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THE RHETORIC OF NEWSPAPER RIVALRY IN THE FACE OF
IMAGE RESTORATION AND TRANSFORMATION

by

Andrea Ludlow Christensen

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Andrea Ludlow Christensen in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee.

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ABSTRACT

THE RHETORIC OF NEWSPAPER RIVALRY IN THE FACE OF IMAGE RESTORATION AND TRANSFORMATION

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Department of English

Master of Arts

This thesis is a study of the rhetoric of newspaper rivalry, particularly under the pressures of image restoration and transformation. I use methods of critical discourse analysis to look at newspaper articles in Utah's two dominant newspapers, the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Deseret Morning News*. I compare a sample of news articles from each paper in 2002 to a sample in 2003, when the *Tribune* was working to restore its image after a scandal involving two of its reporters, and the *News* was working to transform its image as it transitioned from an afternoon newspaper to a morning newspaper.

Using rhetorical categories previously developed, as well as categories I developed myself, I counted the appearances of different types of rivalry rhetoric in the news articles from each year. I found that while certain categories of rhetoric fell from 2002 to 2003, other categories increased drastically. In general, the categories in the 2003

sample were much more polarized than in the 2002 sample. The most striking differences were in the categories of accusation, defense, and gloating. The *News*' use of accusatory rhetoric and the *Tribune*'s use of defensive rhetoric increased considerably from 2002 to 2003. The *News*' use of gloating rhetoric increased largely from 2002 to 2003, whereas the *Tribune*'s decreased significantly during the same time period. Much of these changes are attributed to the pressures of image restoration and transformation.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

According to rhetorician Richard Weaver, it is “impossible and even ridiculous that the utterances of men could be neutral” (1359). Echoes Kenneth Burke, “A rhetorical motive is often present where it is not usually recognized, or thought to belong” (“From *A Rhetoric of Motives*” 1324). Such is the case with much newspaper language, which, although its producers claim—and perhaps often believe—they are reporting without bias, often reflects a subtle rhetorical motive. Alan Bell, a media discourse scholar, writes, “The news story is controlled by news values. It is not a neutral vehicle, nor is news production a neutral process, despite the journalist’s century-old creed of objectivity” (212).

In this thesis I use methods of critical discourse analysis—a current method for conducting research in composition studies—to examine some of the rhetorical motives in two competing newspapers, the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Deseret Morning News*. According to composition scholar Thomas Huckin, “The need for context-sensitive forms of discourse analysis has become increasingly acute. Teachers, students, scholars, and others engaged in composition studies all stand to benefit from being able to analyze written texts and discursive practices” (155). In working to further understand, through discourse analysis, the complex and nuanced rhetoric used by these newspapers, we can better understand the rhetoric of an important facet of our society.

Mary Sue MacNealy, writing about discourse and text analysis, argues that “studying discourse enables scholars to add to a body of knowledge in a particular discipline by making data-based inferences about the person[s] who created the discourse, the audience for the discourse, and the social and political context for the

discourse” (124). In doing this study, I analyze how these two newspapers, through their news stories, work to create what Burke refers to as identification with their audiences, and I look at how the contexts of transformation and restoration affect their discourse of competition and rivalry.

The discourse analyses relevant to English composition studies are not limited to traditional literary studies; in fact, Ellen Barton writes, “Texts in the workplace and the real world are becoming increasingly interesting in composition . . . (and) texts that have not previously been analyzed are of intrinsic interest as well” (27). So why study news language? Bell responds to that question with the simple answer, “First, because it is there. The uses to which language is put in the mass media are intrinsically interesting to us as language users and receivers. . . . How the media use language often seems larger than life, and research which just describes such uses has its own interest” (4). A further reason Bell gives is because “language is an essential part of the content of what the media purvey to us” (4). This discourse analysis contributes to existing rhetoric and composition scholarship by analyzing news language not only because “it is there” but also because it offers a context-sensitive case study for understanding how classical rhetorical genres are manifest in modern, everyday texts.

A free press has long been a symbol of American identity and is often viewed as having a watchdog role in the nation’s political system. Despite this tradition, however, newspapers and other media have also long been criticized for misrepresenting, sensationalizing, and even fabricating information. The relationship between the press and the American people seems to have been especially troubled recently, with people on all points of the political spectrum accusing the media of bias. Complaints about the

“liberal media” come from the right, and fears of a “vast, right-wing conspiracy” come from the left. It seems that the rhetorical motives of newspapers have, in the minds of readers and many critics, been boiled down to political motives. These complaints and accusations, however, are oversimplified. There are, in addition to any political constraints or motives, social, economic, and a variety of other forces influencing the media’s presentation of the news.

The *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Deseret Morning News* are no strangers to broad accusations of being too liberal or too conservative. In focusing on a rich, detailed moment in the recent history of these newspapers, however, I show that the motives behind the rivalry rhetoric of these newspapers are more complex and are influenced by myriad factors.

Newspaper Rivalry History

Utah’s two dominant newspapers, the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Deseret Morning News*, are interesting to look at for a variety of reasons. They are large city newspapers and, as such, are fairly comparable to other big-city newspapers across the country. But they are also unique. The *News* is owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—which is the predominant religion in Utah. As such, it has a reputation for being highly conservative, as well as overly favorable in its reports about the LDS Church. The *Tribune*, on the other hand, has a reputation for being liberal and unfavorable in its reports about the LDS Church. Adding an additional twist to the rivalry between the newspapers is the fact that the two have been in a Joint Operating Agreement (JOA) for more than 50 years, sharing most business functions.

Though the *Tribune* has nearly twice the circulation of the *News*, the two have a reputation throughout the state as long-time competitors whose battles play out, like many media battles, both among reporters hoping to scoop each other and within the pages of the newspapers. In recent years, the rivalry has often been business related, as the two newspapers have disagreed and battled over *Tribune* ownership, and articles regarding those disagreements within both newspapers have demonstrated the rivalry characteristic throughout the papers' history. It seems that this standard rivalry, however, was exacerbated during a six-month period in 2003, as additional forces led the *Tribune* to work on image restoration and the *News* to work on image transformation.

On March 31, 2003, after six years of trying to do so (but being fought by the *Tribune* and its owners), the *News* began its three-month transition to morning publication. The paper changed its name to the *Deseret Morning News* and launched a widespread ad campaign, with billboard slogans such as "Consider it your morning juice—The Deseret Morning News." Both newspapers reported on the transition, with the *News*' articles heavily promoting itself and the *Tribune*'s articles viewing the transition with skepticism.

During this campaign by the *News*, a *Tribune* scandal erupted. On April 28, *Tribune* editor James Shelledy revealed that two of his reporters, Michael Vigh and Kevin Cantera, had sold unsubstantiated and defamatory material about the family of local kidnapping victim, Elizabeth Smart, to the *National Enquirer*. Five days later, on May 2, 2003, the *News* published an editorial under the headline, "A Black Eye for All Journalists." In the five days before this editorial was published, the two reporters were fired, Shelledy resigned, and *Tribune* publisher William Dean Singleton and the paper's

staff had begun working to regain their credibility. In the *News*' editorial, the unsigned voice of the editorial board writes, "Many in this community have asked how this series of events has played out at the Deseret News. If anything, we are mindful of the Tribune reporters, photographers, artists and editors who play by the rules and have been unjustly tainted by the misdeeds of two of their own" (2). The statement is a conciliatory one, considering the two papers' long-standing rivalry.

The editorial continues, "Again, we do not revel in the events of the past week. If anything, they have been a stern reminder of what consequences can come to bear when journalists violate the trust of their readers, viewers or listeners" (7). Although the *News* does not directly question or condemn the credibility of the *Tribune*, and in essence sends its condolences to the paper whose image would be tarnished by the events, the subtle rhetoric of the editorial serves to reinforce the *News*' commitment to ethical news coverage and thus heighten the rivalry between the two papers. Katie MacMillan, who examined the rhetoric of rivalry among two British newspapers, noticed a similar phenomenon in her own study. She writes, "Behind the rhetoric of downplaying any possible gloating is a history of competition, one-upmanship, and old scores between the two papers" (328). As the *Tribune* attempted to offset the gloating and accusation by the *News* during this time with its own defense techniques, this history of competitive one-upmanship played out seemed to be heightened.

In this discourse analysis, I compare a sample of news stories, columns, and editorials from each newspaper during this time period of particular upheaval to a sample of news stories from the previous year to show how the rhetoric of rivalry is heightened under forces of image restoration and transformation. Huckin writes,

For scholars and teachers of composition, I think [discourse analysis] offers a rich form of textual analysis that builds on techniques and concepts already familiar to most compositionists because they are found also in literary close reading, cultural studies, rhetorical analysis, and linguistic stylistics. But it offers new things as well, and blends them all together in a way that is unique, fruitful, and, I think, exciting. (173)

In performing critical discourse analysis of these news stories and looking at their broader rhetorical contexts, I aim to build on current research in rhetoric and composition with local examples. When I worked as a reporter for the *Deseret Morning News* metro desk during the summer of 2003, the board above my desk had a piece of paper (posted by a fellow reporter) that read, “Read the Tribune’s Vigh and Cantera—when *Enquiring* minds want to know.” Around the newsroom were strewn copies of both papers, and each day editors tacked the front pages of both the *News* and the *Tribune* in a prominent position in the newsroom, so reporters, photographers, and editors could keep tabs on scores between the papers, seeing who was getting in trouble, who had better photos, better headlines, and who scooped whom. Most Utah newspaper readers are well aware of the rivalry between these two newspapers, and I use this analysis to show how that rivalry materializes within each newspaper and how it is impacted by increased pressures.

Review of Literature

In this section, I discuss studies on the nature of business rivalries and media rivalries in particular, and also the rhetorical strategies used by competitors in such rivalries, which I plan to build off of. I also discuss literature on identification, which, ultimately, seems to be the root of such competition and rivalries.

Competition and rivalry research

According to Carl Sessions Stepp, “Clobbering the heck out of competition is a long-glorified value that has motivated and terrorized reporters for decades” (22). Though this clobbering competition is generally associated with one reporter fighting to get a big story or interview before his or her competitor can, it can ultimately be traced to a competition for readers. In a book examining competition from an economic and business viewpoint, Terry Burke, Angela Genn-Bash, and Brian Haines write, “The concept of competition carries within it the notion of rivalry for the possession of a not easily divisible object or the achievement of an exclusive outcome. So we have a picture of more than one person, or group of persons, wanting, at the same time, something that cannot readily be shared. Each contestant tries to gain the desired object, while denying it to the rivals” (1). The not easily dividable objects in the case I study are the readers and subscribers of newspapers in Utah, and in the Salt Lake City area particularly—each paper is therefore in a fierce competition to win credibility that will draw readers to its news. Burke, Genn-Bash, and Haines liken competition to a business game in which, they write, “The greatest virtue is to win, by whatever means” (x). In this study I look at what rhetorical tools the newspapers employ in their stories in an attempt to win this business game.

This type of rhetorical study in rhetoric and composition is not new. For example, MacMillan, in her article, “Faking, lies, and hypocrisy in the press: The rhetoric of accusations and rivalry,” examines the rhetoric of rivalry in the British press and suggests that “rivalry is a commonplace feature of journalism, influencing the selection and presentation of news stories. Such reports are self-indexical, constructed to show the

newspaper at work, doing its proper job of news reporting, while contrastively showing the failure of its rivals to do the same” (329). Writes Burke, “Nothing is more imperiously there for observation and study than the tactics people employ when they would injure or gratify one another. . . . To call a man a friend or brother is to proclaim him consubstantial with oneself, one’s values or purposes. To call a man a bastard is to attack him by attacking his whole line, his ‘authorship,’ his ‘principle’ or ‘motive’” (“From *Grammar of Motives*” 1320). We see similar tactics in the reporting of Salt Lake City’s newspapers, which, although perhaps a bit more subtle than Burke’s example, nonetheless attempt to injure the other’s image either through direct attacks or through self-promotion.

In her study, MacMillan focuses on news stories over a five-year period in which media misinformation allows one newspaper to injure another, and she looks for descriptions of faking, lies, and hypocrisy in news texts. She writes, “By addressing truth, faking, lies, and hypocrisy, the newspaper positions itself as a factual information provider” (329). In positioning itself as factual information provider, the newspaper demonstrates “its commitment over other sources to the pursuit of truth, and, in the context of reporting news, scores points over its competitors” (330). In the sample of news stories I analyzed, this positioning appeared frequently in both the *News* and the *Tribune*, as each worked to present itself as a more accurate, thorough source of news than its competitor.

Ultimately, argues MacMillan, all of these accusations and demonstrations of commitment to truth “are rhetorical constructs in an ongoing battle for readership” (329), and, as mentioned above, I believe the rivalry between the *News* and the *Tribune* can

fairly be classified in the end as a battle for readership. As such, the rhetorical tools they employ in their reporting are used in an attempt to promote identification with readers. Obviously, readers would want to read a newspaper that was honest and reliable, and as such, it is in the newspaper's best interest to encourage that image among its readers, either through simple self-promotion or through criticism of the rival newspaper.

Despite a shortage of studies on the rhetoric of rivalry, a variety of additional research on media and business competition provides a foundation for me to build off of in my study. In two separate articles, David Coulson studies the effects of competition on newspaper and editorial content. Most recently he, along with Stephen Lacy, studied journalists' perceptions of how newspaper and broadcast news competition affects newspaper content. Coulson and Lacy surveyed nearly 2,000 newspaper journalists, and for their results they focused on 423 of those journalists who had worked in both competitive- and single-daily cities, asking their perceptions of how newspaper competition affects content. Coulson and Lacy's hypotheses, all of which were supported by their survey findings, were the following: Journalists believe that direct newspaper competition increases quality of local news coverage, diversity of news coverage, diversity of editorial opinions in a newspaper, competitiveness among journalists, and sensational coverage in newspapers (356-57). They conclude, "These findings are useful despite the endangered status of direct daily competition. They suggest areas of research that should be pursued with intercity daily competition and competition between dailies and weekly newspapers" (362).

This conclusion leads to an additional justification for my study; namely, a demonstrated need for research in the area of newspaper competition. My research, by

examining the rhetoric of a particular rivalry, shows how competition among intercity dailies is manifest within actual news articles. Although I do not focus on the effect of the competition between the *News* and the *Tribune* on quality and diversity of news coverage, the way that each newspaper portrays itself as having quality and diverse coverage (as opposed to its rival) is key in the battle for readership and thus in how competition between papers is manifest in news stories.

