

WITTICISM OF TRANSITION:
HUMOR AND RHETORIC OF EDITORIAL CARTOONS ON JOURNALISM

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CHRISTOPHER ALAN MATTHEWS

Dr. Betty Houchin Winfield, Thesis Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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presented by Christopher Alan Matthews,

a candidate for the degree of master of arts,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

Professor Betty Houchin Winfield

Professor Tim P. Vos

Professor Karon Speckman

Professor Mitchell McKinney

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ABSTRACT

The first decade of the twenty-first century was a time of transition for the journalism profession, and a time of economic struggle for news media organizations. A selection of editorial cartoons that constructed arguments about journalism during this period presented criticism of journalism in reference to four broad categories: the decline of traditional news media, the rise of new media technologies, the role of comedians as journalists, and the corporatization of news media. The means by which the cartoons constructed these arguments was analyzed using a combination of previously understood rhetorical elements, as well as the humor theories of incongruity and superiority. This method of analysis demonstrated a connection between the cartoons' use of humor and their use of other rhetorical techniques: incongruity humor manifested when the cartoon depicted contrast, and superiority humor manifested when the cartoon depicted contradiction. The implications of these rhetorical connections that informed the argument of the cartoon, as well as the arguments themselves, provide a guide for future study of the rhetoric and humor of editorial cartoons.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Editorial Cartoons and the Changing Landscape of Journalism

Benjamin Franklin is credited with publishing, during the American Revolution, the first editorial cartoon in an American newspaper (Burns, 2006). Over 230 years later, editorial cartoons are still found in U.S. newspapers, during a time that those newspapers and other traditional news media institutions are facing drastic economic challenges precipitated, at least in part, by the rise of new media technologies, such as the Internet and portable electronic devices. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, editorial cartoonists are in a unique position to comment on journalism during this period of transition. Constructing arguments, using humor and other rhetorical devices, editorial cartoons provide commentary on current social and economic events, including those affecting journalism.

Editorial cartoons are rhetorical artifacts that construct arguments to inform their meanings, which are often humorous based on incongruity or superiority. This thesis is a demonstration of how humor relates to and informs the rhetoric of editorial cartoons concerning journalism in the first decade of the 21st century, a time of drastic economical and professional change. To do so, this thesis focuses on two research questions:

RQ₁: How do the humor theories of superiority and incongruity relate to existing rhetorical understandings of editorial cartoons?

RQ₂: What do humorous rhetorical elements of editorial cartoons argue about 21st-century journalism?

As this thesis incorporates humor theory into existing rhetorical theory on editorial cartoons, as well as provides an analysis of the humorous rhetoric of editorial cartoons on journalism in the 21st century, its purpose is twofold: (1.) to explain how scholars have studied the role rhetoric plays in how editorial cartoons construct arguments, and to merge humor theory into this existing rhetorical understanding; and (2.) to demonstrate how the presence and type of humor in editorial cartoons relates to their argument construction, specifically arguments about the role of journalism in the first decade of the 21st century. Therefore, the scope of this thesis is defined within the intersection of three scholarly fields: rhetoric, humor, and editorial cartoons.

This first chapter defines and discusses the concepts in these research questions: journalism in the 21st century, editorial cartoons, humor, and visual rhetoric. Further discussion on the relationships between editorial cartoons and rhetoric follows with a review of the editorial cartoon literature in Chapter 2. The methodology informing this thesis is described in Chapter 3. The fourth chapter presents an analysis of the humorous rhetoric found in the selected cartoons, and Chapter 5 concluded the thesis with a discussion of the analysis.

Journalism in the 21st Century

The research questions focus on journalism in the first decade of the 21st century, because journalism during this time was undergoing a transformation precipitated by two interrelated phenomena: the rise of digital technologies and the economic struggles of news media organizations. Writing at the end of 2009, Leonard Downie Jr. and Michael Schudson characterized U.S. journalism as being in a “transformational moment, in which the era of dominant newspapers and influential network news divisions is rapidly giving way to one in which the gathering and

distribution of news is more widely dispersed” (p. 28). This widening of the distribution and production of news was an effect of new digital technologies, such as social networking and blogs. Traditional news media, such as newspapers and television news were less influential in the new era of “digital journalism,” which Downie Jr. and Schudson (2009) stated was causing “the means of news reporting [to be] re-invented, the character of news [to be] reconstructed, and reporting [to be] distributed across a greater number and variety of news organizations, new and old” (p. 28).

While the era of digital journalism allowed reporting to be “more participatory and collaborative,” the Internet “also [had] undermined the traditional marketplace support for American journalism,” according to Downie Jr. and Schudson (2009, p. 29). They write that the Internet offered “easily accessible free information and low-cost advertising,” which drew both audiences and advertisers away from traditional news media organizations (p. 29). The rise of the digital era of journalism “helped to accelerate the decline in print readership, and newspapers responded by offering their content for free on their new Web sites” (Downie Jr. & Schudson, 2009, p. 32). As a result, “[t]he economics of newspapers deteriorated rapidly. Profits fell precipitously, despite repeated rounds of deep cost-cutting” (Downie Jr. & Schudson, 2009, p. 32). The downward economic turn effected, at least in part, by the permeation of digital technologies also affected commercial television news, which throughout the decade had been “losing its audience, its advertising revenue, and its reporting resources” (Downie Jr. & Schudson, 2009, p. 28).

The increased availability and popularity of new digital media technologies and the subsequent negative economic positions of traditional news media

organizations set the background for an atmosphere akin to a professional crisis for journalism. This tumultuous time for U.S. journalism created an opportunity for social commentary on journalism and on the news media business. Being closely associated with U.S. journalism, editorial cartoons were in a unique position to offer insight and criticism on journalism during this transformational decade.

Editorial Cartoons

Editorial cartoons are hand-drawn images that occupy a single visual frame, often accompanied by written text serving as an indicator of dialog or narration. A notable exception to this definition is the animated editorial cartoon. These animated editorial cartoons are graphically composed on computers and consist of multiple visual frames that follow one another, creating animation. For this thesis, only the single-frame, non-animated, cartoons are considered. Some non-animated editorial cartoons split the single visual frame into separate segments, perhaps quarters, and the objects are drawn in a way that suggest movement or linear time progression as the reader views each segment individually. These cartoons are incorporated into the definition of editorial cartoons, as they still only exist as a single visual frame. In short, they are not moving images.

The term “editorial cartoon” is sometimes referred to as a “political cartoon” or a “newspaper cartoon.” This thesis treats these terms interchangeably when appropriate, but prefers to label these artifacts “editorial cartoons.” The term political cartoon can be misleading, as the topics of these cartoons are not always about politics. “Newspaper cartoon” limits the definition of the cartoon to its medium of publication, which in the 21st century has expanded to news websites, blogs, and other electronic venues. The label “editorial cartoon” is not without its own

limitations, as it too suggests a relationship of the cartoon to the section of a newspaper designated for opinion. However, by using the word editorial, rather than newspaper, the medium of publication is not the defining adjective of the cartoon. Rather, the fact that the cartoon is expressing an opinion, or making an argument, becomes the primary descriptor of the cartoon. For these reasons, and because the preferred term reflects the fact that these cartoons address an array of social issues that are not directly related to politics or the political system, this research will favor the term “editorial cartoon” to refer to these communication artifacts.

Since the founding of the United States, U.S. journalism has been accompanied by editorial cartoons that provide social commentary (Burns, 2006). While not products of journalism, editorial cartoons typically are published alongside communication that is journalistic or otherwise related to current events. Traditionally, editorial cartoons were published in the Editorial or Opinion sections of newspapers. In the first decade of the 21st century, editorial cartoons were also found on websites, which may or may not be owned by newspaper companies or which function as aggregators that compiled editorial cartoons from various sources into a single database. Many editorial cartoons are created by professional cartoonists who are employed by news organizations to perform the task of creating editorial cartoons. However, some editorial cartoons are created by freelancers or amateurs, and are published only on personal blogs. Regardless of the publication medium, this thesis will apply the label of editorial cartoon to those cartoons that are hand-drawn, single-frame depictions that make arguments about society.

The arguments of editorial cartoons typically address current-event topics, including social and political phenomena, that are relevant to the time period in which

they are published. The editorial cartoons analyzed in this thesis comment on journalism. As a topic of editorial cartoons, journalism can be addressed from a variety of perspectives, such as: its status and practice as a business, its role in society, the content of its publications, or the behavior of journalists. In this thesis, both traditional and novel media of journalism are included in the definition. Some examples of traditional journalism include: newspapers, news broadcasts over radio or television, and cable news channels. Examples of novel media of journalism include: blogs, social networking websites, and citizen-produced journalism. In addition to making arguments about social institutions, contemporary editorial cartoons are humorous, meaning they convey messages that are amusing.

Humor

Humor, according to Martin (2007), “involves an idea, image, text, or event that is in some sense incongruous, odd, unusual, unexpected, surprising, or out of the ordinary” (p. 6). He also writes, “In addition, there needs to be some aspect that causes us to appraise the stimulus as nonserious or unimportant, putting us into a playful frame of mind at least momentarily” (p. 6). This thesis is specifically concerned with the characteristics of a communication artifact that make the artifact humorous.

Several theories have been developed to explain how and why a text is humorous, but two theories are particularly relevant to the study of humor in editorial cartoons. The first humor theory this thesis considers is superiority theory, which posits that texts are humorous because they create a feeling of superiority over others. This theory is often attributed to Plato, who, according to Cundall (2007), “believed that what causes us to laugh is a judgment about persons: a judgment that highlights

our own superiority, moral or otherwise” (p. 204). Relating to this thesis, superiority theory explains that humor manifests when the editorial cartoon represents a scenario in which the audience perceives a sense of elevated power over the person, institution or idea ridiculed in the cartoon.

The second humor theory this thesis utilizes is incongruity theory, which Uekermann, et al. (2007) posit that “humor is based on a two-stage process. The first stage, incongruity, involves the detection of an incongruous element (i.e., an object or event) among two or more incompatible elements” (p. 554). They amplify, “In the second stage, the incongruent element is linked in a meaningful way to the body of the text, resolving the incongruity” (p. 554). Relating to this thesis, incongruity theory explains that humor manifests when the editorial cartoon represents a scenario in which two or more subjects or ideas, which normally occupy distinct realms of meaning, are meaningfully related to one another.

Visual Rhetoric

This thesis applies rhetoric as a foundation by which communication artifacts, such as editorial cartoons, construct arguments. By commenting on specific topics, all editorial cartoons construct arguments, and therefore can be analyzed as rhetorical texts. Because editorial cartoons are visual artifacts, their arguments are perhaps best understood through an analysis of visual rhetoric. Editorial cartoons also use text and written language to construct arguments. In their book *Visual Rhetoric*, Olson, Finnegan and Hope (2008) discuss the nature of communication artifacts that construct arguments using both written and visual information, stating that “words and images are oftentimes mixed together in rhetorically interesting ways” (p. 2). Taking this assumption, and incorporating it with the understanding that rhetoric “as

practice and theory concerns persuasive symbolic actions primarily,” this thesis is careful to consider how both the textual and the visual elements presented in editorial cartoons construct arguments that attempt to persuade the reader. (Olson, Finnegan, & Hope, 2008, p. 3). The specific rhetorical techniques editorial cartoons exhibit are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

The first decade of the 21st century was a period of drastic uncertainty and change for journalism in the United States, about which editorial cartoons constructed arguments using various rhetorical techniques, including humor. The first goal of this thesis is to analyze and discuss the rhetorical means by which those editorial cartoons used humor in the creation of their arguments about journalism. In doing so, this thesis will demonstrate the appropriateness of examining humor alongside other rhetorical mechanisms in the study of editorial cartoons, providing a basis and justification for further studies to incorporate analyses of humor in the interpretation of the meaning of editorial cartoons. The second goal of this thesis is to detail what editorial cartoons argued about journalism during the transformational first decade of the 21st century. These commentaries about journalism will provide insight into the challenges news media institutions faced during this times, as well as how those challenges affected journalism.

CHAPTER 2

Literature: The Scope of Editorial Cartoon Scholarship and Humor

This chapter reviews existing literature on editorial cartoons, focusing on how editorial cartoons have been studied as rhetorical artifacts and as artifacts of humor. In addition, this chapter introduces and describes the humor theories of incongruity and superiority, which are incorporated into the method of this thesis.

Editorial Cartoon Literature

Editorial cartoons, those single-frame images containing visual and textual elements that construct arguments about timely social phenomena, are the subject of a vast amount of scholarly literature. In explaining the work of editorial cartoonists, Pulitzer-Prize-winning cartoonist Matt Davies (2004) summarized the process of creating an editorial cartoon: "Every day, editorial cartoonists troll the news in search of social and political ironies, then create images that encapsulate those metaphorical 1,000 words and pour them painstakingly into a single picture" (p. 6). This section presents an overview of three prominent research thrusts found in the editorial cartoon literature: the functions editorial cartoons serve in society, case studies of how editorial cartoons comment about a specific topic, and other studies that analyze editorial cartoons themselves or compare them with other types of cartoons.

The first thrust of research concerns the role that editorial cartoons play in society: as political commentator, news contextualizer, and critic of power. "Timely and topical, [editorial cartoons] are meant to elaborate and comment upon current events, and usually articulate a specific political message from an ideological

perspective," explained Steuter and Wills (2008, p. 11). In addition to the role of political commentator, editorial cartoons serve a "news discourse" function in society, because they contextualize timely topics (Greenberg, 2002, p. 181). Chris Lamb (2004) highlighted the role of editorial cartoons as critical artifacts: "No one serves the role of government critic as well as editorial cartoonists do" (p. 238). The role of editorial cartoons in U.S. society as critical artifacts is not solely relegated to critiques of government, but includes all powerful societal institutions and figures. Lamb (2004) explained that many editorial cartoonists envision their societal position as an enemy of "those in power who use that power for their own personal benefit at the expense of the rest of us" (p. 42). From this position, the goal of editorial cartooning is "to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted" (Lamb, 2004, p. 42). The maxim, to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted, implies that the societal role of editorial cartoons is to present critical arguments that point out the villainy of people and institutions who hold more sociopolitical power than others. Beyond afflicting the comfortable, editorial cartoons construct arguments from the perspective of an outsider, "seeing a world that is unjust and immoral and in need of reform" (Lamb, 2007, p. 718). In fulfillment of this role as a critic, editorial cartoons usually present a noticeably negative tone (Lamb 2004).

In addition to assessing the role of editorial cartoons in social and political discourse, another research thrust is present in editorial cartoon scholarship: case studies. Several scholarly pieces have been published that focus on a particular social or political event, viewing it from the lens of editorial cartoons. Politicians and political campaigns have been topics of editorial cartoon scholarship, such as Connors' (2005) analysis of the 2004 presidential campaign and Edwards' (2000) study of how

the First Lady is characterized in editorial cartoons (Also see: Edwards, 2001). Ramsey (2000) describes how the U.S. suffrage movement was depicted in editorial cartoons within the context of World War I. How editorial cartoons depict national disasters is a subject that has also received some attention in the literature. For example, Kelley-Romano and Westgate (2007a; 2007b) analyzed how editorial cartoons on the topic of Hurricane Katrina served several functions, including placing blame on national political leaders. Finally, war has been a topic of editorial cartoons and subsequent study, such as Winfield and Yoon's (2002) study of how editorial cartoons used historical references when depicting Cold-War confrontations with North Korea.

Rather than focusing on a specific event or person outside of the realm of cartooning, the final research thrust concerns analyzing editorial cartooning itself. Editorial cartoons published in particular media have served as comparisons to American cartoons, such as editorial cartoons published in Arab and Muslim newspapers (See, for example: Diamond, 2002). Shultz and Germeroth (1998) distinguished editorial cartoons from gag cartoons, in which "societal taboos are confronted openly ... because cartoons ... serve as a socially sanctioned outlet for discussing that for which societal mores ... force us to remain mute" (p. 230). Historically, Benjamin Franklin is credited with publishing the first editorial cartoon in an American newspaper, featuring the well-known "Join or Die" caption below a depiction of a snake severed into labeled colonies (Burns, 2006). Another prominent historical period for editorial cartoons centers around the conflict between cartoonist Thomas Nast and politician Boss Tweed in the late 19th century (See: Adler, 2008 for a history of Thomas Nast and Boss Tweed). Turning from the history of editorial

cartoons, other scholars are taking note of the newest format of editorial cartoons: animation. Speckman and Ponche (2007) compared the characteristics of traditional, print cartoons with those of animated editorial cartoons, using a scheme of classifying editorial cartoon imagery developed by Seymour-Ure (2001), which includes occupational, sporting, historical, theatre/literature/visual arts, animal, inanimate object, everyday image/figure of speech, and common cultural reference. The Seymour-Ure classifications may provide some insight into the rhetorical techniques employed in editorial cartoons, however this thesis finds the taxonomy of Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) and the categories of Morris (1993) more useful in understanding editorial cartoons' rhetorical elements and ultimately linking those rhetorical elements with humor theory.

Rhetoric of Editorial Cartoons

To some extent, all scholarly studies of editorial cartoons include an analysis of rhetoric, because they analyze the arguments of editorial cartoons, arguments that are constructed using rhetorical mechanisms. The difference between the studies mentioned in the previous section and those that follow is a matter of the detail and degree in which rhetoric is the primary focus of the scholarship. In studying editorial cartoons from a rhetorical perspective, scholars have attempted to strike a balance between conceptualizing of the nature of the rhetoric in editorial cartoons as primarily visual or primarily linguistic (Goggin, 2004). Most scholars acknowledge, and their studies have found, that the rhetoric of editorial cartoons contain elements of both visuocentric, or visually-based, and logocentric, or language-based, rhetoric. The distinction between these two perspectives is neither artificial nor inconsequential, as each approach invokes a distinct theoretical paradigm, and subsequent methodology,

from which an understanding of the rhetoric of editorial cartoons is formed. This thesis adopts the position that editorial cartoons are best understood as a combination of visual and linguistic rhetoric (See: Goggin, 2004). While arguments in some cartoons are exclusively visual and others nearly exclusively linguistic, much of the argument in many cartoons are formed from both visuocentric and logocentric rhetorical elements. In essence, editorial cartoons are visual-linguistic texts, and will be treated as such in this thesis.

Although the taxonomy developed by Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) will serve as the primary guideline of rhetorical analysis for this thesis, it is not the only way to study the rhetoric of editorial cartoons. For example, Bormann, Koester, and Bennett (1978) quantitatively studied the rhetoric of editorial cartoons published during the 1976 presidential campaign using a fantasy theme analysis, focusing on the "link between fantasy theme analysis and audience response" (p. 317). In general, fantasy theme analysis, as applied to editorial cartoon rhetoric, searches for "the creative interpretation of historical events as well as the more fanciful fictitious portrayal of imaginative characters" (Bormann, Koester, & Bennett, 1978, p. 318). Stemming from this initial application of fantasy theme analysis, Benoit, Klyukovski, McHale and Airne (2001) utilized fantasy theme analysis and Bormann's Symbolic Convergence Theory to study the rhetoric of editorial cartoons on the Clinton-Lewinsky-Starr affair. The benefit of using fantasy theme analysis as a method grounded in the theory of symbolic convergence is that the message of the cartoon is seen "as a form of multi-step flow of information" that "flows in all directions between all agents creating a web of interaction and making possible a unified rhetorical vision" (Benoit, Klyukovski, McHale, & Airne, 2001, p. 379). Bostdorff

(1987) also studied editorial cartoons by grounding their arguments in a specific theory of rhetoric. Using the concepts of Kenneth Burke, Bostdorff (1987) examined "perspective by incongruity," the "burlesque attitude" and the "fusion of form and attitude" in editorial cartoons (p. 43). While these studies used a particular methodological lens to examine the rhetorical aspects of cartoons, others have focused on a specific rhetorical element found in editorial cartoons: metaphor.

Metaphor. A popular rhetorical technique exhibited in editorial cartoons is the use of metaphor, in which the characteristics of one element in the cartoon are used to describe a different element in the cartoon. While metaphor is only one rhetorical device employed in editorial cartoons, it deserves specific attention, because it provides a central link between the rhetoric editorial cartoons and their humor. In the literature, metaphor is often viewed as a specific manifestation of rhetorical communication, and, like the general field of rhetoric, there seems to be a divide between the analysis of metaphor from a linguistic perspective versus from a visual perspective (See: Kennedy & Kennedy, 1993 for a brief overview).

