you’ve got to remember that tax rates have
got to be competitive (0.2) people are more er mobile in
a word (,) er er in the world than they were in the past
and you’ve also got to make sure that whatever your tax
levels that they’ve got to be reasonable <<now i’ve made
it pretty clear<< that i thought (0.4) that putting the tax
rate up to fifty pence whilst we get through this period that
was justified but i’m ve::ry conscious of the fact that we’ve
gotta make sure that our tax rates are properly competitive
.hhhh it’s it’s all about. >>and sorry to keep coming back
to this?>> but it {matters} (.)
AM: {sure}
AD: if we are serious about getting a greater share of the jobs
in the future (0.2) you’ve got to make sure this country
is COMPetitive, you’ve got to make sure it’s got a robust
financial system, you’ve got to make sure that we’re doing
what we can to make sure our industries can tap into these
massive markets <<but we will not do it<< unless we
play our role, we stand behind (.) we help people .hhh and we help businesses. AM: well the reason that i ask about it (.) partly is that because peter mandelson, who would’ve agreed with every word you’ve said i’m sure? **also** says (0.4) AND taxes may have to go up again after the election? […]

(C.6) **David Miliband appearing on Sky New Sunday Live with Adam Boulton – 20 June 2010** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjFlmihAy8M

AB: but- but let’s be clear about this (0.4) the majority of the planned investment this government is letting go ahead (.) the majority of that- that particular package it is letting go ahead (0.3) what it’s saying is that under alistair darling’s budget (.) hh which you praised? (0.3) there were forty billion pounds worth of cuts which were unspecified (.) they won the election (0.4) they’ve now got the difficult task of clearing up your mess (0.2) haven’t they?

DM: well that’s simply not true i mean the cuts that alistair specified=

AB: =WELL he didn’t specify!

DM: well i’m sorry! (0.7) he pr- promised that we would half the deficit over the {course of the parlia-}

AB: {but he didn’t say HOW!}

DM: just a minute (0.3) he _did_ as a matter of fact (0.4) he said (.) for example (0.2) that we would halve the share of national income going to capital investment. (0.5) at the moment we spend about sixty billion on capital investment in the public sector, (0.2) he explained how {we were going to halve the share-}

AB: {THAT’S EXACTLY WHAY THEY’VE DONE AT FORGE MASTERS}

DM: no it’s not > no no no no no no> it’s-

AB: it’s just putting names to the {outline plans?}

DM: {no no i’m sorry} < i’m sorry you are re-(0.2)-ally not getting this < because the economic case that we’ve made is that unless you have a growth strategy you will never reduce the deficit because you end up boosting unemployment and cutting tax receipts (0.3) and what the tories are doing in the name- in the ridiculous argument that somehow britain is gonna become greece. (0.4) even thought we half half the debt of greece (.4) even though two thirds of our deficit is financed by domestic savings (0.3) even though .hh there’s a four(.).teen er ye::ar return on british bonds they are saying we are like greece when in fact the danger is that {((unclear))}

AB: {so you would do nothing?} you wouldn’t cut?

(C.7) **Chris Bryant on Afternoon Live, Sky News with Kay Burley – 9 September 2010** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RuG_94nZi8
CB: now er kay (0.3) you’ll remember that a few months ago
you and i er had a discussion on- on this channel and i
said that all of this was endemic in this industry and you
attacked me for saying that. (0.4) i hope you’re gonna
apologise now=

KB: =do you think gordon and sarah brow\{n\}

CB: you going to apologise now?=  

KB: =i’m certainly not going to

CB: apologise to you ((chuckles)) mister bry\{ant no::\}

KB: i don’t think our viewers are particularly interested in my
{
views on this subject\}

CB: {I THINK THEY ARE} they are interested because you
have pursued a particular version (0.4) of your own (.) on
what happened here and too many people i’m afraid, (0.2)
dismissed this whole story .hhh and that’s been one of the
problems. that too many people have been intimidated into
not running this story, too many people have dismissed it, i
have to say (0.3) on behalf- er (.) s:ky over the last couple
of weeks have been absolutely exemplary in this. (0.2) but
i think it’s time that you apologi:ed.

KB: okay if i could just hehe continue on with my questioning
if that’s ok? do you think gordon and sarah brown now
regret their close relationship with news international over
the years?

(C.8) Alex Salmond on Sky News Sunday Live with Adam Boulton – 12
December 2010 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nu2-zPQMmKc

AB: but (.) if you knew he was still gonna be alive more than
a year later? (0.3) presumably you wouldn’t have released
him.

AS: well heh when kenny made the the announcement as you
know last year he said (0.4) look (0.2) the three months is
a reasonable estimate under our law (.) under scots law
(0.5) he could die sooner (.) he could live longer. the one
immutable fact is that mister magrahi (0.3) he has terminal
prostate cancer (0.3) < that is absolutely a fact< there is
no-one who can {((unclear))}

AB: {but he’s also been at liberty with his
family for over a year} when (.) of course (.) many many
families (0.3) hundreds (.) of families lost their loved ones
in a er crime of which he has been convicted?

AS: yes: an- and you know our position has always been (.)
my personal position is (0.2) i’ve got every respect for the
grief and agony for the people caught up in the lockerbie er
tragedy (.) many of course in scotland many in the united
states many er across the world (0.4) but what i’ve always
said is (.) agree or disagree with our decision (0.2) we’ve
applied the tenets of scots law (.) we applied a judicial
decision and {{(unclear)}}

AB: {yes, but with hind)sight {{do you regret
it?}}

AS: {{ADAM WAIT
A MINUTE} } (0.5) adam we didn’t do it because anybody
was threatening us (.) we didn’t do it because anybody
was bribing us (0.3) we didn’t do it because of geopolitics
(0.2) we (.) applied (.) a decision (.) of scots law.

AB: but do you regret that he’s lived so long?

AS: i would never (0.4) ever say something like that (.) adam
and i think anybody who wishes death upon anybody (0.2)
i- i- would find that extremely difficult (0.4) it certainly
doesn’t come into my moral compass the one fact that is
absolutely certain is that mister al-magrahi has terminal
( ) prostate ( ) cancer of which he will die.

AB: alex salmond (0.3) thank you very much indeed for joining
this (0.2) sunday live.

(C.9) Douglas Alexander on Newsnight By-Election Special with Emily Maitlis
– 12 January 2011 http://bobnational.net/record/47397

EM: you were the campaign manager at the time when
phil woolas was putting this < potentially libellous
material,< (0.2) which has now gone through a court case,
((increase in pitch, incredulously)) ON HIS CAMPAIGN
LITERATURE. (0.3) what on earth were you thinking?!

DA: well (0.2) of course we regret what happened an’ phil
woolas has paid a very heavy price but my sense is (.)
this election isn’ going to be about what phil woolas did
last year it’s gonna be about what david cameron and nick
clegg are going to do this year. an’ my sense is that
there is bewilderment amongst liberal democrat voters and
great anxiety across the whole of this community about
the rise in v a t which they campaigned against an’ which
they’ve now delivered. against the trebling of tuition fees
which they signed pledges against but which they’re now
in the process of delivering. and on issues like law an’
order where we’ve seen only yesterday (.) the chief (.)
constable in manchester confirming fourteen hundred less
police offices on the streets!

EM: but is it about (0.3) ok you’ve said it’s a regret but is it
an apology? would you like to take this opportunity to
((pointing at audience of local people present)) apologise
to the people of oldham for what happened?!

DA: i deeply regret what happened {ed an’ as i say } phil

EM: {NO APOLOGY?}

DA: has paid a very heavy price=

EM: =and when he said today that he
thinks what happened to him < will actually help labour.<

DM: was it a great opportunity to charge students nine thousand pounds a year for their courses when you said you WOULD ABOLISH TUITION FEES?

SH: um no it wasn’t a great opportunity to do that (0.3) i am opposed to tuition fees (.) that is the party’s position bu::t (0.4) we didn’t win the election! .hhh and when you don’t win the election (0.3) on your own (.) < you can’t deliver all your commitments< (0.2) the tory party was committed to tuition fees as labour was. labour had twice broken its promise about tuition fees and i regret (0.4) that we couldn’t honour that manifesto commitment and the pledge > i regret that=>

DM: =BUT NOW YOU’RE SELLING TUITION FEES now you (0.3) personally are looking after greater access to universities an’- an’- i’ve seen the blogs seen the tweets you’ve been called a turncoat!


DM: what about um the um issue of previous government mistakes °which we’ve heard apologies from ed miliband about and of course°um ed balls was there making those mistakes (0.3) does he have to apologise about some of this? you’ve mentioned banks doing things which um you um say led to the economic collapse (.) under the rules that had been written partly by ed balls.

HH: well in fact around the world there was no financial services system (.) whatever (0.2) hh the method of regulation that was proof against the enormity of the global financial crisis but .hhh ed miliband has said and ed balls agrees that we should have done more on regulation (0.4) when we were in government. at a ti:::me (.) actually (.) when the conservatives were saying that we should get rid of regulation. (0.2) so i mean you obviously don’t do everything right when you are in government and and you have to::: learn lessons and one of those is that we should’ve regulated the banks more strongly. (0.3) but we wait to see what the commission the government have set up comes up with on that:::t.

DM: (0.2) are you heartened by the appointment of ed balls?

JN: will there be enough capacity available at- in the course of 
say the next twenty four hours (0.2) .hhhh for everybody 
that you think .hh wants to get out (.) and that will be 
presumably .hh pretty well everybody from tripoli to come 
home?

WH: yes (0.7) .hh and indeed that should have been the case 
yesterday morning and er i’m very sorry for those people 
who couldn’t get out er to those people who couldn’t 
get out yesterday (0.3) three planes were meant to go in 
yesterday morning and for a vari::ety of reasons which i 
found infuriating but nevertheless we have to deal with not 
one of those planes were able or- or willing to (.) er take 
off so that was the situation we had to deal with=

JN: =willing? willingness came into it did it?

(C.13) Ed Balls appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 19 June 2011 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2wA1qFlRfk

AM: um can i start by looking (0.3) er going back if i may to 
this whole question. (0.3) of whether you in particular 
labour in general have been ready enough to apologise for 
and to explain a period of overspending (0.4) in power 
(0.2) because last time we talked (0.3) you said um that 
there hadn’t been a structural deficit (0.3) >> just going 
back>> um the oecd the imf um >> all these international 
bodies >> say (0.2) oh yes there was!

EB: well we’ve had this conversation {many times and i’m 
going to say the same thing}

AM: {I KNOW but it seems it 
seems} to be central

EB: to you as i’ve said before the truth is that there was a 
global financial crisis (0.4) hh because of a failure of 
banking regulation and i’ve apologised for that. (0.2) BUT 
lehmans in new york didn’t go bankrupt because of 
excessive spending in britain on the nhs (.) {and in the run 
up} to the crisis

AM: {su::re}

EB: we had er er we had lower national debt than hh am-
america france germany and japan and we had moved 
the budget deficit >> excluding investment >> back into 
structural surplus so we had achieved that (.) what i said to 
{you a few months ago was exactly right}

AM: {but (0.2) but let’s .hh} tony blair (0.3) alistair darling 
(0.3) many many other commentators said er actually do 
you know what in the late nineties we were spending too 
much {the civil servants} said

EB: {the late nineties?}

AM: er er the er sorry two thousand and seven (0.4) um civil 
servants said we were spending too much, we weren’t 
getting value er complete value for money, and we had to
start bringing that spending down. (0.3) an’ it does seem
to a lot people that you’re the about the only person saying
(0.3) no.

EB: well look i er actually think that’s complete nonsense what
you’ve just said (0.2) er um the er two thousand and seven
spending review was a tough review it slowed DOWN the
pace of spending and er at that time (. ) david cameron sai::d
that this is a tough spending round and george osborne said
we’ll match those (. ) spending plans (0.3) it was never part
of the debate that our spending was too hi::gh or that our
borrowing was too hi::gh because we had low borrowing
and low national debt (0.3) {with a glo-}

AM: with hind(}sight?

EB: ((exasperated)) but we then had a global financial crisis!
look (0.3) there’s two different things which are said to me,
(0.3) there are some people who um er um (0.3) who tend
to be conservative commentators say you’ve got to admit
you spent too much or you’ll never be trusted again (0.2)
there’s others who sa::y (0.2) you’ve got to defend << your
record mo::re << and say you didn’t spend too much and we
actually achieved great things= {but

AM: HANG ON ANDREW-

EB: but tony blair is hardly a conservative commentator he
say’s that (. ) mervyn king bank of england is hardly
a conservative commentator (0.2) he says that. alistair
darling’s not!

EB: at no point at no point did tony blair ever say (0.4) we
should reduce the deficit by cutting spending (. ) that was
not part of the debate at all in that period and david cameron
and george osborne backed our claims BUT THE FACT is
andrew i could deFEND the past or i could attack the past
{but the public care}

AM: {sure they’re all using hindsight we don’t deny
that}

EB: what the public care about is what is happening now and in
the future. […]

(C.14)  Ed Balls on The Daily Politics with Andrew Neil – 26 September 2011
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrNhKc7GXiY

AN: NOW it was said by some commentators that PIGS
WOULD FLY:. before ed balls would apologi:se? and
today (. ) a hu::ge pig has appeared over battersea power
station (0.3) courtesy of pink floyd, and you’ve apologised.

EB: we (. ) got the regulation of the banks wrong (0.3) .hh and
for the part i played in that (. ) i’m sorry. it caused (. ) the
global financial crisis .hh it was a mistake made around the
world but we played our pa::rt. (0.2) but i think (0.2) part of
politics and life is to have the strength to say when you get things wrong, you say that and you move on: and people have got to see that labour has learned from some things we got wrong, hhhh and listen to what we say needs to be done for the future and that’s our task to win that argument.

but- but for clarity’s sake (.) you are not apologising for spending too much in the good years, you’re not apologising for not putting enough AWAY in the good years to face the bad years?

look andrew you know that we paid down our debts and had lower debts than america f-france germany and japan! there’s people who want to say (0.5) < that was not enough< but i don’t think that’s right. i actually think- look when it came to the national health service (.) we raised the national insurance tax rate! because it was a tough choice that needed to be done. the charge that it was too much spending that caused the crisis look i think i said in the hall today i don’t accept that=

=so you don’t think you should’ve (.) as a good keynesian, (0.2) run some budget surpluses in the good years? you’re not apologising for not doing that?

well you’ll remember we did!

well you never ran a surp- you ran a deficit every year.

no (.) no (.). nineteen ninety nine two thousand we ran a surplus=

=OH THAT WAS because of the money you took from the three g sale!

yeah but even without AND which we all used to repay {the national debt} which you know is exactly that point

{(unclear)} but let’s just come on- you say you were great on this debt, but the fact is by (.) the::: time of (.) the::: crash in two thousand and eight you were borrowing as a percentage of g-gdp as much as you’d inherited in nineteen ninety seven AND you had taken two hundred billion off budget and put it into pfi off-budget financing. (.) so you were borrowing a lot. but my point is not to argue with you but it’s to establish (0.2) you are not apologising for that?

we er pfi was on budget er almost entirely relying by the time that we got to um that stage before the financial crisis.

and we went into um that crisis with a lower national debt than we inherited (.) than other countries but yes (0.3) the deficit went up a lot in britain because our tax revenues from the city and elsewhere fell so much. (0.2) look (.) i’m not gonna apologise for public spending (.) in the entirety, but of course there were some public decisions er er erm some public spending decisions which weren’t wise and i admitted that today and said that. but i think it’s important to be clear what you got right and what you got wrong and in retrospect (.). hh if we had known:: (0.3) that a crisis
w-was coming we’d have acted earlier BUT it would have been the banks we’d have acted on.

AN: you apolo- you attacked the tories for spending two billion (.) that’s your figure (.) on nhs reform. (0.4) would you like to apologise for spending twelve billion on an i.t system for the nhs that doesn’t work?

EB: i think um i think er rather a good point that you can make is that we kept reorganising primary care trusts and that was pretty expensive as well (0.2) {i er}

AN: {you spent} twelve billion on an i.t system that still doesn’t work.

EB: the history of british governments- er that one, the horizon project we inherited (¿0 is often that governments have go i.t projects wrong. (0.2) i don’t know the details of that but it was clearly a mistake um er um i’m not sure exactly who made the decisions, it er clearly didn’t work! ((chuckles))

AN: heheh i think we can agree on that!

EB: ((smiling)) ye:::ah we can agree on that.

David Cameron appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 2 October 2011
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CScsKDPtUaE

DC: good morning

AM: um you’re apologising to women!

DC: yes i mean .hhhhhh i er obviously said some things in the house of commons that er just CAME OUT WRONG and er caused the wrong impression and de- er i deeply regret and i was asked about it in an interview with the sunday times and i just said what i think.

AM: so you’re a new man (0.3) really?! women can relax? you’re not patronising >> you’re not old fashioned>> you’re new (0.3) you’re modern?

DC: er well i mean this er not an excuse (.) it’s an explanation. but the house of commons (. prime minister’s questions is very:: (0.6) aggressive (. very:: confrontational (0.2) that’s what prime minister’s questions is like and i don’t think you can change it actually but um as a result sometimes it er just er it sounds terrible and er so i apologise for that buh that’s not what i’m like that’s not who i am but i wanted to ummm try and put that right ((sharp intake of breath)) but i recognise that er you know (0.3) must do better

AM: right and er um what some of the policies towards women? (0.3) things li:ke (. er there’s been an argument about women’s pensions:: and there are all sorts of issu::es on child benefit and so on. (0.5) um are you conscious that perhaps women voters are not quite as supportive of the coalition as others?

DC: well i er think there’s a deeper underlying issue here that er which is that you know britain faces a very difficult ti:::me
David Cameron appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 2 October 2011
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-gWLDbb0Us

AM: d’you need to reengineer a growth strategy? (0.3) bring it forward a bit?
DC: well we need to do everything we can: (0.2) to (0.2) you know set the fires under the the engines of (0.2) er se-se-se-sorry that’s a bad metaphor let me try again ((laughs))
>>we need to do everything we can to fire up the engine of the british economy NOW {andrew tyrie’s got lots of-}
AM: {SO A step-change so a step} change?

George Osborne appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 27 November 2011 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJ0xtI-HWIg

AM: you’re having as a government an argument with the trade union leaders but er do you (0.3) personally have sympathy with (0.3) um those um really quite poorly paid public sector workers who are going to have to be paying mo::re and working longer for a much poorer pension in some cases?
GO: well er i’m sorry ed balls was er on this chair a few minutes ago saying that people >>earning under fifteen thousand are having to pay more>> we’ve explicitly excluded people on very low salaries from paying more contributions for their pensions (0.4) y’know I:: THINK what’s on offer is a good {deal}
AM: are you sympathetic to these public sector workers who are angry or not?
GO: lo- er look what i am trying to “do is give them a good decent pension” for many many years to come (0.3) much better than you could get if you were in the private sector
these days. (0.3) we got the last labour pensions secretary
(0.2) lord hutton to come in to do a report for us? (0.3)
we’re using that report as the basis for a deal that is fair to
the taxpayer but also fair to the public sector that will get in
many cases a bigger s- er pension than they’ve had before,

AM: right

(C.18) Boris Johnson appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 18 December 2011

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k98KoKPbdQ4

1 AM: well FRANKLY i would cycle more except it seems to me
too dangerous a thing to do all the time (0.3) particularly
{for someone} as incompetent as me
2 BJ: {er well i- i-} well you know i have to be aware of that
and i am (.) and although i- i- er cycle everywhere and and
have absolutely no- no- no qualms or fears about it (0.3) i
have to accept .hhh that there are millions of people who
are apprehensive (0.4) so we’re gonna do a lot more
training we’re putting in cycle (.) super highways a::nd er
we want also to educate motorists >>about the necessity
of {sharing space} >>

AM: {because you’ve also}

12 BJ: BUT but the kicker the kicker IS cyclists have got to obey
(0.2) the laws (0.2) of the (0.2) road (0.3) if cyclists are
going- if we are going to have an increase of cycling of
the order (.) of the kind we want to see: (0.3) in er (0.4)
in london then th:ere’s got to be a reciprocal courtesy by
cyclists (0.3) they must not cycle on the pavement (.) they
must not jump re- red lights (.) they must not break the law.
0.5 sorry to sound preachy about it but {((unclear))}

19 AM: {sure

be}cause you’ve also er (0.5) raised fares on public
transport buses an- and tubes and so on so presumably er
um this is er part of your answer (0.4) people have to cycle
and walk more?

(C.19) David Cameron appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 8 January 2012

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hau9-P7MuXs

1 AM: alright. (0.5) one final point (0.3) um um you um er ed
balls is not your favourite labour politician .hh er you said
er it was like being confronted by somebody with tourette
syndrome (0.3) a mistaken choice of words?

4 DC: er i- i- er <i was speaking off the cuff< and if i er offended
anyone of course er i’m ex- very sorry “about that it wasn’t
my intention at all” but er I THINK it’s probably a lesson
for me that in the commons i have to try and tune out
the noise that’s coming and just concentrate on trying
to answer the question (0.3) ((smiling)) but i’m sure as
meryl streep when she came to the house of commons and
watched question time she probably saw that it can be .hh
challenging by moments =
a bit wild. alright a busy year
ahead prime minister (0.2) thank you very much indeed for
joining us.

