

What is the Meaning of the Phrase "Hope in a Hashtag"? The Discourse Employed by the Activist Group Overstayed

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Abstract

As a significant global tactic in the fight against gender inequality, the use of Twitter hashtags as a tool to organise feminist activism has emerged as an approach that has gained traction. Both the field of feminist media studies and the field of social movement studies have not conducted an in-depth analysis of the significance of this new form of activism or the fundamental components that lead to its efficacy among activists. The purpose of this research is to fill a vacuum in the existing academic literature by conducting an in-depth investigation into the potential and constraints of hashtag feminism. The purpose of this study is to investigate the particular tactics that could be utilised in order for a feminist hashtag to successfully attain global renown as a tool for protest action. Based on this analysis, it appears that the utilisation of the hashtag #WhyIStayed is a significant case study that indicates how hashtag feminism is a contemporary illustration of the communication strategies that are associated with the movement, which have their origins in the past. This problem was brought to light in 2014, following an incident of domestic violence that was played out in the National Football League (NFL) and was widely publicised. Through the use of a narrative framework known as hashtag feminism, a connection is established between the elements that make up an engaging theatrical performance and the efficacy of an online feminist protest. The purpose of this study is to establish the main factors that facilitated the transfer of #WhyIStayed tweets from personal reflection to organised efforts. This study makes use of Twitter as well as other media sources when conducting its research.

Keywords- Hope in a Hashtag, Discourse Employed , Activist Group Overstayed

Introduction

Imagine a situation in which one million women who have been victims of domestic violence come together to voice their opposition to the conventional victim-blaming paradigm that is pervasive in the media's depictions of violence against women. In the

age of social media, the potential influence of one hundred thousand tweets is equivalent to the impact that one hundred thousand people could have if they both spoke in public. Over the course of a single day in 2014, about nine thousand users of Twitter participated in the conversation that around the hashtag #WhyIStayed in regard to the domestic abuse that involved Ray Rice of the Baltimore Ravens. This was a very significant segment of the Twitter community.

The term "hashtag activism" has been used by academics and activists to refer to a subset of this type of demonstration (Gunn, 2015...). The concept of gender equality that is seen in the sphere of online feminism is frequently referred to as "hashtag feminism." In recent years, this has produced a significant amount of attention, which has culminated in the formation of a digital archive that is solely dedicated to hashtagfeminism.com. Digital media expert and analyst Tara L. Conley is the one responsible for curating this platform. Other feminist hashtag campaigns, such as #EverydaySexism, #SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen, and #RapeCultureIsWhen, were also influential in the development of the #WhyIStayed movement.

Following the guidelines for academic writing, the material that has been submitted will be reworded.

Twitter hashtags have arisen as a powerful international strategy in the battle against gender inequality. These hashtags are used as a tool to coordinate feminist activity on Twitter. There has not yet been a comprehensive investigation into the relevance of this new form of activism or the essential elements that constitute effective online activism in the field of social movement studies and feminist media studies. As a result of this work, a gap in the existing body of research is filled by expanding upon previous academic inquiries into the powers and limitations of hashtag feminism. The explicit purpose of this study is to analyse the methods through which a feminist hashtag could achieve significant notoriety and significance as a form of protest. The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate how hashtag feminism expands its historically based discourse techniques, specifically in response to a domestic abuse event that occurred in the National Football League in 2014. The analysis proposes that the use of the hashtag #WhyIStayed serves as a key case study example. A comparison is made between the powerful aspects that are present in a theatrical production and the effectiveness that is displayed during online feminist protests. This comparison is made within the framework of the narrative concept of hashtag feminism. This

research endeavours to determine the crucial factors that facilitated the evolution of #WhyIStayed tweets from simple online diaries to substantial online movements. The research makes use of Twitter as well as other media venues.

The publication given the title "Syntax Keys 2016" and written by F. is the material that is being discussed here. and T. Francis and organisations are involved. These scholarly discussions will cover a wide range of subjects, including feminism, writings protected by intellectual property rights, and social movements.