In another article, also based on surveys of journalists, Coulson discusses the impact of Joint Operating Agreements on newspaper competition and editorial performance. Despite opinions of reporters to the contrary, he argues that “the nature of a JOA necessitates a close business relationship between the member papers that can potentially influence news coverage and editorial opinions. Where they have a mutual financial interest, neither jointly operated newspaper may choose to report or comment on a public issue damaging to that interest” (239). In this study I show that this is not the case with the two Salt Lake papers, and that in fact their rivalry has led them to instead play up stories that might potentially be damaging to the other’s interest. After the *Tribune* editor announced his two reporters’ involvement in the *Enquirer* scandal in a small column on page A2 on a Sunday, the *News* published a long and in-depth exposé on the scandal the next day on its front page. Coulson admits that nearly all journalists surveyed disagreed that a JOA newspaper’s editorial autonomy is inhibited, and instead believed that JOA newspapers provided a greater diversity of news and editorial opinions than monopoly newspapers. However, he asserts that evidence points to the contrary—that, in fact, JOA newspapers rarely have distinct editorial voices. He concludes that a study is needed “to determine the degree of autonomy practiced by jointly operated

newspapers” (246). Although my focus in this study is not on the degree of autonomy practiced by these two JOA newspapers, by analyzing the rhetoric of their rivalry I show that they do act with autonomy and a spirit of competition, both subtle and blatant.

Like Coulson, Stepp concludes that “competition isn’t what it once was, and the daily activities of front-line reporters and editors are changing noticeably as a result” (22). Despite this apparent trend, however, I show that competition, rivalry, and the battle for readers are alive and well in Utah, and that this competition can increase when spurred by external (or internal) forces involving other media, such as scandal or image transformation.

Identification as a means of competition

In this study, ultimately, I am working to demonstrate how newspapers seek identification both with their own readers as well as the readers of their rivals, and how the strategies used to seek identification are used more frequently in times of heightened rivalry and pressure. Identification, writes Burke, describes “the ways in which the members of a group promote social cohesion by acting rhetorically upon themselves and one another” and “considers the ways in which individuals are at odds with one another, or become identified with groups more or less at odds with one another” (“From *A Rhetoric of Motives*” 1325-26). Both the *Tribune* and the *News*, whether accusing, defending, or merely self-promoting in their news stories, are seeking cohesion and identification within their readership by rhetorically bolstering their own credibility and tearing down that of their rivals. Writes Weaver, “The condition essential to see is that every use of speech, oral and written, exhibits an attitude, and an attitude implies an act. .

. . All rhetoric is a rhetoric of motives” (1359). Clearly, when looking at the articles within each newspaper, their rhetoric is indeed a rhetoric of motives.

Though accusatory and defensive stories are the majority of the news stories I examine from my 2003 sample, the sample also includes stories—such as the News’ stories on its transition to morning publication—that make no reference to scandal and instead are solely self-promotional. These stories also reflect the goals of identification and represent the rhetoric of rivalry because they are still seeking to position themselves as the “good” newspaper—one readers should trust and subscribe to. Burke writes, “A speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker’s interests” (“From *A Rhetoric of Motives*” 1340). By publicizing favorable events regarding itself within its news stories, the self-promoting newspaper attempts to gain support, pride, and cohesion among its audience members.

Conclusion

In arguing that all language is sermonic, Weaver writes, “We are all of us preachers in private or public capacities. We have no sooner uttered words than we have given impulse to other people to look at the world, or some small part of it, in our way” (1360). Media discourse scholar Roger Fowler adds, “Language is not neutral, but a highly constructive mediator. The journalist takes a different view. He or she collects facts, reports them objectively, and the newspaper presents them fairly and without bias, in language which is designed to be unambiguous, undistorting and agreeable to readers” (1). From the reviewed literature it is clear that despite journalists’ claims of objectivity, they have motives and use rhetoric, whether intentionally or unintentionally. In this study

I show how those motives are manifest in the rhetoric of intercity newspaper rivalry and how they become more prevalent within news stories when that rivalry is heightened.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the methodology for my study. In Chapter 3, I discuss the rhetorical strategies employed by the *Tribune* and the *News* in a 2002 sample of news articles, and in Chapter 4, I compare the rhetorical tools that appear in the 2003 sample, during the time of apparently heightened rivalry, to those in the 2002 sample. In the final chapter I discuss the findings of this comparison and implications for further study.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

In designing my methodology for this study, I first reviewed a number of recommended methods, many of which offered similar suggestions. Fairclough suggests that analysis “should show features, patterns and structures which are typical of certain types of discourse” (*Discourse and Social Change* 231). According to Barton, “Discourse analysis involves looking at texts, inductively identifying their rich features and salient patterns, and then using these features and patterns as examples in an argument in support of some generalization(s) or claim(s) about the meaning of the relations between features, texts, and their contexts” (23). Depending on the texts one chooses to analyze, then, the salient features and patterns will vary. The analyst must determine what will be most relevant for a particular analysis. As Huckin writes, “Critical discourse analysis is an *approach*, a way of looking at texts, not a rigorously systematic method of analysis. In a manner not unlike that of the literary critic, a critical discourse analyst should use his or her best judgment as to which concepts are most appropriate to an insightful understanding of the text at hand” (163). After choosing news story samples and reviewing the concepts that appeared to be most pertinent in an analysis of the newspaper rivalry, I developed my categories and methods accordingly.

Before developing coding categories, however, I had to select a sample of news stories from each newspaper that would fairly reflect the general rhetoric of rivalry in each. In designing my sample, I tried to heed Bell’s advice that “the period sampled should probably be shorter than at first intended rather than longer. The tendency with media language is to collect too much, not too little, and so run the risk of drowning in data” (22). For my 2003 sample, then, I generated a list of all news stories, columns, and

editorials from each newspaper whose primary focus was either the *Tribune's Enquirer* scandal or the *News'* transition to morning publication. From that list, rather than reviewing each individual story or randomly selecting a number of stories to review for each newspaper, I purposefully selected approximately ten or eleven news stories, columns, or editorials from each paper. For this purposeful selection I chose to analyze issues that were not only covered by both newspapers, but were also given prominence by both newspapers, as reflected by their placement in the newspaper. So when both newspapers covered a story on page A1 or B1, I chose to include those stories in my sample. Both newspapers also carried lead columns or editorials in prominent positions in their papers, and when that was the case, I chose to include those in my sample as well (see Appendix A for a chart of news stories chosen for analysis). Fairclough writes, "One selection strategy which has much to recommend it is to focus on what I earlier called 'cruces' and 'moments of crisis'" (*Discourse* 230). In looking at prominently displayed stories, I am focusing on these moments of crisis, and thus analyzing the most relevant stories on these particular topics. A select few articles I analyze were not prominently placed, such as Shelledy's breaking column on the *Tribune's* scandal, but I selected them because of their significance in the overall sample.

To obtain my comparison sample, I used a similar methodology. For each newspaper I generated a list of stories, columns, and editorials published in 2002 that focused on issues involving itself or its rival paper. Focusing again on "cruces," I picked out stories that had been covered prominently by both newspapers, as demonstrated by their page placement. I ended up with a comparable, though slightly smaller, sample size as that from 2003. Broken down by paragraphs, I looked at 216 *Tribune* paragraphs and

218 *News* paragraphs in 2002, as compared to 247 *Tribune* paragraphs and 312 *News* paragraphs in 2003.

My samples, as mentioned previously, were not selected randomly, but, as Rosenthal and Rosnow point out,

The lack of random sampling in most experiments is not an issue, because in contrast to surveys, experiments are not intended to provide estimates of population values.

The same applies to discourse analysis. . . . Given their emphasis on situatedness and fine detail and their reluctance to make unsupported inferences, discourse analysts tend to make few assumptions about generalizability and to take a piecemeal approach” (qtd. in Wood and Kroger 77).

To take this piecemeal approach and look particularly at situatedness, I decided that a purposeful selection would provide me with a better, but nonetheless fairly representative, sample of news stories.

Once I reviewed my sampled news stories, I developed the following analysis categories that most prominently demonstrated the rhetoric of rivalry between the two newspapers, building off of categories previously detailed by scholars (*kategoria*, or accusation, *apologia*, or defense and apology, and gloating) and defining some of my own (battle/war rhetoric and identification in relation to each paper’s ownership) to add to previously developed categories. With each category’s definition I include one or two examples, which I will analyze later in this thesis.

Accusation

According to MacMillan, through forms of accusation a newspaper “positions itself as a factual information provider” (329). In this category I included both blatant and

implied accusation, whereby one paper attempts to indict the other for dishonesty, bad choices, bad reporting, or bad business practices. Halford Ross Ryan writes, “By identifying and assessing the issues in the accusation, the critic will gain insights into the accuser’s motivation to accuse, his selection of the issues, and the nature of the supporting materials for his accusation” (254). In the 2003 sample of stories, accusation appears primarily in *News* stories, but in the 2002 sample, it emerges in the stories of both newspapers. The accusation levels throughout the papers’ histories has tended to be mutual and complex.

Examples:

- “The Tribune reporters’ behavior introduces a messy element to the already emotional circumstances of Elizabeth Smart’s kidnapping last June” (Kinhead “Smarts, Tabloid Settle” 18).
- “*News* leaders have concocted complaints about *The Tribune*’s management in the last five years to cover their attempts to initially purchase *The Tribune* and later, when that didn’t work, to find a buyer for *The Tribune* who would agree to give favorable coverage to their owner, the LDS Church” (“Tribune Ownership Matters” 3).

Defense

Ryan argues that the rhetorical strategies of *kategoria*, or accusation, and *apologia*, or apology, are best evaluated and analyzed as a speech set. Describing these strategies, he writes, “The accuser perceives an evil or an exigence, he is motivated to expose it, and the rhetorical response to that motivation is a *kategoria*. . . . In reaction to the accusation, the apologist is motivated to deny, to mitigate, or to purify the resultant

image, and the rhetorical response to that motivation is a speech in apology” (256-57).

Though not always directly in the form of apology, defense strategies appear quite frequently in the *Tribune*'s news stories regarding the *Enquirer* debacle. For this category I used William Benoit's categories of image repair discourse, which include denial (through simple denial or shifting the blame), evasion of responsibility (through stressing provocation, defeasibility, accident, good intentions), reducing offensiveness of event (through bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking accuser, or compensation), corrective action (through a demonstration of plans to solve or prevent problems), and what Burke labels mortification (through apologizing for the act).

Example:

- “I apologize for the *Tribune* and personally regret Kevin and Michael's actions — which I knew nothing of at the time” (Shelledy, as qtd. in Warchol, “Publisher Vows” 21).

Gloating

Gloating, as well as what MacMillan calls “the rhetoric of downplaying any possible gloating,” underscores “a history of competition, one-upmanship, and old scores between the two papers” (328). In this category I include all forms of gloating, both subtle and blatant, through which one newspaper emphasizes a triumph over the other in reporting, circulation, or exclusivity. I also include the rhetoric of downplaying gloating, through which a newspaper puts forward a façade of sympathy while emphasizing its rival's weaknesses.

Examples:

- “If anything we are mindful of the Tribune reporters . . . who play by the rules and have been unjustly tainted by the misdeeds of two of their own” (“A Black Eye” 2).
- “The Morning News will likely take some readers from the Tribune, and enjoy doing so” (Wilson and Webb 5).

Identification

Burke’s identification “examines the ways in which the terms used to create identification work to include the members of a group in a common ideology, while at the same time excluding alternate terms, other groups, and competing ideologies” (1296). Though both the *News* and the *Tribune* work to identify with their audiences in a variety of ways, I limit my definition of identification for this category to look specifically at the ways in which each paper emphasizes or downplays its or its rival’s ownership to identify with its audience. In most of its mentions of the *News*, the *Tribune* emphasizes its ownership by the LDS Church, which, according to the *Tribune*, creates an inevitable conflict of interest and makes the *News* biased in its coverage of the news. At the same time, the *Tribune* frequently emphasizes its self-proclaimed role as “Utah’s independent voice.” The *News*, on the other hand, tends to downplay its ownership, hoping to appeal to a broad Utah audience, but it will occasionally make reference to its ownership to promote a “moral” image to its audience, and to thus set up a foil to the *Tribune*. In so doing, each newspaper is working to draw in a particular audience that will relate to its priorities and also exclude groups who feel differently. As Fairclough writes, “The wider social impact of media is not just to do with how they selectively represent the world, . . .

it is also to do with what sorts of social identities, what versions of ‘self’, they project and what cultural values . . . these entail” (17).

Examples:

- “*Salt Lake Tribune* editor James E. Shelledy argues church ownership will always define and limit *News* readership. . . . “The bottom line is that the primary reason people buy the *Deseret News* or the *Tribune* has little to do with the time of day the papers are distributed”” (Warchol, “Deseret News Counting” 18-19).
- “The reality is the Morning News does cover the news, including church-related stories, without bias or pulling punches. . . . The biggest differences between the two papers is found on the editorial pages and opinion columns throughout the papers, with Tribune editorials and writers being much more liberal and the Morning News moderately conservative” (Wilson and Webb 15-16).

Battle/War Rhetoric

In initially looking through the news stories in my two sample groups, I was surprised to see battle and war terms popping up frequently in regard to the battles between the two papers. Phrases and words such as “shock and awe,” “unleash,” “attack,” and “win” highlight each paper’s view of its relationship with its rival and work to further the rhetoric of rivalry within each newspaper’s stories. In this category, I include all terms and phrases which highlight the competitive or battle-like nature of the newspapers’ relationship.

Example:

- “So you thought the Salt Lake City newspaper wars were over? Get ready for Round 2” (Wilson and Webb 1).

To see how frequently these rhetorical tools appeared in each year's sample, and to see if that frequency increased from 2002 to 2003, I looked for their appearances on a paragraph-by-paragraph level. Because paragraphs in newspaper articles are generally similar in length and consist of a few sentences at most, this seemed to be the most logical way to count the categories. In citing the articles, I also cite by paragraph, rather than newspaper placement page, since I'm breaking the stories down at the paragraph level. After analyzing all of the stories, I totaled the occurrences of each type of rhetoric in each newspaper's sampled stories for both years. I will discuss the specific findings of those results in my conclusion.