David Lidington appearing on the Sunday Politics – 27 January 2012, AN
Andrew Neil http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-19863895

AN: NOW less than two years ago (0.2) junior tories in the
government including your own parliamentary secretary
had to resign because they voted for a referendum (0.4)
what changed?
DL: what that debate (.) and that vote were about in er er i think
october twenty eleven was over whether < there should er
be a referendum < um when the future of (0.3) europe was
very (.) far from clear. what the prime minister is talking
about: is having a referendum in the uk to settle matters to
get the consent of the british people at the end of a process
of negotiation and reform (0.2) hh it’s er two completely
different questions.
AN: we::ll is it really? in two thousand and eleven you’re
right that’s the year (0.2) you said er when i go round
the constituency at political and non-political events (0.3)
this is last thing on their minds A REFERendum you said
they’re more huh concerned about JOBS (0.4) i ask you
again what’s changed?
DL: it’s still the case whether you look anecdotally in my
constituency or at the opinion polls that europe ranks
below issues like jobs and the economy {what er what has
changed}
AN: {er i understand
that but} these people were fired because they wanted
a referendum (0.2) and now you’re giving them a
referendum.
DL: two things (0.4) have now changed (0.2) .hh critically i
think we do now have greater clarity about the direction in
which europe is heading (0.3) at the end of twenty eleven
when that parliamentary debate took place (0.3) there was
considerable doubt even around the continent of europe
as (.) to (.) what would happen with the eurozone. (0.3)
WERE they going to stand behind their currency and press
for greater integration or not (.) what’s clearer now is that
there is that political will amongst our colleagues in the
eurozone they’re going to need further integration (.) that
has consequences for the euro INS and the euro OUTS
(0.2) that requires a negotiation to get that right and get that
settled. i think it’s underlining then to say to the british
people at the end of that process look YOU have the final
say:: (0.3) then then put it to the people to decide.
AN: sure (0.2) do you owe your former private secretary an
apology?

DL: n-no ADAM and i:: have always got on both before he
resigned and {{(unclear)}}

AN: {SO DO YOU OWE HIM AN APOLO}GY

NOW?

DL: i don’t think it’s a matter of apology! {{[i think-]}}

AN: {{[he lost his job]}}

for being in the same position as you’re now

DL: the debates that took place in twenty eleven was over a
different matter (0.2) it was over having a referendum

AT THAT time there was absolutely no certainty (0.2)
we’re talking now about having a referendum in the NEXT
parliament at a stage wh- after a negotation has taken place.


www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYDQ7k7EJd8

AM: do you regret the serial leaking (0.4) of aspects of this
budget?

DA: well what i’d say is that you know (.) in a in a in a coalition
government (.) there is going to be debate (0.3) publicly (.)
about er the nature of some of the measures (.) and er you
know we were err as Liberal Democrats very explicit about
the priority that we attached to going further and faster on-
on the income tax cuts for people on low and er middle
incomes (0.4) but of course i’m disappointed that so much
detail was- was- was err leaked {in advance}

AM: — {BECAUSE
your part}y was blamed for that and it was even said that
george osborne had to: ask (0.2) liberal democrat aides to
leave the room during key parts of the budget discussion >
because he assumed they were going to go straight to the
papers and leak them>

DA: well: i’ve no idea where, where these things er er {where
these things}

AM: {that’s
not true?}

DA: i’ve er no er er idea where these things came from. Most of
the discussions actually {were (.) in that quote you refered
to}

AM: {so that’s not true?}

DA: it it er is er it was amongst the four of us plus one treasury
official so that just isn’t true.

AM: so it was not true?

DA: > so that just isn’t true> what i’d what i’d say also is
in the end that (0.3) you know (.) this country was very
poorly served over the past thirteen years by a previous
government that obsessed every day about what was in the
headlines and didn’t think about what was doing what was
right for this country and what i’d say is (.) you know (.)
we’ve spent our time thinking about what is right for this
country and that’s what we delivered in this budget and
that’s what will stand the test of time.

(C.22)  Mike Penning appearing on Newsnight with Jeremy Paxman – 28 March 2012
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-17546287

JP: are people supposed to have petrol in jerry cans in the
garages they may or may not have?
MP: no. cos jerry- you can’t store that amount of petrol or
{die}sel. it was a mistake
JP: {SO-}
MP: it was a mistake by the cabinet minister (. > he didn’t
understand the size of a jerry can> (0.2) he’s apologised
since (. but actually what we are trying to do is get a
common sense approach .hh if the strike goes ahead we
will have shortage, so let’s make sure people understand
that as we go forward.
JP: but there isn’t a strike as things stand.

(C.23)  Jack Straw in a pre-arranged doorstep interview for ITN – 18 April 2012

IE: mister straw (0.3) what is your reaction to the claims of
rendition brought against you by mister belhadj?
JS: i’m sorry that i (0.4) can’t say more about this case (. but
with a (0.3) police investigation pending (0.5) and er this
intended (0.3) civil legal action (0.3) i’m sorry that’s it not
appropriate for me to say any more about it.
IE: can you say how you feel (. about this action being
brought against you personally?
JS: well (0.8) i- i- have no particular feelings (. er about this
ummm they are entitled to bring the action (0.6) er and it
will be dealt with in due course.
IE: mister belhadj has er accused you of being complicit in his
torture? (0.5) that’s quite a strong allegation.=
JS: =well as- as i
say:: um whilst i would like to say more (. i’m sorry that i
can’t as it would not be appropriate to do so.
[Interview ends]

(C.24)  Danny Alexander on BBC Breakfast withh Charlie Stayt – 4 May 2012
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJv1lqk-joc

DA: [...] but nevertheless er it is (0.2) er very disappointing
to see so many losses and er particularly so many (. hard-working councillors who have lost their seats.
CS: are you apologising to those (. very hard-working lib dem
councillors and people our there who have been walking
the streets tryna get votes? ARE YOU APOLOGISING
to them because er essentially what people are saying is
it’s your fault, (0.2) you and your colleagues that sit in the
collection have caused the problem.
DA: well uh what i’d say is (0.3) < is that we are in one of the most difficult economic periods of er in our country’s history n that we have a big job to do cleaning up the mess that labour made of the er economy and trying to do so with fairness as liberal democrats in the coalition government we are making a real difference. for EXAMPLE lifting the income tax threshold giving tax CUTS to millions of er hard-working people on low and middle incomes. we are making a difference bu’ of course as er la- labour found in their first few years when they lost two thousand council seats (0.4) this is er to par- parties of er in government and that doesn’t er make it any harder (0.2) er easier to take the losses particularly in places where liberal democrats have done such a good job of er running the- the- the- local authority but i think it is you er a- a- along the lines of what- what you would expect at this time in a term in office. particularly given the very difficult natures of the decisions which we have to make to get this country back on the right track.

CS: let’s move on mister alexander […]


AM: […] i just want to be clear about thi::s () w- w- so what are your feelings what are the government’s feelings abou::t- (0.4) you know it is a PRETTY VAST mistake (0.3) for a company to be so: far out on the number of people it promises that it’s going to bring as trained security staff to an event like this. (0.5) umm are they ever going to get a contract again from this government? are you angry with them? do you think you’ve been lied to? what’s your reaction?

JH: well i don’t think this is a moment for getting into the blame game (0.3) actually g4s have been quite honourable () they put their hands up (0.2) nick buckles the chief executive has said you know they got it wrong () they’ve apologised () they’re going to cover all the costs () he’s apologised to .hh (0.4) the troops who are going to have to be drafted in at the last moment and i- i- i think this is a moment for pulling together and it- it- it is an amazing project […]

(C.26) Vince Cable on Newsnight with Jeremy Paxman 19 September 2012 http://bobnational.net/record/147462

JP: er so: vince! (0.3) why’s it take two years for you to get round to apologise for this?

VC: oh nick (0.4) we have apologised before but to be frank people were so angry (0.5) before that they weren’t listening () i think now they are listening. (0.3) i think another reason for the timing is nick wants to be make
it absolutely clearly that there’s a distinction between the
pledge which was wrong and which we’ve apologised for
and the policy which we are now operating which we don’t
apologise for and (0.3) hhh is actually in many ways an
improvement and which is now in operation.

JP: and er you:: (0.4) also want to apologise do you? for what
you said and did before the election? {when you were
asking for people’s votes}

VC: {YES (0.3) we-
we are collectively responsible for: } we all participated in
the=

JP: =so it’s not just nick clegg? IT’S THE WHOLE the whole-
the whole parliamentary party wants to apologise?

VC: err yes it is (0.6) er he’s said it as party leader but i share
the responsibility and i don’t shirk from that.

JP: THE ODD THING IS THAT YOU WERE WA::RNED
BEFORE THE ELECTION that the policy was
unaffordable by danny alexander? weren’t you?

VC: in- indeed and that’s why the apology is justified=

JP: =yet you chose to make a commitment in the manifesto that
it was affordable!

VC: well there’s a distinction between the manifesto and the
pledge and the manifesto (0.3) eighty per cent of which
we carried into the coalition agreement but we knew when
we joined the coalition that we would have to compromise
on that THE PLEDGE WAS DIFFERENT hhh and that’s
what nick pledge- er nick clegg is referring to.

youtube.com/watch?v=kYup8T8RI6Y

AM: as i said (0.5) most unusual umm to- to make it and then
release it in the way that you did. was there a sort of light
(0.2) bulb moment when you thought i have to do this?

NC: no (.) actually for quite some time i’ve been wanting to say
that because ummm (0.9) well it’s no secret (0.4) i mean
it’s it’s as i said (.) i think what we did was a mistake (0.2)
i think it was wrong (.) and ummm errr i’ve been meaning
for some time to (0.4) kind of put my hands up and say we
made a mistake errrr we’ve also done lots of good things
which i felt were being obscured by that (0.3) and so i just
wanted to:: kind of make the apology in a simple (.) direct
hhh way which (.) as you say (.) of course gets mocked and
sneered in a way in- in (0.3) frankly in many respects (.) in
um quite er er amusing ways musical and otherwise hhh and
i think the er kind of westminster village is always quite er
sort of cynical about these things (0.4) my hope is that there
are some (.) not all (.) of course hh some er people will say
> oh well it’s not going to make any difference > (0.2) i
hope some people will recognise that in politics (.) as in
life (0.5) .hhh it’s sometimes just the right thing to do to say (0.4) we made a mistake to er {to say sorry}

NC: to er admit it (0.2) and we won’t do it again.

AM: because (0.3) the people who are still angry will say ((clears throat)) the problem was (0.4) this was an entirely deliberate and rather cynical attempt to get the votes of students in places like (0.4) your constituents (0.3) cambridge and others and you can say sorry (0.3) but they gave you their votes < you know er on a- on a false prospectus and you know you can’t give them their votes back again!

NC: well (0.2) let’s be clear! um (0.3) we:: campaigned at the last general election on a manifesto:: which was based on what we would do if we were (0.6) running the government and i was prime minister. (0.5) okay? what i’m apologising for is something slightly different (.) but quite importantly different which is that we:: we signed a pledge which said (.) that we would vote against tuition fees under any circumstances > under any circumstances {and clearly> }

AM: {we can see it in} a second yeah

NC: but if but if i can just stress the point (.) i lead a party which has eight per cent of mps in the house of commons. (0.3) that’s just a political fact i’d like to be prime minister (.) i would like us to have won the general election (0.3) we didn’t (0.3) we came thi::rd we in fact lost a number of mps (0.2) so what i {what i-}

AM: {but you knew} it was unlikely that you were going to become prime minister (.) > if I can say so> and (.) furthermore (0.2) when you held that pledge up< you were promising that you would not vote in a particular way (0.4) and then you did (0.3) when you see that pledge again (.) do you cringe? do you think (.) that that was just a terrible terrible moment (0.2) for me?

NC: well forgive me i’m just going to repeat myself (.) i think it was a mistake i think it was wrong and for that (0.4) i think it was right that i should apologise.

AM: .hhh umm AND to to to those people who voted for you and say (.) i can never vote liberal democrat again i’m so: (0.5) i feel so betrayed (0.3) what do you say to them?

NC: (0.5) hhh well i guess- (0.4) you know i guess i’d ask them > particularly those who say> (0.3) oh that’s why i’m going to put all my faith in the labour party (.) have they heard ed balls? apologise for him going on a .hhh (0.3) prawn cocktail charm offensive in the city of london? to let the banks off the hook which got us into this trouble in the first place? (0.2) > have you ever heard the labour party really apologise for dragging us into what i consider to be an unjust and illegal war in iraq?> i know what i’m doing
is unusual i wanted to do it for some time because i just
in plain (.) simple (.) human terms think that we made a
mistake it was wrong and i should apologise and (0.4) you
know i’m waiting still for some apologies of some pretty
big things (.) from the labour party as well.

AM: mkay let’s mo::ve on to: um what is clearly (.) your main
theme at this conference (0.3) fairer taxes for hard times.

[...]

(C.28) Danny Alexander on the Sunday Politics with Andrew Neil – 23
September 2012 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-19863895

AN: mister alexander (0.2) WHAT DID YOU TELL HIM and
how did he respond?
DA: well well well er i’m i’m coming to that what what i’m
saying is:: we were clear that this was an expensive
pledge that it would be difficult to er er afford under the
financial circumstances that we faced as a country but as
a democratic party where er er our party conference (0.3)
our elected policy committee and so on have a big role in
shaping our manifesto? we decided and i:: was part of this
decision er i was the chair of our manifesto group to include
that policy in our manifesto and i agreed to sign up to that
pledge. {((unclear))}

AN: {{{(exasperated)}} WHAT DID YOU TELL HIM AND HOW DID HE RESPOND MISTER
ALEXANDER?} you’re filibustering here (0.3) what did
you tell him and how did he respond?
DA: i don’t i don’t remember the details of the conversation
that took place- took place quite a few years ago but what
i’m saying to you is (0.5) it was clear that this was a very
expensive policy that er given the financial circumstances
facing the country it would be difficult to er afford and
er that’s er why we took the approach we did in our
manifesto of phasing it in over a number of years. but
nonetheless under the current financial circumstances it
wasn’t affordable (0.4) we made a pledge that we couldn’t
keep an’ we shouldn’t have done that an’ that’s why nick
has apologised for it.

AN: final question mister alexander. (0.3) you signed the nus
pledge (0.3) didn’t you? (0.4) was that before or after you
warned mister clegg it was unaffordable?
DA: er i did (0.3) every liberal democrat mp er er signed that
pledge it’s something i er regret i’m sorry for er i wish i
hadn’t done because it wasn’t somethi- it wasn’t a promise
that we could keep
AN: had you already told mister clegg it was unaffordable when
you signed it?
DA: oh (.) i signed it during the er election campaign. (0.3)
the discussions that you’re er referring to took place way
before the election campaign but having er as a party to er
include this in our manifesto i er followed through on that
in the way that er every other liberal democrat mp did with
all the er consequences that we know about.

AN: al::right mister alexander we’ll er let you get back to the
conference in brighton. (0.3) thank you er for joining us.

(C.29) Ed Balls on the Today Programme with Evan Davis – 01 October 2012
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00z6fbm

ED: […] i know you don’t want to apologise for the record
of the previous government on the economy (0.4) but
you haven’t even appreciated the legacy that this:: (0.3)
government had to pick up. could you do- would you like
to do that now? appreciate what difficult d- decisions that
they had to make when they came in?

EB: well the first thing is (0.3) i’m proud (0.3) that we made the
bank independent (.). we didn’t join the single currency and
we had the biggest rise in nhs investment that we’ve even
seen {and we introduced a national minimum wage}

ED: {but there you go again!} you’re not appreciating the
difficulties (0.2) they had a choice didn’t they? plunging
the economy into recession by cut- cutting the deficit or
borrowing ten per cent of national income for two or three
years?

EB: but but evan you’re asking me long questions which
have within them assumptions and i’m challenging your
assumptions (.). but i’ll answer your question (0.4)
i’m proud of what the labour government did (0.3) i
APOLOGISED a year ago for the fact that we didn’t
regulate the banks in a tough enough way (.). i don’t
think for a second that it was labour public spending which
caused the global financial crisis. (0.2) of course we had
to get the deficit down and that would’ve meant tough
decisions from a labour government too but there was a
big economic choice to be made (0.6). hh and there was
a big learning of lessons from history to be done in twenty
ten and i’m afraid two years on (.). it is clear david cameron
and george osborne- george osborne is a historian (0.2)
he should understand his history! but that is why we are
paying such a big price in the short term and the long term
for this government’s failure. and i think there’s many
liberal democrats who would agree with that!

ED: i’m sure some will! (.). some won’t. (0.6) when you
took office in ninety seven (.). the government’s debt was
forty per cent of national income. (0.5) when you left
office it was fifty per cent of national income, now it’s
seventy two percent of national income (0.3) it’s gone up
very very substantially. what proportion of that rise in
the national debt do you think you can you put down to
coalition policy as opposed to kind of the- the inevitability that they inherited?

EB: well {look i er-}

ED: {FIFTY TWO TO} seventy two per cent

EB: well l-l- let’s unpack the facts. (0.3) when BEFORE the global financial crisis before the cr- crisis in two thousand and seven er the level of national debt in our economy had gone down from what we inherited from the conservatives-

ED: AND THEN IT WENT BOUNCING BACK UP

EB: why don’t you let me finish the question once and-

ED: because you are constantly going back to before and i’m trying to get you to appreciate the difficulty they faced AFTER the crisis.

EB: evan you are an intelligent ma::n and “your questions have assumptions in them which i’m challenging”but the fact is we had lower debt than america france germany and japan (0.3) and italy because of decisions we made to repay national debt during this period. (0.4) there was then a global financial crisis (.) the national debt went up in .hh all of those countries! it went up everywhere because of the global financial crisis .hhh it happened in britain and of course because our financial services industry was important (.) we were hit by that n we’ve now got to get that down (0.4) < do i think that the labour party or public spending caused national debt rising on that scale? in france germany japan italy? (0.3)< I DON’T! or in america either. but di- were we part of a global failure of regulation? yes (0.2) we were (0.2) and i’ve apologised for that.

ED: alright we’re not gonna er i think get further on that-

EB: WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY?

ED: no no no i don’t want you to say anything else [. . .]

David Cameron appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 7 October 2012
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsLI2IZBplk

1 AM: let me ask you about er jeremy hunt (. ) who’s raised the question of a (. ) radical (0.3) cut er in um {the time limit for abortion.}

4 DC: {we:ll to be fair to him (0.2) he hasn’t actually} raised the issue. he was asked a question because he previously voted for a 12 week limit and hh he said he stuck with that view.

8 AM: right.

9 DC: this this is an issue {wh-}

10 AM: {my} my question {was-}

11 DC: {yes ( . )} sorry ask the question first! {sorry i got a bit lively.}

13 AM: {my question to you is} (0.4) would you welcome a fresh vote in the house of commons on this issue? > you’ve made it clear that would be a free vote>
(C.31) Chris Grayling on Sky News Sunday Live with Dermot Murnaghan – 14 October 2012 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8ZZcimlRo4

DM: another issue that you are no doubt watching er very closely given your brief must er be the the spat (. ) the on-going spat between the < police and your chief whip there< er er andrew mitchell (0.3) we know err the government doesn’t think he should resign (0.4) buh the Police Federation are saying he should go. (0.3) isn’t this damaging both your party and relations with the police?

CG: well it is clearly very unfortunate and what happened in the first place with andrew in downing street was very unfortunate (. ) his conduct was unacceptable an’ he has accepted that (. ) he’s apologised and i think really the matter should be left there. he’s issued a full (0.2) public apology (. ) he’s apologised in person to the police officers concerned (0.2) er er I think it is a mistake for the police federation to be trying to use this (0.5) in the way that they are umm i think frankly (0.3) we need to get on with sorting out (0.5) issues and challenges in relation to policing (. ) having constructive dialogue with the police federation in relation to policing (0.3) our police do a wonderful job for us around the country and er er we- we need to make sure that we er give them every support we can to carry on doing that job.

(C.32) Douglas Alexander appearing on the Andrew Marr Show – 18 November 2012 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFBTKQK6JA0

AM: okay um let’s er er turn to a er change in tone (. ) i think it’s fair to say (. ) from ed miliband in an interview er today in the sunday telegraph (0.4) when he says the euro-sceptics were right about quite a few things (0.2) and i- i- just wonder if this is the moment for people like yourself > for the labour party> to sort of formally apologise for all those years in which you regarded or you portrayed all euro-sceptics as sort of swivel-eyed (0.3) kind of dandruff-flecked lunatics?

DA: no listen (0.4) i think you’re reflecting the views of the headline writer rather than of the leader of the labour party (. ) .hhh the truth is we’re very proud of britain’s role in europe over recent decades and the fact that we’ve seen peace and prosperity in a continent that was divided by war twice in the twentieth century. (0.3) but it doesn’t help the pro-european case to suggest that the status quo doesn’t need change. (0.2) < change is coming to Europe< and that’s why we will remain a pro-european (. ) pro-reform
Mary Creagh appearing on The Sunday Politics with Andrew Neil – 10 February 2013
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMs6cfvk55M

AN: in a moment we’ll speak to the environment secretary, Owen Patterson about all that but first I’m joined from Westminster by his shadow, Labour’s Mary Creagh. (0.5) Mary Creagh you’ve been scathing in your attacks on the government for not doing enough but it turns out Labour stopped testing for horsemeat in two thousand and three (0.3) would you like to apologise for that?

MC: (0.4) Well um food standards authority tests for the presence of adulteration on the basis of intelligence and the last tests was done in two thousand and three and since then there has as far as I’m aware there hasn’t been any intelligence that there’s been horsemeat that’s been passed off as beef but that what we do know is that it was found in Ireland in the last four weeks and the question for the environment secretary is why hasn’t he ordered widespread tests on the ten million beef burgers that have already been withdrawn?

AN: But the question too is why over seven years did you not just do some random tests (0.3) why wait on intelligence the intelligence may not reach?

MC: Well the food standards agency is there to protect human health for the most part {so (unclear)}

AN: Health for the most part {so are government ministers!}

MC: Er it does a lot of tests of local kebab shops chicken shops they are the areas of highest risk where ecoli and campylobacter can get out into the food chain and cause serious adverse effects er um on people um massive food poisoning er seventy thousand people I think um {last year}

AN: {we understand} all that you stopped the test you also stopped the inspection of meat cutting plants in two thousand AND SIX (0.4) would you like to apologise for that?

MC: Well er um (0.7) I think let’s keep it focussed on where we are now the government has merged the meat hygiene inspection service in with the food standards agency and has cut the budget by twelve million pounds for a four year period that is what is going on now the government also had its industry summit yesterday and failed to invite in representatives from the big caterers that supply schools and hospitals so now tests are being carried out on burgers that are sitting in hospital and school freezers where children and patients cannot make a choice about the food that they eat
so let’s keep it focussed on the present {there’s no point ((unclear))} and

AN: {well let's keep}

it} (0.3) that’s what you’ve been doing you’ve talked

about illegal and carcinogenic horsemeat entering the
human feud [sic] chain (0.3) you have no evidence for

that (0.5) you’ve talked about it being in schools and

hospitals (0.3) you’ve no evidence for that (0.6) you’re just

scare-mongering to try and make a name for yourself (.)

aren’t you?