An approval for publishing was granted to the article after it underwent changes on December 21, 2015 and January 1, 2016. There was an evaluation that took place on August 18, 2015. Please accept my greetings, [Last Name of Professor]. My hope is that everything is going well for you. For Rosemary Clark, I am writing this letter at approximately 7:18 p.m. on February 22, 2016. It is not possible to rewrite the letter in an academic manner because it is not long enough. Through the use of R, the file was downloaded. The name Clark was bestowed upon him by Rosemary Clark.

A clear indication of the relevance of this developing movement is the fact that Feminist Media Studies contains three essay sections. The potential of feminist hashtags to challenge authority narratives that are dominant in the news, entertainment, and commercial media has been the subject of study performed by eminent academics such as Rosemary Clark (2014), Tanya Horeck (2014), and Michaela D. E. Meyer (2014), etc. The significance of hashtag feminism as a kind of activism that fights violence against women through its discursive power is highlighted by the writers Ryan B. Eagle (2015), Carrie Rentschler (2015), Michelle Rodino-Colocino (2014), Samantha C. Thrift (2014), and Sherri Williams (2015). These authors have all contributed. The authors in question illustrate how sexual violence has become part of the accepted discourse in popular culture. The implementation of hashtag campaigns, like #SafetyTipsForLadies, #StopStreetHarassment, and #YesAllWomen, has effectively brought to light the victim-blaming language that characterises rape culture as well as the daily hardships that women confront. There are risks and limitations associated with the feminist movement, despite the fact that it has resulted in meaningful accomplishments.

Over the course of her article, Cole (2015) highlights the dangers that are posed by misogynistic trolls that spread hate speech and issue threats against women on the internet. Woods (2014), on the other hand, warns feminists who use hashtags to

advocate against the possible adverse effects of exploiting vulnerable individuals for political gain the consequence of doing so. With the use of hashtag activism, marginalised or quiet populations have been able to be included into the larger framework of global feminist movements, as stated by scholarly works written by Higgs (2015) and Akyil (2014). Despite the fact that Twitter is broadly accessible to users, it is essential to bring attention to the fact that Daniela Latina and Steve Docherty (2014) have given a warning to readers about the possibility of exclusive access to the platform for some social groups.

Through the utilisation of a complete case study on the #WhyIStayed phenomena, the purpose of this research is to investigate and evaluate the essence of hashtag feminism, as well as its characteristics and relevance. The social dynamics of the feminist movement have received relatively less attention from academics as compared to the political and cultural aspects of the movement throughout the past few decades. After then, the study of these social processes will be the primary focus of our investigation. When it comes to a public movement that is opposed to a specific cause, how does a feminist hashtag become widely recognised? Which of the following feasible mechanisms could account for the dynamics that have been seen in the phenomenon? A complete grasp of the relevance of hashtag feminism and how it should be interpreted can be obtained by analysing the challenges that have been described above.

It has been stated that the exponential growth of hashtags in the political realm might be attributed to the narrative logic of hashtags, which refers to their capacity to generate and develop linkages between different stories. As opposed to prior incarnations of feminist personal politics, hashtag feminism places an emphasis on the ability of the internet to foster relationships and the sharing of particular experiences of its users. In the early phases of online participation, it appears that hashtags that indicate outrage regarding gender justice breaches tend to generate greater levels of engagement. This is based on my research surrounding the #WhyIStayed movement, which I looked into. Nevertheless, the sociopolitical settings and interaction dynamics of diverse actors have an impact on the ultimate growth of collective online protest on the internet. In light of the fact that the feminist movement has traditionally placed a strong focus on discourse, narrative, and language, the intentional insertion of dramatic elements into online participation and engagement shows to be particularly

effective when it comes to feminist hashtag demonstrations. To investigate the dramatic aspects of hashtag feminism, this analysis makes use of the theoretical frameworks of connected action, as described by W., discursive activism, as discussed by Frances Shaw in 2012, and social drama, as proposed by Victor Turner in 1982. All of these frameworks were considered by Victor Turner. In the year 2013, Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg were married.