According to Huckin, critical discourse analysis "is not a 'discovery' mechanism per se; rather, it serves to confirm, explain, and enrich the initial insight and to communicate that insight, in detailed fashion, to others" (163). That the rivalry rhetoric would be changed and heightened during a period of increased external and internal tensions for the two newspapers I'm studying is not necessarily a groundbreaking discovery. But in performing this discourse analysis, I not only confirm what could perhaps be intuitively inferred, but I also use both numbers and careful examination to demonstrate how and why the rhetoric is heightened, and to communicate that original insight in detailed fashion. Additionally, I work to show how much newspaper rhetoric and the motives behind it are complex, nuanced, and influenced by more than mere politics.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS OF 2002 NEWS ARTICLES

In this chapter I analyze the mutual and complex rhetorical strategies detailed in the previous chapter and used by both newspapers in a sample of 2002 news stories. Nearly all *News* and *Tribune* stories in this sample involve litigation over ownership of the *Tribune*. Long-time owners of the *Tribune*, Salt Lake Tribune Publishing Corporation (SLTPC), headed by the McCarthy family, sold the paper for tax reasons in 1997, but they had maintained editorial control and had hoped to regain total control of the paper after five years (see Figure 1). When the five-year period expired, however, new owner William Dean Singleton, of the Denver-based MediaNews Group, refused to relinquish ownership back to the McCarthy family. Because the *News* and the *Tribune* were in a Joint Operating Agreement (JOA), the *News* was allowed a say in who would control the paper, and because of negative feelings toward the McCarthy family, the *News* refused its consent for that company to regain control of the *Tribune*. The *News* claimed that the McCarthy family had violated terms of the JOA by preventing the *News* from transitioning to morning publication. During this time period, marked by ongoing court battles and battles within each paper's articles, the rhetorical strategies of accusation, gloating, and battle rhetoric appeared frequently in both the *Tribune* and the *News*. In the *Tribune*, there were also frequent attempts at identification through emphasizing its role as "Utah's independent voice," as well as the *News*' ownership by the LDS Church. In the *News*, on the other hand, references to its ownership showed up very little, as it attempted to downplay the effect of the Church on its reporting.

1997: Salt Lake Tribune Publishing Corporation (SLTPC) sells the *Tribune* to media giant TCI as part of a stock swap, but plans to buy the newspaper back after five years.

1999: TCI merges with AT&T, which is not interested in owning a newspaper. It soon begins trying to sell the *Tribune*.

2001: Denver-based MediaNews group, run by William Dean Singleton, purchases the *Tribune* from AT&T, despite efforts by the *Tribune* to block the sale.

2002: The *Deseret News*, which has a say in *Tribune* ownership because of the newspapers' Joint Operating Agreement, refuses to give *Tribune* managers consent to buy the *Tribune* from MediaNews. In July, Singleton and MediaNews take editorial control of the *Tribune*.

Figure 1. Timeline of events in the ownership of the *Salt Lake Tribune* (Spangler, Welling, and Titze A1)

Deseret News

In the sample of *Deseret News* stories from 2002, accusation regarding poor business practices of the *Tribune* appears in 6 percent of the paragraphs and in 55.6 percent of the overall articles. Gloating over legal and other victories appears in 5 percent of the paragraphs and also in 55.6 percent of the articles. Battle rhetoric appears in close to 6 percent of the paragraphs and in 66.7 percent of the overall articles. The other categories I defined in the previous chapter (defense strategies and identification) are virtually nonexistent in this sample. Although the *News* makes little reference to its role as the LDS Church-owned paper, this nonetheless remains an inherent part of its identity.

Accusation

The *News*' accusatory rhetoric in 2002 are centers on the business aspects of the *Tribune* and its owners, emphasizing the owners' efforts to defy contracts with the *News* under the papers' joint operating agreement.

As the McCarthy family attempted to maintain its control over the *Tribune*, the *News*, which felt it had been treated unjustly by the SLTPC, focused its accusations on mismanagement by the SLTPC. In addition, because the *Tribune* was fighting to maintain its relationship with the SLTPC, the *News*' accusations were directed at the *Tribune* as well.

In one article, the *News* writes that the SLTPC has "a history of business decisions damaging to the Deseret News" (Welling, "DesNews says no" 1). These damaging business decisions include, according to the *News*, unjustly blocking the *News* from converting to a morning paper. Welling writes, "The News contends that the Tribune managers, despite paying lip service to the News' legal right to go morning, have persistently blocked and frustrated News attempts to do so" ("Tribune invites" 10). Through "nefarious business tactics" (Benson, "Journalism gets a shot" 2), according to the *News*, "the Tribune managers threw up every conceivable roadblock to thwart the move [to morning publication] and successfully prevented it from happening" (Hughes 8). With strong diction, the *News* blames the *Tribune* for many of its business woes, accusing the *Tribune* and its owners of intentionally impeding the *News*' progress.

In addition to claims of blocking morning publication, the *News* accuses the *Tribune* and its owners of pushing the limits of a business partnership, domineering, violating trust, and even using its paper to promote lies. *News* Editor John Hughes writes,

“The confidence of the Deseret News in its Tribune partners began to erode over the years as the partnership became uneven and dominated by the Tribune to the disadvantage of the Deseret News” (7). In these accusations, the *Tribune* and its owners appear power-hungry and unfair in their behaviors toward the *News*, and according to the claims, the *Tribune*’s actions have been harming the *News* and its business. In addition to being unfair, Hughes accuses the *Tribune* of unethical behavior, writing, “At times it has been hard to bite our tongue, as the managers of the Tribune became increasingly shrill and venomous, using their editorial page and their editor’s column to misrepresent the facts and question the integrity of our management and owners” (2). The *News* is demonstrating its own commitment to ethics and solid reporting, in emphasizing its ability to remain quiet about its rival’s problems, while at the same time highlighting the *Tribune*’s follies in being not only snake-like, but also dishonest. According to MacMillan, news stories are “constructed to show the newspaper reporting the story as doing its proper job of news reporting and success at bringing unbiased neutral reports to its readers. In contrast, and within the same report, the newspaper depicts its rivals as failing to do the same” (327). In nearly all accusations appearing in this sample, the *News* seeks to emphasize, through strong diction and metaphor, its own goodness, while also stressing the vile behavior of the *Tribune*.

Gloating

In addition to accusing, the *News* does plenty of gloating in this sample of news stories, but, as with the accusations, the gloating tends to be more related to business than to ethical or moral superiority (as it does in 2003). The *News* gloats over its legal

victories in the battle over *Tribune* ownership, and it gloats as well about its good behavior throughout the controversies in contrast to that of the *Tribune*.

After the *News* made it clear that it would block the McCarthy family from buying back the *Tribune*, columnist Lee Benson praises the decision, calling it a “shot in the arm” for journalism (“Journalism gets a shot”). The McCarthys, he writes, figured “they could buy the birthright back. . . . Glossing over the fact that their longtime business partner could stop them. Could, would and did. To do otherwise, would not be good journalism” (“Journalism gets a shot” 16-18). Benson emphasizes not only the *News*’ legal power over the *Tribune* in the situation, but also its moral victory over the *Tribune* and its former owners. In highlighting the *News*’ action as “good journalism,” Benson makes the issue more than one of ownership—it becomes an issue of right versus wrong, and it is clear who, in his mind, is on which side.

This emphasis on not only business and legal victories, but also ethical victories, is a common theme in the *News*’ gloating, as it works to distinguish itself from its competitor. During the court battle over *Tribune* ownership, Hughes writes, “The Deseret News has sought to take the high road. While we have tried to cover the complicated court proceedings fairly, we have not used our editorial page, or news columns, to manipulate the facts or further the agenda of our management” (1). The *Tribune*, on the other hand, did use its editorial page to push public opinion in favor of the McCarthy family ownership, and Hughes emphasizes the dichotomy between the two papers, implying that the *Tribune* was practicing poor journalism in merely working to further its own agenda. But in noting that the *News* took the “high road,” Hughes implies that his paper is focused and committed to solid journalism, unlike its competitor, which appears

to be more concerned with business and money. Further highlighting this apparent contrast, Hughes writes,

At times it has been hard to bite our tongue, as the managers of the Tribune became increasingly shrill and venomous, using their editorial page and their editor's column to misrepresent the facts and question the integrity of our management and owners. But we kept our peace, believing that the proper place to resolve the dispute was in the courts, not in the columns of the newspapers.

(2-3)

Although the battle was one of business, the *News*' gloating nonetheless reflects negatively on the quality of the *Tribune* as a newspaper, since it appears from Hughes' statement that their poor business practices were spilling over into the newspaper. But in contrasting itself with the *Tribune*, the *News* happily sets itself up to be more committed to proper journalism.

Battle rhetoric

With story headlines in this 2002 sample such as "Tribune loses a round in lawsuit" (Welling) and "Deseret News gets a legal win" (Welling), the *News*' battle rhetoric reflects the *News*' perception of its relationship with its rival at both the business and editorial levels. Battle rhetoric appears in 5.5 percent of the paragraphs in this sample of news stories.

Referring to the dispute over *Tribune* ownership, the *News* describes "bitter battles" (Welling, "Owners plan" 1), accusing the McCarthy family of running "a bitter media campaign against the Deseret News"—an "attack [that] was spearheaded in the columns of the Tribune" (Hughes 13). This battle rhetoric is accusatory in tone and

content, reflecting the *News*' perceptions of unfair war-waging on the part of the *Tribune*. In the above quote, it would seem that the actions the *Tribune* took were clearly agentic and aimed at unjustly attacking the innocent *News*. Once it became clear that the *News* would have a say in this bitter battle over ownership, however, the battle rhetoric begins to shift.

Battle rhetoric still appears in the *News*' stories after MediaNews gained control of the *Tribune*, but the war terms are used in a friendlier, more conciliatory, and sometimes even playful way. Benson, for example, writes, "The Two Salt Lake newspapers may still get along like a cat and dog, or Cougar and Ute, or Charlton Heston and Ralph Nader, and let's certainly hope so, but the competition between the two papers figures to be much healthier now" ("Journalism gets a shot" 2). By including the references to the local university rivalry and an amusing political mismatch, Benson manages to tone down the frequently bitter rhetoric of past articles, instead emphasizing the "healthy" nature of the competition. Hughes writes of his desire for a partnership that will "provide a level playing field for the two newspapers to compete against each other with editorial vigor" (14). Again, the rhetoric is less cutthroat here, and instead stresses the importance of fair and healthy competition between the two newspapers.

Identification

Unlike the *Tribune*, the *Deseret News*, in these stories, makes few references to its ownership by the LDS Church. When the paper does mention the Church in an article, it is generally only in an attempt to dispel myths or accusations by the *Tribune* relating to its ownership. For example, in Hughes' column, he writes, "The McCarthy group has . . . sought to obscure the actual cause of the dispute in a cloak of alleged conspiracy between

Singleton and the Deseret News to mute negative reporting in the Tribune on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which owns the Deseret News” (15). Whereas the *Tribune* emphasizes ownership in attempts to show its readers why they should identify with itself rather than its rival, the *News* makes little effort to emphasize, unless necessary, its ownership. By downplaying its relationship with the Church, the *News* works to position itself, like the *Tribune*, as an unbiased paper that is not constrained by leaders from the state’s dominant religion.

Salt Lake Tribune

With numbers quite similar to the *News*, the *Tribune*, in this 2002 sample, has accusation appearing in 6.9 percent of its paragraphs and 50 percent of its overall articles. Gloating appears in 7.4 percent of its paragraphs and 50 percent of its articles. Battle rhetoric appears in 5.6 percent of its paragraphs and in 60 percent of its articles. Though, like the *News*, the *Tribune*’s stories in this sample are marked by these three rhetorical strategies, attempts at identification—unlike the *News*, which seems to assume identification with its readers—also appear frequently, showing up in 12.5 percent of the stories’ paragraphs, and in 100 percent of the overall articles.

Accusation

The accusations in the 2002 sample of *Tribune* stories center around what the *Tribune* viewed as dishonest and unethical business practices by the *News* in unfairly attempting to determine ownership of the *Tribune*.

One *Tribune* editorial highlights the nature of this sample’s accusations, as it presents claims made by the *News* and then refutes them one by one. This claim/counterclaim pattern begins with “The *News* said it would object to the Kearns

McCarthy family because of disagreements *The Tribune* and *News* have had in the last five years. That is not true.” (“Tribune ownership” 3). According to MacMillan, “By reporting that these top people ‘say’ they did not know what was happening, [a news source] engenders a skepticism that casts doubt on it as truth” (335). The *Tribune* first casts doubt on the truth of the *News*’ claims, and then openly accuses the *News* of lying. This pattern continues for the next four paragraphs of this editorial and appears also in other stories, with such statements as “The *Deseret News* and MediaNews claim Tribune Publishing has mismanaged the newspaper. Tribune Publishing denies that claim and contends the *Deseret News* and MediaNews interfered with its contract to run the paper and its rights under the JOA” (Neff “News rejects” 18). As previously mentioned, these accusations of lying are related primarily to business practices of the *News*, but nonetheless reflect negatively on the *News* as a newspaper.

Gloating

In this sample of news stories, gloating both subtle and blatant appears frequently as the *Tribune* emphasizes both its circulation, which is the highest in Utah, and its dedication to seeking out truth (which it emphasizes simultaneously that the *News* is incapable of doing).

Though it rarely spends much time discussing it in detail, the *Tribune*, in nearly all stories that mention the *News*, is sure to bring up the fact that it is the largest newspaper (based on circulation) in the state—generally near the beginning of the story. One story by Neff and Vigh begins with the following: “A federal judge has dismissed AT&T Corp. from a lawsuit over the ownership of *Utah’s largest daily newspaper*” (“Judge lets AT&T” 1, emphasis added). Another story notes that the *News*’ decision to

reject SLTPC's buyback of the *Tribune* "sets up yet another showdown in an already bitter, 16-month-old federal lawsuit over ownership of *Utah's largest daily newspaper*" (Neff "News rejects" 5, emphasis added). One story's headline proclaims, "Tribune Owner Vows to Bring Vigor to Utah's Largest Paper" (author, A1). In all of these examples, of which there are plenty more, the *Tribune* does nothing more in the way of gloating than to slip in the fact that it does indeed have the state's largest newspaper circulation. In so doing, however, the *Tribune* emphasizes repeatedly that it is trusted enough by readers to have a much higher circulation than its rival, and therefore diminishes the credibility of the *News* from the beginning of each of its stories. Though this device is used subtly in most articles, in some, the *Tribune* has a bit more swagger. For example, Mullen writes, "After at least 20 years of whining for it, the *Deseret News* is poised to make the switch to mornings and take on my newspaper, which has twice the circulation" (13). Mullen's openly superior tone, though perhaps a bit more harsh than those previously mentioned, serves the same function, in that it works to build up the *Tribune* as it simultaneously tears down credibility of the *News*.