MC: (0.6) i was passed evidence over two weeks ago which i

raised on the floor of the house of commons with defra

ministers that horses in the uk abbatoirs were being um

(0.4) that had tested positive for bute had been exported

and entered the human food chain (0.5) i’ve now had

confirmation that seven horses were exported to france and

the netherlands and that that has ended up on someone’s

plate in the united kingdom.

(C.34) Peter, Lord Mandelson on The Andrew Marr Show with Jeremy Vine –
19 May 2013 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtN8dLQAY1c

JV: but of course you want us to go into the euro::: (0.2) at

what point will you be apologising for that?

PM: i don’t have to apologise for saying er er er =

JV: =it would’ve

been a disaster wouldn’t it?

PM: er er if- er as i said then i don’t have to apologise for making

the point heh if (0.2) the circumstances are such and the

conditions are such that it would be in britain’s interests to

be in the single currency, er then we should consider it=

JV: =even now!

PM: those circumstances and those conditions have not arisen.

but i would make another point to you er jeremy (0.4) if

we were to make a move like that, it would involve us in a

significant change in our relationship with the er european

union and in those circumstances er er i can er see that we

would need to have a referendum but um just to sort of

have an in out referendum now just for the sake of having

it, would be a gigantic lottery. (0.3) nobody could predict

what the outcome would be people are more likely to vote

for any number of reasons other than the advantages for us

of being in europe {and i think} that it would not be the

right thing for britain to do.

JV: {so- so just to be

clear}

(C.35) Mark Pritchard on The Sunday Politics – 17 November 2013, AN=
Andrew Neil https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z199Ezt3Oo8

AN: is it not clear from the telegraph tapes that you did ask
for three thousand pounds a month in consultancy services
and three per cent of multimillion pound deal done in
albania?

MP: well first of all i’d like to apologise for the sunglasses and
i’ve er had a lot of comments from people both in the
commons and outside for that but on the serious point. (0.4)
the fact is that er it is a text out of context and it’s a pretext
and these allegations- these claims by the telegraph are are
false and hurt{ful}

AN: {so you} didn’t ask for a
three thousand pounds consultancy fee?

[... ]

AN: so you haven’t issued a writ?

MP: but you’ve you’ve raised something here and in fact that’s
inaccurate. i’m a member i think of forty something
parliamentary groups of which i make no apology. that’s
less than-

AN: well we’ve got fifty four {country groups from africa to
albania}

MP: {well let me andrew andrew
andrew let me} answer the question if i may!

AN: well that would be very useful.

MP: =well i’m trying to! there are a hundred and ninety six
countries around the world and you at the vatican and
kosovo and argue about those and the states, (0.3) so it’s
(0.2) less than a quarter of the er country groups on my
figures okay? < i make no apology< you know one of my
regrets is not having visited syria. i don’t know whether
i’m a member of the syria group and if i’m not perhaps i
should become a member i make no apology. one of my
regrets is not visiting syria so when it came to the syria
vote i was blindsided. yes we have excellent briefings from
the foreign office yes we have excellent briefings from the
house of commons libraries (..) but i had to make perhaps
a judgement based on part knowledge. nothing beats being
on the ground as bbc journalists recognised this week in
jaffna with the prime minister. < nothings beats being on
the ground.<

AN: you boasted about your connections in albania to get a
business contract.

(C.36) **Andy Burnham on The Sunday Politics – 17 November 2013, AN=**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tozyBywrXQU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tozyBywrXQU)

AN: and when you look back at the gp contracts which labour
negotiated in two thousand and four which errr (0.4)
resulted in a lack of twenty four hour cover in many other
things but huge pay rises for the gp. (0.3) isn’t there part
of that that you now regret that now has to be redone or
undone?
AB: it got changed almost every year from two thousand and four so i think there’s a lot of myths that have been built up about this contract. people forget now that when it came in there was a huge shortage of gps across the country. some communities like the one that i represent really struggled to recruit and the contract helped that. what i want would say actually is that this myth that the government has built all year that the government has built all year that the two thousand and four gp contract is responsible for the a and e crisis is just spin of the worst possible kind we are hearing {today ((unclear))}

AN: right but would you redo that contract?

Paul Kenny on The Sunday Politics – 2 February 2014, AN= Andrew Neil
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAedclDJwuY

PK: so that was likely to reduce anyway but neil the gmb has already done this now.
AN: yes i understand that. by the way it’s andrew or mr neil i umm i don’t mind which but it’s not neil.
PK: i’m sorry what did i say?
AN: neil but never mind. let me ask you this […]
AN: given that you are now, compared to where unions where when i was an industrial correspondent you’re a relatively small pressure group. why should labour be in thrall to you?
PK: well we are a biggest- the biggest voluntary organisation in this country. sorry about that but it’s a matter of fact. (0.3) people make conscious choices, union membership is actually growing, my own union the gmb is growing and it’s been consistently growing for eight years. so this this- dying picture that you are trying to paint in terms of taking into account the fact that some people don’t support labour er that’s why unions do not affiliate all of their members to the labour party. and over the years they’ve recognised that and i mean you know we have adjusted to that. i mean you know if you don’t like being called neil then i don’t like being called a baron either.
AN: okay what about mister baron?

Bob Crow on The Sunday Politics – 16 February 2014, AN= Andrew Neil
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiUVsky6Obg

AN: you’ve said that you couldn’t care less if we have a million strikes. that the people these lowly lower paid people who travel on the tube, who need the tube as an essential service they could care.
BC: well of course they do and as i’ve said before i apologise to the travelling public for the dispute that took place bu-
AN: twenty four strikes in thirteen years?
BC: well it takes two to tango. if the employer (0.5) er never imposed terms and conditions upon us against our will=
AN: =but you’ve got great terms and conditions!
BC: but they are trying to worsen them. (0.2) that’s what they are trying to do.

(C.39) Alistair Carmichael on The Sunday Politics – 30 March 2014, AN= Andrew Neil https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXmXoV5yDwQ
AN: all that may be true but what this unnamed minister was saying is that come the day if westminster’s negotiating with a new independent scotland then a deal is to be done. faslane where the british nuclear deterrent is well there is nowhere else in the united kingdom to put that, certainly not in the next ten to twenty years. (.) a deal will be done the nukes get to stay in faslane and scotland gets a monetary union with the rest of the uk.=that’s perfectly plausible isn’t it?
AC: no no er i’m sorry andrew but it is simply not plausible. (0.3) because the economy is more important than anything else and what you’ve had here is very clear advice from the treasury officials saying that it is not in the economic best interests of people in england wales and northern ireland any more in fact than it (.) is in the interests of people in scotland {to enter into arrangement of this sort}
AN: {OKAY then where do you put the nukes when} the nationalists kick you out?

(C.40) Caroline Flint on The Sunday Politics – 6 April 2014, AN= Andrew Neil https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXkWdSIDC5c
AN: but what happens if this competition report comes out and concludes that what you’re planning to do is not the right thing to do? you’ll still go ahead won’t you? so it is a waste of time!
CF: no i don’t think it’s a waste of time because actually the:- if you look at the report that ofgem produced last week .hh some of the very issues which labour has been drawing attention to like the vertical integration they very much cover that in the report.
AN: =but that’s ofgem. i was asking about the competition commi{ssion}
CF: {yes but-}
AN: no go on
CF: sorry the ofgem report last week is a result of the cma and ofgem working together. i think actually it is clearly accepted now in this section= i mean look at sse last week they’ve already said that they are going to separate out those parts of their business. (0.2) i think we are pushing at an open door here and i’ll be very surprised if the cma don’t agree.
AN: let me ask finally on this (. ) freeze on electricity prices.

(C.41) Nigel Farage on The Sunday Politics – 11 May 2014, AN= Andrew Neil
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YClaK3RDMLc

1 AN: you’ll cut fuel duty?
2 NF: no i’m not talking about any of those things. i’m fighting a
european election. that is the election we are fighting {let’s
talk about the european union}
3 AN: {but it’s all over your website}
4 NF: well i’m sorry but that is not for now. you know that is not
for now= we have not agreed a manifesto for the general
election. but we will do over the course of the summer.
5 AN: yes but this is in your local election manifesto.
6 NF: er yes but er that’s- we are having- (0.3) .hhh and there
are local elections in some parts of the country but we
are fighting a european election. (0.2) really it is actually
impossible with the british media to have an intelligent
debate on the european question.
7 AN: well well that may be fine but as i say we are also fighting
local elections too. and now- so you’ve promised all these
tax cuts. (0.3) how much would they cost?
8 NF: =no idea. (0.3) i’m not here to talk about- (0.2) i’ve
read the local election manifesto and it doesn’t make those
promises.
9 AN: well actually it does. i mean i looked at it last night.
10 NF: we- we- we- we talk in the local election manifesto- er we
do talk about local services and we do talk about the need
to try and keep council tax down but we don’t talk about
income tax! ABSOLUTELY NOT i’m sorry this is just not
right.
11 AN: you also say in local election campaigning you also say
you’d restore cuts to policing, double prison places, create
a new wave of grammar schools, restore cuts to frontline
nhs, spend more on roads and on public transport! how
much would all that cost?
12 NF: i’m sorry. (0.2) but- um you’re obviously reading different
documents to me. we are not=
13 AN: =it’s your website not mine!

(C.42) Patrick O’Flynn on The Sunday Politics – 25 May 2014, AN= Andrew
Neil
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqapnvNTXAQ

1 AN: so! (0.3) do you regret doing that now?
2 POF: =no.
3 AN: (0.2) what were you doing?
4 POF: what i was doing was trying to get nigel to a much more
important interview that had been painstakingly arranged
somewhat=
5 AN: =you mean the sunday times?
6 POF: that’s right.
Appendix D: Transcript of Jonathan Sumption radio lecture

Sumption’s lecture can be found here: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b010t7tx

Jonathan Sumption – ‘Don’t Apologise’ – Four Thought on BBC Radio Four, 4 May 2011

Host: […] Jonathan is also a prominent historian. He has so far published three of his five volumes on the history of the Hundred Years War and it is that experience as a historian which he is drawing on for his talk tonight, which he has called ‘Don’t Apologise’.

Audience: [Applause]

Jonathan Sumption: In June 1997 I remember being struck by a press report that Britain’s newly appointed Prime Minister had apologised to the Irish nation for the Potato Famine of 1846. He was much praised for this act at the time – it struck the note of humility which is increasingly expected in our politicians, but the question which occurred to me was a much more fundamental one: what did this apology actually mean? It is a question worth asking, because the tide for public apologies for historic wrongs grows stronger by the year. It has been estimated by a reputable authority, that the last Pope apologised in public on at least 94 occasions for the misdeeds of the Christian past. Today, there are energetic campaigns to obtain apologies from, for example, the Turks for the Armenian massacres of 1915, from the Japanese for their wars in the Far East in the 1930s and 40s, from the British for the bombing of Dresden during the Second World War, among others. It is now eighty years since Herbert Butterfield protested in a book against the prevailing tendency to see the past in terms of the issues of the present day. This is a battle that Butterfield has comprehensively lost. Apologising for the horrors of the distant past is probably the ultimate symptom of his defeat. It is essentially a rebuke to the past for not being more like the present. It marginalises past events by treating them as monstrous aberrations from the path of truth chosen by our own generation. This isn’t just intellectually impure, although it certainly is that, it obstructs our understanding of history and in doing that, it deprives us of a great fund of vicarious experience which history might otherwise have opened up for us.

Let us return, for a moment, to the Papacy. I take it as an example not because I am either a Catholic or an anti-Catholic, but because it is probably the most ancient political institution on the planet, with a continued existence of a millennium and a
half in something like its present form. There is, as one could expect, a fair amount of both light and shade in this long history. No-one would, I imagine, question the appropriateness of the present Pope apologising for the recent wrongs, such as the abuse of children in Catholic institutions. These things were contrary to what the Church has always taught and what every civilised society has believed. There are victims alive to still remember the abuse, and to accept and acknowledge the apology. But what are we to say about John Paull II’s apology in March 2000 for the Christian wars and crusades of the Middle Ages? Presumably he wasn’t just saying that the world would be a better place if these things had never happened, or that we wouldn’t behave in the same way now. A request for forgiveness would hardly have been the right formula for sentiments as banal as those. But if he was saying more than that, then how much more was he saying? Was he really saying that Medieval crusaders and inquisitors ought to have taken the same view in their own day about morality and religious violence as he himself was taking at the dawn of the 21st Century?

The justification commonly advanced for historic apologies is simple and pragmatic: it may serve to heal the still open sore; it is a small price to pay for the comfort it may bring to those who identify themselves with the victims, so applying the utilitarian calculus, is it not better to cultivate their goodwill than that of the odd historical purist like me? I think that my answer to this would be that apologising for the past is not just a historical anachronism, there are serious philosophical and moral objections to it. When we castigate the sins of our forebears as immoral, we are saying, implicitly, that there are some moral principles which are absolute and eternal, not relative and ephemeral by which men may be justly judged in any age. The difficulty with that, is that if there are eternal moral values independent of the changing understanding and sentiments of mankind, then there must be some source for them other than mankind. In other words, there must be some external and authoritative revelation. The problem is that revelation is not a particularly useful tool for conducting discourse between different generations separated by a gulf of understanding spanning several centuries wide. It was, of course, in the name of revelation that men joined the armies in the name of Crusades, or organised Pogroms against Medieval Jews. It was in the name of revealed truth that churchmen persecuted Galileo and condemned the writings of Harvey and Darwin.

What is, it seems to me, morally objectionable about apologising for these wrongs now is that it depends on a concept of collective and inherited guilt. And that seems to me to be morally indefensible. As it happens, the most famous example of the concept of inherited guilt is also one of the most manifestly wicked. The justification commonly advanced in the first sixteen centuries of European Christianity for the persecution of the Jews was that they had a collective and inherited responsibility for the death of Christ. All of us today would reject this notion as absurd. But is it any more respectable when applied to other historical injustices? On the day after Pope John Paull II’s homily in March 2000, an Italian bishop was asked for his reaction. He replied with a question of his own: ‘In whose name, exactly, is the Holy Father asking for pardon?’. I think that this is a good question. When we ask a public figure for an apology for some historic wrong, we presumably expect more of him than a mere hand-wringing regret for the sins of humanity. We expect him to speak for some specific section of humanity which can be regarded as accepting some special moral responsibility and that requires some institutional continuity. John Paul II’s words had some resonance
because he was speaking as the institutional leader of all Catholics and the successor of the same Medieval Popes who had preached the Crusade and founded the Inquisition. This is presumably why he was apologising for the past sins of Catholics. But as a matter of moral judgements, one might ask why only Catholics? Do not Protestants also belong to communities which were once also associated with the Crusades and organised the persecution of the Jews and the Inquisition? Of course, they do. The only difference is that the Pope can speak for Catholics but not for anyone else. It is worth asking, however, on what basis can the Pope speak for Catholics on an issue like this?

When Tony Blair apologised for the Irish Potato famine in 1997, he was, I suppose, doing this as the institutional successor of the Prime Minister of the time, Sir Robert Peel. Yet, he was plainly not speaking for the English political community of the 1840s to whom Pell had been answerable – he was speaking for me, for you, for all of us. I am entitled, I think to ask, by what right was he doing that? I regard the Irish Potato Famine as not only a great human tragedy but a political catastrophe for my country, whose impact on Anglo-Irish relations has been poisonous ever since. But an apology is more than that – it seeks to engage my moral responsibility. Yet, in what sense am I responsible? I am descended from nineteenth century Englishmen, I live in the same country they did, and I speak the same language. But I didn’t do it! You didn’t do it! It wasn’t done on our behalf! And that brings one to the position of the victims, because they, too, are long since dead. Yet just as there has got to be one who, today, can represent the original perpetrator, so there has to be someone to apologise to. Some individual or group which can be said to represent the ancient victims and here we are confronted by an even greater artifice.

Consider, for example, the demands voiced a few years ago for a public apology for the eighteenth century slave trade from the British government. Its victims suffered terrible hardship and injustice but the apology, it was suggested, was due to those dispersed descendants of the original slaves who are alive today. And it is not obvious what injury has been done to them. In what sense, other than a purely genealogical one, do they represent the victims of the original wrong? It is, I think, an important question because we mustn’t lose sight on the purpose of an apology. We apologise to be forgiven. It is a two-way process consisting of contrition on one side, and the discarding of resentment on the other. But who is in a position to grant absolution for the sins of my ancestors against a long-dead generation. To promote forgiveness in that situation, you have to create an entirely artificial class of victims. It is, I think, an open question of whether the political apologies of the last two decades have, in fact, promoted harmony in our own world even according the the utilitarian calculus. It is at least as likely that by accepting the practice of political apologies for the past, we have perpetuated a sense of grievance by making it inheritable.

It is, of course, the very fact that appalling tragedies happened before our time to people who are long since dead that makes it so facile to apologise for them now. The passage of time makes the moral quandaries of the past seem so much simpler than they were at the time. Take, for example, the German occupation of France and the connivance of the Vichy Government in its crimes. These events presented many Frenchmen with unspeakable dilemmas between 1940 and 1944. Dilemmas which none of us are likely to have experienced. At what point do passivity and compliance in the face of brute strength shade into active collaboration? It’s probably an unanswerable question. But
in the aftermath of the war, a whole generation of Frenchmen declined to ask it. It
was only in the 1970s, that a later generation who had never had to face the same
quandaries found it morally straightforward to start distributing blame. Much can be
said of the rising tide of moral disapproval of the war-time bombing of Dresden and
other German cities by the British and American Air Forces. War is by definition a
breakdown, a complete breakdown, of civilised values. It isn’t easy for a democracy
to compute the exactly right amount or proportionate response to an unprovoked war
unleashed against it by a powerful and savage enemy. The truth is that the misdeeds
of our ancestors still resonate long after their moral dilemmas have been forgotten.
By comparison, we experience our own moral dilemmas directly and immediately and
they still have the power to reduce us to silence.

In the end, the approach of the historian however pedantic and pinched it might seem,
is surely right. History is morally neutral. What has happened has happened. We have
a duty to understand why it happened, but apologising for it is morally questionable
and gets in the way of understanding. Once the relevant actors have left the scene,
there is no longer a live moral issue. There is no longer a perpetrator to be contrite, or
a victim to forgive. There are only those left behind and only lessons to be learnt by
them.

[Polite applause]
Appendix E: Transcripts of historical apology statements

Sources for the videos are provided in the title for each example (please do not make copies of E.1 and E.2).

(E.1) **First World War (Executions) – 24 July 1998; JR = John Reid;** https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yxjcvsmz0y7dda9/AACXbVT0I-XbqPjlgKu6DHova

JR: with permission mister deputy speaker (.) i will make
a statement about executions of soldiers and others in
the first world war. (1.2) mister deputy speaker i doubt
that anyone who has not gone through the (1.1) awesome
experience of war can ever truly imagine (0.5) its effects
on the emotions of human beings. (0.4) some nine million
troops from all sides died during the great war. (0.5) almost
one million british and empire soldiers fell, (0.2) heroes to
their nations and a testimony to the awfulness of war. we
rightly remember them still. not only on the eleventh of
november, (0.4) but in ceremonies throughout the year and
throughout the globe. today i am sure that i am joined
by the whole house in once again paying tribute to the
courage and fortitude of all who served from throughout
britain and the empire. (0.3) but for some of those soldiers
mister deputy speaker, and their families there has been
neither glory nor remembrance. (.) just over three hundred
of them died at the hands not of the enemy but of firing
squadrons from their own sides. (0.2) they were shot at dawn,
stigmatised and condemned. (.) a few as cowards. (0.2)
most as deserters. hhh the nature of those deaths and the
circumstances surrounding them have long been a matter
of contention and therefore last may i said that we would
look again at their cases. (1.0) that review has been a
long and complicated process and i have today placed a
summary in the library of the house. (0.3) but here i will
outline some salient features. (3.0) between the fourth
of august nineteen fourteen and the thirty first of march
nineteen twenty, approximately twenty thousand personnel
were convicted of military offences under the british army
act for which the death penalty could (0.3) have been
awarded. (.) this does not include civilian capital offences such as murder. (0.9) of these twenty thousand something over three thousand (0.2) were actually sentenced to death. (1.5) < approximately ninety per cent of them escaped execution. (0.4) they had their sentences commuted by their commanders in chief. < the remainder (.) those executed for a military offence (.) number some hhh three hundred and six cases in all. (0.3) this is some one per cent of those tried for a capital offence and ten per cent of those actually sentenced to death. these three hundred or so cases can be examine because the records were preserved. (0.4) but in virtually all other cases the records were destroyed. it is the cases of those 300 that many members of this house (. notably my honourable friend the member for thurrock [hon. members: hea::::r hear] and others outside the house (0.2) including the royal british legion have asked us to reconsider with a view to some form of blanket pardon. (1.2) can i make it plain mister deputy speaker? (0.3) we cannot and do not condone cowardice (.) desertion (.) mutiny or assisting the enemy then or now. (0.4) all of these are absolutely inimical to the very foundation of our armed forces=without military discipline the country could not be defended (. and this is never more important than in times of war. (0.5) however (. the circumstances of the first world war and the long-standing controversy about these executions justify particular consideration. (0.3) we have therefore reviewed every aspect of these cases. we have considered the legal basis for the trials, field general courts martial and the review has confirmed that procedures for the courts martial were correct (0.3) given the law as it stood at the time. (0.2) the review also considered medical evidence. (.) now clearly if those who were executed could be medically examined now, it might be judged that the effects of their trauma meant that some should not have been considered culpable (0.2) < but we cannot examine them now< . we are left with only the records. (0.4) and in most cases there is no implicit or explicit reference in the records to nervous or other psychological or medical disorders. moreover while it seems er re- er reasonable to assume that medical considerations may have been taken into account in the ninety per cent of cases where sentences were commuted (0.4) there is no direct evidence of that either since almost all the records of these commuted cases have long since been destroyed. (0.3) however frustrating the passage of time means that the grounds for a blanket legal pardon on the basis of unsafe conviction just (.) do (. not (. exist. we have therefore considered the cases individually. a legal pardon as envisaged by
some could take one of three forms (0.2) a free pardon, a conditional pardon, or a statutory pardon. (0.2) we have given very serious consideration indeed to this particular matter. (0.8) however these three types of pardon have one thing in common. hhh for each individual case there must be some concrete evidence for overturning the decision of legal- a legally constituted court which was charged with examining the evidence in these serious offences. i have personally examined one third of the records and case files. (0.3) approximately one hundred case files. i have to say mister deputy speaker (.) it was a deeply moving experience. (0.2) regrettably many of the records contain little more than the minimum prescribed for this type of court martial, a form recording administrative details and a summary- not a transcript (.) a summary of the evidence. sometimes this amounts only to one or two handwritten pages. i have accepted legal advice that in the vast majority of cases there is little to be gleaned from the fragments of the stories that would provide serious grounds for legal pardon. (.) eighty years ago (0.4) when witnesses were available and the events were fresh in their memories, this might have been a possibility (0.2) but the passage of time has rendered it well-nigh impossible in most cases. (0.9) and so (0.3) if we were to pursue the option of formal legal pardons the vast majority (.) if not all of the cases would be left condemned (1.0) either by an accident of history which has left us with insufficient evidence to make a judgment or even where the evidence is more extensive, by a lack of sufficient evidence to overturn the original verdicts. (0.3) hhh in short most would be left condemned or in some cases re-condemned eighty years after the event. i repeat here what i said last may when announced the review (0.2) that we did not wish, (0.3) by addressing one perceived injustice to create another. i wish to be fair to all (.) for that reason i do not believe that pursuing possible-possible individual legal formal pardons for a small number on the basis of impressions from the surviving evidence will best serve the purpose of justice or the sentiment of parliament. (.) because the point is that eighty years after the events and on the basis of the evidence we cannot distinguish between those who deliberately let down their country and their comrades in arms and those who were (0.2) not guilty of desertion or cowardice. (0.3) but current knowledge of the psychological effects of war, for example, means that we now accept that some injustices may (.) have (0.3) occurred. suspicions cannot be completely allayed by examination of the sparse records. hhh we have therefore decided also to reject the option of
those who have urged us to leave well alone and to say nothing. to do nothing in these circumstances would be neither compassionate nor humane.