Here is a brief overview of the history of hashtag feminism, including its beginnings and its progression, before we go on.

The beginning of the feminist movement in its primitive form

An examination of the current situation of feminism in the digital sphere was the subject of the academic inquiry that resulted in the publication of "#FemFuture: The Online Revolution" in (2013). In order to form a long-lasting and cohesive collective that could capitalise on their pre-existing affiliations with feminist organisations and virtual communities, the gathering of nineteen feminist bloggers at the Centre for Research and Women of Barnard College was held with the sole purpose of achieving this objective.

The document was handed over to Rosemary Clark at 7:18 o'clock on February 22, 2016, a day before the deadline. The authors of *Courses on Gender Representation in the Media for Women* (2013), Vanessa Valenti and Courtney E. Martin, believe that key persons, such as feminists and those linked with academic institutions, ought to be prepared with an alternate path of action. When the writers of the book used the hashtag #FemFuture and promoted online feminist inquiry, they sparked a conversation on Twitter. This conversation was sparked by the authors of the book.

On the other hand, the research was received with criticism by users of hashtags, who noted that it displayed bias towards online groups that were largely composed of white persons, while overlooking the viewpoints of marginalised feminists who had access to institutional support networks and allies (Johnson, 2013). In order to avoid the requirement of a dedicated financing source, the study did not include feminists who propagate their beliefs through social media sites that do not require payment. However, despite the fact that a hashtag was used in the headline, the article failed to adequately address the significance and function of Twitter.

Within the context of the #FemFuture discourse, two aspects of contemporary feminism in the United States are revealed. The fact that it places such a strong focus

on female "voices" is largely indicative of the dissertation's discursive nature. Due to the extensive usage of social media platforms, particularly among the younger demographic, which regularly and exclusively employs them for activist goals, textual exchanges are given increased emphasis. Communication-centered discursive methods were the primary method of choice for feminists of prior generations. Spokespeople, alternative news publications, and organisations that raise awareness were some of the techniques that were utilised (Clark, 2014). The planned preparations for major demonstrations, for instance, did not include the hashtags that were stated earlier in this paragraph.

In the following section, which examines the influence that the widespread use of digital media has had on disadvantaged activists and feminists of colour, the topic that was discussed earlier is expanded upon. They have been able to gain a powerful platform that allows them to disseminate their work and cultivate connections within their local community as a result of the enhancement that was described earlier. In spite of the fact that women of colour and women who do not have institutional backing have been active members in feminist organisations for a long time, feminist narratives in the United States have a tendency to minimise the significance of these groups from a historical perspective. As a result of its ability to provide an easily available venue and to enable activists to communicate with a wide-ranging audience without being constrained by specific group affiliations, the utilisation of digital media has, however, overcome the constraints that were imposed by groups that are associated with the feminist movement. In the 1960s and 1970s, transgender women were generally excluded from significant feminist organisations including the National Organisation for Women, the Women's Equity Action League, and the National Women's Political Caucus. This was the primary reason for their marginalisation under these organisations. Transgender women were subjected to organised yet more radical organisations, such as the New York Radical Women and the Redstockings, which resulted in marginalisation for them (Reger, 2012). This was another effect of being subjected to these organisations. There has been a significant impact that communication requirements have had on the development of the organisational dynamics of the feminist movement. Over the course of its history, the movement's coordination of its numerous components was the responsibility of a number of different institutions. These projects have been able to become more standardised and

integrated into a more uniform structure as a result of the emergence of various communication platforms, such as hashtags on Twitter and blog postings.