In this sample of *Tribune* stories, gloating about the *Tribune's* devotion to good and independent journalism also emerges frequently. As with the gloating over circulation, as the *Tribune* works to highlight its virtues, it also implies that the *News* is lacking in those virtues. In an editorial published after MediaNews takes control of the paper, the *Tribune* editorial board promises that the paper is and will be "dedicated to truth, to independence and to the interests of Utah citizens" ("Our promises" 1). It adds, "*The Tribune* will serve all of Utah and be beholden to no one. It will be as objective as professionals trained in objectivity can make it. It will be compassionate. Its mission will

be to serve the community — the whole community. It owes nothing to any outside entity” (j, 3). As it does in its efforts at identification, the *Tribune* quietly works to distinguish itself from the LDS Church-owned *News*, promising to report objectively and thoroughly on news in Utah, and thus “serve the community.” In implying that the *News* is incapable of doing so, the *Tribune* glories in what it perceives to be its superiority over its rival.

Battle rhetoric

The above-mentioned sense of triumph and superiority appears even more frequently in the battle rhetoric of these stories. Like the *News*, the *Tribune* uses battle metaphors to represent its relationship with its rival, particularly as the two argue within their articles over who should own the *Tribune*. The *News*' decision to reject McCarthy's buyback of the *Tribune*, according to one article, “sets up yet another showdown in an already bitter, 16-month-old federal lawsuit over ownership of Utah's largest daily newspaper” (Neff “News rejects” 5). As in many *News* articles, there is much emphasis here on the bitter nature of the competition, and Neff, in making reference to a showdown, highlights the win-lose nature of the competition. The two papers, as Burke, Genn-Bash, and Haines write, are fighting for “the possession of a not easily divisible object . . . [and] each contestant tries to gain the desired object, while denying it to rivals” (1). According to this view, then, one paper, as in a real war or battle, will win, and one will lose. In stressing this aspect of their competition, the *Tribune* makes the situation seem weighty and works to rally readers to its side of the battle.

Like the *News*, the *Tribune* tones down some of its battle rhetoric after MediaNews gains control of the *Tribune*, but much of it nonetheless remains inflammatory. In an editorial written after MediaNews takes over, the *Tribune* writes,

We believe the relationship between *The Tribune* and the *Deseret News* should be that of respectful business partners but implacable journalistic foes. We are committed to and believe that all Utahns benefit from having two aggressive and combative newspapers. (“Our promises” 13)

The emphasis remains on the competitive relationship of the two newspapers, but the comments also touch simultaneously on the respectful side of their professional relationship. In a column by Holly Mullen, however, there is little mention of this conciliatory side, as she focuses instead on the confrontational and competitive side of the relationship. She writes that the *Tribune* is “fixing for a fight,” and later adds, “We’re ready if you are, *Deseret News*. Bring it on” (14, 18). Although the battle over ownership is over by this point, Mullen emphasizes the ongoing nature of the rivalry between the papers, and writes directly to the *News* in a taunting, provoking way. Both the writing of Mullen and the slightly more pacifying editorial, though they do so through different means, work to continue this idea of battling papers in the minds of readers. As they do so, they also work to show the *Tribune* as the inevitable victor in these battles. As Mullen writes, “Ultimately, readers will decide who wins this newspaper war. Some people prefer their news, like their videos and library books, filtered, chopped and sanitized. Most do not” (17).

Identification

References to the *News*' ownership by the LDS Church or to its own role as "Utah's independent newspaper" appear in every *Tribune* story sampled in 2002, showing up in a total of 12.5 percent of all paragraphs in this sample, as compared to 0.5 percent of the *News*' sampled stories in 2002. In nearly all first- or second-time references to the *News* in its stories, the *Tribune* calls it the "LDS Church-owned *News*." In emphasizing this ownership to its audience, the *Tribune* is seeking to contrast its own role in the state as a newspaper not bound by what many perceive as already being the dominant voice in the state (the church) with its rival, which it both subtly and blatantly attempts to portray as inherently biased.

In early stories about the *News*' involvement in deciding *Tribune* ownership, the *Tribune* references *News* ownership to allege that that ownership is threatening to silence the independent nature of the *Tribune*. According to one story, for example, "*Tribune* Chief Operating Officer Randy Frisch alleged the *News*' decision was not rooted in sound business practice, but in a belief *The Tribune*'s current owner, MediaNews Group Inc., 'will give favorable treatment to the *News*' owner' — the LDS Church" (Neff, "News rejects" 6). In an editorial, the paper furthers,

News leaders have concocted complaints about *The Tribune*'s management in the last five years to cover their attempts to initially purchase *The Tribune* and later, when that didn't work, to find a buyer for *The Tribune* who would agree to give favorable coverage to their owner, the LDS Church. Documents still kept secret by the federal court make clear that silencing *The Tribune*'s coverage of the

church was a driving factor in many of the *News* decisions of the last five years.

(“Tribune ownership” 3)

The accusations emphasize the *News*’ ownership in attempting to undermine its credibility as an objective newspaper, as well as the *Tribune*’s implied objectivity in its coverage, and thus heighten the contrast between the two papers. In heightening this contrast, and suggesting an almost conspiratorial and imminent threat of *Tribune* takeover by *News* interests, the *Tribune* seeks to imbue a sense of injustice and urgency in its readers. Ultimately, according to this editorial, “If the *News* is successful in its attempt to determine who owns *The Tribune*, Utah will have lost its independent voice, which speaks not only for the good of the minority but also for the long-term good of the majority” (“Tribune ownership” 9). Though the LDS Church is not even mentioned in this statement, the *Tribune* again emphasizes the danger of takeover, or at least unfair influence, by the church that apparently would be inevitable if the *News* were allowed to be involved in determining *Tribune* ownership. While emphasizing this supposed danger, the *Tribune* again highlights its own nature as “Utah’s independent voice.”

Even in articles written after MediaNews gained control of the *Tribune*, the *Tribune* emphasizes the *News*’ church ownership to further contrast its own position as a paper “beholden to no one” (“Our promises” 3). In a Holly Mullen column, she writes, “I know decent people at the *News*. But no matter what time of day their paper comes out, they will always be working with the weight of a grand piano on their backs—LDS Church ownership” (14). From her metaphor, it would appear the *News*, sprinkled though it is with “decent people,” is too burdened to be able to function as a newspaper ought to—with no obligations to a party outside of the newspaper. *News* reporters, Mullen

writes, “try to slough off that fact, but they know better. They know that most of the meaty stories in Utah are linked somehow to the LDS Church. . . . Those stories will never get told honestly by the *Deseret News*” (“Tribune management,” 15-16). Again, *News* reporters appear knowingly obligated to the church, and therefore unable to report effectively or openly about stories which, according to the *Tribune*, are most important for Utahns to read. The *Tribune*, while criticizing the role of its rival, emphasizes that it is not bound or limited in its coverage by its owners and can, unlike its rival, offer the whole truth to all of Utah.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF 2004 NEWS ARTICLES

In this chapter, I discuss the rhetorical strategies used by both the *Tribune* and the *News* in a sample of articles from 2003, as the *News* began and completed its transition to morning publication, and as the *Tribune* revealed its involvement with the *Enquirer* and then worked to distance itself from the subsequent uproar.

On Sunday, April 27, 2003, just over a month after kidnapped Salt Lake City teenager Elizabeth Smart returned home to her family, *Salt Lake Tribune* editor James E. Shelledy published his weekly “Letter From the Editor” in its usual spot on page A2 of the state’s largest newspaper. In the column, which Shelledy typically reserved for commentaries on issues in the news, Shelledy detailed an embarrassment involving his own newspaper. Kevin Cantera and Michael Vigh, the *Tribune*’s lead reporters on the Smart story, had come to Shelledy a week prior to let him know that months before they had sold lurid and speculative details regarding the kidnapping to grocery store tabloid and journalism pariah *The National Enquirer*. Rather than accepting their resignations or their request to assign a *Tribune* reporter to write a story on their conduct, Shelledy instead chose to give the reporters what he thought they deserved—a 19-paragraph slap on the hand on the inside fold of the paper.

Shelledy’s column set off a storm of outrage and criticism from the *Enquirer*, the Smart family, Utah readers, and even Shelledy’s staff, all of whom disapproved of his response to the situation in one way or another. In just over a week, the two reporters were fired, Shelledy, who had lost the support of much of his staff, resigned, and the *Tribune* hired a new editor, whose daunting task would include helping the paper regain the credibility that had so quickly been lost during the scandal. In contrast to the

Tribune's later stories, which often reflect a contrite attitude and are marked by emphasis on corrective action and apology, this initial column is marked in large part by defense strategies in which Shelledy works to minimize the issue, evade responsibility, and bolster the paper's overall image while making few concessions. In contrast, the *News*' first story, like its later stories on the issue, has a heavily accusatory and often gloating tone, in which its lexical choices point toward the *Tribune*'s guilt.

During this time of heavy accusation and defense, the *News* was also carrying out its long-awaited transition to morning delivery, working to transform its image as the *Tribune* worked to restore its own. Below I will analyze how each newspaper during this time worked to promote a positive image for itself and identify with its readers, while often, at the same time, disparaging its rival. Because the majority of the stories in which the papers reported on themselves or their rivals involved the Smart issue, I first look in-depth at each paper's breaking story on that situation, and I then analyze the other stories thematically.

The *Tribune* Breaks the Story: "Letter From the Editor"

Shelledy's breaking column, unlike the paper's later stories on the issue, is marked in large part by defense strategies in which he works to minimize negative perceptions regarding his reporters' behavior, rather than apologizing for it. And, unlike the *Deseret News*' exposé article the next day, he delays addressing the issue until he is nearly one-third of the way through his column. Media theorist Alan Bell, describes lead paragraphs in newspapers as "a nucleus of evaluation, because the function of the lead is not merely to summarize the main action. The lead focuses the story in a particular direction. It forms the lens through which the remainder of the story is viewed" (152). Though the

lead in a news story, editorial, or column typically contains the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the story, Shelledy, in this column, does not get to the heart of his issue until the sixth paragraph. He begins the column as follows:

When big stories break in Utah, such as the Olympics bribery scandal, polygamy fireworks, the Winter Games, or, most recently, the Elizabeth Smart abduction and return, the world's media descend on The Salt Lake Tribune newsroom in search of background expertise or for writers and photographers who want to freelance. When we have the time, we do it — normally as a courtesy — but journalists sometimes are offered compensation for their assistance. (1-2)

He continues with an additional two paragraphs that detail the paper's policies on such involvement, as well as Vigh and Cantera's background as reporters highly sought out for their analysis "based on their thorough and accurate reporting" (4). Whether intentionally evading the issue or simply trying to provide some rationale for the actions of his reporters, Shelledy's introduction does little more than to give basic background on freelancing journalism and give a few plugs for the *Tribune's* expertise, thus creating a lens for the reader through which the magnitude of the scandal will be decreased.

In addition to delaying the actual confession of wrongdoing on the part of his reporters, the background he gives serves to minimize the confession when it does come. Not only is what Vigh and Cantera did, as he mentions in the beginning, commonplace in journalism, it is also a sign of the *Tribune* reporters' expertise that other journalists would seek them out. According to Benoit, minimization occurs when an entity attempts to "minimize the negative feelings associated with the wrongful act" ("Image Repair" 180). Benoit places minimization, as an image restoration strategy, in the category of reducing

offensiveness of an event. In this category Benoit also includes bolstering, or stressing the good traits of the company (180-1). In this 19-paragraph column, Shelledy's attempts to reduce the offensiveness of Vigh and Cantera's actions—primarily through bolstering and minimization—appear in 14 paragraphs.

In attempts to bolster the image of the *Tribune*, Shelledy emphasizes the long-standing credibility and ethical standards of the newspaper, rather than focusing on the acts committed by his reporters. According to Burke, “Even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a *deflection* of reality” (“From *Language as Symbolic Action*” 1341). Thus, although the positive information Shelledy emphasizes in discussing his newspaper may be true, he is, in presenting this positive selection, deflecting from the negative associations of his reporters. The information Vigh and Cantera sold to the *Enquirer*, Shelledy writes, “was known to *The Tribune* but had not been printed because of authenticity issues or because it was deemed irrelevant to the crime” (13). And, unlike reporters from other newspapers, he writes, Vigh and Cantera “never included in their *Tribune* stories conjecture, unsubstantiated ‘facts,’ or the irrelevant allegations swirling about” (18). Shelledy highlights the good choices the newspaper in general had made in this situation, thus framing his reporters' lapse as precisely that—a lapse. As a whole, according to his argument, the *Tribune* has maintained high principles in its publications. To further emphasize this point, he writes, “*The Tribune* finds publishing rumors or sensitive findings irrelevant to a crime as anathema as exposing confidential sources of good-faith information or prior restraint. We just don't go there” (17). So although *Tribune* reporters did sell information based on

rumors, it was the *Enquirer* that published them. The *Tribune*, on the other hand, would never stoop so low, according to Shelledy's statements. Further working to bolster the newspaper's image, Shelledy points out the general expertise and experience of his reporters involved in the scandal, writing, "They are talented, young journalists who suffered a lapse of judgment, . . . a mistake they now fully recognize and deeply regret" (19). Shelledy, then, works to bolster primarily the image of his paper as a whole, but also the image of his reporters, thus deflecting from the reality of their "lapse."