and so today there are four things that we can do. first of all we can ( ) in this house which sanctioned and passed the laws under which these men were executed and with the knowledge now available to us: express our deep sense of regret at this loss of life. [hon. members: "hear hear"] mister deputy speaker only very few of our fellow countrymen remain who have any real understanding or memory of life and death in the trenches and on the battlefields of the first world war. (0.3) this year marks the eightieth anniversary of the end of the war and we are recalling and remembering the conditions of that war and all those who endured them. (0.3) those who died at the hands of the enemy and those who were executed and those who fulfilled their awful duty in the firing squads.

secondly mister deputy speaker in our regret as we approach a new century ( ) let us remember that pardon implies more than legality and legal formality. (0.4) pardon involves understanding ( ) forgiveness ( ) tolerance and wisdom and i trust that members of this house will agree with me that, whilst the passage of time has distanced us from the evidence and the possibility of distinguishing guilt from innocence whilst it has rendered the formality of pardon impossible, it has also cast great doubt on the stigma of condemnation.

if some men were found wanting it was not because they all lacked courage (0.4) backbone or moral fibre. among those executed were men who had bravely volunteered (0.3) to serve their country. many had previous good and loyal service. in a sense mister deputy speaker those who were executed were as much victims of this war as the soldiers and airmen who were killed in action or died of wounds or disease as the civilians killed by aerial (0.5) or naval bombardment or those lost at sea. and! as the century draws to a close all of them deserve to have their sacrifice acknowledged afresh. i ask members of the house to join with me therefore ( ) in recognising those who were executed for what they were. (0.2) victims with millions of others of a cataclysmic and a ghastly war.

thirdly mister deputy speaker we hope that others outside this house will recognise this too and that they will consider allowing the missing names to be added to the books of remembrance and the war memorials throughout this land. [hon. members: hear hear]

(0.5) finally mister deputy speaker there is one remaining thing as we look forward to the new millennium. (0.5)
the death penalty is still enshrined in our military law for
five offences including misconduct in action and mutiny.
((coughs)) (0.2) i can tell the house today that defence
ministers will invite parliament to abolish the death penalty
for military offences [hon members: hear hear] in the
british armed forces in peace and in war.
mister deputy speaker (0.2) there are deeply held feelings
about these executions. we have tried (. ) eighty years
after those terrible events to deal with this sensitive issue as
fairly as is possible to all those involved. in remembrance
of those who died in the war the poppy fields of flanders
became a symbol for the shattered innocence and the
shattered lives of a lost generation. (0.3) may those who
were executed with the many (0.3) many others who were
victims of war (0.4) finally rest in peace and let all of us
who have inherited the world that followed remember with
solemn gratitude, the sacrifices of those who served that we
might live in peace.

(E.2) Royal Liverpool Children’s Inquiry – 30 January 2001; AM
= Alan Milburn; https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yxjcsmz0y7dda9/AACXbVT0I-XbqPjlgKu6DHova

AM: with permission mister speaker i wish to make a statement
about the inquiry (0.2) into events at alder hey hospital
liverpool.
(0.4) err mister speaker i am today publishing the report
of the inquiry into the royal liverpool children’s nhs
trust (.) known as the alder hey hospital. (0.2) i am
publishing alongside it two further documents. first (.)
the chief medical officer’s census into the extent of organ
retention in the nhs in england. (0.2) secondly (.) the
chief medical officer’s recommendation (0.3) for reform of
organ retention procedures. all three documents are now
available in the vote office. i am grateful to you mister
speaker for your agreement that the parents affected at
alder hey should also have access to copies of the report.
i would like to record my thanks to the chairman of the
alder hey inquiry (0.3) mister michael redfern qc and
his fellow panel members doctor jean keeling and mrs
elizabeth powell for conducting what has proven to be an
extremely difficult inquiry. the inquiry was established in
december nineteen ninety nine following evidence to the
bristol inquiry that a large number of hearts from deceased
children had been retained at hospitals in the nhs. < alder
hey was one such hospital< . it is a world renowned
hospital treating two hundred thousand children a year. for
many years the hospital has made use of human hearts for
research and teaching. (0.4) the redfern report says that (.)
there are now more than sixteen hundred living children
who would have died in infancy or childhood without the
improvements in surgical techniques and care which were
pioneered in Liverpool.

but as the inquiry report makes perfectly clear (0.5) <
many of those hearts were obtained without consent < .
according to the report ( .) in addition to over two thousand
children’s hearts, there are a large number of brain parts ( .)
eyes taken from foetuses, over fifteen hundred stillbirths
or foetuses and, perhaps most disturbingly of all ( .) a
number of children’s heads and bodies. the redfern report
reveals what it calls (0.2) a lack of respect and a failure
to appreciate the circumstances which led to the taking of
human material.

for example ( .) the report cites entries about foetal material
labelled with the words .hhh < neck deeply lacerated. pull
it to pieces some time and reject.<

some of those entries date back very ( .) many years.
the number of organs retained by alder hey ( .) however
increased dramatically in the seven years ( .) following the
appointment by the hospital and the university of liverpool
of professor van velzen in nineteen er eighty eight as
chair of foetal and infant pathology in the department
of pathology. during van velzen’s time at alder hey
between nineteen eighty eight and nineteen ninety five he
systematically ordered the unethical and illegal stripping
of every organ (0.2) from every child who had had a
post-mortem. (0.2) he ignored parent’s wishes even when
they told him explicitly that they did not want a full
post-mortem ( .) let alone the retention of any of their
child’s organs.

according to the report van velzen lied to (0.4) parents. he
lied to other doctors. he lied to hospital managers. he stole
medical records. he falsified statistics and reports and he
encouraged other staff to do the same.

mister speaker (0.4) for any parent the death of their child
is a tragedy. to bury that child (0.2) to grieve (0.3) to hold
precious their memory over the years is how many families
gradually come to terms with their loss. (0.3) it is hard to
imagine then ( .) the trauma and anguish that each of the
alder hey parents faced when, (0.2) many years later (0.2)
they discovered that their child’s body had not been buried
intact as they believed (0.4) but had been stripped of their
entire internal organs leaving the body as a shell.

< this happened not to one set of parents in liverpool but
to several hundred< . the hospital and the university now
admit that they will never be able accurately to tell parents
what happened to every organ of every child between
nineteen eighty eight and nineteen ninety five.

(0.3) what we do now know is that the vast majority of organs that were taken were never used for medical research. parents cannot even take comfort in the knowledge that their children’s organs were used to help other children. it is clear from the report that the understanding of cot death, (0.2) for which van velzen was funded, was not advanced one iota by his practice of stripping organs from the bodies of children.

the question in the minds of parents and others is how van velzen got away with it for so long. the answer mister speaker is that the hospital authorities and the university of liverpool failed to monitor his practices and failed to take action to stop them. numerous complaints were made. (.) problems were not properly investigated. (.) action was not taken.

these failures were compounded (0.4) by the incompetence and the insensitivity of both the hospital and the university authorities once the truth did begin (0.3) to emerge. the hospital seemed overwhelmed by events. the university seemed simply to have turned its back on parents. some parents faced up to four funerals as different organs from their children were returned to them at different times. the pain caused to the parents by this dreadful sequence of events is in my view unforgivable. (0.4) < i am deeply sorry for the wrong that was done to them (0.2) their families and their children. those who did wrong will now be held to account.<

the inquiry report says that professor van velzen must never be allowed to practise again in this country. (0.2) i can tell the house today that he has been referred to the general medical council for disciplinary action. i understand that he has been summoned to appear before the gmc later this week. i can also tell the house that the inquiry report has been referred to the merseyside police and passed to the director of public prosecutions. they will determine whether criminal prosecutions should now proceed.

four nhs staff including the current chief executive of the trust have today been suspended. their employers will now consider appropriate disciplinary action. the role of other nhs staff will be examined by their employers. the doctors criticised in the report have been referred to the gmc. other staff have been referred to the council for professions supplementary to medicine.

(0.4) my right hon. friend the secretary of state for education and employment has asked the president of the council of the university (0.2) of liverpool to review the evidence in the report and to take appropriate disciplinary
action. hhhh the current acting chairman of the trust board is today leaving the trust along with two non-executive directors whose resignations i have today accepted. (0.2) i have today appointed angela jones as the new chair. < it is right that the trust should have a fresh start< . (0.5) alder hey hospital relies on its dedicated staff. (0.3) they have been as shocked as we all are by these events. i want to thank those staff who have continued through these difficult times to provide treatment and care for children from liverpool and elsewhere. (.) the action that i have taken today should assist those staff to re-establish the hospital’s relationships with the community that it serves. (0.3) hhh i am confident that alder hey can recover and rebuild its reputation as a leading national and international centre for specialist paediatric care.

(0.3) mister speaker what the report describes as, (0.4) the exceptional practice of van velzen, (0.2) between nineteen eighty eight and nineteen ninety five made alder hey unique. (0.3) but elsewhere in the nhs it is clear that organ retention without relatives’ full knowledge and agreement was widespread. the recent national summit on organ retention which was organised by the chief medical officer (.) hhh professor liam donaldson, (.) confirmed that this was also the experience of parents in many other parts of the country. professor donaldson’s census shows that one hundred and five thousand organs (.) are retained throughout the country. (.) poor standards of cataloguing and record keeping mean that those figures may not be wholly accurate. (0.2) twenty five hospitals account for eighty eight per cent of these organs. at least sixteen thousand organs and tissues have been retained in apparent contravention of the law because they came about (.) as a result of coroners’ post-mortems where the organs should not have been kept beyond the time needed to establish cause of death. (.) as at alder hey and indeed at bristol (.) the coroner’s system throughout the country has proved ineffective in that respect.=the current law and post-mortem consent forms are both ambiguous? they talk of taking tissues when they often mean taking organs, they record lack of objection rather than informed consent. in the past four years the government have made an unprecedented effort to better protect patients. the changes that we have already made and the reforms that are still to come enjoy widespread support amongst both doctors and patients. (0.2) the nhs is full of good doctors (.) not bad ones. our reforms are aimed at supporting them to become even (0.3) better. (.) a new statutory duty
on quality for every nhs trust, independent inspection
through the commission for health improvement, annual
appraisal of doctors linked to periodic revalidation, reform
to make self-regulation faster more open and more
accountable. Now however we need to go further. The
cmo’s census, our consultation with parents and the
medical profession and the reports from bristol and alder
hey have formed the basis for professor donaldson’s
recommendations for reform. I am accepting these
recommendations in full. The major proposals are as
follows, (0.5) I am establishing a special
commission under the chairmanship of margot brazier,
professor of law at manchester university, to oversee the
return to families of organs and tissues from around the
country to their families should they wish to have them.
(0.3) we have ensured that parents who are seeking more
information today can obtain it by contacting the nhs direct
telephone helpline. Second (0.3) my right honourable
friend the home secretary has set in train a review of
the coroner system so that we can learn the lessons of
what went wrong at alder hey and elsewhere. Thirdly
(0.3) my right honourable friend the secretary of state for
education and employment will establish a review of the
accountability and management arrangements between nhs
trusts and universities where senior staff are employed on
joint contracts. Fourthly we will ensure that all nhs
trusts provide support and advice to families at the time of
bereavement and I expect this to be in place throughout the
nhs later this year. Finally the law will be changed
to enshrine the concept of informed consent. The existing
law in this area has become outdated. The nineteen sixty
one tissue act does not even contain penalties for breaches
of its provisions. (0.3) the law has ill served bereaved
parents in our country, it causes confusion for staff, it must now be changed.
I will therefore bring forward measures urgently to
amend the act to clarify that informed consent must be
given, (0.2) that organs and tissues must be specified and to
make it a criminal offence to ignore informed consent. We
will also undertake a wider review of existing laws on
all aspects of taking storing and using tissue and
organs from both the living and the dead. When the
review is completed we will seek to legislate to bring in
the necessary changes. These changes in the law will be
supported by a new statutory code of practice which will
be issued to the nhs. (0.2) it will cover the issue of organs
that are used by the pharmaceutical industry. The code
of practice will be accompanied by a new standardised
consent form which will be introduced throughout the health service.
mister speaker (0.2) there is one other important point. informed consent need not be at the expense of medical research. proper post-mortem procedures and archived tissues and organs hold the key to much medical advance. (. ) discovering the effects and causes of disease, finding cures for illnesses that disable or kill. < but retaining public confidence in those procedures requires (. ) public (. ) consent< . members of the medical profession share that view=indeed it is reflected in the recent guidance issued by the royal college of pathologists. (0.2) when i met families from alder hey (. ) from bristol and elsewhere in the country (. ) many told me that had they been asked properly they would have been only too willing to allow their child’s death to help another child live. doctors and pathologists have an incredibly difficult job to do. they’ve usually acted with the best of intentions to create greater understanding of disease and to improve standards of care AND to do so in a way that avoids causing further anguish to grieving families. these are (0.3) laudable aims. (0.2) they are honourable intentions. but as the events at alder hey have shown (. ) modern patient expectations and traditional clinical practices have grown apart. the nhs can no longer assume that the benefits of science medicine or research are somehow self-evident regardless of the wishes of patients or (. ) their (. ) families. the relationship between patients and the service today < has to be based today on informed consent< . that will require changes in practice and changes in policy. and it will require changes in medical education. as i have made clear today, it will also require changes in the law.
mister speaker (. ) the parents (0.2) i have met (.) from alder hey and elsewhere have acted with great dignity and great purpose. i pay tribute to them today. i hope that the reforms we will now make will provide some comfort for the pain that they have endured. (. ) i commend these reforms to the house.


MOB: thank you very much er with er with permission mister speaker i wish to make a statement about help for thalidomide survivors. between nineteen fifty eight and nineteen sixty one (. ) the drug thalidomide was used by expectant mothers (.3) to control the symptoms of morning sickness. (0.2) tragically this led to many babies
being born with often severe physical disabilities. there are
currently four hundred and sixty six thalidomiders as they refer to themselves who are beneficiaries of the falid-
er thalidomide trust. the government wishes to express its
deep sympathy for the injury and suffering endured by all those affected and i will say something more
about that in a moment.

mister speaker i am pleased to report to the house that the government will now fund a twenty million pound
three year pilot scheme to help meet the health needs of thalidomide survivors in a more personalised way.
funding for this has been found from existing departmental central contingency budgets. the scheme will be operated
by the thalidomide trust. it will use its considerable expertise and knowledge of its members’ needs to
distribute money to survivors. they in turn will invest the money in adaptations and other preventive measures that
are likely to reduce long term demands on the nhs.
in recent months i have met the national advisory council of the thalidomide trust on a number of occasions.
they have impressed on me their concerns about the continuing and increasing health needs of thalidomiders as they approach older age. this additional funding will help to meet their complex and highly specialised needs, and to reduce further degeneration in their health.

there will be clear principles for the use of the money. it will be used to explore how the health needs of thalidomide survivors can best be met in the longer term. it will also be used to look at the effectiveness of the scheme and how this approach of working through an expert national body might be applied to other small groups of geographically dispersed patients with special needs. the evaluation will be focused on thalidomide survivors in england. however, as the thalidomide trust has discretion in how it uses its funding we expect that survivors living outside england will also benefit.

it is important to acknowledge that this announcement builds on work done with thalidomiders in past decades by lord morris of manchester and by lord ashley of stoke. lord morris was appointed as the first minister for disabled people in 1974 made distillers, the then owners of the thalidomide drug establish a trust fund for affected children. lord sshley has tirelessly campaigned for greater recognition of the effects of the drug and the needs of thalidomiders which has also led to improvements in drug safety. the work of harold evans and the sunday times should also be acknowledged as the campaigning by a number of current members of this house.
mister speaker whilst the government is taking positive steps to help thalidomide survivors, the contribution of the thalidomide trust to supporting survivors and their families cannot be overstated. i would like to take this opportunity also to pay tribute to the work of the trust, its officers and in particular to the members of the national advisory council who- er who have worked tirelessly to champion the cause of thalidomiders. importantly mister speaker let me make the following statement on behalf of the government. i know that many thalidomiders have waited a long time for this. it is agreed with the national advisory council of the thalidomide trust. the government wishes to express its sincere regret and deep sympathy for the injury and suffering endured by all those affected when expectant mothers took the thalidomide drug between nineteen fifty eight and nineteen sixty one. we acknowledge both the physical hardship and the emotional difficulties that have faced the children affected and their families. as a result of this drug and the challenges that many continue to endure on a daily basis. in the light of what happened a complete review of the machinery for marketing testing and regulating drugs was initiated including the enactment of the medicines act nineteen sixty eight which introduced further testing for medicines prior to licensing to ensure that they met acceptable standards of safety and efficacy.


GB: with permission er mister speaker i wish to make a statement. until the late nineteen sixties successive uk governments had over a long period of time supported child migration schemes. this involved children as young as three years old being transported from britain to australia, canada, new zealand, south africa and zimbabwe. the hope was that these children who were aged between three and fourteen would have the chance to forge a better life overseas. but the schemes proved to be misguided. in too many cases vulnerable children suffered unrelenting hardship and their families left behind were devastated. they were sent mostly without the consent of their mother or father. they were cruelly lied to and told that they were orphans. their parents were dead when in fact they were still alive. some were separated from their brothers and sisters never to see one another again. names and birthdays were deliberately changed so that it would be impossible for families to reunite. many parents did not
know that their children had been sent out of this country.

mister speaker (.) the former child migrants say that they feel that this practice was less transportation and more deportation. (0.3) and it was a deportation of innocent young lives. and when they arrived overseas mister speaker all alone in the world many of our most vulnerable children endured the harshest of conditions. (.) neglect and abuse in the often cold and brutal institutions that received them. mister speaker these children were robbed of their childhood, these most precious years of their lives. (0.2) and as people know the pain of a lost childhood can last a lifetime.=some still mare- bear the marks of abuse (.) all still live with the consequences of rejection (.) these wounds will never fully heal and for too long the survivors have been all but ignored.

(0.3) mister speaker when i was first made aware of this wholly unacceptable practice (.) i wrote to the prime minister of australia to urge that together we do more to acknowledge the experiences of former child migrants and see what together we could achieve. .hhhh so it is right that today we recognise the human cost associated with this shameful episode of history (0.3) this failure in this (.) the first duty of a nation which is to protect its children. (0.4) shortly i shall be meeting a number of former child migrants here in the palace of westminster to listen first-hand to their experiences. (0.2) .hhh and as prime minister i will be apologising on behalf of our nation. (0.3) mister speaker to all those former child migrants and their families (.) to those here with us today and those across the world=to each and every one i say today that < we are truly sorry. (.) they were let down. we are sorry that they were allowed to be sent away at the time they were most vulnerable.< we are sorry that instead of caring for them this country turned its back and we are sorry that the voices of the- these children were not always heard and their cries for help not always heeded. and WE ARE SORRY that it has taken so long for this important day to come and for the full and unconditional apology that is justly deserved.

mister speaker i would like to recognise the work of the right honourable member for the rother valley as cha- as chair of the health select committee and of his predecessor the former member for wakefield. for their commitment to the cause i would also like to thanks all past and present members of the commons health select committees and the all-party parliamentary group on child migrants. (0.3) i would also like to pay tribute to the work of the child migrants trust and the international association of former child migrants and their families (0.2) who have
campaigned for justice over many years. and i know that
the whole house will wish to join me in paying special
tribute to margaret humphreys who founded the child
migrants trust and has been a constant champion and fighter
for child migrants and their families.

(0.5) although mister speaker, we cannot undo the events of
the past we can take action now to support people to regain
their true identities (.) to reunite with their families and
loved ones t- and to go some way to repair the damage that
has been inflicted. (0.2) i can announce today support for
former child migrants that includes the establishment of a
new six millions pounds family restoration fund.

mister speaker there are many painful memories as a result
of the child migration schemes and for many today’s
apology will come too late for them to hear it. (0.3) we
cannot change history but i believe that by confronting the
failings of the past we are determined- and we show that we
are determined to do all we can to heal the wounds. (0.3) i
commend this statement to the house.