The contemporary feminists who have inherited the hierarchical tactics of their predecessors have, according to Reger (2012), failed to recognise the aspects that characterise modern feminism. These factors include the aforementioned components. White women who are of middle-class to upper-class socioeconomic status and who have earned college degrees make up the majority of these feminists. A significant amount of influence has been accumulated by these individuals over the course of time within feminist organisations. They have frequently established a distance between themselves and those who advocate for a wide variety of identities, including those that pertain to sexual orientation, ability, gender, race, and socioeconomic status. The publication was made by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989. It is possible that the #FemFuture movement is moving in the direction of a more centralised infrastructure, as evidenced by the extensive history of organisational strategies that it has employed. As the phrase "hashtag feminism" continues to gain popularity, it indicates that various protest voices are able to engage in collective activism through the use of Twitter and other digital platforms, even in the absence of traditional feminist organising. When traditional institutions are unable to provide leadership, the manner in which speech that is mediated by digital technology stimulates collaborative action creates a dilemma. If there are any political repercussions that could result from this episode, what are they? Through the utilisation of a number of different theoretical frameworks, I propose an analysis that is both thorough and insightful.

Within the realm of discourse and network growth, the incidence of activism is significant.

Notwithstanding the expanding volume of scholarship concerning the correlation between digital media and social movements, there remains a requirement for a framework that may appropriately underline the political repercussions of the discursive methods that bolster online feminism. The findings of research that was carried out on virtual social movements have suggested that the Internet has the ability to facilitate the distribution of political frameworks, enhance the understanding of activists, decentralise power structures, and eliminate barriers to participation. In contrast to its role as an independent political instrument, the use of speech that is mediated by digital technology is usually regarded as a cultural asset that may be

utilised to boost political activities that take place offline. Discourse is therefore proved to function as a tool for building the framework for following presentations (Polletta, 2006), for preserving beliefs despite inaction (Rupp & Taylor, 1987), and for constructing communal identities that function as the basis for action (Melucci, 1989). For the purpose of illustrating political and cultural differences, feminist literary works that are also narrative in form serve as examples. The strengthening of the political and cultural dichotomy is something that is dismayed by feminists in the United States who were developed under the influence of feminist discourse in the 1960s. For feminist action to be effective, it is necessary to recognise and challenge the power structures that are deeply ingrained in everyday life and are typically accepted without being subjected to critical analysis. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that women's social movement research paradigms give a higher amount of importance to the political dimensions of discourse, whether it be in person or online.

According to Shaw (2012), the majority of operations carried out by digital activists take place in the virtual space of the internet. The body of research that is now available, on the other hand, fails to acknowledge the political effectiveness of these gatherings. "Modes of activism" (373), such as participating in online debates, can bring about social change, according to Shaw's argument, even in the absence of offline group action. On the other hand, the vast majority of studies that have been conducted to investigate the use of digital media by those who are involved in social movements have focused on the practical characteristics of demonstrations. For the purpose of illustrating the potential tangible effects that might be engendered by online conversation, Shaw uses the response of the feminist blogosphere in Australia after a radio station's decision to exclude women from a vote which was intended to determine the best rock musicians of all time.

There is a concept known as feminist discursive action, which tries to establish new language and social frameworks to assist organisations, communities, and individuals in recognising social settings and creating appropriate responses to them. Shaw (year) cites Young (1997) in order to offer an explanation of this concept. Young (year) contends that discourse is intrinsically political and that the "new grammars" of activist discourse are tied to shifts in public opinion and responses to political and social events. He also asserts that these shifts are linked to other political and social events. According to Kauwels (2003), Young's concept of discursive activism is based

on the idea that society and language are mutually influential. This concept relies around feminist linguistic activism, which is a phenomena that is recognised by sociolinguistics. Alternative narratives that shed light on the structural marginalisation of women in the rock music industry were disseminated by feminists in Australia through the use of a number of social media platforms, such as blogs, Twitter, and Facebook accounts. In addition to this, they produced their very own rock music canons that were marketed specifically towards women. The radio station made the decision to highlight female singers on its website because of their participation in activities that take place online. As an illustration, this demonstrates how the discourse medium of online communities can result in changes that are concrete and perceptible in the physical reality.