In his column, Shelledy does admit some wrongdoing on the part of his reporters, but, when he is not emphasizing the good in his paper, he is often working to minimize the appearance of evil on the part of his reporters and his newspaper. Discussing image restoration techniques, Benoit points out, "*Perceptions are more important than reality*. . . [a] key question is not if the act was *in fact* offensive, but whether the act is *believed* by the relevant audience(s) to be heinous" (178). Immediately after revealing that his reporters had been involved in selling stories to the *Enquirer*, Shelledy works to shape the perceptions of his audience, attempting to minimize the level of offensiveness to his readers. In what would become a highly quoted passage by those pointing fingers of accusation at Shelledy later, he writes, "Strictly speaking, talking to the *National Enquirer* or others of the ilk, in and of itself, is neither illegal nor unethical. Rather, it is akin to drinking water out of a toilet bowl — dumb, distasteful and, when observed, embarrassing" (8). Though he does acknowledge that the actions of his reporters were not good, he emphasizes that what they did was not only legal, but also ethically acceptable (a claim and belief that would in large part contribute to his forced resignation). Shelledy further works to justify and minimize his reporters' behavior, writing, "On their own time

and volition, they simply laid out what had been reported and responded to theories, rumors and ‘discoveries’ surrounding the investigation, much of which had neither been confirmed nor denied publicly. In short, a dissection of the information mix reporters generally sift through in their pursuit of the truth” (9). Vigh and Cantera’s behavior, then, appears to be little more than what all other reporters involved in the case were doing. It seems, by this point, if we follow Shelledy’s reasoning, that his reporters did indeed do something “dumb,” but it was hardly wrong or sensational.

Burke discusses an aspect of identification “whereby one can protect an interest merely by using terms not incisive enough to criticize it properly. . . . and even terms that seem harsh can often be found on closer scrutiny to be flattering” (“From *A Rhetoric of Motives*” 1334-35). In his column, Shelledy indeed seeks to protect the interests of the *Tribune* through efforts to minimize any damage to the paper by making the problem seem like a small lapse, and at the same time even flattering the image of the *Tribune* and its reporters. According to Benoit, however, “Minimization cannot always be expected to improve one’s image. . . . Trying to make a serious problem seem trivial can create a backlash” (184). Such was the case here, as both Shelledy’s staff and the public were quickly outraged by what they viewed as his too-casual response to what they saw as a serious problem. And the *News* quickly capitalized on this backlash, publishing an exposé the next day that would highlight and emphasize a variety of wrongdoings on the part of its rival.

**The News’ Reacts: “Smarts, Tabloid Settle: Enquirer Falsehoods
Are Linked to 2 S.L. Tribune Reporters”**

Standing in stark contrast to the *Tribune*’s first story on the issue is that of the *Deseret News*, which ran on page A1 Monday, April 28. In the 42-paragraph story, which

is more than twice as long as the *Tribune*'s 19-paragraph column, accusation appears in 23 paragraphs, and gloating appears in four paragraphs. And, in contrast to the *Tribune*'s story, this article emphasizes from the beginning the sensational and lurid details of its rival's involvement in the scandal, at the same time setting itself up "as factual information provider" (MacMillan 327). In revealing the follies of the *Tribune*, "it demonstrates its general trustworthiness as a reliable source of information, and, in contrast, the fallibility of its rivals" (MacMillan 331).

Beginning with the headline and carrying into the lead, the *News* highlights the *Tribune*'s scandalous link with the *Enquirer* and simultaneously points out its own authority in revealing the details of that scandal. Unlike the harmless and unrevealing headline from the *Tribune*, the *News* leads its story with the headline, "Smarts, tabloid settle," followed by the subheading, "Enquirer falsehoods are linked to 2 S.L. Tribune reporters." In this headline, the *News* not only "announce[s] the news as a sensational exposé, they accuse without being explicit, making a story difficult to deny, while at the same time avoiding liability" (MacMillan 332). By linking the *Tribune* and *Enquirer* from the beginning, the headline begs for the attention of readers, who are more drawn to the sensational than to the lackluster. The headline is followed immediately by "Copyright 2003 Deseret News," a phrase that, in addition to prohibiting other news sources from copying their material without permission, essentially shows the reader that the subsequent story will reveal information not yet obtained or revealed by any other news source (the *Tribune* included). This shows that the *News*, unlike the *Tribune*, is doing its job of honest and in-depth reporting. This emphasis on exclusivity and the

revealing nature of the *News*' story continues in the story's lead, immediately following the opening paragraph:

The family of Elizabeth Smart and the National Enquirer have reached a settlement that retracts salacious comments published by the tabloid last summer. Part of the settlement includes a rare apology to the family and admission it printed false information about Smart family members. As an important side note, the Deseret News also has learned two Salt Lake Tribune reporters were paid a combined \$20,000 by the tabloid for information the Enquirer used to build the story it is now retracting. (1-2)

Not only does the *News* bring up *Tribune* involvement in its second paragraph, which Shelledy did not do in his column until the sixth paragraph, writer Lucinda Dillon Kinkead also points out that the information is "an important side note," thus heightening the tension involved in the revelation, which becomes representative of the *News*' thorough investigation skills when Kinkead mentions that "the Deseret News has learned." This subtle gloating continues just a few paragraphs down, when the story reveals, "A joint statement by the National Enquirer and the Smart family, obtained Sunday by the Deseret News, retracts the salacious details of the story" (8). Again, the *News* is emphasizing the exclusive nature of its information, and showing its own commitment to pursuing truth.

Gloating in the *News*' article continues later in the story, when Kinkead further contrasts the ethos of the two newspapers. She writes, "Derek Jensen and Pat Reavy, the Deseret News' lead reporters on the Elizabeth Smart kidnapping coverage, said they were contacted by numerous media organizations in connection with the news story but they

did not speak with the National Enquirer and do not recall being contacted by that organization” (22). Though not accusatory in tone, this statement subtly calls attention to the differences between the two newspapers and sets up the *News* as a stronger, more ethical newspaper than the *Tribune*. First, Kinkead points out that the *News*’ reporters were, like the *Tribune* reporters, also sought out by various news organizations for their expertise on the case. Unlike the reporters from the *Tribune*, however, they did not associate, nor were they even contacted by, the *Enquirer*. In highlighting this difference, Kinkead is able to score points over the *Tribune* by emphasizing the more-ethical nature of her own newspaper.

A bit less subtle than the gloating in this story is the accusatory tone. The accusations in the article are numerous, and the majority fall into one of two categories: they either detail lies perpetuated by the *Tribune* and thus accuse of factual misconduct, or they accuse both directly and indirectly of moral and ethical wrongdoing. According to Ryan, “The accuser perceives an evil or an exigence, he is motivated to expose it, and the rhetorical response to that motivation is a *kategoria*” (256). In the actions of the *Tribune*’s reporters, the *News* has found an evil that it is motivated to expose through a clearly accusatory article. By simply linking the name of the *Tribune* with the *Enquirer*, the *News* is able to accuse the *Tribune* of being at least partially responsible for the *Enquirer*’s story on the Smart family, which “contained details so lurid some Salt Lake supermarkets refused to display or sell it” (6). It also contained what the *News* labeled as “salacious details” regarding a Smart family sex ring (8). Because it was a set of reporters from the *Tribune* who provided these lurid and salacious details, the *News* had an obvious interest in reporting and playing up the story, which implicates the *Tribune* throughout. In

addition to the sensational nature of the details provided by the *Tribune's* reporters, the *News* stresses that the information provided to the *Enquirer* “was inaccurate and false” (13), resulting in “myriad factual errors in the tabloid story” (9). The *Tribune*, then, according to this story, not only provided unsubstantiated information to the *Enquirer*, it was also dishonest in its reporting of the facts to the public. Kinkead writes, “Shelledy’s Sunday column apparently did not provide readers with the entire story. For one thing, the column implied the two Tribune reporters had only a one-time meeting with a reporter from the National Enquirer. There were actually a series of information-sharing sessions” (29-30). Though Shelledy did not give readers the entire story, the *News* is determined to do so. The contrast between what Shelledy’s column “implied” and what “actually” happened offers yet another accusation of dishonesty.

According to Ryan, “Accusations against character stress ethical materials (256). In addition to accusations of mere factual problems, the *News* clearly accuses the *Tribune* and its reporters of creating problems for an innocent family, thus contradicting Shelledy’s claim that his reporters did not violate any code of ethics. Writes Kinkead, “The Tribune reporters’ behavior introduces a messy element to the already emotional circumstances of Elizabeth Smart’s kidnapping last June” (18). It would appear, then, that the actions of the *Tribune* reporters exacerbated the pain of a vulnerable family that had garnered the sympathy of a state, if not a nation. By introducing a messy element for this poor family, the *Tribune* appears as a callous villain, with reporters more concerned with money than ethics. The *News* story concludes with statements from the Smart family, which, according to Kinkead, “sternly rebuke the Tribune’s reporters” (39). Wrapping up the story is the following quote: “The Smart Family is deeply disappointed with local

media Those overseeing these individuals need to realize the magnitude of such serious legal and ethical issues” (40-41). In stressing what they clearly view as unethical behavior, the *News* is able to attack the character of its rival and thus, according to MacMillan, “display its own commitment to the pursuit of truth while scoring points over its competitors” (327).

Follow-up Stories and Their Rhetorical Strategies: The *Tribune*

Soon after Shelledy’s confident column hit readers’ porches Sunday morning, response to the incident clearly indicated that what he thought was no big deal was, in fact, a big deal. The *News*’ exposé story the following day likely didn’t help to keep the glaring spotlight away from the paper, either. And although the *Tribune*’s breaking story on the issue—Shelledy’s column—is marked primarily by the defense strategies of bolstering and minimization, most of the paper’s significant follow-up stories (both news articles and editorials) appear to be making attempts at image restoration, and are marked in large part by a more humble tone, still attempting to reduce readers’ perceptions of offensiveness, but also emphasizing corrective action the paper plans to take and directly apologizing to readers. Though gloating, battle rhetoric, and identification appear rarely, if at all, in its defensive articles, all emerge frequently in the *Tribune*’s articles on the *News*’ transition to morning.

Corrective action

According to Benoit, “A firm commitment to correct the problem—repair damage and/or prevent future problems—can be a very important component of image restoration discourse. This would be especially important for those who admit responsibility” (184). As it quickly became clear that readers, reporters, and other members of the community

wanted more action taken than Shelledy had originally proposed in response to his admission of his reporters' misconduct, the *Tribune*, in both its columns and news stories, emphasized its commitment to making changes to both repair damage and prevent future problems like the one causing such a stir. Vigh and Cantera were originally to be put on one year's probation and removed from coverage of the Smart case, according to an article published Monday, April 28, but by Tuesday, April 29, they had been fired when it appeared that public opinion was in favor of a harsher punishment. Additionally, Shelledy asked an independent investigator to look into incident and agreed to publish his findings, and the *Tribune* was sure to mention the investigation in all subsequent articles. *Tribune* publisher William Dean Singleton also "accomplished a goal to meet with several members of the Smart family and apologize for the actions of Vigh and Cantera" (Warchol "Trib Editor Resigns" 14). Ultimately, and perhaps most importantly, the corrective action centered on regaining the newspaper's lost trust.

In an editorial published April 30, titled "An Apology," the unsigned voice of the *Tribune's* editorial board emphasizes the newspaper's desire to regain readers' trust through more responsible behaviors. It reads, "Our readers need to be able to trust that those who report, write and edit this newspaper will follow the truth wherever it may lead. They need to be just as certain that we are above spreading malicious and hurtful rumors" (11). The paper implies that it will indeed strive to report, write, and edit the paper in such a way that is dependent wholly on truth and ethical standards in order to recover readers' trust. The newspaper also informs readers of its plans "not only to work to regain your trust, but to more jealously guard the credibility that is our only currency" (13). Though more vague than some of the specific aforementioned means of corrective

action, this pledge to earn readers' trust through guarding and rebuilding credibility is nonetheless a display of the paper's apparent humility and commitment to prevent further problems.

In the end, the paper took a drastic step in an attempt to take corrective action—Editor Jay Shelledy, who had held his post for 12 years, resigned, concluding his tenure with a column, just one week after his breaking column on the scandal. In an extended metaphor, Shelledy compares the *Tribune* to the Titanic, calling both strong and proud, yet vulnerable. As its leader, he says, he takes full responsibility for its crash, and he details the need for new leadership so that the paper and the community can move on from the tumult. He writes, “Let me end this, my final Letter from the Editor, by saying The Good Ship Tribune appears to require a new captain if passengers and crew again are to board her with complete confidence” (“Letter from the Editor” 22). Again, the emphasis here is on the newspaper's desire to rebuild its credibility as well as the trust and confidence of the public.

Mortification

In addition to emphasizing what it will do differently, the newspaper does “confess and beg forgiveness,” trying a strategy which Benoit and Burke label mortification (Benoit 181). In doing, so, however, the apology nearly always feels hesitant—coming near the end of stories and generally coming with some shifting of the blame. In an April 30 article, Shelledy is quoted as saying, “I apologize for the *Tribune* and personally regret Kevin and Michael's actions — which I knew nothing of at the time” (Warchol “Publisher Vows” 21). There is an apology here, but Shelledy and the paper seem to be sorrier that Vigh and Cantera were able to do what they did without the

knowledge or permission of their editors. So although Shelledy apologizes, he implies that had he known of their intentions, he would have prevented their wrongdoing.

Ultimately, therefore, the paper seems to be not at fault. Even the paper's April 30 "An Apology" editorial does not even present readers with an apology until the 12th out of 13 paragraphs. They do, nonetheless, eventually give the following apology: "We owe you, our readers, an apology for not meeting your expectations, for having breached your trust" (12). The paper does, then, take some responsibility, using the "we" voice to acknowledge error and breach of trust.

These seemingly contradictory characteristics of the *Tribune's apologia* match those described by Sharon Downey in her depiction of post-1960s *apologia*. She writes, "On the one hand, rhetors accepted full responsibility for the events in question. . . . On the other hand, ironically, all speakers shifted blame for their circumstances" (56-7). Although the *Tribune* does take much more responsibility in its later articles than it did in Shelledy's initial column, it nonetheless attempts to shift the blame for its problems. Benoit categorizes shifting the blame as a strategy of denial, which, according to Ware and Linkugel, "consists of the simple disavowal by the speaker of any participation in, relationship to, or positive sentiment toward whatever it is that repels the audience" (276). Though the *Tribune* does not simply deny any involvement in the scandal, it does seek to push the blame on others whom it sets up as scapegoats—something other than most *Tribune* reporters.

Reduce offensiveness

The *Tribune's* first news article on its reporters, published Tuesday, April 29, leads with the front-page headline, "Reporters' Deal Puts Tribune on Spot," and the

subheading, “*Credibility issue: The newsroom is upset over an ethical lapse in selling information to a tabloid*” (Warchol). From the outset, the *Tribune* is distancing itself from its reporters, at whom the newsroom is clearly angry. The story leads with the following opening paragraph: “The damage to its credibility The Salt Lake Tribune suffered when two of its reporters sold information on the Elizabeth Smart kidnapping to the National Enquirer came home with a jolt Monday” (1). The passive structure of this opening sentence immediately puts the blame on to something other than the *Tribune*, which has suffered as a result of the actions of its reporters. The *Tribune* as a whole, judging by this phrase, has committed no crime, but has instead been victimized. The *Tribune*’s staff appeared to be as shocked by the news as their readers. The paper admits that damage has been done to its credibility, thus making a concession, but it shifts the blame for that damage simultaneously.