DC:  with permission mister speaker i would like to make a
statement. (.) today my right honourable friend the
secretary of state for northern ireland is publishing the
report of the saville inquiry, (0.2) the tribunal set up by
the previous government to investigate the tragic events of
the thirtieth of january nineteen seventy two. (.) a day more
commonly known as bloody sunday. (0.3) we have acted in
good faith by publishing the tribunal’s findings as quickly
as possible after the general election.

mister speaker i am deeply patriotic. (0.4) i never want
to believe anything bad about our country. i never want
to call into question the behaviour of our soldiers (.) and
our army who i believe to be the finest in the world. [hon
members: HEAR] (0.3) and i have seen for myself the very
difficult and dangerous circumstances in which we ask our
soldiers to serve. .hhh but the conclusions of this report are
absolutely clear. (.) there is no doubt. (.) there is nothing
equivocal. (.) there are no ambiguities. (.) what happened
on bloody sunday was both unjustified and unjustifiable. it
was wrong.

lord saville concludes that the soldiers of support company
who went into the bogside did so as a result of an order
which should have not been given (.) by their commander.
he finds that on balance the first shot in the vicinity of
the march was fired by the british army, he find that
none of the casualties shot by soldiers of support company
was armed with a firearm, he finds that there was some firing by republican paramilitaries but that none of this firing provided any justification for the shooting of civilian casualties. (.) and he finds that in no case was any warning given before soldiers opened fire. lord saville also finds that support company reacted by losing their self-control (0.3) forgetting or ignoring their instructions and training and with (.) a serious and widespread loss of fire discipline. he finds that despite the contrary evidence given by se- the soldiers, (.) none of them fired in response to attacks (0.3) or threatened attacks by nail or petrol bombers. and he finds that many of the soldiers and i quote (.) knowingly put forward false accounts in order to seek to justify their firing.

what’s more lord saville says that some of those killed or injured were clearly fleeing or going to the assistance of others who were dying. the report refers to one person who was shot while crawling away from the soldiers. (0.4) another was shot in all probability when he was lying mortally wounded on the ground. .hhh and the report refers to a father who was hit and injured by army gunfire after he had gone to tend his son. (1.0) for those looking for statements of innocence saville says, (0.5) the immediate responsibility for the deaths and injuries on bloody sunday lies with those members of support company whose unjustifiable firing was the cause of those deaths and injuries and crucially that and i quote, (0.3) none of the casualties was posing a threat of causing death or serious injury or indeed was doing anything else that could on any view justify their shooting.

.hh for those who were looking for the report to use terms like murder and unlawful killing (.) i remind the house that these judgments are not matters for a tribunal or for us as politicians to determine.

(1.1) mister speaker. (0.2) these are shocking conclusions to read and shocking words to have to say but mister speaker you do not defend the british army by defending the indefensible. > we do not honour all those who have served with distinction in keeping the peace and upholding the rule of law in northern ireland by hiding from the truth>. so there is no point in trying to soften or equivocate about what is in this report. it is clear from the tribunal’s authoritative conclusions that the events of bloody sunday were in no way justified.

( .) i know that some people wonder whether, (0.2) nearly forty years on from an event a prime minister needs to issue an apology. for someone of my generation (0.3) .hhh bloody sunday and the early nineteen seventies are
something that we feel we have learnt about rather than
lived through. (.) but what happened should never (.) ever
have happened. the families of those who died should
not have had to live with the pain (.) and the hurt of that
day and with a lifetime of loss. some members of our
armed forces acted wrongly. the government is ultimately
responsible for the conduct of the armed forces and for that
and on behalf of the government (.) indeed on behalf of our
country (.) i am *deeply* sorry.

(0.5) mister speaker. (.) just as the report is clear that
the actions of that day were unjustifiable so too it is
clear in some of its other findings. hhh those looking for
premeditation those looking for a plan those even looking
for a conspiracy (0.4) involving senior politicians or senior
members of the armed forces. they will not find it in
this report. (0.2) indeed lord saville finds no evidence
that the events of bloody sunday were premeditated. he
concludes that the united kingdom and northern ireland
governments and the army neither tolerated nor encouraged
the use of unjustified lethal force. he makes no suggestion
of a government cover-up and lord savile credits the united
kingdom government with working towards a peaceful
political settlement in northern ireland.

(0.6) hhh mister speaker the report also specifically deals
with the actions of key individuals in the army (.) in
politics and beyond, including major-general ford brigadier
maclellan and lieutenant-colonel wilford. in each case the
tribunal's findings are clear. it does the same for martin
mcguinness. it *specifically* finds that he was present and
probably armed with a sub-machine-gun but it concludes,
and i *quote* (0.4) we are sure that he did not engage in
any activity that provided any of the soldiers with any
justification for opening fire.

(0.2) mister speaker while in no way justifying the events
of the january the thirtieth january nineteen seventy
two we should acknowledge the background to the
events of bloody sunday. since nineteen sixty nine the
security situation in northern ireland had been declining
significantly. three days before bloody sunday two ruc
officers, one a catholic were shot by the ira in londonderry.
( . ) the first police officers killed in the city during the
troubles. a third of the city of derry had become a no-go
area for the ruc and the army and in the end nineteen
seventy two was to pe- prove northern ireland’s bloodiest
year by far with nearly five *hundred* people killed.
( . ) and let us also remember that bloody sunday is not
the defining story of the service that the british army
gave in northern ireland from nineteen sixty nine to
two thousand and seven. This was known as Operation Banner, the longest continuous operation in British military history spanning thirty-eight years and in which over two hundred and fifty thousand people served. Our armed forces displayed enormous courage and professionalism in upholding democracy and the rule of law in Northern Ireland. Acting in support of the police, they played a major part in setting the conditions that have made peaceful politics possible and over a thousand members of the security forces lost their lives to that cause. Without their work, the peace process would not have happened. Of course, some mistakes were undoubtedly made, but lessons were also learnt.

Once again, I put on record the immense debt of gratitude that we all owe those who served in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Speaker, may I also thank the tribunal for its work and thank all those who displayed great courage in giving evidence. I also wish to acknowledge the grief of the families of those killed. They have pursued their long campaign over thirty-eight years with great patience. Nothing can bring back those who were killed, but I hope that, as one relative has put it, the truth coming out can help to set people free.

John Major said that he was open to a new inquiry. Tony Blair then set it up. This was accepted by the then leader of the opposition. Of course, none of us anticipated that the Saville Inquiry would take twelve years or cost almost two hundred million pounds. Our views on that are well documented. It is right to pursue the truth with vigour and thoroughness, but let me reassure the House that there will be no more open-ended and costly inquiries into the past.

But today is not about the controversies surrounding the process. It is about the substance. About what this report tells us. Everyone should have the chance to examine its complete findings, and that is why it is being published in full. Running to more than five thousand pages, it is being published in ten volumes. Naturally, it will take all of us some time to digest the report’s full findings and understand its implications. The House will have an opportunity for a full day’s debate this autumn, and in the meantime, the Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland and for Defence will report back to me on all the issues that arise from it.

Mr. Speaker, this report and the inquiry itself demonstrate how a state should hold itself to account. And how we should be determined at all times to judge ourselves against the highest standards. Openness and frankness about the
past however painful they do not make us weaker. they make us stronger. that’s one of the things that differentiates us from the terrorists. we should never forget that over three thousand five hundred people from every community, lost their lives in northern ireland. the overwhelming majority killed by terrorists. there were many terrible atrocities. politically motivated violence was never justified whichever side it came from and it can never be justified by those criminal gangs that today want to drag northern ireland back to its bitter and bloody past. and no government i lead will ever put those who de- fight to defend democracy on an equal footing with those who continue to seek to destroy it. but neither will we hide from the truth that confronts us today.

in the words of lord saville, (0.2) what happened on bloody sunday strengthened the provisional ira increased nationalist resentment and hostility towards the army and exacerbated the violent conflict of the years that followed. (0.4) bloody sunday was a tragedy for the bereaved and the wounded, and a catastrophe for the people of northern ireland. those are words we cannot and must not ignore but i hope what this report can do is mark the moment when we come together in this house and in the communities we represent. come together to acknowledge our shared history even where it divides us. and come together to close this painful chapter on northern ireland’s troubled past. that is not to say that we must ever forget or dismiss that past but we must also move on. northern ireland has been transformed over the last twenty years and all of us in westminster and stormont must continue that work of change coming together with all the people of northern ireland to build a stable (. ) peaceful (. ) prosperous and shared future. and it is with that determination that i commend this statement to the house.


CH: today i am publishing the report of the redfern inquiry which was established in two thousand and seven to investigate the processes and practices surrounding the (.) analysis of human tissue that was carried out in uk nuclear facilities from nineteen fifty five to nineteen ninety two. (1.0) the inquiry examined the circumstances in which organs or tissue were removed from individuals (0.4) at nhs or other facilities and sent to be analysed at nuclear laboratory establishments. (. ) to lose a family member is tragic. to find out sometimes decades later that tissue had been taken without consent is
an unimaginable distress. That knowledge is a burden that no one should have to bear. There is no time limit on grief nor on apologies. Mister speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt regret and to apologise to the families and relatives of those involved. I hope that the publication of today’s report goes some way toward providing the closure that they deserve. (0.2) The events described in the inquiry should never have happened in the first place. We have learned the lessons of the past. The law on human tissue has been reviewed and there is now a rigorous regulatory system in place in which both the public and professionals have confidence.

And I would like to thank the chairman of the inquiry, Mr. Michael Redfern QC for conducting the investigation. The inquiry has also benefited from the support of the nuclear industry and other key stakeholders who have co-operated fully. (0.8) The inquiry was established to investigate the circumstances in which organs were removed from individuals and were sent to and (.) analysed at Sellafield. However, as evidence came to light of similar work carried out at other sites and of studies involving non-nuclear workers, Michael Redfern QC was asked to make those additional cases part of his inquiry. (0.2) It was initially sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry which at that time had responsibility for energy policy. The Department of Health became co-sponsors when the terms of reference were expanded to allow the inquiry to access relevant NHS information. (0.2) And to investigate the part played by hospitals in which the post-mortem examinations had been conducted. (0.3) Although not a sponsor of the inquiry, the Ministry of Justice also have an interest in the inquiry’s findings and recommendations in respect of the coroner’s role. (0.3) The report highlights unacceptable working practices within the nuclear industry. (0.2) NHS pathology services (.) and the coronial service and concludes that families’ views were not always obtained as required under the human tissue act nineteen sixty one. (0.3) It acknowledges that these events occurred a number of decades ago and puts them within the context of the times and current practice. Many of the issues raised by the inquiry have since been addressed by changes to the law including the introduction of the human tissue act two thousand and four. (0.8) The inquiry found that organs from sixty four former Sellafield workers were removed by pathologists and taken for analysis at Sellafield between nineteen sixty and nineteen ninety one. In addition organs taken from twelve workers at other nuclear sites were analysed at (0.2) or at...
the request of Sellafield giving a total cohort of seventy six.
(0.3) the inquiry also found evidence of other individuals whose organs were analysed at Sellafield. the report finds that there was a lack of ethical consideration of the implications of the research work that the industry was doing and that limited supervision was undertaken and that relationships between pathologists coroners and the Sellafield medical officers became too close.
(0.1) the inquiry has found that organs from a small number of former ministry of defence employees were removed for analysis. it has been difficult to establish the legality of a minority of these removals. also during the nineteen fifties and nineteen sixties the medical research council oversaw research measuring levels of strontium ninety in human bone obtained at post-mortem. it was a national survey involving more than six thousand people mostly children and was not linked to former nuclear workers.
the inquiry also considered work undertaken by the national radiological protection board. across its entire remit. the inquiry found that families’ views about organ retention were not always sought and that very few families knew that organs were taken for analysis. research using human tissue at that time was carried out under different legislation, and within a culture that took a very different approach to these matters than we do today. that is not to diminish the distress and suffering caused to families by the events of the past. however we have learned from the mistakes of the past and we now have in place the legislative and regulatory framework that makes consent the fundamental principle underpinning the lawful retention and use of body parts organs and tissue from the living or the deceased for such purposes.
(0.2) my right honourable friend the secretary of state for health and i welcome by the inquiry the recognition of the changes in the law and the associated regulatory framework relating to the taking use and storage of human tissue which have been put in place since the events leading up to the inquiry. since the human tissue act two thousand and four came into force we have seen the development of robust regulation which focuses on compliance through the provision of expert advice and guidance and where regulatory action is taken if standards are not met.
(0.4) my right honourable friend the secretary of state for justice has the principal interest in the findings of the inquiry relating to the role of coroners. < his department is responsible for coronial law and policy but as coroners are independent judicial office holders, it does not monitor
how they carry out their functions in individual cases unless specific complaints are made. Communication between families, coroners, and pathologists was and still is vitally important.

(0.3) Changes to the nineteen eighty four coroners rules introduced alongside the human tissue legislation are aimed at ensuring that families’ wishes about what happens to organs and tissue retained after a post-mortem examination can be properly established and acted on. My right honourable friend the secretary of state for justice also intends to take forward several provisions in the coroners and justice act two thousand which address other problems that Mr Redfern identifies and aim to prevent any recurrence of the events that led to the establishment of his inquiry.

(0.8) Although the government is not proceeding with the role of a chief coroner, we intend to transfer many of the intended leadership functions of the post to the lord chancellor or possibly to the senior judiciary. There will be higher standards, when commissioning post-mortem examinations, and in the way coroners communicate with bereaved families. There will be more effective operational delivery (.) with an end to rigid geographic boundary restrictions. Training for coroners and their staff will be maintained and improved (0.2) and coroners’ work will be more transparent, so that unacceptable practices can be avoided or challenged, and deficiencies can be tackled. We are also considering introducing the new (0.4) more accountable system for appointing coroners and their deputies enabled by the two thousand and nine act.

(0.6) Mister speaker, the inquiry has sought and received assurances from all (0.3) of the key nuclear industry stakeholders that the practice of retaining organs or tissue at autopsy has (.) ceased. I hope that the families of those involved can take some comfort from the knowledge that the practices that the inquiry examined simply would not be permissible today. And I commend this statement to the House.


DC: Thank you Mister speaker. (.) With permission I’d like to make a statement on the report of the Hillsborough independent panel. Hhh Today the bishop of Liverpool the right rev. James Jones is publishing the report of the Hillsborough independent panel. (0.3) The disaster (.) at the Hillsborough football stadium on the fifteenth of April nineteen eighty nine was one of the greatest peacetime tragedies of the last century. < Ninety six people died as
a result of a crush in the leppings lane terrace at the fa Cup semi-final between liverpool and nottingham forest.

there was a public inquiry at the time by lord justice taylor which found and i quote that the main cause of the disaster was a failure of police control. but the inquiry didn’t have access to all the documents that have since become available. it didn’t properly examine the response of the emergency services. it was followed by a deeply controversial inquest and by a media version of events that sought to blame the fans.

as a result, the families have not heard the truth and they have not found justice. that is why the previous government and in particular the right hon. member for leigh was right to set up this panel and it is why this government insisted that no stone should be left unturned and that all papers should be made available to the bishop of liverpool and his team. in total more than four hundred and fifty thousand pages of evidence have been reviewed.

mister speaker it was right that the families should see the report first and as a result the government and i have had only a very limited amount of time to study the evidence so far. but it is already very clear that many of the report’s findings are deeply distressing. there are three areas in particular. the failure of the authorities to help to protect people. the attempt to blame the fans and the doubt cast on the original coroner’s inquest. and i want to take each in turn.

first there is new evidence about how the authorities failed. there is a trail of new documents which show the extent to which the safety of the crowd at hillsborough was compromised at every level. the ground failed to meet minimum standards and the deficiencies were well known, the turnstiles were inadequate, the ground capacity had been significantly over-calculated, the crush barriers failed to meet safety standards and there had been a crush at exactly the same match the year before and today’s report shows clearly that lessons had not been learned.

the report backs up again the key finding of the taylor report on police failure but it goes further by revealing for the first time the shortcomings of the ambulance and emergency services’ response. the major incident plan was not fully implemented, rescue attempts were held back by failures of leadership and co-ordination, and significantly new documents today show that there was a delay from the emergency services when people were being crushed and people were being killed.

second. the families have long believed that some of the authorities attempted to create a completely unjust
account of events that sought to blame the fans for what happened. and mister speaker (.) the families were right. the evidence in today’s report includes briefings to the media and attempts by the police to change the record of events. on the media several newspapers reported false allegations that fans were drunk and violent and stole from the dead. the sun’s report sensationalised these allegations under a banner headline, (0.5) the truth. this was clearly wrong and caused huge offence distress and hurt. news international has co-operated with the panel and, for the first time today’s report reveals that the source for these despicable untruths was a sheffield news agency reporting conversations with south yorkshire police and irvine patnick (.) the then mp for sheffield hallam. the report finds that this was part of police efforts (.) to develop and publicise a version of events that focused on allegations of drunkenness, (0.2) ticketlessness and violence.
in terms of changing the record of events, we already know that police reports were significantly altered but the full extent was not drawn to lord justice taylor’s attention. today’s report finds that one hundred and sixty four statements were significantly amended and a hundred and sixteen explicitly removed negative comments about the policing operation including its lack of leadership. the report also makes important findings about particular actions taken by the police and the coroner while investigating the deaths. there is new evidence which shows that police officers carried out police national computer checks on those who had died. (0.2) in an attempt and i quote directly from the report (.) to impugn the reputations of the deceased [hon. members: shame shame] the coroner took blood alcohol levels from all of the deceased including children. and the panel finds no rationale whatsoever for what it regards as an exceptional decision. .h h h h h h h h h h the report states clearly that the attempt of the inquest to draw a link between blood alcohol and late arrival was fundamentally flawed and that alcohol consumption was unremarkable and not exceptional for a social or leisure occasion. (0.3) mister speaker. (0.2) over all these years questions have been raised about the role of the government (.) including whether it did enough to uncover the truth. it is certainly true that some of the language in the government papers published today was insensitive but, having been through every document and every government document including cabinet minutes will be published (.) the panel
found (0.3) no evidence of any government trying to conceal the truth. (.) at the time of the taylor report the then prime minister was briefed by her private secretary that the defensive and (.) close to deceitful behaviour of senior (.) yorkshire police officers was and i quote depressingly familiar. and it is clear that the then government thought it right that the chief constable of south yorkshire should resign. but as the right honourable member for leigh has rightly highlighted on a number of occasions (.) governments then and since have simply not done enough to challenge publicly the unjust and untrue narrative that sought to blame the fans.

thirdly and perhaps most significantly of all the bishop of liverpool's report presents new evidence that casts significant doubt over the adequacy of the original inquest. the coroner (.) on the advice of the pathologists (.) believed that victims suffered traumatic asphyxia leading to unconsciousness within seconds and death within a few minutes. AS A RESULT he asserted that beyond three fifteen in the afternoon, there were no actions that could have changed the fate of the victims and he limited the scope of the inquest accordingly. but by analysing post-mortem reports the panel has found (.) that twenty eight people did not have obstruction of blood circulation, and thirty one did have evidence of heart and lungs continuing to function after the crush. this means that individuals in those groups could have had potentially reversible asphyxia BEYOND three fifteen pm and that is in contrast to the findings of the coroner and a sub- subsequent judicial review. and the panel states clearly that it is highly likely that what happened to those individuals after three fifteen pm was significant in determining whether they died.

.mister speaker. (.) the conclusions of this report will be very harrowing for many of the families affected. anyone who has lost a child knows that the pain never leaves you, but to read a report years afterwards that says and i quote (.) a swifter a more appropriate, better focused and properly equipped response had the potential to save more lives can only add to that pain.

.mister it is for the attorney-general to decide whether to apply to the high court to quash the original inquest and seek a new one. in this capacity he acts independently of government and he will need to examine the evidence himself. but it's clear to me that the new evidence in today’s report raises vital questions that must be examined and the attorney-general has assured me that he will examine this new evidence immediately and reach a decision as fast as
possible. but ultimately it is for the high court to decide. 

it is also right that the house should have an opportunity to 
debate the issues raised in this report fully. hh (0.4) and my 
right honourable friend the home secretary will be taking 
forward a debate in government time and this will happen 
relatively quickly when the house returns in october. 

(0.4) mister speaker i want to be very clear about the view 
that the government take about these findings and why after 
23 years this matters so much, (0.5) not just for the families 
(0.2) but for liverpool and our country as a whole. mister 
speaker (.) what happened that day (.) and since was 
wrong. it was wrong that the responsible authorities knew 
that hillsborough did not meet minimum safety standards 
and yet still allowed the match to go ahead. it was wrong 
that the families had to wait for so long and to fight so hard 
just to get to the truth. it was wrong. (.) quite profoundly 
wrong (.) that the police changed the records of what 
happened and tried to blame the fans. we ask the police to 
do difficult and often very dangerous things on our behalf 
and south yorkshire police is a very different organisation 
today from what it was then (.) but we do the many, 
many honourable policemen and women a great disservice 
if we try to defend the indefensible. it was also wrong that 
neither lord justice taylor nor the coroner looked properly 
at the response of the other emergency services. again (0.3) 
these are dedicated people who do extraordinary things to 
serve the public but the evidence from today’s report will 
make some very difficult reading. 

 hh hh mister speaker. (.) with the weight of the new 
evidence in this report it is right for me today (.) as prime 
minister to make a proper apology to the families of the 
ninety six for all they have suffered over the past twenty 
three years. [hon. members: hear hear] (0.4) indeed the 
new evidence which we are presented with today makes 
it quite clear in my view that these families have suffered 
a double (.) injustice. (.) the injustice of the appalling 
events (.) the failure of the state to protect their loved ones 
and the indefensible wait to get to the truth. = and then the 
injustice of the denigration of the deceased. that they were 
somehow at fault for their own deaths. and so on behalf 
of the government and indeed our country i am profoundly 
sorry that this double injustice has been left uncorrected for 
so long. [hon members: hear hear hear] 
mister speaker. (.) because of what i have described as 
the second injustice, the false version of events (.) not 
enough people in this country understand what the people 
of merseyside have been through. this appalling death toll 
of so many loved ones lost was compounded by an attempt
to blame the victims. A narrative about hooliganism on that day was created that led many in the country to accept that somehow it was a grey area. Today's report is black and white. The Liverpool fans were not the cause of the disaster. The panel has quite simply found no evidence in support of allegations of exceptional level of drunkenness, ticketlessness or violence amongst Liverpool fans. No evidence that fans had conspired to arrive late at the stadium and no evidence that they stole from the dead and dying.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the whole house will want to thank the Bishop of Liverpool and his panel for all the work they have done. And I am sure that both sides of the house will join me in paying tribute to the incredible strength and dignity of the Hillsborough families. AND the community that has backed them in their long search for justice. While nothing can ever bring back those that were lost with all the documents revealed (0.3) nothing held back the families at last have access to the truth. (0.4) And I commend this statement to the House.