On the other hand, it is of the utmost importance to have a solid understanding of the mechanisms that distinguish discursive activism from individual expressions in terms of its ability to produce social actions. This was the year 2013, and it was. A single response is provided by Bennett and Segerberg. The authors believe that the construction of a digital network that permits the seamless linking of "easily personalised ideas" or personal action frames is something that is very necessary in order to inspire collective action (37). In light of the fact that it is based on informal communication networks rather than formal frameworks, this kind of group activity is referred to as "connective action."

Rosemary Clark first started the download of this particular material on February 22, 2016, at 7:18 o'clock in the evening.

Examining feminist media and investigating its many facets and ramifications is the purpose of the current research, which aims to do this. The purpose of this research is to shed light on the ways in which representations of gender roles, power relations, and cultural conventions are reflected in mainstream feminist media. There are a total of five distinct membership tiers that are available for access from the beginning. In spite of the fact that tweets are limited to 140 characters, Bennett and Segerberg's concept of connective action highlights the fact that tweets have the ability to serve as the basis for narratives that are constructed through collaborative efforts and are thematically interconnected on hashtag networks. On the subject of hashtag feminism, there is no conclusive explanation for the phenomena of particular hashtags, which are also known as personal action frames and which stimulate coordinated action.

Specifically with relation to this investigation, I make use of notions that are developed from social drama theory.

An example of a sort of social spectacle that occurs among feminist networks is the use of protest hashtags.

According to Turner's (1982) theory of social drama, it is possible to claim that every contact may be considered to contain aspects of drama and performance. Daniel A. McFarland (2004) places an emphasis on the fundamental components that make up social activity as he makes his definition of resistance. Reluctant acts are a sort of nonconformist activity that undermines the validity of the social order that is already in place, as stated by McFarland (1251). In an effort to replace this questioning with a reference to an alternative normative cognitive framework of engagement in extreme circumstances, these acts, which challenge the accepted comprehension of the circumstance, are now being taken. Through the utilisation of a social drama, which is described as a series of dramatic events, McFarland contends that collective action creates a framework that allows for the anticipation and promotion of social change. A comparison is made between social drama and a narrative that has recognisable arcs, stages of advancement, and a conclusion (Turner, 1982). McFarland (1252) makes this suggestion. The performative aspect of social activity is given a large amount of weight in the aforementioned theory, as stated by Parker and Sedgwick (1995 respectively). As an example, social movements such as #MeToo and other forms of feminism are examples of protests that try to actively expose dissenting ideas and dismantle certain discourses that are prevalent in society. In addition to providing the general public with fresh insights into social identities and phenomena, the individuals who are a part of a social movement also set the groundwork for alternative paths that will contribute to a political future that is more equal and just.

The majority of online activists participate in public conversation on digital platforms, despite the fact that they rarely connect with one another in person. McFarland's theoretical approach is extremely useful in this particular setting because of the context. "Ceremonial deconstruction" is a social drama that is initiated by a breach of language, order, or social standards, according to Turner (1982, page 1252). This initial phase of resistance acts is characterised by Turner. As a result of many stakeholders beginning to develop different narratives regarding the unfolding events, the breach goes through a substantial escalation, evolving into an emergent crisis instead. Frame

alignment methods are a method that activists may employ in order to increase the amount of support they receive for their cause. It is clear that audiences can vary in closeness and size, ranging from little to large and from near to far away, respectively, when Blee and McDowell (2012) quote the research of Snow, Zurcher, and Peters (1981). This is made clear by the fact that Blee and McDowell (2012) cite the research. Users of Twitter may be seen as proximate observers in the feminist space as a result of the increasing convergence of public and private realms in digital communities through the use of Twitter. According to the findings of Kreiss, Meadows, and Remensperger (2014), viewers who are engaged exhibit a particularly high level of active participation. According to Koopmans (2004), in order for news and editorial coverage in the mass media to effectively contest or advance the counter-frame of a movement, they need to have the ability to access audiences belonging to a variety of geographical locations. The dramatic elements that are inherent in the frame contestation become clearly visible when members of the audience identify themselves with either the opposing or supporting factions of the event.

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