Reported in a *Tribune* article on Wednesday was the following: “Reporters and editors at *The Tribune* on Tuesday drafted a statement distancing themselves from the actions of reporters Michael Vigh and Kevin Cantera [The statement read,] ‘Our first obligation is to our credibility and that requires that we avoid associations and activities that jeopardize readers’ trust in us’” (Warchol “Publisher Vows” 5, 7). Clearly, members of the newspaper staff hope to dissociate themselves from their fallen colleagues, and in emphasizing that to readers, they work to show how they are different, and, perhaps, at least partially innocent. In the paper’s apologetic editorial, the board furthers, “The salacious information that the *Tribune* reporters discussed with the *Enquirer* was never judged worthy of publication by *Tribune* editors. But that proved no deterrent to Vigh and Cantera, who made the deal with the tabloid” (“An Apology” 9). At

the same time bolstering and shifting the blame, the statement serves to, once again, set up a contrast between the paper as a whole and its guilty reporters, who ought to carry the blame for the upheaval.

In addition to shifting the blame and emphasizing corrective action, the paper attempts to further reduce the offensive nature of the act, but less through minimization, as in Shelledy's initial column, as through bolstering. Through most of the paper's articles, columns, and editorials, there is an emphasis on the fact that the information Vigh and Cantera sold was never published in the *Tribune*. In one news story, Shelledy is quoted as saying, "We did not use any of that information [in the *Enquirer* story]. The *Tribune*'s coverage throughout the Smart abduction and return was solid reporting" (Warchol "Publisher Vows" 22). By focusing on what the paper did right in the situation, they are able to, at least in part, downplay the wrongdoing associated with the paper. The *Tribune* could have capitalized on the salacious information, but instead, chose to report on information not based on rumor.

In working to bolster its image, the paper, in both columns and editorials, also highlights the ethical standards of the staff in general as well as the strong reputation of the newspaper. In Shelledy's final column, he stresses that what Vigh and Cantera did was "in violation of *Tribune* policy/ethics guidelines and the standards dearly held by this profession" ("Letter From the Editor" 3). Vigh and Cantera, then, violated policies and ethics guidelines which other reporters in the profession, according to Shelledy, adhere to "dearly." In appealing to readers' sense of justice and forgiveness, Shelledy continues, "Readers can help by not allowing the aberration of two reporters automatically to cast aspersions on every byline in this newspaper The good relentless, ethical work of

148 newsroom employees simply can not be eroded forever by this blunder, although the 148 must now work harder at their jobs” (19). Again, the *Tribune* concedes here that its reporters have been tainted and must work to prove themselves, but it emphasizes primarily the “good relentless, ethical work” of every employee at the paper.

According to Ware and Linkugel, transcendental defense strategies “psychologically move the audience away from the particulars of the charge at hand in a direction toward some more abstract, general view of his character” (280). Throughout the majority of Shelledy’s final column, as well as most *Tribune* news stories regarding its scandal, the *Tribune* attempts to move its audience toward a view of the paper’s character in general. Emphasizing this character of the institution, Shelledy quotes reporter Dan Harrie, who said, “*The Tribune* will get through it and will remain the state’s best and best-read newspaper” (“Letter From the Editor” 20). Rather than dwelling, then, on the bad that has happened, or even focusing on the problem and trying to make it seem less bad, the paper instead focuses on the good in its actions, reporters, and general reputation.

Identification

In the 2003 sample of stories, standing in fairly stark contrast to the *Tribune*’s defensively toned articles are its articles regarding the *News*’ transition to morning publication, in which the *Tribune* frequently takes the offensive, highlighting issues of identification, battle rhetoric, and gloating. In the *Tribune*’s 39-paragraph story on the *News*’ transition to morning, titled “Deseret News counting on big gains in move to morning,” references to the *News*’ ownership by the LDS Church appear in 18.

In emphasizing this ownership so heavily, the *Tribune* not only works to make the *News* appear overly conservative, biased, and capable of gaining readers only because they are LDS, it also highlights its own differences, seeking to create a sense of identification with its audience, which it believes will be above such conservatism and bias.

From the beginning, as with many other *Tribune* stories regarding the *News*, the *Tribune* makes clear the link between the *News* and the church, beginning its second paragraph with “The *News*, owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (2). This initial reference sets the stage for a flood of future references, most of which go beyond merely mentioning church ownership. In the middle of the story, Warchol writes, “*Salt Lake Tribune* editor James E. Shelledy argues church ownership will always define and limit *News* readership. . . . ‘The bottom line is that the primary reason people buy the *Deseret News* or the *Tribune* has little to do with the time of day the papers are distributed’” (18-19). This quote from Shelledy, also included as a larger breakout quote in the article, implies, rather loudly, that people who choose to read or subscribe to the *News* do so primarily because it is owned by the church. This idea is furthered later in the story with the claim, “Despite what it has said on the masthead since its 1850 founding — ‘The Mountain West’s First Newspaper’ or ‘Utah’s locally owned daily newspaper’ — Utahns think of it as ‘the church-owned *Deseret News*’” (24). In setting forth a label for the *News* that is based on its ownership by the church, the *Tribune* sets the *News* apart as a newspaper defined by a religion, rather than tradition, good reporting, or other values held strongly by most journalists.

The *Tribune*, in its efforts to distinguish itself from the *News*, highlights how it is different, often using this issue of ownership to do so. Warchol writes, “Right now, 96 percent of the *News*’ audience is LDS [about 45 percent of *Tribune* readers consider themselves LDS]” (29). So the *Tribune*, it would seem, is not dependent solely on people of a certain religion to support it, and it is not, therefore, bound by either its readers or ownership to report stories in a certain way. Warchol further emphasizes the differences between the two papers with the following statements from Scott Trundle, publisher of the Ogden-based *Standard-Examiner*:

‘[The *News* has] always been a church-owned paper,’ he says. ‘Now, it’s saying, “We are the newspaper for decent folks. We reflect the moral and conservative culture — not just Mormons. We are wise and gentle.” It might work.’ The *Tribune*, Trundle says, has its distinctive brand in the Salt Lake market: The statewide paper with the independent voice. (35-36)

Warchol emphasizes with this quote that the *News* is gearing its stories toward a conservative, primarily church-going group, whereas the *Tribune* is reporting for all audiences, and is doing so without any other aim than presenting the news with its independent voice.

Gloating

In its primary story on the *News*’ transition to morning, the *Tribune* manages to work in a variety of subtle punches that emphasize both its own strengths and the weaknesses of the *News*. The story, titled “Deseret News Counting on Big Gains,” notes that “the state’s second-largest newspaper’s move is being watched closely by its competitors and advertisers” (Warchol 9). In highlighting the *News*’ status as second-

largest newspaper, the *Tribune* is also, if indirectly, highlighting its own status as the largest. The *Tribune* further highlights the weaknesses of the *News*, bringing up both its past status and the challenges it will face in the future. Warchol writes, “Afternoon newspapers are the spotted owls of publishing . . . Few readers today are interested in coming home to the same news they heard on the radio during the day or have on the television in front of them” (11). Though he does not directly state that nobody is interested in reading the *News*, he implies that what the *News* has been doing as an afternoon newspaper has been virtually useless, reporting only old news. But the *Tribune*, Warchol implies, has in contrast been right on top of breaking news. And although, as this story is reporting, the *News* is transitioning to morning in an attempt to increase its readership, Warchol ends his story with the judgment that “invasion into foreign territory is always perilous for outside newspapers. . . . Adds Trundle: ‘For an out-of-town newspaper to blow out a local paper is very difficult. What you end up doing is just making that local paper better’” (38-39). In ending on a note that emphasizes the likely failures or perils the *News* will face in its quest, the *Tribune* seems to revel in these failures.

Battle rhetoric

In its stories regarding the *News*’ transition to morning, the *Tribune* discusses the battle tactics of its rival, but in so doing, it frequently implies that the *News* will be fighting a losing battle. In its 39-paragraph “Deseret News Counting on Big Gains,” Warchol uses the majority of the article’s space to imply that the *News*’ techniques in fighting for those gains will be unsuccessful. The story’s subheading reads, “**Shock and Awe**’: LDS-owned newspaper unleashing \$2.7M advertising attack to win readers in

Utah, Davis counties,” and the story itself discusses the *News*’ plan to win over new readers. But the article concludes with the following observation: “invasion into foreign territory is always perilous for outside newspapers” (38). Thus, it would appear that the *News*’ attempts at invasion and battling to guarantee its survival will be futile. In so implying, the *Tribune* makes its rival appear not only weak, but also naïve, in assuming its plans will work. So although the battle rhetoric is primarily concerned with business issues, the *Tribune*’s use of it serves to make its rival appear not just vulnerable, but virtually incapable of even surviving.

Follow-up Stories and Their Rhetorical Strategies: The *News*

On Tuesday, April 29, the day after it published its first story on the *Tribune* scandal, the *News* again led its front page with a headline slamming its rival. The 62-paragraph story (nearly twice as long as the *Tribune*’s 36-paragraph story the same day) was topped with the headline, “Tabloid targets Trib” (Kinkead). Both accusation and gloating appear frequently in this article, setting the tone for further follow-up stories, which are also sprinkled quite heavily with accusation and gloating. As with the *Tribune*, the *News*’ stories regarding this issue do not include much reference to identification or battle rhetoric—those appear instead in stories about its transition to morning delivery.

Accusation

In its news stories, columns, and editorials, the *News* directs much of its accusatory rhetoric at Vigh and Cantera, asserting that the two had no standards of proper journalism, hurt the Smart family and Smart investigation, and cared for little more than money. In stories about both the *Tribune*’s scandal and its own transition to morning

publication, it also accuses, a bit less frequently and a bit less directly, the *Tribune* in general of poor ethics and poor reporting values.

In columnist Lee Benson's column, "Writers' story hijacked the investigation," he uses the phrase "sold their souls" in regard to Vigh and Cantera twice, and he also uses the phrases "sell out" and "sold out" to refer to their actions. In his opening paragraph he explains that they "sold their souls to the National Enquirer for 20 grand" (1). In writing that they "sold their souls," Benson implicates the two reporters in an almost Judas-like scheme. For what he views as a paltry sum, they violated the ethics held by journalists. Just two paragraphs later Benson asks, "How could anyone with a notebook and pen stoop so low as to sell out to the National Enquirer?" (3). Again, the focus here is that they sold out to what most journalists view as a mockery—a supermarket tabloid. The indignant tone in Benson's column heightens the power of such phrases, making Vigh and Cantera appear to be villainous. Jay Evensen, *News* editorial page editor, further vilifies these reporters and their actions in recounting his experience sitting on an ethics panel a month before with Cantera, who, he writes, "made it clear then that as a reporter, he didn't care whether Elizabeth was found. He only cared about getting the story and the facts" (14). This insensitivity on the part of the reporters toward Elizabeth Smart and her family emerges as another key form of accusation from the *News*.

Cantera and Vigh, according to one *News* editorial, "fed information to the Enquirer Not only was the story untrue, it deeply wounded a family already struggling to cope with the kidnapping of their beloved family member" ("A black eye" 6). Echoing that accusation is a statement from Benson, who writes that the two, through their reporting and selling of information, "helped heap considerable pain and suffering

on a family already victimized by a kidnapping” (“Writers’ story hijacked” 15). Cantera and Vigh in these statements appear almost like wolves, preying on a wounded and victimized family and concerned only with their own interests. This metaphor continues in an Evensen column, when he writes in part about the experience of *News* photographer and uncle of Elizabeth Smart, who was defamed in the *Enquirer* article. “He and his brothers,” Evensen writes, “were mauled. Imagine how you would feel if you awoke in the middle of a family tragedy to discover that supermarket checkout counters nationwide were falsely announcing you as part of a porn ring and deftly implying you had something to do with your own daughter's, or niece's, kidnapping” (6). Though the mauling came in the form of an *Enquirer* article, the source of the false and painful and mauling information ultimately came from the *Tribune* reporters. The *News*’ second news article on the issue ends with a quote from a Smart family spokesperson, who says, “The family is deeply disappointed and finds it reprehensible that members of our community entrusted with information and great responsibility would act in such a reckless manner” (Kinkead “Tabloid targets Trib” 62).

According to other accusations in the *News*, in addition to causing emotional pain to the Smart family, the *Tribune* reporters—in both their selling of information and their own reporting—also caused distractions and delays in the investigation, and subsequently delayed Elizabeth’s homecoming. Benson writes that Vigh and Cantera’s reports, published in the *Tribune*, “succeeded in quickly reducing the supply of volunteers reporting to search for Elizabeth and her abductor” and “swerved the effort to look for a kidnapper still at-large. Wittingly or unwittingly, Cantera and Vigh’s reports in the *Tribune* and the *Enquirer* helped keep alive speculation that the kidnapping was an inside

job and helped keep the focus . . . from looking at fresh leads and new suspects” (“Writers’ story hijacked” 11). He also argues that the information they sold “helped fuel a nine-month wild goose chase” (5), while their own reporting sent out “distracting ripples never fully quelled” (10). Though Benson acknowledges that the two might not have done so wittingly, by using such terms as “swerved” and “goose chase” and “distracting ripples,” he quickly implicates them in detracting from the investigation.

A bit more subtly, the *News* also indirectly accuses the *Tribune* reporters of tarnishing their trade, and, as a result, the staff of the *News*. The editorial board writes, “The truth is, the entire profession suffers when journalists violate basic tenets of the trade. The commodity of journalists is trust. Any breach of that trust besmirches the entire profession” (“A black eye” 3). There is a tone of bitterness in the claim, and the *News* clearly holds the *Tribune* reporters responsible for decreasing the public’s trust in journalists. In a later column, Evensen heightens this idea, writing, “In many ways, everyone who calls himself or herself a journalist has suffered in the public's estimation. Despite the many healthy egos in this business, many in the public don't think Tribune or Deseret News when these things happen. They think ‘the media’” (16).