Patrick Finucane Report – 12 December 2012; DC = David Cameron

DC: Thank you Mr. Speaker. With permission Mr. Speaker I would like to make a statement on Sir Desmond De Silva's report into the nature and extent of state collusion in the murder of Patrick Finucane. Mr. Speaker, the murder of Patrick Finucane in his home in North Belfast on Sunday the twelfth of February nineteen eighty-nine was an appalling crime. He was shot fourteen times as he sat down for dinner with his wife and three children. His wife was injured (0.4) and Pat Finucane died in front of his family.

In the period since the murder there have been three full criminal investigations carried out by the former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Lord Stevens. Taken together they amount to the biggest criminal investigation in British history led by the most senior police officer (0.4) consisting of more than one million pages of documents and twelve thousand witness statements obtained with full police powers. As a result of the third Stevens investigation one of those responsible, Ken Barrett (0.3) was tried and convicted in two thousand and four for the murder of Patrick Finucane.

There was a further report by Judge Cory. Both Lord Stevens and Judge Cory made it clear there was state collusion in
this murder. (.) now this itself was a shocking conclusion
and i apologised to the family on behalf of the british
government when i met them last year. but despite these
reports some twenty three years after the murder there
has still only been limited information put into the public
domain. the whole country and beyond is entitled to know
the extent and nature of the collusion and the extent of
the failure of our state and government. (0.3) that is why
last october this government asked sir desmond de silva to-
to conduct an independent review of the evidence (.) to
expose the truth as quickly as possible.

(0.5) .hhh mister speaker sir desmond has had full and
unrestricted access to the lord stevens archive and to all
government papers. (0.2) these include highly sensitive
intelligence files and new and significant information
that was not available to either lord stevens or justice
cory including cabinet papers (.) minutes of meetings
with ministers and senior officials (.) and papers and
guidance on agent handling. he has declassified key
documents including original intelligence material and he
has published them in volume two of his report today. the
decision over what to publish was entirely his own.=it was
entirely a matter for desmond de silva. sir desmond’s report
has now given us (.) i believe, the fullest possible account
of the murder of patrick finucane and the truth about state
collusion. .hh and the extent of disclosure in today’s report
is without precedent.

(1.0) .hhh now mister speaker nobody has more pride than
me in the work of our armed forces (.) our police (.) our
security services. i see at close hand just what they do to
keep us safe. and as sir desmond makes clear he is looking
at an extremely dark and violent time (0.3) in northern
ireland’s history. and i am sure that the whole house will
join me in paying tribute to the police and security forces
that served in northern ireland. (0.2) but < we should
be in no doubt that this report makes extremely difficult
reading< . it sets out the extent of collusion in areas such
as (1.2) identifying targeting and murdering mr finucane.
supplying a weapon and facilitating its later disappearance;
and deliberately obstructing subsequent investigations.
the report also answers questions about ho- how high up
the collusion went, (0.5) including the role of ministers at
the time. sir desmond is satisfied that there was not and
i quote. (0.3) an over-arching state conspiracy to murder
patrick finucane. but mister speaker (.) while he rejects any
state conspiracy, he does find quite frankly shocking levels
of state collusion. most importantly sir desmond says he is
and i quote left in significant doubt as to whether patrick
Finucane would have been murdered by the Ulster Defence Association in February nineteen eighty nine had it not been for the different strands of involvement by elements of the state.

He finds that a series of positive actions by employees of the state actively furthered and facilitated his murder. (0.4) and he cites five specific areas of collusion. First, there were extensive leaks of security force information to the UDA and other loyalist paramilitary groups. Sir Desmond finds that in nineteen eighty five the security service assessed that eighty five per cent of the UDA’s intelligence originated from sources within the security forces and he is satisfied that this proportion would have remained largely unchanged by the time of Patrick Finucane’s murder.

Second (0.5) there was a failure by the authorities to act on threat intelligence. Sir Desmond describes and I quote an extraordinary state of affairs in which both the army and the RUC Special Branch had prior notice of a series of planned UDA assassinations yet nothing was done by the RUC to prevent those attacks. When you read some of the specific cases in the report (.) page after page in chapter seven. (.) it is really shocking that this happened in our country. (0.3) and in the case of Patrick Finucane he says (.) and I quote that it should have been clear to the RUC special branch from the threat intelligence that the UDA were about to mount an imminent attack but it is clear that they took- and I quote (.) no action whatsoever to act on the threat intelligence.

Third, he confirms that employees of the state and state agents played key roles in the murder. (0.7) HHH Sir Desmond finds that two agents who were at the time in the pay of the state were involved. (0.3) That’s Brian Nelson and William Stobie. (0.4) Together with another who was to become an agent of the state after his involvement in that murder. Now it cannot be argued that these were rogue agents. Indeed Sir Desmond concludes that army informer Brian Nelson should and I quote=properly be considered to be acting in a position (.) equivalent to an employee (0.2) of the Ministry of Defence. And although Nelson is found to have held- withheld information from his army handlers, I quote again. The army must bear a degree of responsibility for Nelson’s targeting activity during nineteen eighty seven to nineteen eighty nine including that (0.4) of Patrick Finucane. And most shocking of all (0.3) Sir Desmond says that (0.4) on the balance of probabilities an RUC officer or officers did propose Patrick Finucane as a UDA target when speaking to a loyalist paramilitary.
fourth. there was a failure to investigate and arrest key members of the wes- west belfast uda over a long period of time. (0.5) as i said earlier ken barrett was eventually convicted of the murder. (0.3) but what is extraordinary is that back in nineteen ninety one instead of prosecuting him for murder as the ruc (0.2) cid wanted to, the ruc special branch decided instead to recruit him as an agent.

fifth. (0.3) this was all part of what sir desmond calls a wider relentless attempt to defeat the ends of justice after the murder had taken place. sir desmond finds that senior army officers deliberately lied to criminal investigators, (0.5) the ruc special branch too were responsible for seriously obstructing the investigation. and on the separate question of how certain ministers were briefed .hh while sir desmond finds no political conspiracy he is clear that ministers were misled. he finds that and i quote (. ) the army and ministry of defence officials provided the secretary of state for defence with highly misleading and in parts factually inaccurate advice about the force research unit’s handling of nelson. (0.4) on the comments made by douglas hogg (0.2) sir desmond agrees with lord stevens that the briefing he received from the ruc meant he was compromised. however, sir desmond goes on to say that there is (. ) and i quote (0.3) no basis for any claim that he intended his comments to provide a form of political encouragement for an attack on any solicitor.

(0.6) mister speaker. more broadly on the role of ministers he says that there is and i quote (. ) no evidence whatsoever to suggest that any government minister had foreknowledge of patrick finucane’s murder nor that they were subsequently informed of any intelligence that any agency of the state had received about the threat to his life. he says that the then attorney-general sir patrick mayhew deserves (0.2) significant credit for withstanding considerable political pressure designed to ensure that brian nelson was not prosecuted. as a result of course nelson was prosecuted in nineteen ninety two following the first investigation by lord stevens.

(0.3) .hhh mister speaker the collusion demonstrated beyond any doubt by sir desmond which included the involvement of state agencies in murder (. ) is totally unacceptable. we do not defend our security forces or the many who have served in them with great distinction by trying to claim otherwise. collusion should never ever happen. so on behalf of the government and the whole country let me say again to the finucane family (0.3) i am deeply sorry.

(1.3) mister speaker. (. ) it is vital that we learn the lessons
of what went wrong. (0.4) and for government in particular to address sir desmond’s criticisms of, and i quote. (0.2) a wilful and abject failure by successive governments to provide the clear policy and legal framework necessary for agent-handling, (0.2) or agent-handling operations to take place effectively and within the law. now since nineteen eighty nine many steps have been taken to improve the rules procedures and oversight of intelligence work. (0.2) there is now a proper legal basis for the security services and the regulation of investigatory powers act two thousand has established a framework for the authorisation of the use (0.5) and conduct of agents. in addition the activities of individual agents are now clearly recorded along with the parameters within which they must work. and the intelligence services commissioners and the office of surveillance commissioners now regulate the use of agents and report publicly to this house. taken together (.) those changes are designed to ensure that the failures of nineteen eighty nine could not be made today. (0.8) mister speaker policing and security in northern ireland have been transformed reflecting the progress that has been made in recent years. the force research unit and the special branch of the ruc have both gone (0.3) .hhh and the ruc- the police service of northern ireland is today one of the most scrutinised police forces anywhere in the world. (0.6) it is accountable to local ministers and a local policing board. and i believe that it commands widespread support across the whole community. (0.4) through all these measures both this government and its predecessors have shown a determination to do everything possible to ensure that no such collusion ever happens again. (0.2) we will study sir desmond’s report in detail to see whether what further lessons can be learned and i’ve asked the secretaries of state for defence and for northern ireland and the cabinet secretary to report back to me on all the issues that arise from this report. i will publish their responses. (0.3) other organisations properly independent of government such as the police and prosecuting authorities will want to read this report closely and consider their own responses. mister speaker. sir desmond says that his conclusion should not be taken to impugn the reputation of the majority of ruc and udr officers who served with distinction during what was an extraordinarily violent period. (0.8) he goes on to say that it would be a serious mistake for this report to be used to promote or reinforce a particular narrative of any of the groups involved in the troubles in northern ireland. mister speaker i am sure that those statements will have
wide support in this house. We should never forget that over three thousand five hundred people lost their lives, there were many terrible atrocities. Sir Desmond reminds us that the Provisional IRA was the single greatest source of violence during this period and a full account of the events of the late nineteen eighties and I quote (...) would reveal the full calculating brutality of that terrorist group.

During the troubles over three hundred RUC officers and seven hundred British military personnel were killed, with over thirteen thousand police and military injured. I pay tribute to them and to all those who defended democracy and the rule of law and created the conditions for the progress we have now seen. (0.3) We must not take that progress for granted as we have seen this week (...) and I pay tribute again to those in the PSNI who are once again in the front line today. (0.3) We must not allow Northern Ireland to slip back (0.2) to its bitter and bloody past.

(0.5) Mister Speaker, the Finucane family suffered the most grievous lost and they suffered it in the most appalling way imaginable. I know they oppose this review process and I respect their views. However I do respectfully disagree with them that a public inquiry would produce a fuller picture of what happened and what went wrong. Indeed, the history of public inquiries in Northern Ireland would suggest that had we gone down this route we would not know now what we know today.

(0.6) Mister Speaker, Northern Ireland has been transformed over the past twenty years but there is still more to do to build a genuinely shared future. One thing this Government can do to help is to face up honestly when things have gone wrong in the past. If we as a country want to uphold democracy and the rule of law then we must be prepared to be judged by the highest standards. (0.4) And we must also face up fully when we fall short. In showing once again that we are not afraid to do that (...) I hope that today's report can contribute to moving Northern Ireland forward. And in that spirit I commend this statement to the House.


1 WH: with permission mister speaker I would like to make a statement on a legal settlement that the government have reached (...) concerning the claims of Kenyan citizens who lived through the emergency period and the Mau Mau insurgency from October nineteen fifty two to December nineteen sixty three.

2 (0.3) hh during the emergency period widespread violence
was committed by both sides (.) and most of the
victims were kenyan. many thousands of mau mau
members were killed. (0.2) while the mau mau themselves
were responsible for the deaths of over two thousand
people including two hundred casualties among the british
regiments and police.

emergency regulations were introduced, political
organisations were banned, prohibited areas were
created and provisions for detention without trial were
enacted. the colonial authorities made unprecedented
use of capital punishment and sanctioned harsh prison-
so-called rehabilitation (. ) regimes. (0.2) many of those
detained were never tried and the links of many with the
mau mau were never proven. there was recognition at the
time (0.4) of the brutality of these repressive measures and
the shocking level of violence > including an important
debate in this house on the infamous events at hola camp
in nineteen fifty nine.

we recognise that british personnel were called upon to
serve in difficult and dangerous circumstances. many
members of the colonial service contributed to establishing
the institutions that underpin kenya today and we
acknowledge their contribution. however i would like
to make clear now and for the first time on behalf of
her majesty’s government, that we understand the pain
and grievance felt by those who were involved in the
events of the emergency in kenya. (0.3) the british
government recognises that kenyans were subject to torture
(0.2) and other forms of ill treatment at the hands of the
colonial administration. the british government sincerely
regrets that these abuses took place and that they marred
kenya’s progress towards independence. torture and ill
treatment are abhorrent violations of human dignity which
we unreservedly condemn.

in october two thousand and nine claims were
first brought to the high court by five individuals who
were detained during the emergency period regarding their
treatment in detention. in two thousand and eleven the high
court rejected the claimants’ arguments that the liabilities
of the colonial administration transferred to the british
government on independence but allowed the claims to
proceed on the basis of other arguments.
in two thousand and twelve a further hearing took place
to determine whether the cases should be allowed to
proceed. the high court ruled that three of the five cases
could do so. the court of appeal was due to hear our
appeal against that decision last month. (0.7) however i
can announce today that the government (0.3) have now
reached an agreement with Leigh Day, the solicitors acting on behalf of the claimants in full and final settlement of their clients’ claims. The agreement includes payment of a settlement sum in respect of five thousand two hundred and twenty-eight claimants as well as a gross costs sum to the total value of nineteen point nine million pounds. The government will also support the construction of a memorial in Nairobi to the victims of torture and ill-treatment during the colonial era. The memorial will stand alongside others that are already being established in Kenya as the country continues to heal the wounds of the past. The British High Commissioner in Nairobi is also today making a public statement to members of the Mau Mau War Veterans Association in Kenya explaining the settlement and expressing our regret for the events of the emergency period.

(0.4) Mister Speaker this settlement provides recognition of the suffering and injustice that took place in Kenya. The Government of Kenya, the Kenya Human Rights Commission and the Mau Mau War Veterans Association have long been in favour of a settlement and it is my hope that the agreement now reached will receive wide support. It will help draw a line under these events and will support reconciliation.

(.) We continue to deny liability on behalf of the government and British taxpayers today for the actions of the colonial administration in respect of the claims and indeed the courts have made no finding of liability against the government in this case. We do not believe that claims relating to events that occurred overseas outside direct British jurisdiction more than fifty years ago can be resolved satisfactorily through the courts without the testimony of key witnesses that is no longer available. It is therefore right that the government have defended the case to this point since two thousand and nine. It is of course right that those who feel they have a case are free to bring it to the courts. However, we will also continue to exercise our own right to defend claims brought against the government and we do not believe that this settlement establishes a precedent in relation to any other former British colonial administration.

The settlement I am announcing today is part of a process of reconciliation. In December this year, Kenya will mark its fiftieth anniversary of independence and the country’s future belongs to a post-independence generation. We do not want our current and future relations with Kenya to be overshadowed by the past. (0.3) Today we are bound together by commercial security and personal links that
benefit both our countries. we are working together closely
to build a more stable region. bilateral trade between the
uk and kenya amounts to one billion pounds each year, and
around two hundred thousand britons visit kenya annually.
although we should never forget history and indeed must
always seek to learn from it we should also look to the
future strengthening a relationship that will promote the
security and prosperity of both our nations. (.) i trust
that this settlement will support that process. the ability
to recognise error in the past but also to build the strongest
possible foundation for co-operation and friendship in the
future are both hallmarks of our democracy.
Appendix F: Copy of the Hansard report of the Ron Brown censure debate

Audio from the censure debate can be found here: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yxjcm0y7da9/AACXbVT0I-XbqPjlgKu6DHOva

20 April 1988 - vol. 131, col. 934-957. Note: Numbers in square brackets refer to the column number in the report

Mr. Speaker Before calling the Leader of the House to move the motion in his name, may I remind the House that the exercise of its disciplinary powers in relation to one of its own Members is one of its most solemn and responsible duties. I trust that the forthcoming debate will be conducted in accordance with the best traditions of this House, and that in reviewing the conduct of a colleague we shall conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the responsibility that we bear. In order to allow the House the possibility of choosing what alternative penalty, if any, is appropriate in this case, I have selected both of the amendments on the Order Paper. I shall permit a general debate on the motion and the amendments. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that, if it is desired to move both amendments after the conclusion of the debate, it will be necessary for it to end approximately 20 minutes before the allotted time so that there will be an opportunity for both amendments to be taken.

I ask hon. Members to bear these considerations in mind. In view of the long list of right hon. and hon. Members who wish to participate in this debate, I ask for brief speeches.

10.15 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham) I beg to move, That Mr. Ron Brown be suspended from the service of the House for twenty sitting days, and be held responsible for the damage that was sustained by the Mace.

The motion before the House was tabled last night following discussions through the usual channels, and with the agreement of the official Opposition. The points of order yesterday afternoon about the conduct of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) after which I undertook to bring forward a motion showed how seriously the House regards this matter. The agreement to the motion from both sides of the Chamber is a clear sign that the House generally accepts the importance of upholding the authority of the Chair.
The incidents to which the motion refers took place yesterday and the day before, so the House will need little reminding of them. On Monday night, at the end of the proceedings, the hon. Member for Leith threw some papers on to the floor of the Chamber and picked up the Mace. He then released it, and, as it hit the ground, it sustained a certain amount of damage. As you told the House yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the extent of that damage is now being assessed.

Arrangements were made yesterday for the hon. Member to make a personal statement at 3.30 pm about his conduct the previous night. Despite being given ample opportunity by you, Mr. Speaker, to make his statement and apologise, he failed to do so in a way which satisfied the House and had to be asked to withdraw from the Chamber.

I have deliberately given a low-key factual account of what happened, but it is clear that many right hon. and hon. Members are—in my view rightly—very concerned at this behaviour. The conduct of the hon. Member for Leith [935] showed a deep disrespect for the dignity and position of the Speaker of this House and the authority he exercises on behalf of the House itself.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) was right to point out yesterday that the House is generous to those who make personal statements expressing regret for action taken in the heat of the moment. I am sure that hon. Members can think for themselves of occasions when this has occurred. Very often the House may decide that on these occasions no further action is needed. But I do not think that anyone who heard the hon. Member for Leith yesterday could believe that he regretted his action, and indeed I understand that he has since said as much to the press. That is why the House must take this matter so seriously.

The action which the motion proposes is twofold. The first element is that the hon. Member for Leith should be suspended from the service of the House for 20 sitting days. This is, of course, the level of penalty which would automatically follow on the second occasion in a single Session that the same hon. Member had been named. The second element is that the hon. Member should be held responsible for the damage sustained by the Mace, and should thus pay for the repair work it needs. I do not think many hon. Members would disagree with the view that the hon. Member for Leith’s aggravation of his original misconduct by his persistent refusal to offer a satisfactory apology justifies a penalty more severe than that which he would have received yesterday had he been named. Nor do I think any hon. Member would feel it right for the public purse to bear the cost of putting right the damage done to the Mace as a result of the hon. Member’s conduct.

It may be helpful if I now say a few words about each of the amendments which you, Mr. Speaker, have selected.

The amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) would reduce the penalty for the hon. Member for Leith to financial liability for the damage caused to the Mace. I say to the hon. Gentleman that, while that might conceivably have been acceptable to the House if the hon. Member for Leith had shown yesterday any genuine regret for what he had done, in the circumstances where he quite clearly has not, for the sake of its own reputation I do not believe the House would or should agree to that amendment.
My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth), by contrast, would take a tougher line than would my motion which was agreed through the usual channels. He would ask the House to suspend the hon. Member for Leith without pay for 60 sitting days and insist on an acceptable apology before the suspension was lifted. I greatly sympathise with the concerns behind my hon. Friend’s amendment. But I do not think that it would be right to bring forward new disciplinary measures—docking salary and making an end to the suspension dependent on an acceptable apology are novel—in one particular case without a more general consideration of the House’s power in this respect. As the House will know, I said at business questions last week that I expect to set up the Procedure Committee very shortly. Indeed, I hope to table the motion next week. It may be that that Committee would wish to carry out a review of our disciplinary procedures and, if so, I am sure that the House would wish to take its comments into account before making any changes.

Sir Hugh Rossi (Hornsey and Wood Green) I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for giving way. Obviously, the House must take careful note of what he has said concerning the ordinary penalty that this House is accustomed to impose in situations of this kind. Nevertheless, could he state whether there has been an increase in incidents giving rise to suspension in recent years which might lead the House or the Committee that he is setting up to draw the conclusion that that sanction is possibly less adequate than it has been in the past?

Mr. Wakeham Since the end of the war in 1945, there have been 24 suspensions of five days for hon. Members acting in defiance of the Chair, of which seven have occurred in this Session, since we returned in the autumn.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West) Does the Leader of the House accept that there have been previous examples of many suspensions being made on the same day, for example, in 1881, a total of 28—[Interruption.] I am sorry that Conservative Members are not interested in any form of historical perspective. In 1881, 28 hon. Members were expelled on the same day. Should not the Leader of the House look back a little further to see what happened in the past?

Mr. Wakeham We are living in the present day and are trying to deal with the present problems. I have to say that seven suspensions in this Session of Parliament, compared with the total of 24 for similar offences for the entire period since the war, is something that I should have thought was of concern to hon. Members on both sides of the House.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would say just this. It is a privilege of which many of us are very conscious to be a Member of this place. That privilege carries the responsibility of respecting the authority the House itself places in the holder of the office of Speaker and of observing the procedures and practices by which we order our discussions. When those are defied, we cannot take the matter lightly, and must act in self-regulation. No amount of regulation by the House can adequately substitute for self-discipline and self-control on the part of each individual hon. Member. But, in the present circumstances, the motion proposes a disciplinary course which I believe the House as a whole will find it right to take. I commend it to the House.