Foss (2004) provides a summary of the traditional, logocentric view of metaphor, which consists of a tenor and a vehicle, characterized by the relationship between two semantic forms (See: Speedling, 2005 for a logocentric metaphorical analysis of editorial cartoons on political campaign debates). Foss (2004) writes, "Metaphors are nonliteral comparisons in which a word or phrase from one domain of experience is applied to another domain" (p. 299). Foss (2004) continues to explain that "the two parts of a metaphor are called the *tenor* and the *vehicle* (p. 299, original emphases). She says, "The tenor is the topic or subject that is being explained. The vehicle is the mechanism or lens through which the topic is viewed" (p. 299). For

example, in the given metaphor, "journalism is a watchdog," the tenor is "journalism" and the vehicle is "a watchdog."

Refaie (2003), however, argues that using this linguistic approach to metaphor when studying editorial cartoons is limited. Refaie (2003) choose to apply cognitive metaphor theory instead. In simple terms, cognitive metaphor theory postulates that metaphorical understanding is based on the concepts underlying visual depictions, and finds figurative arguments illustrative of a way of thinking in images. Based on this cognitive metaphor theory, Refaie (2003) takes the assumption that "many of our common thought patterns are really based on figurative processes," and proposes that "expressions that arise from such conceptual metaphors can actually be considered literal in that they emerge from a direct connection between language and the way we think" (p. 82). This argument provides a tenuous bridge between the logocentric and visuocentric metaphorical distinction. Refaie (2003) summarizes her work, providing the methodological implications of understanding visual metaphors conceptually:

While cognitive metaphor theory seems to offer a promising approach to the study of visual metaphor, my study of newspaper cartoons indicates that researchers working within this paradigm must be more sensitive to the socio-political context of metaphor use and that they must give more attention to the form in which metaphors are expressed - be it verbal, visual, or a combination of both (p. 92).

This thesis accepts this advice and implements a visual metaphoric analysis in its methodology, as well as an analysis from a logocentric perspective. In other words, this thesis assumes that both logocentric and visuocentric methods of analyzing metaphor in editorial cartoons are useful, as editorial cartoons are best understood as visual-linguistic texts.

Metaphorical analysis is particularly appropriate to apply to editorial cartoons. Janis Edwards has taken a particular interest in the use of metaphor in editorial

cartoons. In addition to an analysis of candidate metaphors in editorial cartoons during the 2000 presidential campaign (Edwards, 2001), Edwards (1997) has theoretically explained the role of metaphors in editorial cartoons:

Because cartoon images condense meaning through metaphor, allusion, and metonymy, they create new worlds of understanding - a President becomes a tiger (or pussycat), a political campaign is described as a sinking ship, a televangelist sells snake oil. The literal recasting of familiar and true events into imaginative settings, incongruous yet coherent, creates a drama or story offered for acceptance as a viewpoint on the true nature of events. In creating fictional worlds, cartoonists offer assessments of a collection of facts, forming a meaningful whole. It is the dramatistic creation of such understandings that forms the rhetorical core of many visual images, including political cartoons. (p. 8).

By focusing on the drama and story of editorial cartoons, Edwards' (1997) understanding relates to the justifications of using Symbolic Convergence Theory as a basis for fantasy theme analysis. However, this thesis demonstrates how the depiction of metaphors in editorial cartoons can be understood in terms of the rhetorical, and especially their humorous, construction of an argument.

Humor of Editorial Cartoons

The implementation of rhetorical analysis in the study of editorial cartoons is well established, but a review of the literature reveals a surprisingly large hole in the connection between the rhetoric of the cartoons and their humor. This thesis will aid the closing of this gap by linking the rhetoric of editorial cartoons with their humor. Before turning to that link, the relevant theories of humor need to be explained. The scholarly study of humor dates back to Plato and Aristotle, and several theories of humor have emerged in subsequent scholarship. Most theories of humor are based in either psychology or linguistics (Attardo, 1994). While there are several theories of humor, three general theoretical trends can be identified: superiority theories,

psychoanalytic theories, and incongruity theories (Oppliger & Sherblom, 1992). No substantial attempt has been made in the literature to generate theories of humor that apply specifically to visual depictions, and few studies have attempted to explicate the humor in editorial cartoons beyond a passing reference.

Of the few studies that have examined editorial cartoons from the perspective of humor theory, one of the most detailed and theoretically-grounded is an analysis of editorial cartoons that attempts to expand the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) to take into account some rhetorical devices used in cartoons, such as exaggeration, contradiction, and metaphor (Tsakona, 2009; Also see: Archakis & Tsakona, 2005). In addition to combining rhetorical techniques of editorial cartoons and theories of humor, Tsakona (2009) emphasizes the connection between the logocentric and visuocentric elements of editorial cartoon rhetoric. The humor theory, GTVH, on which Tsakona (2009) seeks to elaborate was first offered by Attardo and Raskin (1991). In brief, Brône and Feyaerts (2004) explain, "concepts such as scripts and frames, incongruity and cognitive resolution, which are grounded in cognitive psychological models of humor, are the central pillars of [GTVH]" (p. 362). The theoretical combination of rhetoric and humor as both apply to editorial cartoons makes Tsakona's study the most closely related to one of this thesis' research goals. However, this thesis will utilize several more rhetorical devices, as outlined in the Medhurst & DeSousa (1981) taxonomy, and will connect them to different theories of humor than did Tsakona (2009).

A second helpful study of editorial cartoons that is equally grounded in humor theory is an analysis of cartoons addressing the 2005 Referendum on the European Constitution (Marín-Arrese, 2008). Using a cognitive linguistics paradigm, which

draws heavily from GTVH, Marín-Arrese (2008) creates a conceptual schema of how humor is interpreted from editorial cartoons: "the presence of some form of incongruity in a salient interpretative context, which functions as an interpretative cue whereby an alternative, nonsalient interpretative scenario is accessed, and which triggers the resulting resolution process" (p. 4). In simpler terms, Marín-Arrese creates a five-step process based on an incongruity theory of humor, which is helpful in explicating incongruity theory and applying it to the visual realm of editorial cartoons. However, unlike this thesis, Marín-Arrese (2008) does not substantially relate the humor found in editorial cartoons to the rhetorical features of the cartoons. The discussion of metaphor and metonymy in the Marín-Arrese (2008) piece applies to the relationship between figurative language and humor in general, rather than specifically to editorial cartoons.

Other studies of editorial cartoons using humor as a central theoretical concept neither adequately relate rhetoric and humor nor provide a sufficient theoretical basis for their analysis. Lowis and Nieuwoudt (1994) devised a scale to measure the humorousness of editorial cartoons, finding that the derision of the subjects of the cartoons seemed to be positively related to the humorousness of the cartoon. Jones, Fine and Brust (1979) studied the relationship between the humorousness of the visual depictions and the humorousness of the linguistic captions in editorial cartoons, as they relate to the overall humorousness of the cartoon. The humor of the visual depiction and the humor of the linguistic caption were found to interact in the construction of the overall humor of the editorial cartoons, which Jones, Fine and Brust (1979) found to support a theory based on incongruity. Similarly, Herzog and Larwin (1988) found that captions and depictions in editorial cartoons both contribute

the appreciation of the cartoons' humor, which supports the incongruity theory of humor. While these latter two studies lack significant advancement in theory, they do illustrate an attempt to combine the visual and linguistic elements of editorial cartoons in analyzing the cartoons' argument. This conceptualization of editorial cartoons as both visually and linguistically rhetorical artifacts will continue to be important as the two selected humor theories are discussed. The theories of superiority and incongruity are two of the oldest humor theories in the literature (*See*: Kline, 1907, and Shelley, 2003). Although at least one scholarly attempt, Vandaele (2002), has been made at combining the elements of superiority theory and incongruity theory into a comprehensive whole to explain comedy in films, most humor scholarship treats the two as relatively distinct ways of understanding why phenomena are humorous.

Superiority. The superiority theory of humor is a way of understanding that humor manifests in an editorial cartoon when the cartoon represents a scenario in which the audience perceives a sense of elevated power over the person, institution or idea ridiculed in the cartoon. Superiority theory of humor posits that events and texts are humorous, because they create a feeling of superiority over others. Cundall (2007) writes that superiority theory has a long history, dating back to Plato and later Hobbes. "Plato and Hobbes both believed that what causes us to laugh is a judgment about persons: a judgment that highlights our own superiority, moral or otherwise" (p. 204). It is in this judgment that superiority theory appropriately applies to editorial cartoons. By criticizing authority figures, editorial cartoons exert a moral superiority over the hypocrisy or infirmities of those figures. Ferguson and Ford (2008) elaborate on Plato's idea of superiority humor, stating that Plato "suggested that we find ludicrous or ridiculous those who lack self-knowledge ... and that we derive amusement from

such misfortunes or absurdities" (p. 288). It is in this way, superiority theory explains how humor serves to establish normative boundaries, punishing those who act immorally or undesirably in a process of "disciplining by laughter" (Meyer, 2000, p. 314). By judging those with power, editorial cartoons use superiority humor to argue that the authority figures or institutions depicted are somehow undeserving of the power they possess. Superiority theory explains humor from the perspective of the psychological processes of the person who is laughing, whereas incongruity theories focus on the processes of the text itself as the source of humor.

Incongruity. Incongruity theories, or incongruity-resolution theories, of humor, which describe humor as the resolution of presented incongruities in a text, come not from philosophy or psychology, but from linguistics. While some scholars, such as Veale (2004), argue the limits of incongruity as a theory of explaining all humor phenomena, incongruity theories are perhaps the most popular thrust in contemporary humor scholarship. Several variations of incongruity theories exist in the literature, accompanied by varying degrees of linguistic specificity, but this research will only utilize the basic premise that all incongruity theories of humor share. Oppliger and Sherblom (1992) explain the base assumption of incongruity theory: "in order to perceive something as humorous an audience must experience a disruption to their cognitive equilibrium followed by a resolution of that disruption" (p. 101). In simple terms, incongruity theory posits that humor is written into texts via presenting some kind of abnormality, or contradiction, and then resolving that incongruity. Cundall (2007) adds that humor results from "incongruity coupled with a pleasant and sudden psychological shift" (p. 206). On the other hand, it is understood that "[i]f an incongruity does not result in a pleasant psychological experience, then we will not

find it humorous" (p. 206; Also see: Morreall, 1987). While the specific aspects of, and numerous variations on, this basic idea of incongruity explicate the theory further, understanding that the humor in editorial cartoons can be explained by the proposition and resolution of an incongruity is enough for the purposes of this thesis. Incongruity theory is explicated more in the discussion of how the rhetorical mechanisms of editorial cartoons are related to their humor.

Application of Humor to Rhetoric

The studies of humor and editorial cartoons illustrate how humor, as a scholarly topic, is generally viewed as a logocentric phenomenon, much like rhetoric. In a similar manner that Morris (1993) utilized traditionally logocentric rhetorical concepts to the study of editorial cartoons, this thesis carries the superiority and incongruity theories of humor into the partially visual realm of editorial cartoons. Starting with superiority theory and then addressing incongruity theory, this section will attempt to provide the logical connections between humor and the rhetorical aspects of editorial cartoons as a justification for incorporating analyses of editorial cartoon humor with analyses of editorial cartoon rhetoric.

Before turning to the theories of humor, the foundation of the rhetorical analysis informs this research. Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) provide a taxonomy of the rhetorical mechanisms through which editorial cartoons construct arguments. This taxonomy included the stylistic elements of line and form, size and placements of objects and their relationship to the text, and physionomical exaggeration, as well as the rhetorical rhythm of all elements interacting with each other. These stylistic elements, with the exception of physionomical exaggeration, are not intimately linked with either superiority or incongruity theories of humor. Rather, they may serve to

construct a holistic argument that is humorous, the humor in which may be explained by either theory equally. Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) also outlined the rhetorical categories of contrast, commentary, and contradiction, as well as the importance of enthymeme in the understanding of a cartoon's argument. Morris (1993) explained how editorial cartoons use the devices of condensation, domestication, opposition, and combination. Excepting combination, the devices provided by Morris, like the stylistic elements from Medhurst and DeSousa, are not directly associated with either two humor theories.

Finally, the rhetorical device of metaphor, from both a logocentric and visuocentric understanding, is particularly useful in describing how editorial cartoons construct arguments. From this framework of rhetorical devices, these mechanisms of constructing arguments are related to the two theories of humor.

Editorial cartoons are communication artifacts that present humorous arguments, oftentimes criticizing power. Edwards (1997) explains that the subjects of editorial cartoon humor and criticism "are almost invariably those who lay claim to some authority" (p. 24). Furthermore, Edwards (1997) states that "[e]ven where humor is not directed at specific authority figures, there is an element of superiority at work when the joke is received at the expense of a fool (p. 26). The use of humor to critique institutions or persons with social or political power, then, connects the humor found in editorial cartoons to theories of humor that focus on the admonishment of power or authority, namely superiority theories. It is important to remember that superiority theory posits not only that the ridiculers feel superior to the ridiculed, but they feel superior because the ridiculed have violated some social code or normative boundary. In this way, superiority theory can be applied to institutions as well as

individuals. Just as powerful individuals are expected to perform specific roles in society, so too are institutions. When an institution, such as journalism, is ridiculed for not living up to its expectations, the humor can be understood from a superiority perspective. In other words, if an editorial cartoon argues that journalism focuses on trivial rather than important issues, the humor resulting from that argument could be explained by the superiority theory notion of moral judgment: journalism is wrong to focus on trivial issues, and by pointing out that journalism does focus on trivial issues, a sense of moral supremacy manifests in the cartoon and the reader, who then laughs at the failures of journalism to live up to its expectations.

In addition to the critical nature of editorial cartoons, the stylistic rhetorical technique of physionomical exaggeration, which is the depiction of a person's physical characteristics in an exaggerated manner, and the rhetorical device of contradiction are related to superiority humor. By depicting persons' physical characteristics in an exaggerated manner, the editorial cartoon ridicules that person, which is humorous because the reader then feels superior to that person in light of their physical detriments, or what the exaggerated physical characteristics are interpreted to implicate about their character. If that individual is meant to represent an institution as a whole, then physionomical exaggeration also relates to how superiority and criticism work together. Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) explain the implications of contradiction to the argument of the editorial cartoon: "[t]he individual, party, or idea being exposed is condemned by all reasonable people because it has been judged guilty of that most unpardonable political sin, hypocrisy" (p. 207). Again, by judging individuals or institutions for their moral or ethical failures, the humor arises from recognition of that failure and a subsequent assessment

of the cartoon or readers' own moral or ethical superiority. For example, an editorial cartoon's labeling of journalism a "lapdog" in contradiction to journalism's valued role as a "watchdog" is humorous because the cartoon and reader assume a superiority in chastising journalism for its failures.

The use of metaphors, such as lapdog and watchdog, can also be humorous within a superiority paradigm. As with physionomical exaggeration, if a cartoon uses a metaphor to critique the failures or deficiencies of an individual or institution, its humor can be explained by superiority theory. Serig (2008) explains that the process of creating metaphors "consists of being aware of a domain, having the domain placed in tension or conflict with another, and then restructuring the domains in an attempt to resolve the tension or conflict" (Serig, 2008, p. 42). When the vehicle, or the domain through which an understanding of the topic is viewed, points to some fault of the topic, or tenor, superiority manifests. From a phenomenological perspective, Denham (2000) explains that "the form of (some) metaphorical representations - representations which invite us to conceive of one thing in terms of its likeness to another - is a form echoed in the exercise of moral concepts" (p. 33). In essence, by comparing one entity to another, a judgment about the first is made: journalism as a lapdog invites normative criticism, the familiar terrain of editorial cartoons. While the humorousness of metaphoric representations in editorial cartoons can be explained by superiority theory, they are perhaps best understood for their incongruousness.

Incongruity theory of humor is most related to the rhetorical function of metaphor found in editorial cartoons. Mio and Graesser (1991) write, "The paradox in humor that most closely ties it to metaphors involves the incongruity of elements"

(p. 93). They connect the linguistic understanding of metaphor to the incongruity present in humor:

[H]umor is a two-stage process: (a) puzzlement at incongruity and (b) resolution of incongruity ... this seems to be akin to the metaphor notions of tension and ground. Tension is created by the dissimilarity between the topic and vehicle, and the metaphor is solved when the appropriate ground is discovered. (pp. 93-94).

This discovery of ground is synonymous with the filling of an enthymematic gap. In order to comprehend both the argument of the figurative comparison and the humor of the metaphor, the reader must understand how the two domains occupied by the tenor and vehicle are literally dissimilar and figuratively similar. "Journalism is a lapdog" is neither comprehensible nor funny without knowledge that the expected role of journalism in society is to hold accountable powerful individuals and institutions, that a watchdog is a common metaphor used to describe this function of journalism, that a lapdog represents an inappropriately close relationship with those powerful individuals and institutions, and so on. Furthermore, Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) explain that the rhetorical elements of editorial cartoons signal what knowledge is necessary to resolve the enthymeme: "[U]nlike the rhetorical syllogism where one part is usually left unspoken, caricature achieves its enthymematic nature by including, in compressed form, the entire universe of discourse on the given topic" (p. 220). This compression is directly related to the element of condensation explained by Morris (1993), whereby the visual depictions in editorial cartoons condense "a complex phenomenon into a single image that is purported to capture its essence graphically" (p. 200). In using specific visual depictions, editorial cartoons provide a great deal of information about the relationship between the tenor and vehicle,

signaling the means by which the enthymematic gap must be filled in order to understand both the argument of the metaphor and its humor.

Humor, as explained by incongruity theory, and metaphor are closely linked, and Krikmann (2009) suggests, "the lines separating humour and figurative speech in general are not distinctly clear and discrete, but multivalently continuous and gradual" (p. 34). Elaborating on this idea, Krikmann (2009) explains this close link between humor and metaphor:

The deep cognitive similarity between metaphor and humour ... is easy to recognize, and this has actually long been noticed and discussed by numerous philosophers, psychologists, linguists and others. Both metaphor and humour are embodied in texts with two planes of meaning. When a recipient encounters such a text for the first time, he/she encounters a semantic contradiction ... and feels a need for it to be disambiguated ... via certain semantic alterations using his/her linguistic competence and encyclopaedic knowledge. To succeed in this, a certain intersection ... must be found between the two planes of meaning. (pp. 16-17).

Krikmann's (2009) description of disambiguating the contradiction between two planes of meaning is a description of both the process of incongruity-resolution and the process of understanding metaphorical representations. Given this near inseparability of figurative language and humor, it should follow that if editorial cartoons are studied for their use of one, they should be studied for their use of the other. The following chapter outlines the rhetorical elements that will be analyzed in the selected editorial cartoons, combining traditional visual and textual rhetorical elements with an analysis of humor.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology: Humorous Rhetorical Elements of Editorial Cartoons

Editorial cartoons make arguments. Rather than depicting an event, as perhaps a photographer does, editorial cartoonists construct images and language to persuade the reader to understand a specific interpretation of an event or phenomenon. In this sense, the meaning of an editorial cartoon is inseparable from the arguments it contains. Therefore, a method intended on analyzing the meaning of an editorial cartoon is best conceptualized as a rhetorical method. As Berger (2000) explains, “Rhetoricians are particularly interested in one element of the communication process, the matter of persuasion” (p. 60). As a method of textual analysis, which is characterized by a researcher making “an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made” of a text, rhetorical analysis is a method of understanding the meaning of communication artifacts by analyzing the many ways in which the artifacts construct arguments in an attempt to persuade the reader (McKee, 2003, p. 1).

This chapter outlines the rhetorical method this thesis employs to assess the meaning of editorial cartoons on journalism in the first decade of the 21st century, a method that combines the language and visual elements, as well as two aspects of humor of editorial cartoons. This method is based on a combination of established rhetorical understandings of editorial cartoons, as well as a demonstration of how humor theories relate to those existing rhetorical understandings of editorial cartoons, which addresses this thesis' first research question: How do the humor theories of

superiority and incongruity relate to existing rhetorical understandings of editorial cartoons? The current chapter will also explain the selection process for the editorial cartoons that will be analyzed in Chapter 4, which will address the second research question of this thesis: What do humorous rhetorical elements of editorial cartoons argue about 21st-century journalism?