In making its accusations, the *News* often focuses specifically on Vigh and Cantera and their actions, but it also makes more general accusations geared at the *Tribune* in general, accusing it of poor reporting, misplaced priorities, and even hypocrisy. In his column, Evensen writes, “Spare me all the hand-wringing over the loss of credibility and the potential loss of subscribers. The Salt Lake Tribune’s numerous mea culpas last week, from the now-former editor, the staff and the editorial page . . . were a bit sickening” (1). Evensen, disgusted by the entire situation and the way the

Tribune in general dealt with it, is unmistakable in his critique of the *Tribune*. He includes in his column a quote from Shelledy, who said that the *Tribune* had had solid coverage of the Smart case, and follows it immediately with a sardonic rebuttal (taking words Shelledy had initially used to respond to accusations from the *Enquirer*): “That is baloney” (8). He accuses the *Tribune*, its reporters, and its editors of all contributing to the problem they find themselves enmeshed in, and finds their apologies to be insufficient. The *News* also includes the voices of readers and community members in its articles to further critique and accuse the *Tribune*. One reader writes that staff at the *Tribune* “really don’t care about the impact on people, only about their own business and careers. It really is very, very sad” (Kinhead “Readers weigh in” 1). Another reader makes the following claim:

Many believe The Salt Lake Tribune has been very much like the craftsman whose only tool is a hammer. To such an unfortunate craftsman, everything looks like a nail. To the Tribune’s reportorial and editorial staff, committed as it has been to exposing presumed ‘hubris and hypocrisy’ of the majority culture, everything looks like well: “hubris and hypocrisy.” (8-9)

Thus the disgust at Vigh and Cantera and their actions spills over to reflect poorly on the *Tribune* as a whole, as the *News* generalizes its accusations to move beyond the two reporters and instead seize the opportunity to implicate its rival.

Though accusation appears at a much lower frequency in stories regarding its transition to morning than it does in stories regarding the *Tribune*’s scandal, the *News* nonetheless accuses the *Tribune* of poor business practices and poor reporting in these articles, much like it does in the 2002 sample. In their column, Wilson and Webb write,

“Going morning is a big win for the Morning News, which for years had been blocked in its efforts by the previous Tribune managers” (5). As in the stories from the previous year’s sample, this statement accuses the *Tribune* and its owners of preventing the *News*’ transition to morning for years and subsequently hurting the *News*’ circulation.

Accusation of poor business practices, though, are also joined by accusations, however subtle, of poor reporting. “[*Tribune*] Editor Jay Shelledy is adept at walking the tightrope — being fairly sassy and aggressive in covering the LDS Church and Utah’s LDS culture, without very often going over the top and being downright offensive” (20). As with the rhetoric of downplaying gloating (MacMillan 328), the *News* seems to be downplaying its accusation here, but the tone is nonetheless accusatory. Shelledy, they write, does not “very often” become downright offensive, but, it is implied, he does sometimes.

Gloating

Of the gloating that appears in the *News*’ news articles, columns, and editorials, most emerges as what MacMillan describes as the “rhetoric of downplaying any possible gloating” (328). In the editorial, “A black eye for all journalists,” members of the *News* editorial board tells readers that instead of rejoicing in their rival’s misfortunes, “we are mindful of the Tribune reporters, photographers, artists and editors who play by the rules and have been unjustly tainted by the misdeeds of two of their own” (2). The statement appears sympathetic—and likely is, in part—but the word choices in the phrase also indicate a subtle gloating. No doubt the *News* would be just a bit pleased in the “tainting” of its rival’s workers, and that tainting was caused not by two outsiders, but by two of “their own,” which the *News* is quick to point out. But to further emphasize their sympathy for their journalistic colleagues, the *News* writes, “Again, we do not revel in

the events of the past week. If anything, they have been a stern reminder of what consequences can come to bear when journalists violate the trust of their readers, viewers or listeners” (7). The *News* is eager to stress its lack of reveling, but it is also eager to emphasize the problems caused by the ethics and trust violations of *Tribune* reporters, thus “displaying its commitment over other sources to the pursuit of truth” (MacMillan 330).

Perhaps a bit more obvious is the *News*’ gloating in emphasizing, as it did in its first story on the issue, its reporting abilities in uncovering and providing exclusive information. In the *News*’ April 30 news story, Kinkead writes, “Shelledy said in his column Sunday he originally turned down the reporters’ offer to resign, but circumstances apparently changed after the Deseret News reported the National Enquirer had a tape of conversations . . . that conflicted with what they apparently told Shelledy” (“Tribune to pore” 6). It appears here that the *News* has even more information than the *Tribune* does regarding the *Tribune*’s own affairs, and the *News* is the one providing truth to readers. In this same story, the *News* mentions three additional times what it has been told by the *Enquirer*, what it has “obtained,” and what it has “learned” and printed in a copyrighted story. According to MacMillan, reporting success is in part “flagged by the way that a story is heralded as exclusive” (329). When the *News* has exclusive information, it is quick to point it out to readers, thus showing that its reporters, unlike its competitors, are committed to seeking out truth and presenting it to readers in a respectable, yet still revealing, fashion. And when that reporting results in increased business for the state’s second-place newspaper, it is also eager to point that out. In one news story, Kinkead writes, “Viewers in record numbers called up the Deseret News

online version of a copyrighted story titled: ‘Tabloid targets Trib’ People called up the story more than 100,000 times, making it the most heavily read article to appear on the Deseret News Web page this year” (“Readers weigh in” 4-5). Not only does Kinkead again emphasize the copyrighted, and therefore exclusive, nature of the story, but she offers numbers to show that readers are turning to the *News* to receive their truth.

In the stories regarding the *News*’ transition to morning publication, its gloating includes a combination of emphasizing solely its own strengths and emphasizing its strengths in relation to the weaknesses of the *Tribune*. Writing about their editor, Wilson and Webb write, “Hughes, a non-Mormon, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist with impeccable credentials and a national reputation, is the Morning News’ best-kept secret and most powerful symbol of good journalism” (14). Here they revel in the strength of their leadership, which they view as a powerful symbol of the overall strength of their newspaper. In additional gloating statements, however, they highlight their strengths while simultaneously emphasizing the weaknesses of their rival. For example, they write, “The reality is the Morning News does cover the news, including church-related stories, without bias or pulling punches. . . . Even the fact that a column like this is printed in the News shows its willingness to deal with sensitive issues, even about itself. You don’t see anyone doing this kind of analysis at the Tribune” (15). Wilson and Webb are quick to point out the *Tribune*’s failings, both editorial and business, and in doing so, further distinguish the *News* and its values.

Battle rhetoric

Whereas the battle rhetoric in news stories about the *Tribune* upheaval from this sampled period is virtually nonexistent, it appears frequently in a *News* column regarding

its transition to morning, titled “Brace for Round 2 of S.L. Newspaper War” (Wilson and Webb). Not surprisingly, the fighting words Wilson and Webb use apply primarily to business and readership battles, but ultimately serve to make the *News* look strong and the *Tribune* look vulnerable. Wilson and Webb begin their column with, “So you thought the Salt Lake City newspaper wars were over? Get ready for Round 2” (1). They proceed to describe the details of “Round 1” (which, they say, the *News* won) and “Round 2,” which they describe as the “battle for readership and prestige” (3). With a boxing metaphor that continues throughout the column, they set up the two newspapers as combatants in a fight that one will win and another will lose. In their description of this fight, they emphasize the successful tactics and various wins of the *News*, portraying it as the stronger fighter in this battle.

Identification

As with battle rhetoric, both the *Tribune*'s and the *News*' mentions of the LDS Church and issues of the *News*' ownership appear primarily in stories about the *News*' transition to morning publication. And though each newspaper brings up the issue with an aim to undermine the credibility of its rival while building up its own, the *News*' mentions of its and its rival's ownership appear a bit more defensive.

In a column by Ted Wilson, a Democrat and former Salt Lake mayor, and LaVarr Webb, a Republican political consultant and lobbyist, regarding the *News*' transition to morning, the two acknowledge,

LDS Church ownership of the Morning News remains a very mixed blessing and poses challenges to circulation growth. Even though the Morning News covers the news without fear or favor, as Editor John Hughes likes to say, the perception

remains, even among many active church members, that they may not get completely unbiased coverage from the Morning News. (11)

Wilson and Webb recognize that there is a negative perception about the *News*' ownership, but at the same time they work to dispel or shift that perception, acting on the defense. They assure readers, "The reality is the Morning News does cover the news, including church-related stories, without bias or pulling punches. There may be differences in tone and emphasis between the News and the Tribune, but you will never miss a story, even if it reflects badly on the church, by reading the Morning News" (15). Here also Wilson and Webb are responding to perceptions or accusations regarding the *News*' apparently limited news coverage, and try to show that its newspaper does in fact cover news regardless of its relation to the LDS Church. Taking this defense one step further, the two attempt to bolster the paper's image by pointing out the benefits of its ownership: "On the Morning News side, it is ironic and a little-known fact that church ownership in some ways actually has a moderating influence on the paper's editorial positions and policy, rather than the reverse" (17). Responding to the sense that its church ownership has made it heavily conservative, they point out instead how the church has made it, if anything, more moderate.

In addition to defending its own paper, the *News*, in its mentions of ownership, also seeks to promote negative perceptions of the *Tribune*. Wilson and Webb write, "The biggest differences between the two papers is found on the editorial pages and opinion columns throughout the papers, with Tribune editorials and writers being much more liberal and the Morning News moderately conservative" (16). In including the term "moderate" before its admission of conservative, the *News* is appealing to what most of

its readers, and most of Utahns for that matter, hold as their political stance. Moderately conservative hardly seems biased. The *Tribune*, on the other hand, is “much more liberal”—a claim that makes it seem completely biased, and, for that matter, biased in a political direction often scorned by the heavily Republican state. Further seeking to polarize the *Tribune* and its ownership, Wilson and Webb write, “Shelledy knows the numbers — probably less than 45 percent of Utahns are active, committed LDS Church members. He’s happy to go after the 55 percent” (20). In this statement the *News* portrays the *Tribune* as the newspaper for people not committed to religion, whereas the *News* appears to be a newspaper for the moral and religiously devoted population.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In beginning my discourse analysis I assumed that the different categories of rivalry rhetoric for the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Deseret Morning News* would indeed appear more frequently in my 2003 sample of news articles than in my 2002 sample. In carrying out the analysis, I confirmed my initial feelings (see tables below), but I also provided additional insights into the rhetorical situation with these two papers and their long-standing rivalry.

	Defense	Accusation	Identification	Gloating	Battle Rhetoric
<i>Tribune</i>	1.9 %	6.5 %	12 %	7.9 %	6 %
<i>News</i>	0.9 %	5.5 %	0.5 %	5 %	5.5 %

Table 1. Percentages of rivalry rhetoric categories' appearances at the paragraph level for the 2002 sample of news stories.

	Defense	Accusation	Identification	Gloating	Battle Rhetoric
<i>Tribune</i>	10 %	50 %	100 %	50 %	60 %
<i>News</i>	11.1 %	55.6 %	11.1 %	55.6 %	66.7 %

Table 1a. Percentages of rivalry rhetoric categories' appearances at the overall article level for the 2002 sample of news stories.

	Defense	Accusation	Identification	Gloating	Battle Rhetoric
<i>Tribune</i>	36.8 %	0 %	8.1 %	5.7 %	3.6 %
<i>News</i>	0 %	25.3 %	2.9 %	17 %	2.9 %

Table 2. Percentages of rivalry rhetoric categories' appearances at the paragraph level for the 2003 sample of news stories.

	Defense	Accusation	Identification	Gloating	Battle Rhetoric
<i>Tribune</i>	80%	0 %	20%	30%	30%
<i>News</i>	0 %	81.8 %	9.1 %	90.1 %	27.3 %

Table 2a. Percentages of rivalry rhetoric categories' appearances at the overall article level for the 2003 sample of news stories.

The tables above show how often the various categories appeared at both the paragraph and overall article level. I include the article-level tables to show the large number of articles these categories of rhetoric appeared in, but for my discussion, I focus primarily on the paragraph comparisons.

In the sample of news stories from 2002, not surprisingly, defensive strategies, which the *Tribune* employs heavily in 2003, appear hardly at all, with 1.9 percent of the *Tribune's* paragraphs and 0.9 percent of the *News's* paragraphs containing a form of defense. In 2003, on the other hand, defense strategies appear in 36.8 percent of the *Tribune's* paragraphs (but in 0 percent of the *News's* paragraphs). Given the scandal, this large jump from one year to the next in the *Tribune* is not unexpected and can be attributed to the *Tribune's* increased need to defend itself because of the scandal involving its reporters.

As with the defensive rhetoric, the level of accusation from 2002 to 2003 also changes quite a bit. In 2002, the *Tribune* and the *News* each had a similar amount of accusatory rhetoric, with 6.5 percent of the *Tribune's* paragraphs and 5.5 percent of the *News's* paragraphs containing accusation. In 2003, however, the level of accusation in the *Tribune's* paragraphs dropped to 0 percent, while the *News's* grew to 25.3 percent. Again, this difference and large increase can be generally attributed to the changed rhetorical context the papers found themselves in—the *News* had plenty to accuse its rival of in 2003, and the *Tribune*, which was focused on restoring its image, had little time or energy to spend on attacking or accusing the *News*.

There is a similar trend with the gloating rhetoric in the news stories, with the *News's* gloating appearing at a much higher frequency in 2003 than in 2002, and the

Tribune's gloating decreasing largely from 2002 to 2003. In 2002, gloating rhetoric appeared a bit more frequently in the *Tribune* than in the *News*, showing in 7.9 percent of the *Tribune's* paragraphs, compared to 5 percent of the *News's*. Gloating rhetoric for the *Tribune*, however, dropped to 5.7 percent in 2003, and the *News* jumped to 17 percent. Here again, in 2003, the *News* clearly had much more, and the *Tribune* had much less, to gloat about.