10.23 pm
Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras) From time to time, because we are overwrought, angry or frustrated, we all make fools of ourselves, including in this place, but we all live in hope of the opportunity to recover our reputations–

Mr. Ron Brown (Edinburgh, Leith) My old mum says that one must apologise, and I cannot knock that. Clearly, individuals here and elsewhere are worried about this mess. I hope that they are also worried about the working class and what it has to suffer. If you, Mr. Speaker, want an apology, so be it, you can have an apology, but only if one apologises also to the working class for what it has to suffer–fair do’s. That is fair enough with me. Back home in Scotland, back in Leith, there are many unemployed engineering workers. If the Mace has been damaged, they will be willing to repair it. In fact, they will give you a new one, Mr. Speaker. That is a guarantee to you. If you are worried about a bauble, as Cromwell said, [937] you are worried about nothing. What is important is this country. It is important because it belongs to us. It does not belong to certain individuals in this place. Democracy will be fought for outside this place. I–

Mr. Speaker Order. I think that it would be more appropriate if the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) sought to make a speech.

Mr. Brown I know that you are trying to protect me, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, if we say and do certain things, we must accept the consequence. Please pass on the bill if I have offended you.

Mr. Dobson I shall not attempt to reply to the points made by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown). I expect that he will be called to speak in the debate. Late on Monday evening, the hon. Member for Leith picked up the Mace, for whatever reason, dropped it and damaged it. The following morning, the Opposition Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip had a meeting with the hon. Gentleman and explained to him that by custom in this place he could make a personal statement apologising for what he had done, but that the terms of the statement had to be agreed with you, Mr. Speaker. This he agreed to do. He agreed also to make good the damage to the Mace. He was asked to stand by in his office while it was discovered what terms of apology would be acceptable to you, Mr. Speaker. This was done particularly as it was not a matter in which a personal statement about another Member was concerned. It was a matter that was related directly to your authority.

Later the hon. Member for Leith could not be found. He got in contact with the Opposition Chief Whip at 3.25 pm, five minutes before he would have had to make the apology if he chose to do so. He was given a copy of wording which had been agreed by you, Mr. Speaker, and he told the Opposition Chief Whip that he would make the apology in those terms. Lest anyone feels that the terms suggested were personally humiliating, I shall read them out: I wish to make a personal statement, Mr. Speaker. I regret my action last night in regard to the Mace, and I apologise unreservedly to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the House for what occurred. I accept responsibility for any damage that was sustained by the Mace. You duly gave the hon. Member for Leith no fewer than nine opportunities to make that apology in the terms agreed with you, Mr. Speaker, and this he failed to do. You asked him to leave the Chamber and he did.

There can be no question of leaving it at that. Such behaviour would not be acceptable
in any other organisation and it is not acceptable here. Members are elected to this House to represent the people in their constituencies. Most of that representation is done by word. That is partly by the written word but mainly here by the spoken word. Before words can have influence, they must be heeded. Before words can be heeded, they must be heard. For them to be heard, there must be order. Without rules of order and without someone to sustain and apply those rules, there can be neither debate nor opportunity to influence those outside this place who hear or read what we have said.

It is not only Parliament that has rules for the conduct of its business. Every organisation has such rules because without them organisations cannot function. Nowhere is this more true than in the Labour and trade union movement. Every trade union has a rule book, and most of them spell out what can and cannot be done at meetings if the views of the members are to prevail. All grown-up people know that such rules exist and that they must be accepted, and that if they are not, those who breach them must take the consequences. A great deal of our childhood is taken up by learning just that.

I shall give two examples drawn from the heart of the Labour movement to illustrate what I am trying to say. The rule book of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, of which the hon. Member for Leith is a member, sets out the duties of presidents in the union, from branch presidents to national presidents. The first duty of the branch president in the AEU rule book is to preside over all meetings and to see that the business is conducted with propriety and order. For another example I draw upon Citrine’s famous book “ABC of Chairmanship” which spells out that if any delegate to the Trades Union Congress refuses to obey the president when called to order he or she shall be expelled from the hall and allowed back in only if he or she expresses regret and the delegates consent to his or her return.

That springs from the simple recognition by ordinary working people over the years that the proper and orderly conduct of business is necessary if their interests are to be promoted. There is nothing soft, wet or weak about such an approach. Quite the reverse; it requires self-control, self-discipline and team work. Perhaps we should remember Hemingway’s definition of guts, which he described as "grace under pressure."

Of course, the House of Commons is not always orderly. Many of us, including me, from time to time are ill-disciplined. When this place is disorderly or ill-disciplined, as my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) pointed out, it is only reflecting what has happened many times in the past. There are many things wrong with this place that Opposition Members would like to see changed. We would like to change the policies of the Government. We would like to change the Government. We would like to see changes in the procedures of this place and make all Governments more accountable. We would like to see far-reaching changes in the working practices here. However, I know of no one who wishes to get rid of the rules that are designed to secure a hearing for all or who wishes to diminish the authority of Mr. Speaker to help to achieve that.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover) Now that my hon. Friend has got on to the question of working practices in the House, will he take into account the fact that in this quaint little club there are practices that allow Members of Parliament to turn up for work
when it suits them without clocking on? It allows Members of Parliament, such as Tory Members, to go on jaunts to the Both a regime, paid for by that evil system. It allows many Tory Members in particular to make money on the side by moonlighting with four, five or six different jobs. Is it not time that the Opposition Front Bench concentrated on those issues instead of attacking one of its own?

Mr. Dobson I agree with many of the criticisms that my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) has levelled at this place and at some Tory Members. However, I do not think that what he is suggesting is the way to go about changing matters.

We have a Government—I hope that my hon. Friend will agree with me—who are arrogant with power. They are often unwilling to answer our points. They ignore what we believe to be the sufferings of many of our people. We all find that very frustrating, and our frustration manifests itself in many ways. People occasionally, on the spur of the moment, may do foolish things or behave in a disorderly way. However, that does not mean that they care more about what is happening to our country or that they are working harder in the House than others to try to put things right.

[940] Day in and day out, most Opposition Members are doing their hardest to represent their constituencies, to expose what is wrong with the Government and to propose alternatives to what is happening to our country. They try to make the most of the opportunities available in this place. They try to be sensible, trenchant, committed and coherent. For those qualities to show through, we need a House of Commons that is orderly, or usually orderly. For it to be orderly, we need to sustain the authority of the Chair, and the only way in which we can do that tonight is by voting for the motion and rejecting the two amendments.

[941] 10.35 pm

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point) A great deal of what has been said by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) must be agreed by the whole House. I would respectfully submit, however, that the bizarre actions of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) cannot be seen wholly in isolation. They were but one more instance of a deterioration in the standards of behaviour in this place which has manifested itself in the last few months. Therefore, what the hon. Gentleman did—I must say this in fairness—cannot wholly be set apart from what went before.

There is no escape for any of us who have wittingly or even unwittingly made a contribution to this rising tide of disorder. It is one of life’s ironies that we do not always see where our own behaviour is leading us. After this latest episode we should be able to see it all too clearly.

Let us speak plainly. For some time there have been those in our midst—only a few, I believe—who have been openly advocating the disruption of Parliament as a means to a political end. Are they not as much to blame as the hon. Member for Leith?

I should like to keep this in perspective. Down the years, disruptive behaviour and even violence have not been unknown in this place. There were many instances in the last century and in this of disorder and violence.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow) I am one of those to whom the right hon. Gentleman
Sir Bernard Braine has referred. If the argument is to be generalised, one has to take into account other considerations. I happen to think that it should not be generalised tonight. There is the question of the organised mendacity of others if the right hon. Gentleman intends to make generalisations.

Sir Bernard Braine The hon. Gentleman has been in the House long enough to know that to intervene at the beginning of an argument is often a waste of time. If he would hear what I have to say, I think that at the end of it he, a formidable parliamentarian in his own right, would understand what I am driving at.

In 1893, during the 47th sitting on the Home Rule Bill of that year, there was not only complete uproar but violence. According to one report, when it was all over, the Floor of the Chamber was found to be strewn with scarf pins and artificial teeth. But always in the past the overwhelming majority drew back from the brink. Extremist behaviour was curbed and the outside world continued to admire the way in which contrary views could be expressed here with lucidity, with feeling and even on some occasions with passion.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth) rose–

Sir Bernard Braine I shall not give way. This is a short debate and I want to say something which I hope is important. I trust that my hon. Friend will understand. There is no need for disruptive behaviour in this place. There are those amongst us who know that in the voicing of grievances and in the righting of wrongs there are procedural devices by which the astute can get results. I have learnt a few of the tricks myself in my time. I know of no greater authority on procedure than my hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hislop). In this Parliament no fewer than seven hon. Members have been suspended, and there is open talk in some quarters of further disruption of our proceedings.

I am not making excuses for the hon. Member for Leith. If his defiance of the norms of decent parliamentary behaviour continues, he must be dealt with effectively. One of the greatest of parliamentarians, Edmund Burke, held: Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom”. That is generally good advice, but there is a point at which we have to say that this House is always more important than the sum total of those who constitute it at any one time.

Governments come and go. Ministers are vested with a little brief authority. None of us is master here. We are all trustees for the nation, for those who have gone before and for those who are still unborn. Running off with the Mace, throwing it down or dropping it are acts of violence. That "bauble", as Oliver Cromwell referred to it contemptuously, symbolises in one sense the authority which you, Mr. Speaker, derive from the Sovereign. In a wider sense, it symbolises everything that we represent here and seek to defend—a system which facilitates change within a framework of order and proper respect for continuity. To treat the Mace with contempt is to treat the system with contempt, and that is to treat all of us and those who elected us to this place with contempt. It fires a shot at the governing party, but, more than that, it fires a shot at all political parties. It is a direct challenge to the authority of the Chair, and that is what is intended.

You have a difficult enough task, Mr. Speaker, in holding a fair balance between parties and between strongly expressed, opposing and sincerely held points of view. Precisely
because you are the protector of our rights in this place, you are entitled to have our support at all times.

I remember not so many years ago a formidable figure in the Liberal party—the late Mr. Clement Davies—who, in the midst of a disruptive scene when certain elements were attacking the Chair, silenced the House by saying, “In this country people do not like the side that kicks a referee.” If we continue kicking the referee, as some hon. Members seek to do, the game is not worth playing and the public will lose interest. There will be great anger. We must stop the rot while the time is right.

Whatever our differences, the House will be united on that. You have powers, Mr. Speaker. You should use them. If they are not sufficient in the light of future misbehaviour, the House can give you extra powers. I am convinced that the House is about to draw back from the brink and, therefore, I argue that we should accept the motion moved by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. That should do the trick. I hope that this short debate will illustrate that the House of Commons intends to he master in its own house.

10.43 pm

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland) I do not want to dwell at length on the actions of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown), which have been described by the Leader of the House and the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson). His abuse of the Mace—the symbol of your authority, Mr. Speaker—and pathetic performance yesterday speak for themselves and merit at least the sanction proposed in the motion moved by the Leader of the House.

[943] I welcome the fact that the right hon. Gentleman has indicated his opposition to the fiscal penalty proposed by the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth). Before embarking on the imposition of fiscal penalties on people, it is important that we think carefully. I welcome the announcement that the Procedure Committee will consider these matters. Certain rules of natural justice, which I hope that the Committee will address, should be observed.

My right hon. and hon. Friends uphold, above all, the concept of parliamentary democracy. Like the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras, we believe that this is a place where political issues are debated. It greatly distresses us when organised barracking drowns out free speech, however unpalatable the views expressed.

Equally, it distresses us when parties represented in the House suggest outside the House illegal methods of challenging laws passed by the House. If we aspire, as all of us in the various parties do, to come to government and pass laws ourselves, we expect the country at large to obey those laws. That is the essence of parliamentary democracy. We very much regret, therefore, the challenge to parliamentary democracy and to your office, Mr. Speaker, mounted by the hon. Member for Leith, and we support the Leader of the House’s motion.

Finally, I believe that there are other ways in which parliamentary democracy can be undermined. The essence of civilised democracy is that the rights of minorities are respected. When a Government say that they will carry on regardless and do not heed the dissenting voices, even within their own ranks, that quality of listening to minorities—the essence of parliamentary democracy—is undermined.
The institutions of the House are attacked when the Government opt for the grandeur of the stage-managed press conference instead of coming to answer hon. Members at the Dispatch Box. While we deal with the activities of the hon. Member for Leith, we should remember that there are various ways of undermining parliamentary democracy.

10.47 pm

Mr. Cranky Onslow (Woking) It is clear that both sides of the House are largely united in condemning the disgraceful events that have led to this debate on the conduct of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown). If you, Mr. Speaker, had been led yesterday simply to name him and he had withdrawn from the House for no more than five days, that would scarcely have been sufficient penalty for the gravity of his offence. We are grateful to you, therefore, for the opportunity to debate the matter more widely. It is also important to note that the debate provides an opportunity for the House to focus on a situation that has been causing growing impatience both inside and outside the House. No one gainsays that there must be a place in politics for passion, but we all agree that there is no place in the House for deliberate, cold-blooded disruption of democratic processes.

That is why it is right to reinforce some of the figures that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House gave by reminding the House that between 1974 and 1980—a period largely dominated by a Labour Government who could not really be described as popular—there were no suspensions in this place. Since 1981, there have been 18. I am glad to say that none of those have come from the party to which I have the honour to belong.

You, Mr. Speaker, know that many of my hon. Friends have been deeply angered by the persistent challenges to your authority. That is why I welcome what my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House has said about the re-establishment of the Procedure Committee for which many of us have been pressing for a long time. If cur Standing Orders need to be reinforced, that is the right way to go about it. If the penalties are inadequate, that is the right place to debate how much stronger they should be made. But if the House then decides that the Chair needs stronger powers, the purpose of those powers will not be to suppress opposition or to create martyrs, because it is a mistake in politics to do either of those things.

In the days of John Wilkes, the occupant of the Chair, Mr. Speaker Onslow, once found himself burnt in effigy on Tower Hill by the street politicians of the day. Because they thought that they were defending a martyr, they raised the cry of, “Wilkes and liberty.” However, this evening we are not talking about liberty; we are talking about licence. There is no doubt that the abuse of his position by the hon. Member for Leith makes it necessary that his licence should be withdrawn, as the motion proposes.

10.49 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South) I should like to move my amendment which would—

Mr. Speaker Order. I shall ask the hon. Gentleman to move his amendment at the end. This is a general debate.

Mr. Cryer I hope that the House will support my amendment and I shall say briefly
why. A principal reason is that the atmosphere of the House yesterday was not the cosy, still atmosphere that some hon. Members imply in their condemnation. There was a great deal of shouting and bellowing from the pinstriped hooligans on the Tory Benches, and that must be taken into account. When hon. Members talk about undermining democracy, they would do well to remember that Peter Wright wrote more about that in MI5 than whatever could have conceivably happened in this place.

This place rests on precedent. "Erskine May" is virtually a list of them—a thick list. We can recall, for example, the precedent of the right hon. Member For Henley (Mr. Heseltine) on the night when he came down, took up the Mace and started whirling it around. He was forced to put it back by the moderate Jim Prior who presumably did not think that that was the way forward for the Conservative party. The right hon. Gentleman apologised the following day and no more was heard about it. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] The right hon. Gentleman was heard in silence. We are considering the difference between the two cases. The apology from my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) was less than fulsome, but it was repeated twice—[Interruption.] Yet, the House is saying that for a fumbled apology my hon. Friend should be suspended; for 20 days.

There is a further precedent for this resolution. On Monday 1 November 1976, the House established a Select Committee to examine the conduct of three hon. Members. The report was considered on 26 July and one [945] of the hon. Members subsequently resigned. Those three had consistently over several years used their position as Members of the House for personal financial gain in approaches to Ministers and public bodies, and in asking questions and raising issues in the House. Those financial gains were never disclosed. It would be fair to say that all three were in the pocket of J. G. L. Poulson.

As I have mentioned, one resigned. Albert Roberts and Reginald Maudling faced a similar resolution to this one. What were the precedents then? Were a large number of Conservatives waiting for blood, as is obviously the case tonight? The resolution to agree with the Select Committee report—a Select Committee established and approved by the House—was defeated and an amendment was inserted simply to "take note" of the report. Resolutions to suspend the two for six months without pay were defeated by massive majorities of about 200. After a career of abusing the House for several years, those two hon. Members got off scot-free, despite being involved in one of the widest cases of local and national government corruption in the 20th century.

The hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) said: We should realise, looking back over the period in question, which is 13 to 14 years, that there are few of us who can say that we have done everything completely as we might have wished or who have not made the odd mistake. If our colleagues have erred in any judgment, they have suffered more than enough from the publicity following the Report and during previous years when their names were constantly in the headlines. We can serve the House best and show understanding best by taking note and leaving the matter there."—[Official Report, 26 July 1977; Vol. 936 c. 438.]

I recall that you, Mr. Speaker were convinced by that call for consideration and understanding, and voted for the suggestion of the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South. I urge the House to have the same compassion and understanding that the hon.
Gentleman had on that occasion.

The truth of the matter is that we are here dealing with two very minor incidents compared with that on 26 July 1977. The House would do well to bear that fact in mind and support my amendment, which allows for a "take note" motion as on 26 July and for the costs of repairing the Mace to be charged to my hon. Friend the Member for Leith.

10.55 pm

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire) This is a matter of the utmost gravity, as seems to be widely agreed throughout the House, though I have to say that what has just been said by the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) suggests that he does not understand its gravity.

We must all begin from the point that the Mace symbolises not only the House itself but your authority, Mr. Speaker. The House cannot let go unrecognised or unpunished the actions of a Member who lifts the Mace and drops it or throws it to the floor and damages it. That action goes beyond the mere damage done to the Mace. It suggests an attitude to the House and to your authority, Mr. Speaker, that is totally unacceptable.

We are not looking at this action in isolation, because it must be seen in the context of something that has already [946] been mentioned this evening—a growing incidence of such activities in the House. It is against that background that the activities of the hon. Member for Edinburgh Leith (Mr. Brown) must be judged.

Reference must also be made to the events in the House yesterday. When the hon. Member for Leith was given opportunity to apologise to the House, he deliberately refused that opportunity and set out systematically to undermine the authority of the Chair. His use of the phrase I did not write this rubbish.”–[Official Report, 19 April 1988; Vol. 131, c. 676.] when referring to the agreed apology, sums up well the attitude of the hon. Member to yourself, Mr. Speaker, to the Chair, and to the House. In that respect, the hon. Gentleman’s attitude and activities must be regarded as completely unacceptable.

There is a motion before the House in the name of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and the House should be grateful for the fact the Opposition have seen fit to support it. I do not believe that it goes far enough. One of the main reasons is that it seeks merely to suspend the hon. Member for 20 days, with no effect on his pay.

I shall now answer the point made by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. He told the House that we are to have a Procedure Committee and that it will consider the matter before us. In the light of what has happened in the past two days, I believe that it is the right and the duty of the House to judge the actions of the hon. Member for Leith and to give the Procedure Committee guidance on the action that it should take, by accepting the terms of my amendment. That would tell the Committee, under the authority of the House, that the House expects the penalties available to you, Mr. Speaker, to be much more severe in future.

If we were to accept the motion in the name of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, supported by the Opposition Front Bench, the hon. Member for Leith, would
be suspended, yes, but he would be able to return to the service of the House without ever having given an apology to the House for what he did. I view that as completely unacceptable. My amendment, in requiring from the hon. Gentleman an apology that is acceptable to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the House before he is allowed to return, is the only basis on which we can allow him to return. I hope that the House will consider that proposal most seriously in determining how it votes this evening.

10.58 pm

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East) This is a sad occasion for the House of Commons, and any right hon. or hon. Gentleman who takes pleasure from this debate must have a perverted sense of justice. It is at moments like this that I never envy a judge or magistrate having to sit in judgment on his fellow men. I do not enjoy what is happening in the House tonight, and I suspect strongly that there are a great many right hon. and hon. Members on these Benches and in all quarters of the House who share my sadness that we have to sit in judgment on one of our colleagues.

When I go into the Division Lobby, as I will, it will be in support of the motion. I say to my colleagues who are in doubt that this is a Labour party motion–an Opposition motion–as much as it is a Government motion. When I go into the Lobby to support the motion I shall do so, not to punish my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown), but to show my personal [947] displeasure–I can put it in no other words–at his conduct yesterday and the day before. The one thing that I shall not do is regard myself as going into the Lobby along with Conservative Members: I shall not see it in that light. This is, as I have said, as much a Labour as a Government motion. I shall also see myself, Mr. Speaker, as supporting you and the Chair.

I say openly and honestly that I have not always done that. I have never voted against a Speaker, but on occasions I have deliberately abstained. There have been times when I have played my part in disrupting the proceedings of the House. My hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson)–the shadow Leader of the House–made the telling point that, by the very nature of the Chamber, the issues with which we deal are bound, at one time or another, to result in our feelings spilling over so that we do things that we might not have done in our calmer moments.

Let me inject a lighter note into the few remarks that I wish to make. A comparison was drawn between my hon. Friend the Member for Leith and the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), and I should like to take the comparison a bit further. After the right hon. Member for Henley had waved the Mace in the House, Mr. Speaker Thomas suspended the sitting and refused to allow him to make his apology there and then. That was why the right hon. Gentleman had to come back and apologise the following day. But look at what has happened to the right hon. Gentleman. He went on to become a Cabinet Minister, and he is now challenging others for the position of leader of his party. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Member for Leith should give some further consideration to the apology that he refused to make yesterday.

Some of my colleagues–with most of whom I have had a lifelong friendship–now take the view that disruption should lead to destruction. Anyone who holds that view should dismiss it from his thoughts. We as a Labour movement have fought long and hard to represent our people here in this Chamber. If we destroy this place, we have no place left in which to voice the fears, worries and concerns of the people whom we
represent.

Some of my hon. Friends may say, "Let us disregard this place and take the argument to the people." All right: we will follow that through. We take the argument to the people and we convince them: where do we go then? We will have no place left for legislation.