Rhetoric of Visual and Language

Editorial cartoons generally make arguments using both language-based, or logocentric, and visual-based, or visuocentric, rhetorical devices. As Morris (1993) described the visual rhetoric of editorial cartoons, he expressed the intention of his analysis to “situate itself between the logocentric ... and the visuocentric approaches in searching for elements within each that can fruitfully be applied to the other” (p. 197). The thesis attempts to construct a method that achieves the same end. However, the method of this thesis, by including the humor theories of incongruity and superiority and the typology of Medhurst and DeSousa (1981), attempts to create a more detailed means of analyzing the language and visual rhetorical elements of editorial cartoons. Foss (2004) explains the relationship between a method drawing on rhetoric and an analysis of visual texts, such as editorial cartoons: “A rhetorical perspective on visual artifacts constitutes a particular way of viewing images—a set of conceptual lenses through which visual symbols become knowable as communicative or rhetorical phenomena” (p. 306, original emphasis omitted). Thus, the conceptual lenses of this research are shaped by the humor theories of superiority and incongruity and the rhetorical elements provided by Morris (1993) and Medhurst and DeSousa (1981).

The Medhurst and DeSousa Taxonomy

An important work in the rhetorical conceptualization of editorial cartoons was authored by Martin J. Medhurst and Michael A. DeSousa in 1981. Putting forth "a classificatory scheme for recognizing and analyzing the elements of graphic persuasion as embodied in the political cartoon," Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) provide a groundwork on which subsequent analyses of the rhetorical elements of editorial cartoons have been based (pp. 198-199). Related to the conceptualization of editorial cartoons as a combination of visual and linguistic rhetorical characteristics, two general arguments thread the work of the taxonomy generated in the Medhurst and DeSousa study: (1.) "the *general framework* for producing effective oral rhetoric is, with some modifications, applicable to the production of graphic discourse"; and (2.) "the *specific techniques* used by graphic artists to invite audience response are significantly different from those of the oral persuader" (p. 199, original emphases). These two arguments and the resulting taxonomy highlight the necessity to study editorial cartoons from both a visuocentric and logocentric analysis of rhetoric.

The initial step in analyzing editorial cartoons using the Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) classificatory scheme is identifying the subject of the argument. Common political activities, character traits, cultural allusions, and "situational themes," which are nuanced and timely events, are common topics addressed by editorial cartoons (Medhurst & DeSousa, 1981, p. 200). From the use of these topics, editorial cartoons "construct first order enthymemes which invite the reader to respond in accord with certain values, beliefs, and predispositions" (Medhurst & DeSousa, 1981, p. 205). Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) emphasize the importance of the enthymematic nature of editorial cartoon argument: "Graphic rhetoric, like its oral

counterpart, relies to a great degree on the enthymematic form" (p. 204). What Medhurst and DeSousa are referring to when they discuss enthymematic form is that the arguments made by editorial cartoons are logical, but are intentionally incomplete; they do not spell everything out for the reader. Rather, some prior understanding or value orientation must be brought to the interpretation of editorial cartoon's rhetoric in order to fully understand the argument. This process of filling an enthymematic gap becomes important when attempting to understand how the rhetoric of cartoons is related to their humor.

One primary and two secondary forms of graphic arrangement that constitute visual rhetoric in editorial cartoons are contrast, commentary and contradiction (Medhurst & DeSousa, 1981). Contrast, the primary form, situates one element, whether it be a person, event, idea or statement, in contrast with another element (Medhurst & DeSousa, 1981). Commentary consists of presenting a subject in true form or representing an "obvious fact" about the subject (Medhurst & DeSousa, 1981, p. 207). Contradiction can be seen as a more aggressive form of contrast, wherein distinct judgments about the subject are made based on contrasting an element of the subject with another element (Medhurst & DeSousa, 1981). In contradiction, "[t]he individual, party, or idea being exposed is condemned by all reasonable people because it has been judged guilty of that most unpardonable political sin, hypocrisy" (Medhurst & DeSousa, 1981, p. 207). Medhurst & DeSousa (1981) point out that each of these three dispositional forms can manifest visually, linguistically, or through a combination of both.

The visual-linguistic combination in editorial cartoon rhetoric is echoed in the most microscopic typology of visual rhetoric provided by Medhurst and DeSousa:

style. Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) list the six stylistic elements that should be considered in analyzing the rhetoric of editorial cartoons:

the use of line and form to create tone and mood; the relative size of objects within the frame; the exaggeration or amplification of physiological features (caricature, in the narrow sense); placement within the frame; relation of text, both caption and balloon, to visual imagery; and rhythmic montage within the frame which arises from the interaction of invention, disposition and stylistic elements. (p. 212, original emphases).

Explicating each in turn, the use of line and form refers to the various drawing and shading techniques in the cartoon (Medhurst & DeSousa, 1981). The relative size of objects takes into account how the cartoon draws attention to particular visual depictions, and the physiological exaggerations relates both to the cuing and critique of popular figures (Medhurst & DeSousa, 1981). Placement within the frame, like the relative size of objects, elicits focal points, announcing what is important and why it is important in relationship to the other depictions. The relation of text is treated both visually and linguistically, in that the placement and magnitude of the labels or dialogue balloons, as well as the message of the words themselves, provide insight into the cartoon's argument. The final stylistic element, rhythmic montage, stresses the importance of viewing the cartoon as a whole in interpreting the rhetorical meaning of the cartoon. Simply, these stylistic elements taken alone and together make up the visual-linguistic argument of the cartoon.

The strength of the taxonomy developed by Medhurst and DeSousa is its detailed outline of the rhetorical methods by which editorial cartoons construct arguments. This detail allows researchers to study the minute elements of an editorial cartoon individually, as well as begins to provide a way of studying those elements in combination with one another. However, the categories of rhetorical elements

subsequently provided by Morris (1993) are less focused on the details of the cartoon, and provide a more helpful way of understanding editorial cartoons as comprehensive rhetorical texts.

The Morris Elements

In developing the six rhetorical elements discoverable in editorial cartoons, Morris (1993) was particularly aware of how both the language-based and the visual-based elements of editorial cartoons need to be studied together in rhetorical analysis:

The tradition of rhetorical study has itself been heavily logocentric, implying a speaker in verbal communication with an audience. In this respect, the whole idea of visual rhetoric, similar to that of visual semiotics, assumes that art is a language and that the success of linguistic models is strong evidence that this metaphor should be applied to visual communication (p. 196).

Morris (1993) argues that rhetorical elements found in verbal communication can be applied to visual communication, which this thesis adopts in its method of studying editorial cartoons. In his research, Morris (1993) did just that: apply linguistically-based rhetorical theory to the study of the editorial cartoons as visual and linguistic artifacts. Morris (1993) outlines six rhetorical devices found in editorial cartoons: condensation, domestication, opposition, carnivalization, hypercarnivalization, and combination. Condensation refers to the ability of editorial cartoons to compress "a complex phenomenon into a single image that is purported to capture its essence graphically" (Morris, 1993, p. 200). Domestication, according to Morris (1993) is "the process by which abstract ideas and distant, unfamiliar persons or events are converted into something close, familiar, and concrete" (p. 201). Opposition occurs when elements or subjects depicted in an editorial cartoon are represented as dualities, and are linked to existing familiar oppositions (Morris, 1993). Morris (1993) provides the example of the French and English languages being treated as oppositions and

linked to existing oppositions, such as male-female and adult-child. Carnivalization and hypercarnivalization relate to the form in which rhetoric is displayed (Morris, 1993). For Morris (1993), carnivalization relates to the "stylized representations of spontaneous behavior, analogous to ceremonies" that "featured many discordant voices and viewpoints, [and] disorderly conduct that inverted and ridiculed social hierarchy" (p. 202). Hypercarnivalization, then, refers to the nature of editorial cartoons as commercially journalistic artifacts, whereby "[t]he people are no longer the foolmakers, however, they have become ... the glancers at the cartoonists' efforts to poke fun at the foolishness of politicians on their behalf" (Morris, 1993, p. 203). Analyzing the hypercarnivalization of editorial cartoons is particularly useful for situating the rhetoric of editorial cartoons within the context in which they are presented. Editorial cartoons do not operate as rhetorical artifacts in isolation, but rather the rhetorical nature of the editorial cartoon includes the understanding that the nature of the cartoon, such as its institutional connection with journalism, informs the argument and meaning of the cartoon. The final rhetorical device outlined by Morris (1993), combination, is the rhetorical means by which ideas from different domains are blended into "a new composite that remains clearly identifiable as something that contains each of its constituents" (p. 200). Morris (1993) notes that the rhetorical function of combination is closely tied to the rhetorical form of metaphor. The previous chapter discussed the relationship between the use of metaphor and the humor of editorial cartoons. The Morris elements and the Medhurst and DeSousa taxonomy are combined with humor theories to produce the elements of this thesis' method of analysis.

Humor-Rhetoric Method for Editorial Cartoons

The method of this thesis is a qualitative textual analysis that analyzes the rhetorical elements of editorial cartoons. The goal of this method is to demonstrate how the humor of editorial cartoons is related to other rhetorical elements of editorial cartoons, and to explain the arguments editorial cartoons made about journalism in the first decade of the 21st century. The method consists of an analysis of individual rhetorical elements followed by an analysis of those rhetorical elements taken together. When appropriate, the logocentric and visuocentric elements of the cartoon's argument are also analyzed both separately and together. Analyzing the rhetorical elements individually allows the illumination of any relationships between one or more of the rhetorical elements, and analyzing the rhetorical elements as a whole allows a comprehensive understanding of the meaning and argument of the cartoon.

In total, 17 rhetorical elements will be analyzed for each cartoon (Figure 1). From the Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) taxonomy, the following rhetorical elements are analyzed: contrast, commentary, contradiction, line and form, relative size of objects, exaggeration or amplification of physionomical features, placement, relation of text to visual imagery, and rhythmic montage. From Morris (1993), the following rhetorical elements are analyzed: condensation, domestication, opposition, carnivalization, hypercarnivalization, combination. Analysis of the final two rhetorical elements asks how each cartoon exhibits the humor theories of superiority and incongruity. In addition to the rhetorical elements in the cartoon, the method will detail the argument the cartoon presents about journalism.

This method analyzes each cartoon separately from the others, analyzing it first for its argument about journalism, second for each of the rhetorical elements, and

Figure 1. Chart of Elements Analyzed for Each Cartoon.

<i>How does the cartoon's use of [element] inform its argument/meaning?</i>
contrast
commentary
contradiction
line and form
the relative size of objects
physiological exaggeration
placement
the relation of text to visual imagery
rhythmic montage
condensation
domestication
opposition
carnivalization
hypercarnivalization
combination
superiority humor
incongruity humor

finally for the ways in which the rhetorical elements function as a whole. Following the analysis is a discussion of any notable relationships between rhetorical elements, specifically between humor elements and the other elements, as well as a summary of the arguments about journalism.

Data Selection

In selecting the cartoons for this research, no attention is paid to generalizability, meaning the sample of analyzed cartoons does not need to be representative of all, or even most, editorial cartoons published during the same time. Rather, the cartoons will be chosen based on the presence of an argument about journalism. The online database PoliticalCartoons.com, which aggregates editorial cartoons from numerous sources in the United States and a few sources from other countries, allows a user to search for editorial cartoons based on subject. This databased was searched, from January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2009, using the following keywords: "journalism," "journalist," "reporter," "news," "press," "media," and "blog." From the collection of cartoons that resulted from this search, cartoons that expressed an argument about journalism in the 21st century were selected for analysis. With duplicates eliminated, a total of 37 editorial cartoons, ranging from publication dates of May 29, 2003 to December 31, 2009, were selected for analysis. That analysis, using the methodology described above, is presented in the next chapter, which will analyze the selected cartoons to discover their arguments and how those arguments were constructed using humor and rhetorical elements.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis: Rhetoric and Humor of Selected Cartoons on Journalism

This chapter presents an analysis of the selected editorial cartoons. First, the cartoons are analyzed individually, beginning with a description of the cartoon and its general arguments about journalism, followed by an analysis of the 17 rhetorical elements found in each cartoon, and concluding with a summary of how those rhetorical elements, taken together, inform the argument of each cartoon. Second, a discussion of the relationship between the humor and the other rhetorical elements of the 37 cartoons, taken as a whole, is provided. Finally, the arguments of the cartoons are discussed in terms of the topic of journalism on which their arguments are based. Due to copyright restrictions, in lieu of providing the images of the cartoons, World Wide Web Uniform Resource Locator (URL) addresses are provided for each cartoon.

Cartoon 1

Description. Authored by Wright for *The Detroit News*, the cartoon titled “Help” was posted on May 29, 2003.¹ This cartoon depicts a newspaper delivery boy holding up a newspaper labeled, “The New York Times.” A dialog box from the boy states, “Help.” This cartoon argues that the newspaper industry is facing a crisis of some sort.

Contrast. The cartoon contrasts the size of the text in the dialog box with the size of the dialog box, the text being much smaller than the dialog box, to indicate that the word “help” is spoken very softly. A newspaper delivery boy would normally be

¹ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/b023b4e2-7010-43eb-8b63-6848ed01951f.html>.

expected to holler a slogan in an effort to attract attention and sell the newspaper. This contrast informs the argument of the newspaper business in crisis.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts the newspaper, delivery boy, and bag in a manner that is true to form. This creates the sense that the manner in which these items are drawn are not the focal point of the argument; rather, what these elements signify inform the argument of the cartoon.

Contradiction. This cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. This cartoon uses line and form to reinforce the contrast between the expected hollering of the newspaper delivery boy, and the depiction of the text in the dialog box. The black background contrasts with the lighter image of the boy and dialog, which creates a sense that the boy does not have an audience; no one is around to hear his small cry of “help.”

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon depicts the dialog box much larger than the text within it to further inform the contrast of the cartoon.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not appear to utilize any physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The boy and the dialog are placed in the center of the visual frame. This centering, combined with the dark, empty space surrounding the boy, inform the contrast and argument of the cartoon.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to label the newspaper and to express dialog in the dialog box. The relation of the small dialog text to the larger visual image of the dialog box informs the contrast and argument of the cartoon.

Rhythmic Montage. The boy is depicted in the center of the visual frame, with the large dialog box above his head. The darkness of the background and the small size of the text in the dialog box indicate that the boy is alone and small, which informs the contrast and the argument of the cartoon.

Condensation. This cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor to inform its meaning or argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the incongruity between the expected hollering of the newspaper boy and the depicted meekness of his dialog. The incongruity is resolved when that contrast is understood to mean the newspaper industry is in crisis, and is in a diminished state, which the visual depiction of the boy and dialog create.

Summary. This cartoon argues that the newspaper industry is facing a crisis. The cartoon expresses this argument through the use of contrast, notably the small text within the large dialog box, and the use of incongruity humor.

Cartoon 2

Description. Authored by Parker for *Florida Today*, the cartoon titled “Masters Voice” was posted on June 3, 2003.² This cartoon depicts a large phonograph speaker, labeled “concentration of media ownership,” and a dog labeled “the public” listening. The caption, within the visual frame, reads, “his master's voice.” The cartoon argues that the public is subservient to large media corporations. This depiction is a parody of the iconic “his master's voice,” image and advertisement.

Contrast. This cartoon depicts a contrast between the phonograph speaker and the dog. The contrast is indicative of the disparity of power between the two figures, the phonograph speaker having much more power and control over the dog.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts both the phonograph and the dog true to form, which allows the cartoon to identify as a parody of the popular image it refers to.

Contradiction. This cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. The use of line and form mimic the popular image, allowing the cartoon to construct an argument as a parody.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon depicts the phonograph at a much larger scale than the dog, indicating its visual power in the frame and its dominance over the dog, which informs the argument of the cartoon.

² URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/1ca08843-2008-4661-8001-dc60789c6686.html>.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not seem to utilize any physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The phonograph is placed on the left side of the visual frame, and the dog is placed on the right side of the visual frame. This mimics the iconic image the cartoon references, and informs its visual depiction as a parody of that popular image.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to label the phonograph and the dog, which creates metaphor and informs the cartoon's argument. The cartoon uses text to label the cartoon, within the visual frame, to indicate the parody.

Rhythmic Montage. The cartoon represents a parody of a popular image, the phonograph on the left side of the visual frame and the dog on the right side of the visual frame.

Condensation. This cartoon condenses the abstract idea of corporate media concentration exerting control over the public, by relating those images to the popular “his master's voice” image.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. This cartoon combines the image of the phonograph with the textual label of the phonograph to create a metaphor. Likewise, the image of the dog with the textual label of the dog creates a metaphor.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor to construct its argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the incongruity created in the metaphors. The incongruity is resolved when the relationship between those two metaphors is understood.

Summary. This cartoon parodies the popular “his master's voice” image, using metaphors and incongruity humor to construct an argument that the public is subservient to large media corporations. The nature of the parodied image, as well as the relatively large size of the phonograph compared to the dog, further informs this argument.

Cartoon 3

Description. Authored by Wright for *The Detroit News*, the cartoon titled “COLOR 24-hour News” was posted on May 3, 2005.³ This cartoon depicts a television on the left side of the visual frame with a dialog box from it stating, “Runaway Bride: 'click'; Michael Jackson: 'click'; Runaway Bride: 'click'; Michael Jackson: 'click'; Cold feet: 'click'; Michael Jackson: 'click'.” On the right side of the visual frame, a man holding a remote control states in a dialog box, “I miss the old days before 24-hour news channels when you could actually find out what was going on in the world.” A woman sitting next to the man, replies in a dialog box, “Try the comedy channel.” The cartoon argues that comedy programs provide better news coverage than 24-hour cable news channels.

3 URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/a926e1da-eacf-489a-bf73-0c006c0e1a46.html>.

Contrast. The cartoon contrasts, exclusively through the use of text, the quality of information on cable news channels and the quality of information on comedy channels.

Commentary. This cartoon depicts all visual elements true to form, indicating the focus of the cartoon's argument is found in the textual elements of the cartoon.

Contradiction. This cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses line and form to depict the television, man, woman and furniture realistically.

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon does not appear to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to construct an argument.

Physiological Exaggeration. This cartoon does not appear to utilize physiological exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the television on the left of the visual frame indicates that its associated text should be understood first. The placement of the conversation between the man and the woman on the right of the visual frames indicates that the text associated with them is in response to the text from the television.

Text-Visual Relation. This cartoon uses text exclusively as dialog: from the television, from the man, and from the woman. The text is the primary element that informs the argument of the cartoon.

Rhythmic Montage. The visual frame progresses from the left to the right, with the argument constructed primarily through text as dialog.

Condensation. The cartoon does not appear to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not appear to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon stylizes a depiction of a spontaneous conversation between two individuals.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The article does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to construct an argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the incongruity between the value of the information on cable news channels and the value of the information on comedy channels. The incongruity is resolved with the understanding that the woman is suggesting the comedy channel provides better news than the cable news channel.

Summary. This cartoon primarily uses text, in dialog, to construct the argument that the comedy channel provides better news coverage than 24-hour cable news channels. This cartoon's argument is indicative of incongruity humor.

Cartoon 4

Description. Authored by Patrick Chappatte for *The International Herald Tribune*, the cartoon titled “Deep Throat Blog” was posted on June 6, 2005.⁴ The cartoon depicts two young adults, who either are bloggers or are readings blogs on computers, listening to a radio broadcast saying, “Watergate's greatest secret revealed.” In late May 2005, “Washington's best-kept secret source for more than 30 years,” the informant known by the pseudonym “Deep Throat,” who provided information to *Washington Post* journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein during their uncovering of President Richard Nixon's Watergate scandal beginning in 1972, publicly revealed his identity (Purdum, 2005, p. A1). In the cartoon, one person states, “What is Watergate?,” and the other person responds, “What is a secret?” The cartoon argues that young adults, who either are bloggers or are immersed in the culture of blogging, are unfamiliar with journalistic history, perhaps with history in general, and are accustomed to a culture in which information is widely accessible and secrets are no longer a reality. Furthermore, the cartoon argues that the present-day characteristics of information-sharing differ from those of the recent past.