The trends with battle rhetoric and identification are a bit less obvious from one year to the next, and there are actually even some decreases in each category from 2002 to 2003. In 2002, battle rhetoric appeared in 6 percent of the *Tribune's* paragraphs and in 5.5 percent of the *News's*. In 2003, however, those numbers dropped to 3.6 percent for the *Tribune* and 2.9 percent for the *News*. In both years, the battle rhetoric appears at a slightly higher frequency for the *Tribune*, but the percentages are close enough to be comparable. But one wonders why the drop in battle rhetoric? From closely analyzing the articles from both years, this decrease would seem to be explained by the decrease in head-to-head battling between the two papers. In 2002, the two were continuing an ongoing fight over the *Tribune's* ownership, and the battle rhetoric seemed appropriate for this war of words. In 2003, however, battle rhetoric appeared only in the stories about the *News's* transition to morning publication, which makes sense, given that this would increase the battle over circulation between the two papers. In the stories about the *Tribune's* scandal, however, the *News* clearly had the upper hand in the battle over images, so it had little need to include any battling rhetoric. And again, because the *Tribune* was focused on its own woes, it had little motivation to be attacking its rival.

Identification rhetoric appears at a much higher frequency for the *Tribune* than it does for the *News* in both 2002 and 2003, but it appears less frequently for the *Tribune* in 2003 than it does in 2002, though more frequently for the *News* in 2003 than in 2002. In 2002, identification rhetoric appears in 12 percent of the *Tribune*'s paragraphs, compared to 0.5 percent of the *News*' paragraphs. In 2003, the *Tribune*'s number drops to 8.1 percent and the *News*' rises to 2.9 percent. The drop for the *Tribune* can likely be attributed the drop in the number of articles involving its rival. Whereas in 2002, the *Tribune* was emphasizing the danger its independence was facing from the LDS Church-owned *News* in 2003, the only stories that really involved the *News* were the stories about the *News*' transition to morning. In those stories, the *Tribune* certainly highlighted the nature of the *News*' ownership in an attempt to undermine its credibility. But as with most of the categories discussed above, the *Tribune* had little time to spend belittling its rival in stories on its own scandal, because it was so focused on defending itself. The *News*' mentions of ownership in both years were quite a bit less frequent than the *Tribune*'s, and this can likely be attributed to both the *News*' desire to downplay its ownership by the church. When it can do so in a way that might build its credibility, or when it needs to clarify issues involving its ownership, it does so, but generally, the *News* avoids this type of rhetoric.

Thus, the nature of the rivalry rhetoric clearly changes from one year to the next, with many categories increasing significantly from 2002 to 2003, but also becoming much more polarized (see Tables 1 and 2). Whereas the *Tribune* and the *News*, in the 2002 sample, had fairly similar appearances of most types of rhetoric I studied, those similarities were virtually eliminated the following year. Generally speaking, there were

clear increases in the appearances of rivalry rhetoric in both newspapers from 2002 to 2003, reflecting the heightened tension for both papers triggered, most likely, by the attempts at image restoration and image transformation. In the *Tribune's* 2002 stories that I studied, there were 74 appearances of the different categories of rhetoric in a total of 216 paragraphs, or 34.3 percent. In the *News's* 2002 stories, there were 38 appearances in 218 paragraphs, or 17.4 percent. In 2003, those percentages jumped to 54.3 percent for the *Tribune* and 48 percent for the *News*.

Though there are obvious increases in the newspapers' rhetoric, and though, to a certain extent, the causes and implications of those increases can be considered, I remain cautious about making sweeping categorical statements about each newspaper's intentionality. As Fowler writes, "It should be clear that linguistically constructed representation is by no means a deliberate process, entirely under the control of the newspaper. The newspaper does not select events to be reported and then consciously wrap them in value-laden language which the reader passively absorbs, ideology and all" (41). Not every phrase or passage that fits into my interpretation for my story samples was necessarily an intentionally calculated tactic by the newspaper. But, Fowler adds, "The practices of news selection and presentation are habitual and conventional as much as they are deliberate and controlled. And as for value-laden language, the crucial point is that the values are in the language already" (41). These patterns, then, though they might not have been deliberately perpetuated on the part of the newspapers, nonetheless reflect the deep-rooted value systems in the two papers which manifest themselves as rivalry rhetoric.

This brings us back to the age-old debate over journalistic objectivity. If values are in the language already, and, as Burke suggests, all language in some sense deflects reality by virtue of being merely a selection of that reality, is it even possible for journalists to be objective? And if not, is any journalism really ethical? Readers, for the most part, treat the news media as being objective, and they hold high expectations for news that is untainted by any biases or outside influences. From this study, however, we can clearly see that values, ownership and economics, to name a few, undoubtedly impact the reporting of news, whether reporters recognize that fact or not.

So how can the façade of objectivity possibly be ethical, when much of the reading public assumes that they are receiving news that is not influenced by outside sources? First, I think it's important for newsmakers to do their best to be aware of the factors that influence their presentation of the news, whether the factors be pressure from an editor to reflect the "voice" of the newspaper or a personal bias. In striving for such awareness, the reporter, whenever possible, can do his or her best to select and present information in a way that is not unduly influenced by such biases. Though this is perhaps asking a lot of people who are already working under tight deadlines and pressure, and often don't have much time to consciously think about such influences, it seems, ethically, it is a reporter's responsibility to do so. Second, readers could work to be more informed and aware of where their news is coming from and how that news might be influenced or shaped by external forces. In so doing, readers could better recognize that an article from even their most trusted news source is only one selection of a vast reality, and as such, when possible, readers should seek out additional selections and sources for a fuller picture of the truth.

Implications For Teaching

All of these issues are important not only for readers, writers, and researchers of the news, but also for teachers in both journalism and composition. Students studying communications and journalism would benefit from discussions regarding objectivity and a reporter's responsibility toward his or her audience. There is already much discussion about such issues, but teachers could work to more strongly emphasize the inevitable existence of factors that might compromise objectivity, and to discuss how students can most ethically deal with those factors.

In composition, there are a number of ways teachers could apply these principles in their classrooms. In doing research projects, for example, students often go to newspapers or news magazines to obtain reliable, unbiased information. There is, undoubtedly, a wealth of valuable information to be found in such sources, but if students depend solely on newspapers as their sources—or especially one news source in particular—they will be depending on sources that are often fallible, and, as discussed above, not necessarily objective. A valuable exercise for a teacher hoping to emphasize such points, then, would be to show in class some of the articles discussed in this study or other relevant articles, and to discuss their potential value and also their limitations and biases.

Additionally, studying such news articles in a composition classroom would be valuable when teaching principles of rhetorical analysis. To effectively analyze a text, students need to be aware of the rhetorical situation of the text and examine how that rhetorical situation influences the production and reception of the text. Again, the articles

in this sample and others like them provide a wealth of examples for discussion and analysis that students could benefit from.

Implications For Further Study

There are myriad options for further study of both general rivalry rhetoric and media rhetoric, all of which can add to current studies in rhetoric and composition by helping us to understand the rhetorical strategies people use to identify with their audiences. With the *Tribune* and the *News*, it would be particularly interesting to look closely at how each newspaper covers issues of importance to Utahans (not necessarily related to the other newspaper), and how the quantity and slant of their coverage differs based upon the issue. For example, the *Tribune* is often accused of covering issues and stories regarding the LDS Church with a negative slant, whereas the *News* is frequently accused of covering such stories with an overly positive or favorable slant. Similarly, the *Tribune*, according to locals, tends to view political issues through a liberal lens, while the *News*, is perceived as the more conservative of the two newspapers. It would be interesting, then, to look at issues regarding the LDS Church or local politics to see if and how the different ownerships and audiences of the newspapers influence how the papers present such issues rhetorically. Such studies could give us additional insight into the ways newspapers seek to promote a particular image in order to create identification with readers.

At a larger level, it would also be interesting to look at different rhetorical strategies that national newspapers and magazines, such as *TIME* and *Newsweek*, or the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, use to compete with each other and to identify with their audiences. Such analysis could also be expanded to the Internet, where studies

could be conducted to see the rhetorical strategies competing news sites use to draw readers to their sites, and television, where most networks are clearly competing with each other to offer the best anchors, the best news footage, and the hottest, most revealing stories.

As Huckin writes, “The need for context-sensitive forms of discourse analysis has become increasingly acute. Teachers, students, scholars, and others engaged in composition studies all stand to benefit from being able to analyze written texts and discursive practices” (155). The benefit of analyzing different forms of discourse would come from the ability such analysis gives us to further understand the rhetoric people use and the rationale behind it.

Personal Reflection

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Huckin claims that critical discourse analysis “is not a ‘discovery’ mechanism” (163). I began this analysis assuming that, as he implies, I would not discover anything new, but instead would just detail what could be clearly recognized by any news reader. In completing this analysis, however, I gained a number of insights, which, for me, involved some interesting and enlightening discovery. I found myriad types of rhetoric appearing frequently in both newspapers, as expected, but I discovered some unexpected trends and shifts (detailed above). I discovered that the rhetoric employed by each newspaper, rather than being motivated by clear-cut influences as I thought it might be, is nuanced and complex.

The methods I used for this study, overall, worked well, and I appreciated the methodologies suggested by Huckin and others. The biggest difficulty I encountered when trying to synthesize a variety of methods, however, was wondering if what I was

doing would really be effective. I changed my methodology quite a few times since beginning this project, and it would have been helpful to see more examples of others have done in their discourse analyses so I could have been more confident in designing and carrying out my own.

Were I to begin this project again, or if I had additional time to work on it, I would do a few things differently. Primarily, since I did complete a systematic analysis involving counting and percentages, I would further triangulate my research to add further support for my conclusions. I would have liked to have had another reader to analyze the same articles I did to see if he or she would come to the same conclusions I did. I would also have liked to have interviewed some of the reporters and editors involved in the stories I analyzed so that I could obtain further insights from them.

Ultimately, though, I am pleased with the insights I have gained while completing my thesis, and am grateful for the chance I had to combine my rhetorical studies with my previous studies in communications.

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APPENDIX A: SIDE-BY-SIDE LIST OF ANALYZED NEWS STORIES

2002 Sample

Date	<i>Salt Lake Tribune</i>	<i>Deseret News</i>
March 28	B1: Judge Lets AT&T Out of Trib Suit/ <i>Court ruling is setback for paper's management</i> (16 para.)	B1: Tribune loses a round in lawsuit (18 para.)
May 21	D1: Trib Option, News' Claim Ruled Valid/ <i>Sides declare win; judge urges talks</i> (31 para.)	B1: Deseret News gets a legal win/ <i>Tribune managers can buy paper only with News OK</i> (21 para.)
June 5, 6	C1: Tribune Suit Sides Agree To Discuss a Settlement/ <i>Litigants to talk; Huntsman would be unofficial mediator</i> (18 para.)	B1 (June 5): Tribune invites owner to talks (16 para.)
June 26, 27	D1 : News Rejects Trib Buyback/ <i>Trib managers say they don't need consent</i> (19 para.)	A1 (June 26): DesNews says no to Tribune purchase (23 para.)
June 30	AA1 (<i>Our View</i> editorial): Tribune Ownership Matters (10 para.)	B1 (Lee Benson column): Journalism gets a shot in the arm (18 para.)
July 22, 23	A1 (July 22): Trib Owner Can Take Over, Judge Says (21 para.)	A1 (July 23): Tribune managers are out, judge says (30 para.)
July 30	A1: Tribune Owner Vows to Bring Vigor to Utah's Largest Paper (34 para.)	A1: Owners plan to alter Trib: Make it better (50 para.)
	B1 (Holly Mullen column): Tribune Management Change Sure to Spark Newspaper War in SLC (18 para.)	
July 31	A1: Defiant Ex-Owners to Yield Control/ <i>McCartheys: The family vows to keep fighting for newspaper</i> (34 para.)	A1: MediaNews to take control/ <i>S.L. Tribune managers lose federal appeal</i> (22 para.)
Aug. 1	A12 (<i>Our View</i> editorial): Our Promises to You (15 para.)	
Aug. 4		(John Hughes column): It's time to break silence in rift (20 para.)
	173 news, 43 column/editorial/216 total para.	180 news, 38 column/218 total para.

2003 Sample

Date	<i>Salt Lake Tribune</i>	<i>Deseret News</i>
March 30	E1: Deseret News Counting on Big Gains in Move to Mornings/" <i>Shock and Awe</i> ": <i>LDS-owned newspaper unleashing \$2.7M advertising attack to win readers in Utah, Davis counties</i> (39 para.)	AA3 (Ted Wilson and LaVarr Webb column): Brace for Round 2 of S.L. newspaper war (21 para.)
April 9		B4: NAC chief hails the switch to Morning News (16 para.)
June 9	D8: Deseret News Begins All-Morning Wasatch Front Delivery Today (13 para.)	
April 27, 28	A2 (Column from James Shelledy, April 27): Letter From the Editor (19 para.)	A1 (April 28): Smarts, tabloid settle/ <i>Enquirer falsehoods are linked to 2 S.L. Tribune reporters</i> (42 para.)
April 29	A1: Reporters' Deal Puts Tribune on Spot/ Credibility issue: <i>The newsroom is upset over an ethical lapse in selling information to a tabloid</i> (36 para.)	A1: Tabloid targets Trib/S.L. paper fires 2 reporters day after <i>Enquirer's letter</i> (62 para.)
April 30	A1: Publisher Vows to Rebuild Trust/ Tribune reporters fired: <i>Editor James E. Shelledy says their version of events did not hold up, and he apologizes to readers</i> (32 para.)	B1: Tribune to pore over its policies/ <i>New owner says paper will not tolerate lapses</i> (38 para.)
	A16 (Our View editorial): An Apology (13 para.)	
May 1	D1: Smarts to Receive an Apology/ The Tribune: <i>The publisher calls it a step toward regaining trust. The status of the editor is not yet decided</i> (24 para.)	B1: Readers weigh in on Trib saga (25 para.)
May 2	A1 (Top left, four columns): Trib Editor Resigns Amid Controversy/ Under fire: <i>Criticized for his handling of an ethics crisis in the newsroom, Shelledy chooses to step down</i> (24 para.)	A1 (): Trib editor quits amid <i>Enquirer imbroglio</i> (47 para.)
	A2 (James Shelledy column): Letter From the Editor (22 para.)	B1 (Lee Benson column): Writers' story hijacked the investigation (16 para.)
		A10 (Editorial): A black eye for all journalists (7 para.)
May 4		AA1 (Evensen column): Smarts are real victims of Tribune reporters (18 para.)
May 6	A1: New Tribune Editor Named/ <i>Veteran MediaNews journalist takes helm June 2</i> (25 para.)	A1: Oakland editor to head the Tribune (20 para.)
	7 news (193 para.), 1 editorial (13 para.), 2 columns (41 para.), / 247 total paragraphs	7 news (250), 1 editorial (7 para.), 3 columns (55 para.)/312 total paragraphs