I caution all my hon. Friends who think that the way to unseat the Government—the way to prosecute our case—is to disrupt and destroy the Chamber to think long and carefully about where that process ends. It ends where it began: it ends without representation for the very people whom we are sent here to represent.

11.03 pm

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South) As a new boy—a member of the new intake—I found that it seemed almost like normal behaviour over the past 10 months to see Member after Member named by you, Mr. Speaker, for disruption in the House. It was with some surprise that I found that not a single hon. Member needed to be named and dismissed from the service of the House between 1974 and 1980.

In 1981 the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) found a method of disrupting this place and had to be named. The rot started there, and unfortunately the [948] next person to decide that this was a good way of getting his name into the newspapers was none other than the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) who was dismissed from the service of the House not once, but twice. It is interesting to note that on both those occasions, Mr. Speaker Thomas did not need to call a vote. the hon. Gentleman was immediately suspended on the unanimous verbal vote of the whole House.

Now, time after time, it is necessary to suspend the business of the House for 15 minutes or more at a time, so that some hon. Member can get his name in the papers.

It is easy to be out of order by mistake in this place. It could be judged a legitimate parliamentary tactic to be deliberately out of order, but what cannot be sustained is that you should be challenged, Mr. Speaker, when you rule an hon. Member out of order. There are parliamentary tactics available to us for attacking our opponents, but we should never attack the Chair.

The best form of discipline is self-discipline. It would be good if all hon. Members understood that, but clearly they do not. I shall certainly support the call of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) for the hon. Member for Leith to be suspended for a long period, to lose his salary and to have to apologise to the Chair before he returns.

11.07pm

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield) Tonight the House is sitting, as you said, Mr. Speaker, in a judicial capacity. We are the prosecution, the judge and the jury, and the executioner stands in the Serjeant at Arms’ Box.

This is a House of Commons matter, on which we should all be free to vote. I am deeply uneasy about a sentence negotiated between the two Front Benches, for the simple reason that, on matters of this sort, every hon. Member must reach a judgment.
[Interruption.] I hope that the House will listen to my argument, because I am not in favour of hon. Members getting themselves expelled from the House.

If I had ever been asked by anyone—I have not—I should have advised them that there were other ways of getting their case across—in questions, speeches, motions, points of order, and even in motions of censure against the Speaker. On one occasion I moved such a motion, which was well in order. Those who say that hon. Members must support the Speaker forget that there is an ultimate right to move a motion against him if that is the right thing to do.

At the same time, I know that there is a degree of anger about what is happening in this country and about the violence that is being perpetrated against our constituents by the Conservative party. That leads to much anger among hon. Members. The question for us tonight is solely what we should do about it.

I want to put a simple point before the House. We are a representative body and our duty is to those who sent us here and not to each other—except in one special context. We hold our privileges on behalf of those who sent us here. If an hon. Member says, "I do not want the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith back until he has done this or that," he is assuming the rights of my hon. Friend's constituents. No hon. Member is in the House because other hon. Members approve of him. The day that we accept that the House can remove an hon. Member will be the day that we destroy parliamentary democracy.

[949] I say that with some feeling, because, historically, some hon. Members have been in the most severe breach of duty. I refer to hon. Members elected on one party ticket who remain in the House and change their allegiance. I regard that as a profound betrayal of their true responsibility to their constituents. In that regard, I shall make a reference that is of special relevance. My father was the Liberal Member for Leith. The day that he joined the Labour party he applied for the Chiltern Hundreds and left the House. Unlike the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), he did not believe that it was right to be elected as a Liberal Member and remain in the House as a Labour one.

If we remove my hon. Friend the Member for Leith (Mr. Brown) we are punishing not him—except financially—but his constituents. I do not think that the House has the right to remove hon. Members. I say that with some feeling, because I was expelled from the House by the House on the most ludicrous ground of peerage. I was an elected Member for 10 years, and the same sort of hon. Member who will troop through the Lobby to get rid of my hon. Friend, denied the electors of Bristol—[Interruption.]

Mr. Speaker Order. Every hon. Member should have a right to say what he wishes, provided it is in order, and the right hon. Gentleman is in order.

Mr. Benn I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for supporting what I am saying. [Laughter.] When the passions of hon. Members subside, it may be that the high excitement tonight would not look so good if a precedent were to be created and became part of the procedure of the House.

It is true that my hon. Friend the Member for Leith broke the rules of the House, but they are not the same as the basic principles of parliamentary democracy; they are the
rules of the club. If parliamentary democracy depended on a bit of metal on the Table, we would all be in trouble.

If one looks at the history of disorder, one sees that there are some formidable precedents. The King came here and Mr. Speaker Lenthall had to deal with him. Cromwell removed the bauble. The home rule debates of the 1880s led to the first invention of a closure. There was no English word for it, so the French word, "cloture" had to be used, and then we moved to "guillotine" and other French words. It was unknown in our history to limit debate.

Before the war, Beckett swung the Mace about and was put in the Clock Tower. As there have been so many references to the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) I shall not add to them. Manny Shinwell—who, on his 100th birthday, was paid a special tribute in the House of Lords—crossed the Floor of the House and struck Commander Bower because he thought that he had made an anti-Semitic remark. In my time, George Wigg struck a Tory Member in the precincts of the House. Bernadette Devlin struck Reginald Maudling. Private Eye said that she nearly woke him up.

The reality is that we can become awfully pompous about disorder in the House. I shall tell one brief true story concerning my former hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West, Leslie Hale and the then Chairman of Ways and Means, Sir Charles MacAndrew. Leslie was short and red faced and Sir Charles MacAndrew was tall and severe with white hair that looked like a wig. One night, in the middle of a Committee stage, Leslie Hale was speaking. MacAndrew told him to withdraw a remark. Hale said he would not. MacAndrew said "Are you challenging my ruling?" Hale said, "Yes, I am." Sir Charles MacAndrew said, "I shall ask you to leave." Hale said, "I will not leave." Then it all faded away. I said to Leslie Hale afterwards, "What happened?" and he said, "Charlie MacAndrew came up to me and said, 'I have guests in the Gallery tonight Leslie. Will you challenge one of my rulings?'".

That is an absolutely true story—[Interruption.] Dare I say it, there is a lot of synthetic indignation and the day will come when we will bring children round and say, "That is where it happened."

You, Mr. Speaker, have at your disposal the power to suspend the sitting. You can take an idea from the other place—not a Chamber which I like—which adopts the practice of moving that "the noble Lord be no longer heard." That is a disciplinary measure. You, Mr. Speaker, could rely on pressure from colleagues. As you look at the angry faces on our Benches, you know that whatever the House does to my hon. Friend is nothing to the fate that awaits him when my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition gets at him when he returns.

Are you, Mr. Speaker, really saying that this is the end of parliamentary democracy? It is nothing of the kind. In my opinion, my hon. Friend did a silly thing. I have told him that tonight, he should get up, read the apology, say nothing and withdraw. I gave him that advice because the House is happy always to accept it.

I beg the House tonight, in high passion with some entertainment value added, not to go through the Lobby and throw out a Member of this House for four weeks for what, however we judge it, was a minor offence. It was not a pre-arranged offence, it was nothing to do with a plan of disruption discussed secretly by hon. Members. It was nothing of the kind.
Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East) Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Benn No. I am on my last words. I appeal to hon. Members to have a sense of proportion about the whole matter.

Mr. Faulds Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Benn I shall finish on these words, if I am allowed to get them out. I am depending on you, Mr. Speaker to protect me from my hon. Friend.

Mr. Speaker Order. The right hon. Member is not giving way.

Mr. Benn I am not giving way to my hon. Friend. Friend, but if he gets slung out, I will support him. [Interruption.]

Mr. Faulds It is parliamentary convention for hon. Members to give way.

Mr. Speaker Order. The right hon. Gentleman said that he was not giving way.

Mr. Benn I am not giving way only because, knowing my hon. Friend very well, he might make it worse. Therefore, I hope that the House will allow me to say my last sentence. [951] Have a sense of proportion. My hon. Friend the Member for Leith has done something for which I fear later his colleagues will exact a terrible price. I shall make a similar speech when the moment comes. Tonight, the House has made its point and I suggest that we leave it with two speeches, we do not go into the Lobbies, and we let it pass into the history of the Chamber along with more dangerous and sensational events.

11.18 pm

Mr. John Biffen (Shropshire, North) We have just heard a delightful speech, a tour de force, a patrician view. Those who live cocooned in that kind of political and physical comfort often can be much more detached, if not semi-detached, about these affairs. I suggest to the House that there is an underlying seriousness. The House knows perfectly well that this is a disagreeable and uncomfortable occasion that we would much rather do without. At least we have had the advantage of the debate being introduced by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and responded to by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) in a manner which has elevated it as much as possible in these circumstances.

I ask the House to consider only two points. They may be dull and pedestrian. They do not have the panache and the glamour of the preceding speech, but they are possibly closer to the working-day reality of the House. The Mace exerts an almost mesmerising attraction for politicians from time to time. Such behaviour has occurred not just since the last war. It occurred in the interval between the two wars when a Mr. Forgan and a Mr. Beckett took charge of the Mace.

The Mace represents something of the utmost significance to the House. There are very few institutions to which we belong where there are not symbols that command collegiate respect. Therefore, the handling of the Mace is naturally not a matter of farce or dismissive comment. It is symbolic because of its wider implications.

I speak in all charity when I say to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) that all hon. Members are fighting their corner and that we have a pretty dismissive view of the judgment of our fellow Members. The hon. Gentleman is being arraigned...
on a question of judgment, certainly not on a question of honour. When one recalls the 
opportunity for the apology, it was the hon. Gentleman’s unwillingness to abide by an 
unconditional agreement that worried me. The hon. Gentleman is not the only guilty 
one, but I do not intend to widen the debate.

To put it in as neutral terms as I can contrive, there has grown up over some time an 
increasing reluctance to accept Mr. Speaker’s ruling, the judgment of the Chair, in a 
total and complete fashion, without any qualification whatsoever. I have watched—I 
must admit, reminiscent of my own days in the ranks of the Army, with some envy—the 
development of dumb insolence into an art form. That cannot continue. I promise the 
House that that kind of development is corrosive of authority and that eventually we 
shall all pay for it.

That brings me to the point that was so eloquently made by the hon. Member for 
Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing). The rules, orders and conventions, and the symbols 
that represent them that are evident in this House, are not the manufacture of the 
Treasury Bench. They are the manufacture of the House of Commons over the decades, 
gen erations and centuries. Above all, they have been of value to unfashionable 
minorities—minorities who came here to crusade. When Red Clydesiders came to this 
House of Commons they did not come to it to destroy its institutions. They came to 
use them. To the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), who is muttering away, I 
say that if he can leave this institution with the reputation of Jimmy Maxton, he will 
have done pretty well by Socialism and pretty well by radicalism.

We must defend the Orders of the House, not to be on the side of the establishment 
but to protect essentially minority interests. That can be done only if we show a much 
more increased and a much more evident respect for authority both in this context and 
over a much wider field.

11.23 pm

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough) I have some sympathy with the hon. Member for 
Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) who, as his neighbour the hon. Member for Linlithgow 
(Mr. Dalyell) pointed out yesterday, suffered an industrial injury which, in the context 
of a motion for the Adjournment of the House on a matter relating to supplementary 
benefit appeals, led to his misuse of the Mace.

I have equal sympathy with you, Mr. Speaker, in your endeavours, with patience and 
good humour, to hold hon. Members to the Standing Orders of this House and to the 
precedents of "Erskine May". A massive Tory majority is being used not moderately, 
as we would expect, to unite the nation but to tear us all asunder. It seems determined 
to create not one nation among our people but a series of different nations and a series 
of mini-statelets consisting of the poor, the oppressed and the bewildered who, unable 
to fend for themselves, find a stony-faced Government bearing down upon them. They 
look to Parliament to redress their grievances and to protect their interests as best it 
can.

Faced with an onslaught on the living standards of those who sent Labour Members 
to Parliament—the onslaught on our National Health Service, on those who are entitled 
to social security, on those who have not gained what they thought they might gain 
under the Budget, and on those who are the victims of an iniquitous and divisive 
Government, with its poll tax—faced with these monumental and ravaging attacks,
it is hardly surprising that discipline breaks down, frustration creeps in, and that frustration should express itself in aggressive ways and manners inappropriate to this House.

However, to explain how these things happen is not to justify them happening. However high ran the emotions of the hon. Member for Leith on Monday evening, the situation could not justify his refusal to make a personal statement to this House on the following day, when his emotions had cooled and when he had had an ample period for reflection. Indeed, those hon. Members who are in the Chamber tonight, and who were in the Chamber yesterday, noted how, with firmness but forebearance, you, Mr. Speaker, gave the hon. Gentleman every opportunity to make the statement which you had given him leave to make. His failure to do so brought contempt upon the Chair, and also brought contempt upon our parliamentary proceedings.

It is, of course, a parliamentary privilege to make a personal statement uninterrupted, which is without intervention or debate. As the hon. Member for Hornsey [953] and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) stated yesterday, the House will listen with indulgence and sympathy to those who have been carried away in the heat of the moment. However, privilege—parliamentary privilege—goes to the heart of our proceedings. The privilege to speak freely on any subject is a privilege that we claim from the Monarch at the beginning of each Parliamentary Session.

I advise my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) that this House has exclusive control over its own proceedings, and has seen the enhancement of our parliamentary democracy since the time of William and Mary, many years ago. It was Mr. Justice Coke—if I might tell the right hon. Member for Chesterfield—who in 1565 noted: Whatever matter arises concerning either House of Parliament ought to be examined, discussed and adjudged in that House to which it relates and not elsewhere”.

Therefore, if power and privilege rest with us, so too does responsibility. It is a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, we owe to you in the Chair. We owe it to you to uphold the authority of the Chair. It is a responsibility that we bear to the British people that the Executive should be held to account, that its policies should be probed and questioned, that hon. Members should be kept on their toes and feel understandably nervous at the Dispatch Box.

Any failure of this House to act responsibly towards a Member who has brought it into disrepute demeans the House and its reputation and diminishes it in the eyes of the public. What signal do we send to our collective electorate if we are unable to control the conduct of our own affairs?

I advise Labour Members that we are in a privileged position. We are in the vanguard of the Labour movement. We represent millions of voters out there in the field. If we act responsibly, they will respond to us. For that reason, I support the motion.

Mr. Speaker Before I call the next hon. Member, may I draw attention to what I said at the beginning of the debate. If the House desires to have two votes on this matter, we should be thinking about drawing the debate to a close.

11.29 pm

Mr. Ron Brown (Edinburgh, Leith) Perhaps there was a misunderstanding yesterday
about what was meant by a personal statement. Certainly I knew what I intended to say, even though you, Mr. Speaker may have thought differently. That is in the past. I make it clear to the House that, if there is any damage to the Mace, it will be paid for by myself and my friends back home—the members of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers—who are quite happy to do what they can to make everything better, if that is what you want. They will certainly look at the Mace simply because it symbolises so much to so many hon. Members. Members, on both sides of the House. We recognise that such things are important to certain hon. Members.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, you have that as a guarantee from me, but you still know my strength of feeling, bearing in mind what is happening to working class people, not just in Scotland but in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. That should be borne in mind. That is not a [954] political statement, but a statement that I make as the representative of Leith. I feel strongly about many things that have happened repeatedly since 1979.

11.30 pm

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster) The only reason I intervene is that I am probably the only Conservative Member who knows the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) well. The hon. Gentleman and I have paired for the last nine years—[Laughter.]

Mr. Speaker Order.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It will not escape the notice of my hon. Friends and Opposition Members that I therefore have something of a vested interest in what the House decides. However, I hope that you, Mr. Speaker, will accept that that is not the reason why I intervene. I do so because having known the hon. Gentleman for nine years and having got to know him quite well, I know him to be someone for whose political views I have absolutely no time at all and whose judgment I sometimes question politically.

I seldom agree wholeheartedly with the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), who has urged the hon. Gentleman to apologise, as I did at some length last night. I have intervened because I should like the House, and especially my hon. Friends, to take into account the fact that, having got to know the hon. Gentleman quite well, I find him to be someone of absolute integrity and total honesty. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen), the former Leader of the House said, this is not a question of the hon. Gentleman’s honour, it is a question of his judgment. In my opinion, his judgment is appalling.

No one in the House would feel otherwise than that your authority, Mr. Speaker, has been questioned, that it should not have been and that action must be taken. However, I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends, when deciding the level of penalty, to take into account the fact that the hon. Gentleman’s integrity sometimes leads him astray—on that occasion, it certainly did—and that they give him the benefit of that judgment.

11.33 pm

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton) Everyone in the House gets excited on occasions. If they do not get excited, they are not reflecting the worries, fears and excitement of their constituents. I well remember, when I first became a Member
of the House, that Dame Irene Ward who had a great problem in her area, and who had raised the matter with the Ministers of the day time after time, without getting anywhere, walked from her place, stood in front of the Mace and, for a period of time, disrupted the House, and was named.

I had never seen that before, but I stored it in my memory until an occasion when we had been debating the Industrial Relations Act 1971. About 20 or 30 hon. Members—all members of the Tribune group, led incidentally by the present chairman of the parliamentary Labour party—stood in front of the Mace. I got up from the Front Bench and stood with them. We expected to be named, but Mr. Speaker of the day was a highly intelligent person. He looked through, round, above and below us, and he did not see us. He decided that we were not there. [955] The Division was called and it was then that the sitting was suspended. The then Mr. Speaker called a Division on a second occasion, as we had done it again.

Disruption has taken place on many occasions. I remember my hon. Friends and I singing “The Red Flag”. I remember also the present leader of the Labour party joining in heartily. Indeed, he may have led the singing of “The Red Flag”. Some of my hon. Friends threw pennies at us. They were the old-style large pennies. Had one of those pennies hit an hon. Member in the eye, it could have knocked it out. That was an act of some violence in the House. Let us get these matters into perspective.

I believe that there was a misunderstanding yesterday—[Interruption.] I wish that Conservative Members would listen carefully to what is being said. I said yesterday that I had not realised that personal statements made by hon. Members were agreed. I turned to the relevant passage in “Erskine May”, and found that it does not provide that such statements have to be agreed: The passage reads: provided that the Speaker has been informed of what the Member proposes to say, and has given leave. I understand that that provision has been interpreted over the years as meaning that Mr. Speaker has to agree the words in the statement.

I understand also that my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) did not meet and speak to you, Mr. Speaker, on any occasion yesterday. Instead, the matter was handled through the Opposition Whips’ Office. My hon. Friend the Member for Leith was asked to go to the Chief Whip’s Room, and I understand that he stayed there for some time. He did not stay there throughout, and I do not know to where he disappeared. I know only that he disappeared after a period.

My hon. Friend was handed the statement when he came into the Chamber, and it had never been discussed between him and yourself, Mr. Speaker. If there is to be an agreed statement, surely Mr. Speaker of the day and the Member, whoever he is, should ensure that there is a properly agreed statement, if that is the way in which such statements are to be handled.

If we heard what my hon. Friend the Member for Leith said or if we read what he said yesterday, it is clear that he was trying to apologise in his own way—[Interruption] I ask all hon. Members not to use a sledgehammer—[Laughter.]

Mr. Speaker Order. Time is getting on.

Mr. Heffer I am glad that the House is slightly in front of me. That is what I want to say to the House. In my opinion, the House has to be compassionate on this issue. I
have defended many hon. Members over the years on issues when sometimes, looking back, perhaps I ought not to have done. However, I believe that hon. Members can get highly excited on occasions and we should take that into consideration. That is why I am asking the House to support the amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), which I think is the best answer to the issue before us.

Several Hon. Members rose–

Mr. Cryer On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. With the leave of the House, may I move my amendment?

[956]

Mr. Speaker Other hon. Members are rising to speak. It is not up to me to accept a closure on timed business such as this.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East) rose–

Mr. Speaker Order. We are still on the main Question. It is not possible to move the amendment at this point.

11.41 pm

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South) The hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) certainly entertained and enlightened the House. However, I believe that he has taken us away from the main issue and I hope that he will not seduce us from it.

The hon. Members who came closest to dealing with the main issue were, in my estimation, the hon. Members for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) and for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen). They underlined the fact that this is a House of Commons occasion. We are not seeking vindictively to punish an individual Member who might have done things that he now, to some degree, repents. We are talking about upholding the authority of the Chair because whoever occupies the Chair, it protects all hon. Members. We are also underlining the importance of the two red lines on the floor of the Chamber that we see every time we come in here. They symbolise the fact that here we should seek to solve our differences by argument and persuasion, not by other means.

A total of 37 of my hon. Friends and I know what it is like to be in a minority this week, and it is for the protection of minorities, above all, that the rules and procedures of the House have been devised. It is important that every hon. Member should have the opportunity to express his opinions, however objectionable those opinions might be to his colleagues. However, it is not up to any hon. Member to usurp or desecrate the authority of the House or to challenge the Chair and, in so doing, to do the gravest disservice that he can possibly do to his constituency and those who sent him here to represent their interests.

I accept entirely the generous words that were uttered by my hon. Friend the Member for Upminster (Sir N. Bonsor), who, in three weeks’ time will have the good fortune to pair with the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown). I do not wish to repudiate what he said. I say this in no spirit of personal recrimination, but if the
House does not unite behind the Chair and in support of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras, it will have abdicated its authority. We need a united House behind you, Mr. Speaker, because of what is at stake.

11.44 pm

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn) In supporting the motion, may I point out that my background is the trade union movement and local government. On no occasion in the trade union movement or in my service in local government would the kind of behaviour that we are considering have been allowed. It is all right for some hon. Members to talk about the rules of the club, but those rules sometimes work in favour of Privy Councillors, who are called to speak before Back Benchers such as myself. [957] I take exception to my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) and other hon. Members who may have been removed from the House saying that they are the only ones who care about unemployment and the poor. Like other Back Benchers, I have to take my chance on being called to speak. I have not had an opportunity tonight to speak about the poll tax, which will affect people in Scotland before it affects people south of the border–

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. SPEAKER put the Question, pursuant to the order this day.

The House divided: Ayes 463, Noes 27.