Contrast. The primary contrast in this cartoon is the difference between traditional, or old, mediated information and new mediated information. Logocentrically, the cartoon labels the new media as “blogscoop,” “blogger,” “my podcast,” and “rumors,” and the dialog between the young bloggers indicates that they are unfamiliar with a high-profile journalistic endeavor as well as with the ideas of secrecy or confidentiality. This language communicates to the reader that a divide exists between traditional, Watergate-style journalism and new type of information-sharing that seems contrary to traditional journalistic values.

4 URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/d1640c83-a521-4e01-b7c3-7e62cbb5da4e.html>.

Commentary. This cartoon relies on commentary to inform its argument. Specifically, the antenna radio and newer electronic devices are presented true to form, with no exaggerations or metaphors. This commentary denotes that the realistic and common use of these media technologies are the focus of the argument. Likewise, the people are presented realistically, as young adult users of the new media technologies, without exaggeration or figurative allusions.

Contradiction. This cartoon contains little evidence that it is presenting a contradiction rather than merely a contrast. The contrast between the uses and values of the new media technologies is clear, but it is not clear that a judgment is being made about that contrast. If there is a contradiction depicted, it would seem to lean toward the detrimental loss of traditional journalistic values in the new media landscape. This conclusion is not clear, however, because the new media users are not explicitly denoted as flawed or hypocritical, they are merely depicted as differing in values from the old media, which speaks more to contrast than to contradiction.

Line and Form. Line and form in this cartoon inform the argument less than does the relative size of objects and their placement within the visual frame. The characteristics of the line and form in this cartoon serve to present a realistic commentary of the new media technologies and the two people who are using them.

Relative Size of Objects. The size of the objects depicted further informs the argument and contrast of this cartoon. The new media technology and various electronic devices are sometimes larger than the radio, and certainly make up a larger portion of the visual frame. The relative smallness of the radio on the left edge of the visual frame indicates its historical status and its relative irrelevance in the current news-information culture.

Physionomical Exaggeration. No distinct physionomical exaggerations are present in this cartoon, and no popular figures are depicted. The two people depicted do not appear to refer to any popularly known bloggers or other figures.

Placement. Visually, the contrast in this cartoon is quite distinct, with the journalistic values of the traditional media, represented by an outdated, antenna-equipped radio propped on a stack of dead-tree papers, positioned in the background on the left edge of the frame, while in the foreground, various electronic devices, including three computer screens, several wires, and cell phones and mp3 players, occupy a large portion of the visual frame. While the blog readers do have analog paper on their table, it is certainly not a newspaper, because the blog readers are more interested in a stack of rumors.

Text-Visual Relation. The relationship between the textual and visual elements in this cartoon serve to label the various new media technologies, which provides the commentary on which the contrast is based.

Rhythmic Montage. Because of the dialog predictably moving from left to right, the story of this cartoon begins in the background, with the radio and the flashback to journalistic standards of investigative reporting, accountability, and commitment to source confidentiality, and then moves right toward the two people living in the realm of the latest shift in journalism, mimicking the linear progression of a time line. This linear movement, combined with the placement and size of the contrasting elements, creates a temporal perspective, much like a drawn pathway that begins narrow and small in the background and widens in the foreground, that indicates for the reader that the antenna-radio, and the bygone journalistic qualities it and the Watergate story represent, are in the past, like fading landmarks on the side of

a road already traveled. Now, in present time, in the foreground, information providers are engaging in journalistic, or information-sharing, practices that do not reflect those touted standards of the past.

Condensation. The most notable example of condensation in this cartoon is the old-fashioned radio, which condenses all the attributes of information-sharing and journalistic practices in the past age of traditional media technologies. This condensation is aided by the conversation between the blog users and the depictions of new media technologies, which are less condensed than the radio. The values and attributes of the new media technologies are explained in the dialog between the two blog users, whereas the depiction of the radio alone serves to conjure the traditional media technology attributes.

Domestication. This cartoon does not present much domestication, aside from condensing the abstract ideas of journalistic values and traditional media technology attributes, in the form of the old-fashioned radio.

Opposition. This cartoon does not rely on opposition to construct its argument. The contrast between the old media and new media is clear, but that contrast does not appear to be linked to any existing duality. Perhaps, and this is not alluded to in the cartoon, if the cartoon had depicted the voice from the radio being that of an older person, compared to the younger people using the blogs, that would be indicative of opposition. Again, this was neither evident nor depicted in this cartoon.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not rely on carnivalization to construct its argument. The only element of carnivalization appears to be the representation of a spontaneous communication between the two blog users. However, the mere act of their conversation does little to inform the argument of the cartoon. Rather, the

content of their communication establishes the contrast that is central to the argument of this cartoon.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to rely on hypercarnivalization to construct its argument, as there are no overly-stylized representations of spontaneous behavior that serve to indicate a judgment about a subject or idea.

Combination. This cartoon does not rely on combination to construct its argument. The presence of the old media technology and the new media technology in the same visual frame is not metaphorical, it only seems to serve as the basis for the contrast in the cartoon.

Superiority Humor. Little, if any, of the humor in this cartoon appears to be based on superiority. This cartoon relies more on contrast than contradiction, which implies there is little judgment being made about the figures depicted. The confusion illustrated by the dialog, “What is Watergate” and “What is a secret” does not seem to portray the discussants as ignorant, but rather seems to portray the discussants as having a different standards and expectations from those connoted by the radio dialog.

Incongruity Humor. The humor in this cartoon largely stems from the resolution of the incongruity between the values and attributes of old, or traditional, journalistic and information-sharing methods, and the values and attributes of new journalistic and information sharing methods. To understand the humor, the reader must fill an enthymematic gap, which is the understanding of the nature of the Watergate scandal and how that scandal characterized traditional journalistic values. In filling that gap, the humorous message becomes clear that an incongruity exists between the values and attributes of the old age and those of the new age. This

incongruity is largely communicated in the cartoon through the use of text, primarily the dialog between the two blog users.

Summary. The primary argument of this cartoon is that a difference exists between the values and attributes of traditional information-sharing and new information-sharing, which are depicted respectively in terms of the media technologies most utilized during their eras. The argument is informed by the contrast between these two eras and their accompanying technologies and values. This contrast is communicated through the dialog spoken and the size of the objects and their placement in the frame. The humor stems from incongruity.

Cartoon 5

Description. Authored by John Trever for *The Albuquerque Journal*, the cartoon titled “Deep Stuff” was posted on June 7, 2005.⁵ This cartoon depicts two visual frames, the left visual frame depicts a man reading a newspaper, and the right visual frame depicts a wider view of the man reading the newspaper, who is revealed to be sitting inside of a toilet bowl. In the left frame, the man wearing a hat labeled “press” is reading a newspaper labeled “Daily Snooze,” on which the headline reads “Watergate source revealed.” A thought dialog box from the man states, “Following the money ... digging up the facts ... uncovering the cover-up ... exposing abuse of power ... serving the public ...” The right visual frame depicts a thought dialog box from the man stating, “Those were the days!” The toilet is textually labeled: “fabrication,” “bias,” “gotcha' reporting,” “infotainment',” “declining readership,” “advocacy,” and “low ratings.” The left visual frame is accompanied by a caption at the bottom reading, “Deep Throat!” The right visual frame is accompanied by a caption at the bottom reading, “Deep Doo-Doo.” The cartoon argues that Watergate-

⁵ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/761873d0-7842-4f7f-ba53-22d9cd0bb7ae.html>.

style journalism that occurred during the Watergate Scandal in the 1970s was characterized by “following the money, digging up the facts, uncovering the cover-up, exposing abuse of power, [and] serving the public,” whereas the style of journalism occurring in the present day is characterized by “fabrication,” “bias,” “'gotcha' reporting,” “infotainment',” “declining readership,” “advocacy,” and “low ratings.”

Contrast. The cartoon contrasts the characteristics that define current journalism with those that defined Watergate-style journalism. The contrast is indicated by the textual labels on the toilet, the captions, and the dialog from the man.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts the man and the toilet true to form, allowing the textual labels on the toilet to inform its meaning, and subsequently the argument of the cartoon.

Contradiction. This cartoon depicts a contradiction between the positive attributes of Watergate-style journalism and the negative attributes of present-day journalism. The cartoon's depiction judges the current attributes as inferior compared to the Watergate-style attributes.

Line and Form. This cartoon utilizes line and form to present the visual images true to form.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not appear to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to inform its arguments. The visual depictions are realistically proportional.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the “Deep Throat” visual frame on the left indicates that its meaning must be understood to inform the meaning of the “Deep Doo-Doo” frame on the right.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to express dialog, provide captions, and label the visual depictions.

Rhythmic Montage. The left frame of the cartoon presents a zoomed-in, or a close-up, perspective of the man reading and thinking. The right frame shows a zoomed-out, or wide shot, of the man sitting inside the toilet bowl. This movement reinforces the contrast between the two styles of journalism.

Condensation. The cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon depicts a spontaneous situation involving a man reading a newspaper and thinking.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not appear to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon uses superiority humor to judge the current journalist attributes as inferior to the attributes of the Watergate-style journalism.

Incongruity Humor. The cartoon uses incongruity humor by presenting the contrast between the two eras of journalism, and resolving that incongruity by contrasting the two and comparing the current era of journalism to a toilet.

Summary. The cartoon uses both incongruity and superiority humor in presenting the contrast between the attributes of current journalism and the attributes of Watergate-style journalism. The cartoon argues that Watergate-style journalism was characterized by “following the money, digging up the facts, uncovering the cover-up, exposing abuse of power, [and] serving the public,” whereas the style of journalism occurring in the present day is characterized by “fabrication,” “bias,” “‘gotcha’ reporting,” “‘infotainment’,” “declining readership,” “advocacy,” and “low ratings.” The cartoon uses two visual frames, the left as a wide shot and the right as a close up, and the right frame with a wordplay caption, to reinforce the contrast.

Cartoon 6

Description. Authored by John Cole for *The Scranton Times-Tribune*, the cartoon titled “Peter Jennings and Networks” was posted on August 12, 2005.⁶ The cartoon depicts a man putting flowers on the near a gravestone labeled, “Peter Jennings.” To the right of the visual frame, another gravestone, labeled “network news dominance,” is depicted with overgrown vines and grass surrounding it. Peter Jennings, who was the anchor for the ABC evening news program, died on August 7, 2005 (The last anchor, 2005). The network evening news programs used to be a dominant presence in the United States information culture, but “the audience of people who routinely stop and sit down around dinnertime to see the news is steadily shrinking and swiftly aging” (The last anchor, 2005, p. 18). The cartoon argues that

⁶ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/6fdb9984-32ee-4c6b-b742-2d7e335c4b87.html>.

while the death of Jennings is recent, the death of the network news' dominance occurred a while ago.

Contrast. This cartoon contrasts the gravestones of Jennings and network news to construct the argument that the death of the former was recent and the death of the latter occurred further in the past.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts the man and the gravestones true to form.

Contradiction. The cartoon does not appear to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses the line of the growing vines around the network news gravestone, as well as the shading and discoloration of that gravestone, to indicate that it had been placed at a time prior to the Jennings gravestone.

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon does not appear to utilize the relative size of objects to construct an argument; all visual depictions appear to be drawn in realistic proportions.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the Jennings gravestone on the left side of the visual frame, and the network news gravestone on the right side of the visual frame, reinforces the contrast between the two to inform the argument of the cartoon.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to label the gravestones and indicate the entity that has died.

Rhythmic Montage. The cartoon's visual depictions are stagnant, with exception of the man placing flowers on the grave. The depictions in the left side of

the visual frame are contrasted with the depictions on the right side of the visual frame.

Condensation. The cartoon condenses the complex phenomenon of the decline of network news' dominance into the single image of a gravestone.

Domestication. The cartoon does not appear to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon stylizes the ceremony, and spontaneous act, of a man placing flowers on a gravestone, but the argument of the cartoon is informed more by the contrast between the two gravestones.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument. The network news gravestone is figurative, but not indicative of combination or metaphor.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor to construct an argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the incongruity between the two gravestones, which are depicted differently. The resolution arises when the comparison between the gravestones is understood: one is older than the other. That comparison is then related to the ideas those gravestones signify.

Summary. This cartoon argues that while the death of Jennings is recent, the death of the network news' dominance occurred at a previous time. The cartoon

depicts the visual contrast between the two gravestones, and utilizes incongruity humor to construct this argument.

Cartoon 7

Description. Authored by John Cole for *The Scranton Times-Tribune*, the cartoon titled “Wall Street in the Newsroom -- Color” was posted on November 22, 2005.⁷ This cartoon depicts a large bull labeled “Wall Street profiteers” snorting onto a man, presumably a journalist, using a computer. The air from the bull's snort has blown newspapers, one of which is labeled “Knight Ridder,” off the desk of the man. A dialog box from the bull states, “Bull in the news shop.” Knight Ridder, “the second largest newspaper chain in America,” announced that it was selling its business in November 2005. (Watson, 2005, p. n.a.). The decision to sell Knight Ridder seems to have stemmed from pressure from Wall St. investors in the company: “Indeed, [Private Capital Management's] stakes could be driving a stake into the heart of the American newspapers” (Watson, 2005, p. n.a.). “Knight Ridder is [in] the process of trying to squeeze profits from its growing web operations, but PCM and other Knight Ridder institutional investors are not in a patient mood” (Watson, 2005, p. n.a.). This cartoon argues that the presence of Wall Street profiteers in the newspaper business impedes the work of journalists.

Contrast. The cartoon contrasts the angry, snorting bull with the frightened and disturbed journalist working at the computer. This contrast informs the argument of the cartoon by demonstrating the relationship between the two depicted figures.

Commentary. The bull, man, computer and newspapers are drawn true to form.

⁷ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/dd2077fa-2e26-463b-8561-0896c52141d3.html>.

Contradiction. This cartoon's use of contrast does not seem to rise to the level of contradiction. The contrast seems to explain a situation more than using the contrast to make a judgment about one of the figures.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses the cloud-like lines of the bull's snort to indicate motion in the cartoon.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon depicts the bull as much larger than the journalist, which reinforces the argument that the bull has more influence and power compared to the journalist. Therefore, the bull's presence in the newsroom is intrusive from the point of view of the journalist.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not appear to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the bull on the left side of the visual frame and the journalist on the right side of the visual frame indicates that the bull is acting and the journalist is reacting, which further reinforces the argument about the power dynamic of the two figures.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to label the bull and newspaper, to express dialog from the bull, and to label the air from the bull's nose.

Rhythmic Montage. The visual elements in the frame create a movement from the left to the right. The bull on the left is, therefore, depicted as acting, and the journalist on the right is depicted as reacting.

Condensation. This cartoon condenses the abstract idea of the influence of Wall Street investors on the newsroom.

Domestication. This cartoon does not appear to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. This cartoon's contrast of the bull and the journalist seems to align to the existing duality of beast and man. The beast is aggressive and imposing, and the man is frightened and interrupted.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. This cartoon combines the figure of the bull with the label of “Wall Street profiteers” to create a metaphor.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor to inform its meaning or construct an argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of this cartoon is best understood in terms of incongruity. The incongruity between the bull's presence in the newsroom is resolved by understanding that his metaphorical presence refers to the imposition the investors are placing on journalists.

Summary. This cartoon utilizes contrast, incongruity humor, and relative size of objects to construct the argument that the presence of Wall Street profiteers in the newspaper business impedes the work of journalists. The metaphor and size of the bull, in contrast to the journalist, reinforces the argument.

Cartoon 8

Description. Authored by Pat Bagley for *Salt Lake Tribune*, the cartoon titled “Extra Wise Man” was posted on December 22, 2006.⁸ The cartoon parodies the popular story of the three wise men bringing gifts to the baby Jesus. The cartoon depicts the three wise men on camels, each holding a gift: one labeled “gold,” one

⁸ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/1b89d9a2-3b64-4b53-af82-393aed49e6d9.html>.

labeled “frankincense,” and the other labeled “myrrh.” Following behind the camels is a newspaper delivery boy on a bicycle with a bag labeled “news”, and a label in the similar style to the wise men's gifts, denoting the contents of the bag, “newspapers.” Text written in the upper-left of the visual frame serves as a caption, “Rare and exotic treasures from a bygone era ...” The cartoon argues that newspapers are artifacts of the past.

Contrast. This cartoon contrasts the depiction of the wise men on camels with the presence of the boy on the bicycle.

Commentary. This cartoon parodies the wise men story, and depicts the figures true to form.

Contradiction. The cartoon does not seem to use contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses line and form to depict the visual elements true to form, which allows for the understanding of the parody and for the contrast.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not appear to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to inform its argument. The visual depictions are drawn in a realistic proportion to one another.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not appear to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The wise men on camels are depicted on the left side of the visual frame, and slightly separate from the boy on the bicycle, who is depicted on the right side of the frame. This reinforces the contrast in the cartoon.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text as a caption and as labels for the visual elements depicted.

Rhythmic Montage. The cartoon presents a parody of the three wise men story, and contrasting their gifts with the gift of newspapers from the boy. The camels and bicycle are moving from the right to the left, but the argument of the cartoon progresses from the left to the right: beginning with the caption, moving to the familiar gifts, and ending on the gift of newspapers.

Condensation. This cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor to construct an argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests with the incongruity between the gifts of the wise men and the gifts of the boy on the bicycle. The incongruity is resolved by understanding that the newspapers are compared to the other gifts, as sharing the similar qualities of rarity and historical existence.

Summary. This cartoon parodies the three wise men story to contrast the gifts of the wise men with the gifts of the newspaper delivery boy on the bicycle. Using incongruity humor, the cartoon argues that newspapers are artifacts of the past, in the same way that myrrh is an artifact of the past.

Cartoon 9

Description. Authored by RJ Matson for *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the cartoon titled “Murdoch Buys Wall Street Journal-COLOR” was posted on August 2, 2007.⁹ This cartoon depicts a dinosaur with the caricatured face of Rupert Murdoch, the owner of “News Corp.,” which labels the dinosaur. The dinosaur is holding a newspaper labeled, “The Wall Street Journal,” on which the headline reads, “Murdoch pays \$5 billion.” A textual caption within the visual frame states, “Walking with Dinosaurs.” The cartoon argues that the newspaper, which was purchased by an old company, will become extinct.

Contrast. This cartoon contrasts the newspaper, a current entity, with the dinosaur and prehistoric setting, extinct entities. This contrast aids the argument that by being purchased by the dinosaur, the newspaper will suffer the same fate as the dinosaur.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts the newspaper true to form.

Contradiction. The cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses line and form to establish the prehistoric scene, and to show the anachronism of the newspaper in the scene.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of objects to construct an argument.

⁹ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/c9a18fe4-87e1-42af-9701-635dde1482cd.html>.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument. The visual metaphor of Murdoch as a dinosaur seems more indicative of combination than caricature.

Placement. The dinosaur holding the newspaper is placed at the center of the frame, with only scenery cues in the background, indicating that it is the dominant visual element in the cartoon's argument.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to label the dinosaur and the newspaper, to provide dialog from the newspaper, and to caption the cartoon.

Rhythmic Montage. The cartoon places the caption within the visual frame on the left, and the dinosaur and newspaper image in the center of the visual frame.

Condensation. This cartoon does not appear to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not appear to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon combines Murdoch's facial characteristics and the dinosaur to create the metaphor that Murdoch is prehistoric, which informs the argument that the newspaper, like Murdoch and the dinosaur, will be extinct as a result of the purchase.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor to construct its argument. The metaphor of Murdoch-as-a-dinosaur does judge Murdoch, but that judgment does not seem to be the humor that informs the cartoon's argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests with the incongruity between the newspaper and the dinosaur. This incongruity is resolved by understanding the argument of the cartoon that the newspaper is now prehistoric, like the dinosaur.

Summary. This cartoon uses combination to create a metaphor of Murdoch as a dinosaur, which contrasts with the depiction of the newspaper that Murdoch has purchased. Using incongruity humor, the cartoon argues that *The Wall Street Journal* has become a prehistoric relic due the nature of its new owner.

Cartoon 10

Description. Authored by Joe Heller for *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, the cartoon titled “Uncivil Message Boards” was posted on October 2, 2007.¹⁰ This cartoon presents an argument that user-generated information on new media technologies, specifically “community message boards, forums and blogs” are negative in tone. The September 2007 news item and timely topic expressed via the newspaper held by the male character is the 25th anniversary of a commonly used emoticon in written communication on the Internet, the “smiley face icon,” which consists of a colon, a hyphen, and a closing parenthesis (:-) and the world smiles with you, 2007, p. 38). The cartoon depicts a man sitting in a chair reading the newspaper, on which is the headline celebrating the smiley face icon's anniversary, with a dialog box above stating, “I can remember the first time I saw an online smiley face icon.” In response,

¹⁰ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/a53ac751-d160-4701-80e5-3d0ae5f262b2.html>.

a woman sitting at a computer desk using the computer replies, “Unfortunately, I can't remember the last time I saw an online smiley face icon.” Emanating from the computer screen are icons denoting violence and extremity, such as a skull-and-crossbones, noose, bomb, lightning bolt, star and an atomic symbol.

Contrast. The argument of this cartoon is primarily informed by contrast, specifically the contrast between the celebration of an Internet-era expression of happiness and the negative and violent language used on user-generated, Internet-based communication spaces. A secondary contrast in this cartoon is perhaps the tone of traditional media versus the tone of new media. The smiley face icon story in the newspaper is docile and friendly, whereas the computer is depicted as figuratively exploding with negativity and hatred. This contrast between the two forms of media is explicit, due to the specificity of the man reading the news story in a newspaper. If, hypothetically, the man were reading the story on a laptop, then the only contrast would be between the smiley face icon and the negative expressions on the Internet. This cartoon explicitly depicts the man reading from a newspaper, which introduces the second contrast in the cartoon.

Commentary. This cartoon almost exclusively uses commentary to establish the scene of the cartoon. The room, furniture, media devices and people depicted in the cartoon are not represented figuratively. Rather, they are depicted true to form, which allows the message of the cartoon to focus on the dialog and logocentric elements of the cartoon.

Contradiction. Contradiction is not an evident rhetorical device this cartoon uses to construct its argument. The contrast presented in the cartoon does not appear to construct an argument that judges any ideas or figures. Perhaps the contrast

between old media and new media presents a contradiction argument against the Internet, as a medium that 25 years ago was a communication space in which happiness was expressed, via the smiley face, but currently is used to express negative emotions. However, this contrast does not seem to rise to the level of contradiction, as no hypocrisy is depicted nor are any judgments against the Internet seemingly in this cartoon's argument

Line and Form. The prominent element of line and form present in this cartoon is found in the symbols above the computer. Sharp, jagged lines from the computer to the symbols above create a sense of energy coming from the message boards and forums described on the computer screen. The symbols above the computer connote that the energy coming from the forums are negative and violent.

Relative Size of Objects. The relative size of objects in this cartoon do not inform its argument. The visual frame is occupied evenly between the man and the woman, as they are depicted realistically. The icons above the computer screen occupy about the same amount of visual space as the dialog boxes for the man and woman, as well as for the newspaper and the computer screen, which presents the sense that no one visual element or textual element is the primary focus of the cartoon.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not make use of physionomical exaggeration to construct its arguments. No popular figures are depicted, and the two people depicted are drawn realistically, all features in proportion to one another.

Placement. The placement of the man reading the newspaper in one realm of space and the placement of the woman using the computer in another realm of space,

establishes a visual contrast that aids the primary contrast presented through the dialog of their conversation.

Text-Visual Relation. The primary text in this cartoon is the label of the story on the newspaper, the label of the community message boards on the computer screen, and the dialog between the two people. There does not seem to be any particular rhetorical function of the relationship between the text and the visual elements, aside from labeling designating which person is speaking specific dialog.

Rhythmic Montage. The visual frame moves from left to right. First, the story on the newspaper and the man's spoken reaction, then moving to the right of the visual frame, the woman's response to the man, and ending with the icons and labels on the computer screen. This rhythmic montage allows the reader to understand the progression and the contrast expressed in the textual elements of the cartoon.

Condensation. This cartoon uses the icons of the skull-and-crossbones, noose, lightning bolt, bomb, star, pound sign and atom to condense the idea of negative or violent expression. Although figurative, these icons are representative of negative expression. Perhaps, a secondary condensation is evidence in the newspaper, which could represent old media, in contrast to new media.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication in the construction of its argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition in the construction of its argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon stylizes the spontaneous behavior of a conversation between two people, one of whom is reading a newspaper and the other who is reading messages on a computer screen. This carnivalization, however, does

not appear to inform the argument of the cartoon. Rather, it establishes a scene in which the textual elements of the cartoon, primarily the dialog, informs the argument.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization in the construction of its argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not appear to utilize combination in the construction of the argument. The symbols above the computer screen referring to the negative tone of the communication on the Internet are figurative, but are not metaphors. While a skull-and-crossbones and a bomb are elements of one domain entering a different domain of a common household, they are not combining with that second domain. In other words, those figurative icons are not used to judge the second domain, they are merely used to represent the emotional elements of the Internet communication.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor. No figures or ideas are depicted as having less power, or of being of a lesser stature, than any other, including the audience.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of this cartoon stems from the resolution of the incongruity between the good-natured newspaper story along with the reminiscent statement by the man and the bad-natured communication on the new media technology space. As the reader understands the message on the left side of the visual frame, about the smiley face icon, the incongruous statement by the woman establishes the contrast. The incongruity is resolved when the reader encounters the depictions of the negative communication on the Internet, which relates back to the smiley face icon.

Summary. The argument of this cartoon is primarily informed by contrast, and its humor by incongruity. The reference to the smiley face icon is a vehicle by which the disparity between the positive communication of the smiley face and the negative communication found on Internet communication spaces is illustrated. The visual placement of the man on left and the woman on the right, each engage with different realms of mediated communication further establishes this contrast.

Cartoon 11

Description. Authored by Nate Beeler for *The Washington Examiner*, the cartoon titled “Hollywood Writers Strike” was posted on November 6, 2007.¹¹ The cartoon depicts a young man, presumably college-aged, sitting on a couch watching television. The television is on the left side of the visual frame, and the young man is on the right side of the visual frame. A second young person is in the center of the visual frame at the door to the room, with a dialog box from him stating, “Dude, didn't you hear? The Hollywood writers strike shut down all the late-night talk shows.” The first young man on the couch responds in a dialog box, “But where will I get my *news?!!*” The cartoon argues that young people get their news from late-night talk shows.

Contrast. The cartoon contrasts the young man's statement about getting news from late-night talk shows with the expectation that people get their news from journalistic sources.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts both men and the all scenery objects true to form. The dart board on the wall, the video game system, and the fast-food packaging near the couch are depicted true to form, signifying the age of the man on the couch.

¹¹ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/f3cbbba8-520f-4cd5-b373-218439521d50.html>.

Contradiction. This cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to inform its argument.

Line and Form. This cartoon uses line and form to depict realistic figures and a realistic setting.

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to inform the argument.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the second man on the left side of the frame and the man on the couch on the right side of the frame indicate the sequence the dialog should be read in order to understand the argument of the cartoon.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to express dialog.

Rhythmic Montage. The dialog box on the left side of the visual frame asks a question that the dialog box on the right side of the frame answers. The visual elements of the cartoon seem only to indicate the age of the men depicted.

Condensation. The cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon stylizes a spontaneous conversation between the two men.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to construct an argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the incongruity of the expectation that people get their news from journalistic sources, and the statement by the young man indicating that he gets his news from late-night comedy sources.

Summary. The cartoon uses incongruity and contrast to present an argument that young people get their news from late-night talk shows, rather than from journalistic sources, as one might expect. The visual elements in the cartoon seem only to serve as indicators that man depicted is young, presumably a college student.

Cartoon 12

Description. Authored by David Fitzsimmons for *The Arizona Star*, the cartoon titled “Media Color” was posted on November 9, 2008.¹² This cartoon consists of two visual frames, one on top and one on bottom. The top frame depicts a woman typing on a computer with dialog stating, “Reporting huge losses one has to wonder how much longer these giant cornerstones of American life can hang on in this economy.” The top frame also depicts a woman standing behind the sitting woman, as well as a man with dialog stating, “The didn't adapt fast enough to the changes they didn't bother to see coming. That's capitalism. I don't feel sorry for GM, Ford or Chrysler.” The bottom frame depicts the same human figures. The sitting

¹² URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/d4b32eec-2250-4bbe-8c3f-b292af318dbe.html>.

woman dialogs, "I'm writing about us." The standing woman dialogs, "faster," and the man dialogs, "hurry." The figures depicted are presumably journalists writing a story about the financial troubles of the U.S. automobile industry. The cartoon argues that like the automobile industry, the newspaper industry is likely to collapse soon due to not adapting to a changing economy and culture.

Contrast. The cartoon contrasts the meaning of the sitting woman's first dialog with the man's interpretation of that dialog. The man commented about the automobile industry, whereas the sitting woman was commenting on the newspaper industry. This contrast allows the reader to interpret the argument of the cartoon: that both industries are in a similar situation.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts all figures true to form.

Contradiction. The cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses line and form to depict the visual elements in the cartoon realistically.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not appear to utilize the relative size of objects to construct an argument. The figures are drawn in realistic proportions.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of one frame above another signifies that information in the top frame is needed to understand the information in the bottom frame, and to understand the argument of the cartoon.

Text-Visual Relation. This cartoon uses text exclusively to represent dialog, which is the primary element informing the cartoon's argument.

Rhythmic Montage. The top frame and the bottom frame depict the same situation with the same figures. The bottom frame represents a passage of time respective to the first frame.

Condensation. The cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon depicts a stylized representation of a spontaneous conversation between journalists.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority to inform the humor of the cartoon or to construct an argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests with the incongruity between the man's misinterpretation of the sitting woman's dialog and the meaning of the sitting woman's dialog. The incongruity is resolved by understanding the misinterpretation and understanding the comparison between the topics of the dialog, the automobile industry and the newspaper industry.

Summary. This cartoon relies primarily on text, as dialog, to construct the argument that like the automobile industry, the newspaper industry is likely to

collapse soon due to not adapting to a changing economy and culture. Using incongruity humor, the cartoon presents a misinterpretation of dialog that is later resolved to argue a comparison between the two industries. The cartoon uses two visual frames, one above the other, to indicate a passage of time in the scene depicted.

Cartoon 13

Description. Authored by Keefe for *The Denver Post*, the cartoon titled “New Media Color” was posted on December 9, 2008.¹³ This cartoon depicts two people sitting at the bar of a cafe, an older man reading a newspaper on the right side of the visual frame and a young man using a portable electronic device. A dialog box from the young man asks, “Why do you bother with old-fashioned media when you could have Myspace, Flickr, Google, Facebook, Twitter and Craigslist?” A dialog box above the older man replies, “Pass me the sports section.” The argument of this cartoon is somewhat ambiguous, allowing at least two plausible interpretations, although only one allows the cartoon to express humor. The non-humorous interpretation is that the older man has been convinced by the young man to use the new electronic device, specifically to look at sports information, which would likely be available on the electronic device. In this sense, the older man's reply to the young man's question is taken literally. The interpretation that would allow the cartoon to express humor is that the older man's response is sarcastic, meaning that the advantage of traditional media, such as newspapers, is the ability to tangibly hold a paper section of the newspaper and share it with others. While not conclusive, the expression depicted on the older man's face, eyes closed and eyebrows raised, seems to indicate that his response is sarcastic. Because it allows for humor and the accompanying visual

13 URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/db4aad05-c08c-4bf6-b082-41cf379c60bc.html>.

elements seem to support it, this latter argument will be adopted as the argument of this cartoon.

Contrast. This cartoon contrasts the tangible qualities of portable electronic media devices with those of newspapers. While the electronic media device can access more information, it does not have the broad-sheet, paper feel of a newspaper, which the older man prefers.

Commentary. This cartoon utilizes commentary extensively, as it depicts a realistic scene. The diner, the appliances, the street corner and the people depicted are all drawn true to form. This allows the cartoon to establish a scene that seems literal and realistic. In doing so, the focus becomes on the conversation the two people are having, which is the primary element in the construction of the argument.

Contradiction. This cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct its argument. If contradiction is present, it would be based on the contrast between the electronic device and the newspaper. However, the qualities of the newspaper are not explicitly depicted as superior to the qualities of the electronic device, the cartoon only seems to argue that the older man prefers the qualities of the newspaper.

Line and Form. This cartoon uses line and form to inform its argument. All representations seem to be depicted realistically to establish a scene, as opposed to a mood or judgment about a particular subject or idea.

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon presents a balanced visual depiction of the two elements in contrast, the new media device and the traditional newspaper, which indicates that the argument of the cartoon does not stem from how the elements of the cartoon are depicted.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct its argument.

Placement. This cartoon presents a balanced visual depiction of the two elements in contrast. Their placement, the electronic device on the left and the newspaper on the right, seem to serve only the direction of the conversation, not to imply any meaning in relation to one another.

Text-Visual Relation. This cartoon utilizes only a minor relationship between the visual elements and the textual elements to inform its argument. The “tap tap tap tap tap” onomatopoeia above the electronic devices serves as a labeling function for the electronic device. The other text in the cartoon is dialog, from which the thrust of the argument of the cartoon is contained.

Rhythmic Montage. The visual frame of the cartoon seems to present a realistic setting in a diner on a street corner. The largest dialog box, from the young man, on the left side of the visual frame asks a question to which the smaller dialog box on the right side of the visual frame answers.

Condensation. This cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct its argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct its argument.

Opposition. This cartoon utilizes opposition to construct its argument. The contrast between the new media technology and the traditional media technology is related to an existing duality between young and old, perhaps child and adult. The adult, older man, uses the newspaper, and the child, younger man, uses the electronic device. This comparison serves to illustrate that the media technologies have changed

over time. The newspaper was popular in the past, and now with the older man, and the electronic device is popular in the present, with the younger man.

Carnivalization. This cartoon stylizes a spontaneous conversation between the two people depicted. The visual frame as a whole is drawn to mimic the perspective of the reader if the reader were walking down the sidewalk and happened to look in on the conversation between the two people. The older woman in the background further cues the scene of a typical conversation in a realistic setting that someone may overhear.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct its argument. The carnivalization in this cartoon is not overly-stylized, nor does it seem to make a judgment about the spontaneous behavior depicted.

Combination. This cartoon does not seem to utilize combination in the construction of the argument.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority to construct the humor in the cartoon.

Incongruity Humor. This cartoon uses incongruity to inform the humor in the cartoon. The incongruity stems from the contrast between the attributes of the electronic device and those of the newspaper, and from the contrast between the question asked by the younger man and the response from the older man. An incongruity is established when the younger man asks why the older man bothers with old-fashioned media, and it is resolved when the older man's reply states the older man's preference for the newspaper, because it possesses qualities the electronic device does not.

Summary. This cartoon presents an argument that the older man prefers the tangible qualities of the newspaper, whereas the younger man prefers the qualities of the electronic device. The humor of the cartoon stems from this contrast, and is indicative of incongruity humor. The argument is largely found in the dialog between the two people, and the visual depictions of their respective media devices. The other visual elements in the cartoon seem to set a realistic scene, in which the reader may be overhearing a realistic conversation in a diner.

Cartoon 14

Description. Authored by David Fitzsimmons for *The Arizona Star*, the cartoon titled “Death of Print Color” was posted on December 11, 2008.¹⁴ This cartoon depicts a man, labeled “big media,” in a graveyard talking to the spirit of death, with a dialog box from the man stating, “Yeah, yeah, yeah. But just between you and me, spirit, it's the shareholders I'm worried about. Are they okay?” The cartoon depicts several tombstones surrounding the man in the graveyard. The tombstones are labeled: “print journalism,” “in-depth coverage,” “international news bureaus,” “press,” “investigative reporting,” “informed citizenry, amused to death,” and “democracy 1776.” The cartoon argues that all of the entities named on the tombstones no longer exist, but media companies are only concerned with profits and shareholders.

Contrast. The cartoon contrasts the value of the subjects listed on the tombstones with the living, “big media” concern for the shareholders. This contrast informs the argument of the cartoon that the dead entities are more valuable than concern for the shareholders.

¹⁴ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/cbe6b35f-a244-443f-b209-2a634ff5f002.html>.

Commentary. This cartoon depicts the man, tombstones and the mythical death spirit true to form.

Contradiction. This cartoon establishes a contradiction in its use of contrast. Media companies, “big media,” ostensibly should place a greater value on the entities labeled on the tombstones, and a lesser value on the concern of the shareholders.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses line and form to depict the figures realistically, although one figure and the scene do not exist in reality. The cartoon also uses line and form to designate snow falling from the sky and snow on the ground, neither of which seem to inform the argument of the cartoon.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to inform its argument.

Physiological Exaggeration. The cartoon does not appear to utilize physiological exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the man and spirit in the center of the frame, with the labeled tombstones surrounding them, indicates the dialog from the man refers to the surrounding tombstones.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to express dialog and to label the tombstones.

Rhythmic Montage. The cartoon centers the spirit, the man and the man's dialog in the center of the visual frame, with the labeled tombstones surrounding them, indicating that the man's dialog refers to the tombstones.

Condensation. This cartoon does not appear to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not appear to utilize domestication to inform its argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to inform its argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize carnivalization to inform its argument. The depicted event does not seem to be a stylization of a realistic spontaneous event, but rather an imagined occurrence.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not appear to utilize combination to construct an argument. The labels on the tombstones are not metaphorical.

Superiority Humor. The humor of this cartoon is informed by superiority humor. The man, by being concerned with the shareholders over the journalistic qualities depicted on the tombstones, is deemed morally unjust or perhaps incompetent.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon also stems from the incongruity between the concerns of the man and the value of the entities labeled on the tombstone. The incongruity is resolved by understanding the contradiction of the man valuing the shareholders over the tombstone labels.

Summary. This cartoon argues that “big media” companies value shareholders over the following: “print journalism,” “in-depth coverage,” “international news bureaus,” “press,” “investigative reporting,” “informed citizenry,” and “democracy.” (1776). The cartoon argues that those entities labeled on the tombstones no longer

exist. The cartoon exhibits incongruity and superiority humor in presenting the contradiction in the values of “big media.”

Cartoon 15

Description. Authored by Joe Heller for *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, the cartoon titled “Newspapers Not Dead” was posted on January 6, 2009.¹⁵ This cartoon is comprised of four distinct visual frames, chronologically progressing from left to right, and connected by four dialog boxes that when read from left to right combine to create a single sentence. The first visual frame shows a radio announcer with the dialog box, “The will ...”; the second visual frame shows a television announcer with the dialog box, “mean the ...”; the third visual frame shows an Internet user with the dialog box, “end of ...”; the final visual frame shows a futuristic man reading a hand-held electronic newspaper with the dialog box, “the newspaper!” The argument of the cartoon is that each of the technological advances in media brought proclamations that it would “mean the end of the newspaper,” but eventually the newspaper will survive in a futuristic electronic format. The first three visual frames depict historical situations, and the fourth depicts a futuristic situation.

Contrast. This cartoon centers its argument on the contrast between the historical proclamations, in the first three frames, and the future proclamation in the fourth frame. In the first three frames, each depicted person seemingly states the full sentence, “This will mean the end of the newspaper,” in response to the introduction of new media technologies: radio, television, and the Internet. These proclamations are contrasted with the person in the fourth frame, who is reading a newspaper, albeit in a futuristic electronic form.

¹⁵ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/5bc7cf18-83a0-40f4-96a8-d12d28e973c1.html>.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts the radio, television, and Internet as true to form. Although futuristic, the “iPaper” can also be considered as depicted true to form, as it is the same size and shape of a traditional newspaper.

Contradiction. The contrast depicted in the cartoon does seem to rise to the level of contradiction. While each of the historical people declared that their new media technologies would mean the end of the newspaper, they were consistently proven wrong. The argument of the cartoon is that those who claim the Internet will mean the end of newspapers will likewise be proven incorrect when the futuristic electronic newspaper is invented. While not indicative of hypocrisy, those who proclaimed the end of the newspaper were wrong, not morally but practically.

Line and Form. This cartoon uses a shadowed line that occupies the top quarter of each visual frame to show cohesiveness among the four separate frames. This lends additional support for the interpretation that the sentence segments in the four dialog boxes should be read as a whole. In addition, the concentric circle figures above the individuals' heads in the fourth frame, further indicate their futuristic nature.

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon does not seem to construct an argument based on the size of the objects depicted. Each media technology, individual depicted, and dialog box are relatively the same size, which adds to the cohesive quality of the four visual frames comprising one cartoon.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument. No popular figures seem to be represented. The people using the various technologies only seem to be identified with their historical, or futuristic, time period.

Placement. This cartoon utilizes the placement of its depictions not to denote what is important, but rather to illustrate a chronological progression from one frame to the next. The earliest media technology is the leftmost frame and the latest media technology, the futuristic one, is the rightmost frame.

Text-Visual Relation. This cartoon relates the textual elements to the visual elements in two ways: one to label the media technologies and one to create a cohesion between the four visual frames. The labels of “radio,” “tv,” “Internet,” and “iPaper” serve to illustrate the technology and time period each frame represents. The four separate dialog boxes, when taken together create a single sentence, illustrates how the sentence informs the argument of the cartoon, as well as how each of the four visual frames are chronologically and logically linked together.

Rhythmic Montage. The movement from the leftmost visual frame to the rightmost visual frame represents chronology as well the progressive statements that combine to form a single sentence. Each visual frame is similar to the others, each depicting a prominent individual using a media device and speaking two words in a dialog box overhead. This similarity in the visual frames creates cohesion between the four frames.

Condensation. This cartoon does not appear to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument. No spontaneous events are depicted in the visual frames.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not appear to utilize combination to construct its argument. While the four visual frames are illustrative of four separate realms that are linked by the dialog, they remain distinct realms. There does not appear to be any figurative depiction in this cartoon.

Superiority Humor. While this cartoon does appear to present a contradiction between the past proclamations of the end of the newspaper, and the presented reality of a future newspaper, the humor of the cartoon does not seem to be based on superiority. The humor is not derived from the futuristic individual becoming superior to the historical individuals, nor is the humor derived from the futuristic media technology being superior to the historical media technologies.

Incongruity Humor. The humor in this cartoon is best understood from the perspective of incongruity theory. An incongruity exists between the proclamations of the individuals depicted in the first three frames, that the introduction of their respective media technologies “will mean the end of the newspaper,” and the statement by the individual in the fourth frame, “the newspaper!” The incongruity is resolved by understanding that the wordplay discovered in the fourth frame relates back to the individual statements in the first three frames, creating a cohesive argument.

Summary. The argument of this cartoon is that with the advent of new media technologies in the past, people have claimed that those media technologies will

replace newspapers, but the reality is that in the future the newspaper will exist in an electronic form. The four separate visual frames are linked together primarily by the dialog that forms a single sentence, with a play on words at the end, and secondarily by the visual aspects of the connected shadowed line at the top of each frame and the visual similarity found between each frame.

Cartoon 16

Description. Authored by John Cole for *The Scranton Times-Tribune*, the cartoon titled “Twitter Pulitzer COLOR” was posted on February 20, 2009.¹⁶ This cartoon depicts a man using a Blackberry to announce the 2012 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for “investigative tweeting.” The cartoon depicts three Pulitzer Prize awards, one for “Facebooking,” one for “blogging,” and one for “texting.” The argument of the cartoon is that traditional journalistic media will soon be replaced by newer forms of communication technologies. In this sense, the Pulitzer Prize, which is usually awarded to journalists in the fields of print and broadcast, will soon be awarded to journalists who distribute their work through electronic and Internet-based media technologies.

Contrast. This cartoon contrasts the new media technologies of “tweeting,” “facebooking,” “blogging,” and “texting,” with the awards given to journalistic work published in traditional media. This informs the argument of the cartoon that the new media technologies will replace traditional technologies, or will at least be given the same credibility as traditional media technologies. Although, no traditional media technologies are represented alongside the new media technologies, which reinforces the argument that the new media technologies have replaced the traditional media technologies.

¹⁶ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/f0e952d6-a31f-42d8-8e95-5d448df06615.html>.

Commentary. This cartoon utilizes commentary to depict the Blackberry and the Pulitzer Prize awards plaques, to establish a literal nature to the argument.

Contradiction. This cartoon's use of contrast does not seem to rise to the level of contradiction. While the new media technologies are depicted as replacing the traditional media technologies, no explicit judgment is made about this replacement. The cartoon seems to argue that this is a change, rather than a change with negative consequences.

Line and Form. This cartoon utilizes line and form depict a realistic scenario, a literal event that is expected to occur in the near future.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not appear to highlight the importance of any one element of the cartoon by depicting it larger or smaller in relation to the other elements of the cartoon.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct its argument. The individual depicted in the cartoon does not appear to be a public figure, and his face and body appear to be in a realistic proportion.

Placement. The cartoon does not appear to place any one visual element of the cartoon in a manner that would dictate its importance in relation to the other visual elements. Few visual elements are depicted, and their placement seems to serve the literal, and realistic, scene of the cartoon.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon utilizes a textual box denoting the time and place of the event depicted, "April 2012, Columbia University," to establish the scene of the cartoon. Several textual elements serve as labels on the plaques and on the Blackberry. The final textual element is a dialog box from the individual speaking. No

other relationships between the text and the visual elements of the cartoon seem to inform its argument or meaning.

Rhythmic Montage. The textual box designating the setting of the cartoon, along with the dialog box and the plaque labels, create the scene and the argument of the cartoon. The scene takes place in one point in time, and each of the few depicted elements seem to all relate to the single argument of the cartoon.

Condensation. This cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct its argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct its argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct its argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon depicts the ceremony of announcing the Pulitzer Prizes, and carnivalizes that ceremony by depicting the announcer using a Blackberry, which would be unusual, during the event.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct its argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not appear to utilize combination to construct its argument. The contrast between the new media technologies and the prizes traditionally awarded to journalistic work published on traditional media technologies is literal, not metaphorical.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to inform its meaning.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of this cartoon seems to be best understood using incongruity theory. The cartoon depicts an incongruity between a prize that is customarily for exemplary journalistic work published in traditional media being awarded to journalistic work published via new media. The incongruity is resolved when it is understood that the new media technologies are depicted as replacing the traditional media technologies as the means by which journalistic work is published.

Summary. This cartoon presents the argument that new media technologies will soon replace traditional media technologies as the source where prized journalistic work is published. This cartoon uses contrast and incongruity humor that is largely informed by the textual elements of the cartoon: the setting box, the dialog box, and the plaque labels.

Cartoon 17

Description. Authored by Steve Greenberg for *VCRReporter, Ventura*, the cartoon titled “Newspaper Crumble” was posted on February 25, 2009.¹⁷ This cartoon consists of six visual frames, indicating a passage of time between the first visual frame in the upper-left of the cartoon to the sixth visual frame in the lower-right of the cartoon. The cartoon depicts “The Daily Newspaper,” progressively crumbling from the bottom of the newspaper as the visual frames progress. The newspapers in the first five frames have a headline that differs from the newspapers depicted in the other five frames. From the first frame to the fifth frame, the headlines read: “Newspaper revenues drop, staffs are cut”; “Sections reduced and pages trimmed”; “Columnists, reviewers & cartoonists laid off”; “Features and visuals cut; more layoffs”; and “Daily home delivery eliminated.” The sixth frame shows only a mound of debris, indicating

¹⁷ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/a8c09097-1ab9-4fbe-a486-5b3b0862666c.html>.

the newspaper has eventually disappeared. The cartoon argues that the actions of the newspaper industry, designated by the headlines, are causing newspapers to disappear.

Contrast. The cartoon contrasts the amount of the newspapers that has crumbled between the visual frames.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts the newspaper true to form.

Contradiction. The contrast in this cartoon does not seem to rise to the level of contradiction.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses depictions of bits of the newspaper falling from the newspaper to indicate a progressive disappearance.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to construct an argument.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The cartoon places the visual frames in a chronological progression: the first at the upper-left of the cartoon, the third at the upper-right of the cartoon, the fourth at the lower-left of the cartoon, and the sixth at the lower-right of the cartoon.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to label the newspaper and as dialog from the headlines. The chronological progression of the visual frames, coupled with the change of headlines from one frame to the next, indicates that the events of the headlines are causing the disintegration of the newspaper.

Rhythmic Montage. The six visual frames, with an increasingly crumbled newspaper depicted, indicate a chronological progression from the one frame to the next.

Condensation. The cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not appear to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to inform its meaning or to construct an argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the incongruity between the extent the newspaper has crumbled from one frame to the next. The incongruity is resolved by understanding the argument that the events dialogued on the headlines are the cause of the crumbling.

Summary. The cartoon uses six visual frames, with progressive amounts of newspaper crumbling, to establish a chronological progression from one frame to the next. The cartoon argues that various events in the newspaper industry, indicated by headlines on the newspaper, are causing newspapers to disappear. Those headlines read: “Newspaper revenues drop, staffs are cut”; “Sections reduced and pages trimmed”; “Columnists, reviewers & cartoonists laid off”; “Features and visuals cut;

more layoffs”; and “Daily home delivery eliminated.” The cartoon uses the incongruity between the extent of crumbling in one frame to the next, to construct a humorous argument.

Cartoon 18

Description. Authored by Keefe for *The Denver Post*, the cartoon titled “Rocky Obit Color” was posted on February 27, 2009.¹⁸ This cartoon depicts a newspaper delivery boy holding up a newspaper labeled, “The Rocky, Final edition.” A dialog box from the boy states, “Read all about it!” *The Rocky Mountain News*, “The Rocky” on the newspaper, published its final edition on February 27, 2009 (Perez-Pena, 2009). The cartoon argues that the closing of the newspaper is sad.

Contrast. The cartoon contrasts the dialog of the boy to read all about the closing of the newspaper with the request of the boy to read about the closing in the final edition of the newspaper.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts all figures true to form.

Contradiction. The cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. The cartoon presumably uses the jagged line in the background to signify the location in the Colorado Rocky Mountains.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to construct an argument.

Physiological Exaggeration. The cartoon does not appear to utilize physiological exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The cartoon places the dialog of the boy to the left of the visual frame, the boy in the center of the visual frame, and the newspaper in the right of the

¹⁸ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/5668d75c-7a60-49fd-a477-83f603da8afd.html>.

visual frame. However, this placement does not seem to inform the argument of the cartoon.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to express dialog and to label the newspaper.

Rhythmic Montage. The cartoon depicts a boy, with a dialog box, holding a newspaper. The visual elements of the cartoon seem stagnant, with the exception of the boy crying, which informs the argument of the cartoon.

Condensation. The cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon does not appear to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to inform its meaning or to construct an argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the incongruity between the boy saddened by the final edition of the newspaper and his dialog

requesting to read all about it. The incongruity is resolved by understanding the irony of the request to read, in the newspaper, about the closing of the newspaper.

Summary. This cartoon argues that the closing of the depicted newspaper is sad. The cartoon uses incongruity to inform its humor: the irony of the boy's request to read, in the newspaper's final edition, about the closing of the newspaper.

Cartoon 19

Description. Authored by Keefe for *The Denver Post*, the cartoon titled “LOCAL CO Polis on Rocky COLOR” was posted on March 3, 2009.¹⁹ This cartoon depicts a man in a tuxedo dancing on the grave of “Rocky, 1859-2009,” while a blogger in the background types on a computer. To understand the argument of this cartoon, the reader must understand the topic, especially because it is a local, rather than national, issue. The man in the tuxedo “tappity, tappity” tap dancing on the grave of the recently deceased newspaper *The Rocky Mountain News*, is Colorado Congressman Jared Polis. *The Rocky Mountain News*, “Rocky” on the gravestone, published its final edition on February 27, 2009 (Perez-Pena, 2009). The most probable explanation for why Keefe drew Polis dancing on the grave of the defunct newspaper is that Polis spoke with little pity about the demise of the newspaper. An editorial in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* addressed Polis' remarks:

At a convention of bloggers in Colorado, Democratic U.S. Rep. Jared Polis posed and answered his own question: “Who killed the Rocky Mountain News?” which closed last week. “We're all part of it, for better or worse, and I argue it's mostly for the better ... The media is dead, and long live the new media,” Polis said. (The Rocky's demise; All blogged up [Editorial], 2009, p. A14).

Polis, a millionaire from entrepreneurial pursuits on the Internet, seemed to have sided with the new media over the traditional. Perhaps because of his wealth, he is depicted

¹⁹ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/c574c12f-4cd3-47fb-9117-6d2798a225ff.html>.

as wearing a suit with a top hat, or perhaps that outfit simply completes the tap-dancer caricature. Those visual elements combine with Polis' dialog, "Bloggers are the new journalists! LMAO! :)", the "LMAO" being a common electronic-communication acronym for "laughing my ass off," completes the picture of a elected official who is pro-new media and gleeful that a traditional news organization has folded. The blogger in the background stating, "Sources? We don't need no stinkin' sources." serves to inform the argument that bloggers, while championed by Polis, are not a sufficient replacement for the journalism.

Contrast. This cartoon contrasts the value of traditional journalism, represented by *The Rocky newspaper*, with the value of bloggers. This contrast argues that traditional journalism is more valuable than bloggers, because bloggers do not adhere to valuable journalistic practices, specifically that bloggers do not use sources to inform their work. A secondary contrast is presented between the celebratory reaction of Polis, who is depicted as celebrating the fact that bloggers are replacing traditional journalists, and the failure of bloggers to adhere to journalistic standards.

Commentary. This cartoon utilizeS commentary to inform its argument. The only visual depiction that seems to be true to form is the computer on which the blogger is typing.

Contradiction. This cartoon utilizes contradiction to comment on the contrast between Polis celebrating that bloggers have replaced traditional journalists and the fact that bloggers are inferior to traditional journalists. This contradiction ridicules Polis for celebrating a phenomenon that has negative consequences.

Line and Form. This use of line and form in this cartoon informs its argument, which stems from the visual depictions and textual elements of the cartoon. The

depicted, wispy clouds in the background seem only to indicate that the scene is occurring in Colorado, supposedly on top of a Rocky Mountain.

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of objects to inform its argument. While not depicting a realistic scene, all of the visual depictions seem proportionally sized in comparison with the other visual depictions.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon exaggerates and caricatures Polis as tuxedo-wearing tap dancer. Because Polis is a public figure, this caricature is utilized both to label him and to describe his qualities, such as his wealth and carefree attitude toward the demise of the newspaper. The facial expression of the blogger could be deemed a type of physionomical exaggeration, as his crossed eyes indicate his lack of intelligence or competence.

Placement. This cartoon places Polis and the newspaper grave in the foreground and toward the left of the visual frame, allowing it to be the first image viewed. The blogger on his computer is placed in the background toward the right edge of the frame, allowing that image to be viewed last. This serves the argument, as the reader understands the situation the cartoon is referring to, namely the closing of the newspaper and Polis' reaction to it, and then the reader understands the cartoonist's judgment of that situation by viewing the contradictory and contrasting remarks made by the blogger.

Text-Visual Relation. This cartoon uses text to denote dialog, as well as labeling Polis and the grave. The words “tappity tappity” coming from Polis' feet as he dances on the grave are echoed coming from the computer's keyboard as the

blogger types, which connects the two visual elements in the argument that both are celebrating the replacement of traditional journalists with bloggers.

Rhythmic Montage. The visual frame moves from the left and foreground, with Polis speaking and dancing on the grave of the newspaper, toward the right and the background where the blogger is speaking and typing on the computer. This movement allows the argument of the cartoon to manifest, as the images of the grave and Polis are viewed first, and the image of the blogger is viewed last.

Condensation. This cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct its argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct its argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct its argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize carnivalization to construct its argument. The images depicted are not spontaneous or ceremonious, nor are they set in a realistic scene.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct its argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct its argument. Polis tap dancing and dressed in a tuxedo connotes qualities about him, but it is not a metaphor. The grave of the newspaper is figurative, but not metaphorical. This cartoon does not seem to combine two elements from different domains into one common domain wherein both retain their distinct qualities and inform one another.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon utilizes superiority humor by depicting the contradiction between Polis' celebration of the bloggers replacing journalists and the inferior qualities of bloggers compared to journalists. The blogger is depicted as intellectually or professionally inferior to traditional newspaper journalists, and Polis is depicted as celebrating the fact that these inferior bloggers are replacing traditional newspaper journalists. The humor manifests from a ridiculing of both of these figures.

Incongruity Humor. This cartoon also utilizes incongruity to construct humor. The incongruity manifests with the contrast between the celebration of bloggers replacing journalists and the lack of journalistic standards held by bloggers. The incongruity is resolved by understanding that bloggers replacing journalists is actually not something to be celebrated.

Summary. This cartoon argues that bloggers are insufficient replacements for journalists, and that Polis is foolish for celebrating the closing of the newspaper in favor of bloggers. The humor manifests from this contrast and contradiction, and is indicative of both superiority and incongruity humor. The argument is informed almost equally by textual elements and visual elements.

Cartoon 20

Description. Authored by Joe Heller for *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, the cartoon titled "Newspaper Woes" was posted on March 3, 2009.²⁰ This cartoon consists of two visual frames, the top frame references an historical scene, and the bottom frame references a current scene. The top frame, captioned "Moticello, Then," depicts Thomas Jefferson writing his famous quote, "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate to prefer the latter." The bottom frame, captioned "Moticello,

²⁰ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/415cb4b5-c437-4815-97ba-afe725805cd1.html>.

Now,” depicts Jefferson's memorial on the left of the frame, a newspaper in a dispensing machine with the headline “papers close as gov't grows” on the right of the frame, and a woman and man who are presumably tourists, with dialog from the man asking, “Do you hear spinning?” The phrase “spinning in a grave” is a colloquialism indicating that a deceased person would be unhappy with the circumstances of the present day. The cartoon argues that Jefferson would be unhappy with the circumstances of a larger government and the closing of newspaper businesses.

Contrast. The cartoon contrasts the ideals of Jefferson with the current circumstances of larger government and the closing of newspapers.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts all visual elements true to form.

Contradiction. The cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses line and form to depict the visual elements realistically.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to construct or inform its argument.

Physiological Exaggeration. The cartoon does not appear to utilize physiological exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The cartoon places the frame with the historical reference at the top, indicating that its meaning informs the meaning of the bottom frame.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text as captions and dialog from the human figures and from the newspaper headline. The cartoon uses text to label the Jefferson monument.

Rhythmic Montage. The cartoon presents two visual frames, one on top and the other on the bottom. The top frame presents an historical scene, and the bottom frame presents a present-day scene. The position of the frames indicates that the historical information is needed to understand the information presented in the bottom frame.

Condensation. The cartoon does not appear to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon stylizes a spontaneous conversation in the bottom frame.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to construct an argument or inform the meaning of the cartoon.

Incongruity Humor. The humor in this cartoon manifests with the incongruity between the ideals of Jefferson and the current situation of newspapers closing and government growing. The incongruity is resolved with the understanding that Jefferson would disapprove of the current situation.

Summary. This cartoon uses incongruity humor to construct the argument that Thomas Jefferson would disapprove of the present-day circumstances of a larger

government and the closing of newspaper businesses. The cartoon consists of two visual frames, an historical scene is depicted in the top frame and a present-day scene is depicted in the bottom frame.

Cartoon 21

Description. Authored by Jimmy Margulies for *The Record of Hackensack, NJ*, the cartoon titled “Newspaper Closing” was posted on March 10, 2009.²¹ This cartoon consists of two visual frames, each with the same visual elements, indicating a chronological progression from the first, top, frame to the second, bottom, frame. The top frame depicts a woman and man sitting on a couch with a dialog box from the man stating, “Unemployment rising, foreclosures spreading, banks failing, auto industry in tatters ...” The bottom frame depicts a dialog box from the man stating, “Will the bad news ever end?!” A dialog box from the woman replies, “You're in luck ... our local newspaper just folded ...” The cartoon argues that the closing of the local newspaper means the end of hearing about bad news, but is simultaneously indicative of bad news. The argument of this cartoon is analogous to a simple set-up-punchline joke.

Contrast. The cartoon utilizes contrast to construct an argument. The argument seems to be constructed exclusively by incongruity humor.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts the man, woman and couch true to form. The argument seems to be informed by the textual elements of the cartoon.

Contradiction. The cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. The cartoon utilizes line and form to depict the visual elements realistically. The bottom frame is shadowed darker than the top, presumably

²¹ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/0ab5047e-5637-49e5-84f1-a7461816cf5f.html>.

to better distinguish one frame from the other. This shading does not seem to inform the argument of the cartoon.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not appear to use the relative size of the depicted objects to construct an argument.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the visual frames indicates a chronological progression of a scene, beginning with the top frame and ending with the bottom frame.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text exclusively as dialog.

Rhythmic Montage. The cartoon depicts the same visual elements in the top frame and in the bottom frame, which indicates a chronological progression, from the top frame to the bottom frame, of the same scene.

Condensation. The cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon stylizes a spontaneous conversation between the man and the woman.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to construct an argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the incongruity between the meaning of the woman's dialog, which would be expected to relieve the man of the distraught he expression, and the failure to meet this expectation. The incongruity is resolved when the meaning of the woman's dialog is understood and related to back to the man's previous dialog.

Summary. The argument of this cartoon is primarily, if not exclusively, similar to a common set-up-punchline joke, based on incongruity humor. The cartoon argues that the closing of the local newspaper means the end of hearing about bad news, but is simultaneously indicative of bad news. The cartoon consists of two visual frames, each depicting the same visual elements, to create a sense of chronological progression from the top frame to the bottom frame.

Cartoon 22

Description. Authored by Adam Zyglis for *The Buffalo News*, the cartoon titled “Cornerstone of Democracy” was posted on March 13, 2009.²² This cartoon depicts four people walking on sidewalk, each using a new media technology: a cellular telephone, a wireless ear piece, and portable electronic devices. The sidewalk meets at a corner at the crumbling corner of a building, which is depicted as a coin-operated newspaper delivery machine. A text box at the top of the visual frame states, “Cornerstone of our democracy ...” The cartoon argues that newspapers, which represent traditional journalism, are the “cornerstone,” or significant aspects, of the

²² URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/61220b84-f79c-48cd-bf4a-9418acc44312.html>.

U.S. democratic society, and they are deteriorating or are being diminished or replaced by new forms of media technology.

Contrast. This cartoon contrasts the new electronic media technologies with the traditional medium of newspapers. In presenting this contrast, the cartoon argues that newspapers, and the traditional journalistic values they represent, are disappearing or are crumbling, because people have chosen to use electronic media. While not explicitly depicting that the new media technologies are not able to fulfill the cornerstone stature of newspapers, this cartoon implies this by showing people using the new technologies as seemingly oblivious to the deterioration of the traditional newspaper.

Commentary. This cartoon presents the new media technologies in their true form, showing how they are individualized and capture a person's attention while they are walking down a street. The newspaper machine is not depicted true to form, and is not indicative of the use of commentary.

Contradiction. The contrast in this cartoon does not seem to rise to the level of contradiction. This cartoon only implies that the new media technologies are inferior to the newspaper, but there is not enough evidence that the cartoon is passing judgment on the new media technologies or the people using them. Rather, it seems the cartoon is primarily demonstrating a contrast between the new media technologies and the newspaper, which is indicative of contrast more than contradiction.

Line and Form. The use of line and form that informs the argument of this cartoon is the depiction of the newspaper machine as the crumbling corner of a building. The cracks in the building depicted as a newspaper stand signify that it is deteriorating.

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon does not seem to use the relative size of objects to inform its arguments. All visual depictions seem to be proportional to a realistic setting.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not appear to use physionomical exaggeration to inform its argument. None of the depicted people seem to be public figures, and all are drawn in a realistic proportion.

Placement. This cartoon places the corner of the building in the center of the visual frame, which draws attention to the combination of the newspaper machine and corner image. This demonstrates that the cornerstone depiction in the cartoon is a key element in its argument.

Text-Visual Relation. This cartoon uses text once for a labeling purpose: “pull” on the newspaper machine. The other use of text serves as a caption, placed at the top of the visual frame.

Rhythmic Montage. This cartoon depicts a snap-shot of a realistic situation, people walking down a sidewalk using electronic devices. A visual contrast to that realism is the metaphorical placement of the newspaper-machine-as-cornerstone depiction, which relates directly to the caption at the top of the visual frame.

Condensation. This cartoon does not seem to use condensation to inform its argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to inform its argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to inform its argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon depicts a realistic spontaneous moment: people walking down the sidewalk. This carnivalization informs the argument of the cartoon by presenting the realistic imagery of people walking on the sidewalk with the metaphorical imagery of the newspaper machine as a part of the building, which further highlights the contrast present in the cartoon.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to inform its argument.

Combination. This cartoon utilizes combination in the depiction of the newspaper machine as a cornerstone of a building. The metaphor is: newspapers are cornerstones of democracy. The argument is: newspapers are integral to the structural integrity of democracy. A newspaper machine exists in one realm, while a building exists in another realm. This depiction combines these two elements into a single realm, while still preserving the qualities they exhibit in their separate realms.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority to inform its humor.

Incongruity Humor. The humor in this cartoon is based on incongruity. The incongruity exists between the depiction of the newspaper machine crumbling and the depiction of the people on the sidewalk using new media devices. The incongruity is resolved with the caption explaining that newspapers are cornerstones of democracy, and the caption's explanation of the metaphorical image of the newspaper machine as a cornerstone of the building.

Summary. The argument of this cartoon is that newspapers are integral to the structure of democracy, but are crumbling as people choose to use new electronic

media technologies. Its humor is informed by incongruity, and it presents a visual and textual metaphor of the newspaper machine being a corner block in the building.

Cartoon 23

Description. Authored by David Fitzsimmons for *The Arizona Star*, the cartoon titled “Color Newspapers” was posted on March 20, 2009.²³ This cartoon argues that newspapers are disappearing due to the prevalence of people reading news and information online. The cartoon depicts a newspaper delivery boy holding up a recently vanished newspaper, depicted as an outline with the word “poof” and dust clouds emanating from it. A dialog reference from the boy states, “American newspapers disappearing! Read all about it!,” and a second dialog statement from the boy states, “online,” which finishes his first statement. The boy is wearing a bag with the words “The Daily Clarion Bugle Sun,” written on it, using common elements of newspaper names not to refer to a particular newspaper, but to newspapers in general. The moth or fly flying from the bag indicates that it is empty.

Contrast. This cartoon utilizes contrast to inform its argument. Both new media technologies and old media technologies are referenced in the cartoon, and depicted as contrasting with one another.

Commentary. The paper boy and his empty bag are drawn, for the most part, true to form, with the exception of the exaggerated facial expression of the boy.

Contradiction. This cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct its argument.

Line and Form. The abstract blueish design in the background, as well as the exaggeration on the boy's face indicates a playfulness, which could be seen as a visual contrast to the seriousness of the boy's statements. However, this contrast does not

²³ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/05c2796a-1079-4e33-bba4-9f4deb34b196.html>.

seem to inform the argument of the cartoon. The dotted line surrounding the recently vanished newspaper indicates that a tangible item once existed, but is now gone. The dotted line from the moth or fly depicts its movement from inside the bag to outside the bag.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of objects to inform its argument. The visual depictions are drawn to a realistic scale compared with the other visual depictions in the cartoon.

Physiological Exaggeration. The boy's face is exaggerated, but this does not seem to inform the argument of the cartoon. The exaggerations do not seem to indicate a known person or a public figure, nor do they seem to indicate a judgment about the boy. Rather, the exaggeration, mostly of the mouth, seems to indicate that the boy is hollering.

Placement. The cartoon depicts the boy in the center of the visual frame, balanced on the left with the disappearing newspaper and the moth, and on the right by the dialog explaining that the newspapers are disappearing and directing the audience to read about them online.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses dialog and textual labels as the primary means of communicating the argument that newspapers are disappearing because of the use of the Internet to read information. The label on the boy's bag and the label of "poof" on the vanished newspaper indicate the meaning of the visual depictions.

Rhythmic Montage. The rhythmic montage of the cartoon, which depicts a single moment in time, begins with the boy, the most pronounced visual element of the cartoon, in the center of the frame. To the left of the boy are the visual and textual

elements that illustrate the loss of the newspapers, and to the right are the dialog elements that complete the argument that they have been lost due to the Internet.

Condensation. This cartoon does not appear to use condensation to inform its argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not appear to use domestication to construct its argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not appear to use opposition to construct its argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon stylizes a spontaneous event of the paper delivery boy speaking to an unknown audience, perhaps the reader of the cartoon.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct its argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct its argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor to inform the meaning of the cartoon.

Incongruity Humor. The humor in the cartoon is best understood using incongruity theory. An incongruity exists between the various visual and textual elements that indicate that newspapers are disappearing, and the fact that a newspaper delivery boy is the person explaining that the newspapers are disappearing. The incongruity is resolved with the simple punch line of “online,” which indicates that use of the Internet for publishing news is the cause of the newspapers disappearing, so ironically that would be the medium to utilize to read news about the newspapers disappearing.

Summary. This cartoon presents the argument that newspapers are disappearing because people are accessing news online, so the newspaper delivery boy wants to share news about that phenomenon, but because newspapers have disappeared, he directs his audience to read about it online. This argument is indicative of incongruity humor. While indicative of incongruity theory, the cartoon did not seem to utilize contrast between newspapers and the Internet, it simply referred to them. The visual elements and the textual elements are balanced in the frame, with the boy in the center, the visual indications of disappearing newspapers toward the left, and the dialog explaining why the newspapers have disappeared on the right.

Cartoon 24

Description. Authored by David Fitzsimmons for *The Arizona Star*, the cartoon titled “Meet the Press” was posted on March 23, 2009.²⁴ This cartoon parodies the NBC Sunday morning news program “Meet the Press,” which commonly features journalists discussing the news events, and media coverage of those events, that occurred during the previous week. The cartoon depicts four late-night talk-show hosts and comedians on the show. The caption at the bottom of the cartoon, outside the visual frame, reads, “This week's panel of journalists includes Bill Maher, David Letterman, Jay Leno and myself, your host of Meet the Press, Jon Stewart.” The cartoon argues that these comedians are deemed prominent journalists in the culture.

Contrast. The cartoon contrasts the expected panel of journalists on the show with depictions and descriptions of the comedians as journalists.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts the set of the show realistically, allowing for the parody to exist.

²⁴ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/e04a9274-d0fd-4ccb-989a-e4230177c40f.html>.

Contradiction. The contrast in this cartoon does not seem to rise to the level of contradiction.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses line and form to depict the realistic set of the show and to caricature the panel of comedians.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to construct an argument.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon caricatures the comedians by emphasizing their unique physical characteristics: Maher with a large nose, Letterman with a gap in his front teeth, Leno with a large chin, and Stewart with his gray-and-black hairstyle. The exaggerations seem only to identify the comedians, not to make judgments about them.

Placement. The comedian panelists are centered in the visual frame, the program's logo is in the upper-left of the visual frame, and the caption is at the bottom of the cartoon outside the visual frame. The placement of the depicted objects does not seem to inform the argument or the meaning of the cartoon.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text as a caption, which is expressed as dialog from Stewart, and as a sign for the program.

Rhythmic Montage. The depictions of the comedians are centered in the visual frame, but the argument of the cartoon seems to be presented in the caption of the cartoon.

Condensation. The cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon does not appear to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not appear to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor to construct an argument or to inform its meaning.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon stems from the incongruity of the comedians on a panel usually reserved for journalists. The incongruity is resolved with the understanding that the comedians are argued to function as journalists in society.

Summary. The cartoon depicts four comedians, and late-night talk show hosts, as the panel of journalists on “Meet the Press.” The cartoon argues, using incongruity humor, that these comedians are deemed prominent journalists in the culture.

Cartoon 25

Description. Authored by Joe Heller for *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, the cartoon titled “Folding Newspapers-COLOR” was posted on March 31, 2009.²⁵ This cartoon depicts a man using a computer with a dialog box from him stating, “Let newspapers fold! I get all my news from the Internet anyway!” Also toward the right side of the visual frame, to the right of the man on the computer, a woman is depicted with a worried and knowledgeable look, pointing to the left side of the visual frame, where

²⁵ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/ca9e43cb-6e70-46ce-abda-84736ecfe155.html>.

an exaggeratedly large newspaper is about to literally fold over onto the man. The headline on the newspaper reads, “Newspapers, Prime source of news for the Internet.” The argument of the cartoon is that newspapers provide much of the news that people read on the Internet, so if they fold, meaning close down, much of the news on the Internet will disappear as well.

Contrast. This cartoon presents a stark visual contrast between the newspaper and the Internet, represented by the computer. The contrast is between the value of the newspaper's information and the value of the information found on the Internet. The value of the newspaper's information is greater than that found on the Internet, because the newspaper is the source for the information found on the Internet.

Commentary. While exaggerated in size, the newspaper is depicted as true to form. The people and the computer are also depicted true to form. This allows the cartoon to present a realistic situation in all aspects, except the large newspaper, which adds to its prominence and contrast with the other visual elements in the cartoon.

Contradiction. This cartoon depicts a contradiction with the man using the computer, stating that he gets his news from the Internet, so he is not concerned if newspapers disappear. The contradiction is introduced with the depiction and the headline on the newspaper informing the audience, whom the woman is signaling, that if newspapers disappeared, so would most of the news on the Internet. The man, then, is depicted as not understanding the source of the news he reads online and is therefore being ridiculous when he claims he will still read news online if newspapers fold.

Line and Form. This cartoon uses lines around the left side of the newspaper, as well as the newspaper's bent shape, to indicate motion of a newspaper literally

folding down on top of the computer. This informs the argument, because in this visual depiction, if the giant newspaper literally folds it will crush the computer, and perhaps the man using the computer. The analogy is that if newspaper businesses close, or fold, then the information on the Internet will diminish or disappear as well.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon exaggerates the size of the newspaper, which is in contrast to the proportional representations of the other visual elements, which indicates that it is the prominent visual element in the cartoon. The newspaper is depicted as being so big that it could actually crush the computer if it were to fold.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct its argument.

Placement. This cartoon places the newspaper on the left side of the visual frame and the computer on the right side of the visual frame. This serves to further indicate the direction the newspaper would travel if it were to fold over.

Text-Visual Relation. The text in the cartoon serves as dialog from the man and as a label and dialog for the newspaper.

Rhythmic Montage. The visual elements of the cartoon are drawn proportionally, with the exception of the newspaper, which is exaggeratedly large. The potential movement of the newspaper indicated by the lines and the form of the newspaper folding informs the argument of the cartoon.

Condensation. This cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct its argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct its argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to inform its arguemnt.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does depict a stylized representation of a spontaneous conversation between the man and the woman.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to inform the argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not appear to utilize combination to construct its argument.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon utilizes superiority humor to ridicule the man who falsely claims he will still be able to read the news on the Internet if newspapers were to close. He is depicted as foolish for not understanding that the news on the Internet comes from newspapers.

Incongruity Humor. The cartoon also utilizes incongruity humor. The incongruity exists between the man's statement that he will be able to read the news on the Internet if newspapers close, and between the depicted newspaper's headline informing that newspapers are the prime source of news for the Internet. The incongruity is resolved by reconciling the statement of the man with the facts presented in the newspaper.

Summary. This cartoon presents the argument that if newspapers close, the Internet will lose a prime source of the news published on it. Using incongruity and superiority humor, the cartoon ridicules the man using the computer for stating that he falsely believes he will be able to read news on the Internet if newspapers close. A play on the word “fold,” meaning both for a newspaper business to close and for a

tangible newspaper to be bent in half, ties the visual and the textual elements in the cartoon together, creating a cohesive humorous argument.

Cartoon 26

Description. Authored by Keefe for *The Denver Post*, the cartoon titled “After the Fold COLOR” was posted on April 2, 2009.²⁶ This cartoon consists to two visual frames, one on the left and the second on the right. The left visual frame depicts a newspaper, with text indicating that the upper section of the newspaper is labeled “above the fold,” and the lower section of the newspaper is labeled “below the fold.” The second visual frame depicts a man and a woman walking on a sidewalk in front of a newspapers business building with a “closed” sign in the window. A dialog box from the man states, “What's up with city council?,” and a dialog box from the woman replies, “Here. Check out this investigative tweet.” A textual label in the upper left of the second visual frame labels the scene, “After the fold.” The argument of the cartoon is that when newspapers close, people will use new media technologies to read the news, specifically news about local government.

Contrast. The cartoon presents a contrast between traditional media technologies, specifically the newspaper, and new media technologies, specifically Twitter, which are read on portable electronic devices.

Commentary. This cartoon presents the newspaper in the left visual frame true to form, as well as the realistic situation in the right visual frame, a man and woman having a conversation on a sidewalk in front of a newspaper building that has closed.

Contradiction. The cartoon's use of contrast does not appear to rise to the level of contradiction. While the new media technologies differ from the newspapers, the

²⁶ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/af1a4d0e-43d1-4def-af0a-51d6f6e88197.html>.

cartoon does not appear to make any judgments about the new media technologies in comparison to the newspapers.

Line and Form. The cartoon utilizes line and form to present a realistic image of both the newspaper and the conversation between the man and woman on the sidewalk.

Relative Size of Objects. The objects depicted in the cartoon, when taking both visual frames separately, are drawn proportional to a realistic situation. The large size of the newspaper in the left visual frame does not seem to inform the argument of the cartoon.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not appear to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the visual images in the cartoon are proportional to a realistic situation. The relationship between the left visual frame and the right visual frame seems only to exist in the labels: “above the fold,” “below the fold,” and “after the fold.” The placement of the newspaper on the left visual frame indicates that it should be read first, which allows for the wordplay on fold to exist and make sense in the right frame.

Text-Visual Relation. The text in the cartoon serves as dialog and labeling. The relationship between the text and the visual elements of the cartoon do not appear to particularly inform the cartoon's argument.

Rhythmic Montage. The left visual frame denoting the labels of the newspaper connect the left frame with the right frame, which plays on the text of labels to create a caption for the setting of the right visual frame.

Condensation. The cartoon does not appear to utilize condensation to construct its argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not appear to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon stylizes the spontaneous event of a man and a woman walking on a sidewalk, engaged in a conversation. This carnivalization adds to the realism of the cartoon and its argument.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct its argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to inform its argument.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor to inform its argument.

Incongruity Humor. This cartoon establishes an incongruity between the new media technologies and newspapers. The incongruity is resolved with the understanding that if newspapers closed, journalism would be distributed through other media. The wordplay on the word “fold,” is also indicative of incongruity.

Summary. This cartoon presents the argument that after newspapers close, people will utilize new media technologies to read news and information. The cartoon creates humor by using incongruity and wordplay, but does not seem to present a judgment about the new media technologies in comparison to newspapers.

Cartoon 27

Description. Authored by John Darkow for *Columbia Daily Tribune*, the cartoon titled “Stop the Presses” was posted on April 6, 2009.²⁷ This cartoon depicts two men at the grave site of “major chain newspapers,” which labels the tombstone. A dialog box from one man states, “You know, when they're gone .. we'll just have to bring them back!” A dialog box from the other man replies, “Johnson, once again you've buried the lede!” The colloquialism, “burying the lede” refers to a news story that does not present important or interesting information at the beginning of the article. Johnson, the man on the left, states that major chain newspapers should be brought back at the end of his dialog, which indicates that if he were burying the lede, this information, at the end of his statement, would be the most important. The cartoon argues that major chain newspapers are dying, or are dead, but should be brought back.

Contrast. This cartoon does not seem to place one element in contrast to another element in the construction of its argument.

Commentary. This cartoon depicts the tombstone and the human figures true to form.

Contradiction. This cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. The cartoon utilizes line and form to depict realistic representation of the visual elements.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not appear to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to construct an argument. The tombstone is relatively large

²⁷ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/d8736e4d-b888-432c-b2bb-e95123e4644e.html>.

compared to the other visual elements in the cartoon, but its size does not seem to inform the argument of the cartoon.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the depicted objects in this cartoon do not seem to inform its argument.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to express dialog and to label the tombstone, which indicates the entity that has died.

Rhythmic Montage. The cartoon presents the tombstone on the left side of the visual frame, and the men on the right side of the visual frame. The leftmost dialog box indicates that it should be read first, and related to the dialog in the rightmost box, in order to understand the argument of the cartoon.

Condensation. This cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon stylizes a spontaneous conversation between two men at a grave site, which establishes the scene of the cartoon.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not appear to use superiority humor to construct an argument or to inform the meaning of the cartoon.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of this cartoon manifests with the incongruity between the first man's statement, which ends with a call to bring back the newspapers, and between the second man's statement that the first man had buried the lede. "Burying the lede" does not appear to be a pun for the literal burying of the newspapers, which hypothetically contain ledes, because there is no indication that the man on the left was the one who literally buried the newspapers.

Summary. This cartoon argues that major chain newspapers are dying, or are dead, but should be brought back. Using incongruity humor, the cartoon uses the colloquialism of "burying the lede" to indicate that the last statement by one of the men was the most important part of that man's dialog. The cartoon depicts two men engaged in a conversation at the grave site of "major chain newspapers," which labels the tombstone.

Cartoon 28

Description. Authored by J.D. Crowe for *Mobile Register*, the cartoon titled "Craigslist in Dark Alley" was posted on April 22, 2009.²⁸ This cartoon depicts a shadowy figure labeled "Craigslist" at the far end of a darkened alley, with a sign at the entrance to the alley asking, "Why pay for classified ads?" This cartoon was published when the "Craigslist Killer," a man who allegedly killed people he solicited using Craigslist, a free, online classified ad service, was a news item. Also, during this same time, Craigslist was also allowing users to post classified ads for adult, sexual services. An article in *Beaver County Times* published on the same day as this cartoon explains: "Even as the nation's airwaves are flooded with reports about the so-called

²⁸ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/d8736e4d-b888-432c-b2bb-e95123e4644e.html>.

“Craigslist Killer” in Boston, sexual services in the Pittsburgh area are still being offered on the Web site” (Prose, 2009, p. n.a.). This story seems to account for the depiction of Craigslist as a shadowy alley-dwelling character. Furthermore, the decline of newspaper businesses' revenue from classified ads, has been called a prominent reason for the decline of the newspaper business, and blamed on Craigslist, which offers classified ads for free. A *Columbia Journalism Review* article states:

Data gathered by the Newspaper Association of America show a savage decline in newspaper ad revenue in the third quarter of 2008, down 18 percent from the same period the previous year. Classified volume was down 30 percent for the same quarter. Craig Newmark, the founder of Craigslist, has been tried and convicted in the media for causing that decline. (Ross, 2009, p. n.a.).

With this information, the argument of the cartoon is that paying for classified ads, presumably by purchasing a newspaper, avoids dealing with the negative attributes of the free ads on Craigslist.

Contrast. The cartoon depicts a contrast between Craigslist and newspapers, both of which offer classified ads. While Craigslist is free, it is not a trustworthy or safe source of classified ads. By inference, newspapers are a safer and more trustworthy source of classified ads, although they are not offered free of cost.

Commentary. This cartoon does not seem to utilize commentary to construct its argument.

Contradiction. The cartoon judges Craigslist negatively compared to newspapers, which represents contradiction and informs the argument of the cartoon.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses dark vertical lines and shadowy, faceless figures to represent distrust and fear of the individuals depicted.

Relative Size of Objects. The Craigslist figure depicted at the end of the alley, a visually distant perspective, creates a sense of the unknown, and with that distrust and

perhaps fear. The sign at the entrance of the alley is larger and brighter than the shadowy figures, creating a visual contrast between the message of the sign and reality of the figures.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The cartoon's placement of the sign at the left side of the visual frame allows the information it contains to be read first, and afterward the shadowy figures are seen, which aids in the understanding and interpretation of the argument.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to label the shadowy figure as "Craigslist." The cartoon also uses text as a caption, represented on the sign.

Rhythmic Montage. The perspective of the cartoon creates distance between the reader and the shadowy figures at the end of the alley, which creates a sense of distrust and skepticism about the shadowy figures. The darkened alley adds to this understanding. The sign on the left side of the visual frame, at the entrance to the alley, signals the direction of the movement in the frame.

Condensation. This cartoon utilizes condensation in capturing the essence of the distrustful and fearful Craigslist, by portraying it as a shadowy figure at the end of a dark alley.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication in the construction of its argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition in the construction of its argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize carnivalization in the construction of its argument.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization in the construction of its argument.

Combination. This cartoon utilizes combination in a metaphor that describes Craigslist as a shadowy figure in a dark alley. This combination informs the argument of the cartoon by attributing the qualities of the shadowy figures to Craigslist.

Superiority Humor. The humor of this cartoon is best understood as superiority. The cartoon depicts newspapers, as the paid source for classified ads, as being morally superior to Craigslist, the free source for classifieds.

Incongruity Humor. This cartoon utilizes incongruity to inform its humor. An incongruity exists in the form a metaphorical representation of Craigslist. However, the cartoon seems to primarily exhibit superiority humor.

Summary. Using superiority humor, this cartoon argues that the reason the reader should pay for classified ads, presumably in newspapers, is because the free classified ads offered on Craigslist are untrustworthy and potentially dangerous. This contrast is informed by the use of dark line and perspective distance in the alley.

Cartoon 29

Description. Authored by Nate Beeler for *The Washington Examiner*, the cartoon titled “Walter Cronkite RIP COLOR” was posted on July 20, 2009.²⁹ This cartoon depicts a woman and a young man, who is using a portable electronic device, sitting on a couch and watching television. On the television, a news anchor is depicted holding a news story labeled, “Cronkite.” A dialog box from the news anchor states, “The most trusted man in America has died ...” A dialog box from the woman, who is depicted as shocked, states, “But ... But ... Jon Stewart was still so young and vivacious!!!” A dialog box from the young man states, “I don't believe a word of it.”

²⁹ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/fe7b0f2a-622b-4b3e-ad4b-70780a0069f4.html>.

The cartoon argues that young people distrust news anchors and trust Jon Stewart.

Maurstad (2005) explains: “Recall a time when network news anchor Walter Cronkite could be chosen by Americans as the most trusted man in the country” (p. 13A).

Maurstad (2005) continues, “[T]he closest contemporary example of that old-world tradition ... is Jon Stewart of The Daily Show, a comedian on a fake-news show who is the most trusted anchor to a new generation of viewers”

(p. 13A).

Contrast. This cartoon contrasts the intended message of the news anchor with the misinterpretation of the message by the woman.

Commentary. This cartoon depicts the visual elements true to form.

Contradiction. This cartoon's use of contrast does not seem to rise to the level of contradiction.

Line and Form. This cartoon utilizes line and form to depict the visual elements realistically. The woman's facial expression and dropped class of water indicates her shock.

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon does not appear to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to construct an argument.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not appear to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the television and anchor on the left side of the frame and the viewers on the right side of the frame reinforce the contrast between the statements and understandings of the two.

Text-Visual Relation. This cartoon uses text to label the television broadcast as “news” and the story as “Cronkite.” The cartoon uses text to express dialog from the

human figures and from the portable electronic device, “Twitter, tweet, tweet.” The text “most trusted man in America” and the text “Jon Stewart” are highlighted in orange, which connects those two textual elements together visually.

Rhythmic Montage. The cartoon depicts an anchor on television on the left side of the frame and viewers on the right side of the frame, which indicates that the viewers are reacting to the information presented by the anchor.

Condensation. This cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon stylizes the spontaneous conversation between the two human figures, as well as the scene of the people watching television.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not appear to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor to construct an argument or to inform its meaning.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of this cartoon manifests with the incongruity between the anchor's intended meaning by “most trusted man in America,” and the woman's misinterpretation of that statement to mean “Jon Stewart.” That incongruity is resolved by understanding that people view Stewart as the most trusted man in

America. A second incongruity exists between the meaning exhibited in the first incongruity and the statement by the young man indicating that he does not trust the news anchor. That incongruity is resolved by relating the young man's distrust of the news anchor to the understanding that people trust Stewart more than news anchors.

Summary. This cartoon argues that young people distrust news anchors and trust Jon Stewart. Using incongruity humor, the cartoon depicts a woman misinterpreting a news anchor's reference to Walter Cronkite as the most trusted man in America to mean the anchor is referring to Jon Stewart, who young people trust more than news anchors. To reinforce this argument, the cartoon depicts a young man stating that doesn't believe the news anchor, while presumably committing a misinterpretation similar to the woman.

Cartoon 30

Description. Authored by John Cole for *The Scranton Times-Tribune*, the cartoon titled “Walter Cronkite COLOR” was posted on July 21, 2009.³⁰ This cartoon depicts a man using a portable electronic device while sitting in front of a television and two computer screens. From the television, a dialog box depicts Walter Cronkite saying, “And that's the way it is ...” From the computer screen labeled “news site,” a dialog box states, “*No! This is the way it is!!*” From the second computer screen labeled “blogs,” a dialog box states, “*Hmph! That's the way it was! This is the way it is, now!*” From the electronic device, a dialog box states, “*Oh sure! That's the way they'd like you to think it is.*” The man at the computer is looking at another man on the right side of the visual frame. A dialog box from the man at the computer states, “*Yeah, I miss Walter Cronkite.*” Walter Cronkite was a “legendary CBS Evening News anchor,” who died on July 17, 2009 (Hurst, 2009, p. A04). He used a signature

³⁰ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/1c94b97a-3d95-4131-ab41-d061fbe24336.html>.

sign off phrase, “And that's the way it is” (Hurst, 2009, p. A04). The argument of the cartoon is that before the Internet and news media technologies, during the time when broadcast television news was dominant, there was only one interpretation of the events of the day, and the man at the computer feels overwhelmed by the various interpretations of news found on new media technologies.

Contrast. This cartoon presents a contrast between the news media technologies and the older media technologies, in terms of the editorial content of their information. The cartoon argues that old media technology, the broadcast television, before the advent of the new media technologies, the blogs and news sites and portable electronic devices, was more certain and presented one point of view. The new media technologies allow a variety of points of view, which taken together do not provide the same amount of certainty that the single-viewed newscast from Cronkite provided.

Commentary. The images depicted in the cartoon are drawn true to form, in realistic proportions to one another.

Contradiction. The cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to inform the argument of the cartoon. While the man at the computer prefers the Cronkite-style information, there is no indication that the other styles are ridiculed or judged inferior.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses line and form to present a realistic commentary on the visual depictions.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of the objects to inform its argument.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to inform its argument.

Placement. The cartoon places the man and the media in the center of the visual frame. The dialog boxes are to the left, and the other man that is being spoken to is toward the right of the visual frame. These placements, in themselves, do not seem to inform the argument of the cartoon.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to label the content on the media devices. The cartoon uses text to express dialog, but with no indication of a relationship between the text and the visual elements, in the creation of an argument.

Rhythmic Montage. This cartoon depicts the man and the media devices in the center of the frame, the dialog boxes to the left, and the other man to the right. The argument seems to stem from what these media devices are saying, rather than how they are positioned in relationship to one another.

Condensation. The cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to inform its argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to inform its argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to inform its argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon stylizes a spontaneous conversation between two men.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests in the incongruity between the certainty felt by receiving news from broadcast television anchors, and between the uncertainty felt by receiving news from new media technologies. The incongruity is resolved when the man demonstrates his preference for the older media technology broadcasts.

Summary. This cartoon presents the argument that information from new media technologies contains various interpretations of the news, which overwhelms the man sitting at the computer, and which is in contrast to the single point of view expressed by broadcast news anchors. Using incongruity humor, the cartoon primarily relies on the dialog to construct its humorous argument.

Cartoon 31

Description. Authored by David Fitzsimmons for *The Arizona Star*, the cartoon titled “Most Trusted Newsman Color” was posted on September 3, 2009.³¹ This cartoon depicts a king sitting on a throne and an associate of the king on the left side of the visual frame, and a court jester kneeling on one knee holding a puppet on the right side of the visual frame. Dialog from the associate states, “The most trusted newsman in the kingdom, your majesty.” The court jester, as the most trusted newsman, refers to Jon Stewart, “a comedian on a fake-news show who is the most trusted anchor to a new generation of viewers” (Maurstad, 2005, p. 13A). The cartoon argues that Stewart, a comedian, is the most trusted newsman in the culture.

Contrast. The cartoon presents a contrast between the label of “most trusted newsman,” and the depiction of the court jester.

31 URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/42edae93-ff49-4484-abba-c800c42ffc2e.html>.

Commentary. The cartoon represents the visual elements true to form.

Contradiction. The contrast in the cartoon does not seem to rise to the level of contradiction.

Line and Form. The cartoon utilizes line and form to depict the visual elements realistically.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not appear to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to construct an argument.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the visual elements in the cartoon do not seem to inform its argument.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to designate dialog.

Rhythmic Montage. The posture of the court jester suggests that he is presenting himself to the king, which is reinforced by the associate's dialog.

Condensation. The cartoon does not appear to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not appear to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon stylizes a ceremonious event of a court jester entertaining a king, which establishes the scene of the cartoon.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not appear to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument. The representation of Stewart as a court jester is figurative, but not metaphorical.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to construct an argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the incongruity between the phrase “most trusted newsman” and the depiction of the court jester. The incongruity is resolved by understanding the court jester represents Stewart.

Summary. This cartoon argues that Jon Stewart, a comedian, is the most trusted newsman in the culture. By figuratively, but not metaphorically, representing Stewart as a court jester, the cartoon utilizes incongruity humor to construct its argument.

Cartoon 32

Description. Authored by RJ Matson for *The New York Observer*, the cartoon titled “ABC News Anchor Diane Sawyer-COLOR” was posted on September 8, 2009.³² This cartoon depicts a fictionalized version of a YouTube page, featuring a video of Diane Sawyer as the anchor of ABC's “World News Tonight.” The title of the video is “Hot Young Sexagenarian Reads Evening News to Old People.” On the left side of the visual frame is a depiction of the video featuring Diane Sawyer, and on the right side of the frame are additional videos from Diane Sawyer, titled “Good Evening America” and “At Last!” Also on the right side of the visual frame are four “related videos” titled: “Old Man Watches Network News Broadcast” with an image of a cartoon man holding a remote and yelling; “Grandpa Tunes In To Katie Couric” with an image of the CBS icon and Couric; “Granny Likes That Smart Brian Williams

³² URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/aab9e73e-7585-4b38-831c-7d215b90ff5e.html>.

Boy” with an image of the NBC icon and Williams; and “Networking News” with an image of the Facebook icon. In early September 2009, ABC announced that 63-year-old Diane Sawyer would anchor the nightly news broadcast, “World News,” beginning in January 2010 (Carter & Stelter, 2009). Elayne Rapping, writing a contributing piece to an editorial in *The New York Times* asks and answers a rhetorical question about Diane Sawyer's new anchor position:

Will she save the evening news? No chance of that I'm afraid. That ship sailed back in the '70s. The average age of network news viewers is 57 years old and aging, and the nets won't recapture the more desirable demographics that have switched to cable and especially the Internet (The Editors, 2009, p. n.a.).

The cartoon argues that the demographic for nightly broadcast news shows is elderly, yet popular. The count of video views for all of the videos are in the millions. The cartoon further argues that news is more widely viewed on new media technologies, such as YouTube.

Contrast. This cartoon contrasts the demographics of new media technologies with those of traditional media technologies, specifically in the context of nightly news broadcasts. The contrast manifests primarily through the textual elements of the cartoon, specifically the names of the videos, which indicate an elderly demographic for the broadcast news shows.

Commentary. The YouTube image that forms the basis the visual imagery in this cartoon is a true-to-form representation of a YouTube website, albeit with fictionalized video titles. The images of Diane Sawyer are also true-to-form.

Contradiction. The contrast used in this cartoon does not seem to rise to the level of contradiction.

Line and Form. The cartoon uses line and form to present a realistic version of a YouTube site, which allows the reader to understand that the demographics of the nightly news broadcast are being discussed on new media technologies.

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon presents the video of Diane Sawyer as the largest, and therefore dominant, visual image in the cartoon, which signifies that the cartoon is referencing the recent announcement of her new anchor position.

Physionomical Exaggeration. This cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the visual images in the frame are true-to-form to a YouTube website.

Text-Visual Relation. The textual elements serve as titles to the videos depicted, in a manner similar to a YouTube website.

Rhythmic Montage. The large visual image of the Sawyer video and the familiarity of the YouTube website design create a sense that the reader is viewing a screenshot of an actual website. The titles of the videos provide the contrast and the explanation of the argument of the cartoon.

Condensation. This cartoon does not appear to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not appear to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon seems to use hypercarnivalization as a means to construct its argument. The visual depiction is not of a spontaneous event, but one of a realistic phenomenon. The cartoon creates the sense that the reader is actually viewing a website, but the argument insists that the reader is actually commenting on the nature of the videos on the website, rather than merely looking at a website. This seems to be indicative of hypercarnivalization.

Combination. This cartoon does not appear to utilize combination to construct its argument.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority humor.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon seems to stem from the incongruity between the demographics of those who use new media technologies and the demographics of those who use traditional media technologies, which is reinforced by depicting the traditional media technologies through the format of the new media technologies. The incongruity is resolved when the understanding, primarily through the titles of the videos depicted, that older people watch the nightly broadcast news shows.

Summary. This cartoon presents the argument that older people are the primary audience members of the nightly news broadcasts, while much of the news information, even about the nightly news broadcasts, is viewed on new media technologies, such as YouTube. Using hypercarnivalization and incongruity humor, the cartoon presents a contrast between the new and old media technologies.

Cartoon 33

Description. Authored by RJ Matson for *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the cartoon titled “LOCAL STL-Racist Comments on School Bus Beating” was posted on

September 17, 2009.³³ This cartoon depicts a man dressed in a Ku Klux Klan outfit, typing on a computer screen that reads, “School bus attack in Belleville, Post your blog comment anonymously.” A dialog box from the man states, “On the Internet, nobody knows you're a racist.” Toward the right of the visual frame a pet dog is depicted with a thought dialog box stating, “Yeah, right!” in response to the man's statement. On September 14, 2009, a white high school student was attacked on a school bus by two black high school students. (Thorsen, 2009). It is unclear from the *STLToday* website, the website of *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, that comments were ever posted in response to this story, because there are no comments listed in response to the story, but the website still provides a link to this cartoon. The argument in the cartoon seems to indicate that racist comments were posted on the website in response to this news story. They have apparently since been removed. The argument of the cartoon is that anonymity on blog posts commenting on news stories does not hide the attitudes and values of those who post comments.

Contrast. The cartoon does not seem to utilize contrast to construct its argument.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts the man, dog, furniture and environment as realistic and true to form.

Contradiction. This cartoon does not appear to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. This cartoon uses line and form to present a realistic portrayal of a man posting a comment on a message board in response to a news story.

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of objects to inform its argument. Every visual depiction is proportional and true to

³³ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/0fa033af-3a08-4910-a29f-95abed4235f9.html>.

form. The computer screen is perhaps larger than usual, but that seems to be a factor of the amount of text presented on the screen, rather than any other meaning of importance to the argument of the cartoon.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon does not seem to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The cartoon places the man and the computer in the center of the visual frame, the man's dialog and the window on the left of the visual frame, and the dog and its dialog on the right of the visual frame.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon utilizes text to signify dialog and to label the content of the website the man is posted a comment onto. The relationship between the text and the visual elements of the cartoon do not seem to inform its argument, which is largely defined by the man's outfit and the dialog.

Rhythmic Montage. The window shows a nighttime skyline of St. Louis to establish setting. The dialog moves from the left to the right, with the man's statement and the dog's response. The computer is in the center of the frame, designating the current event topic of the cartoon.

Condensation. The cartoon does not appear to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon stylizes a spontaneous moment where a man is typing on a computer and talking to his dog.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct its argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct its argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not appear to utilize superiority to inform the humor of its argument. While the man in the KKK outfit is mistaken about the extent to which the comments conceal the traits of the individual posting the comments, the humor does not seem to stem from a ridicule about his mistake.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of this cartoon seems to manifest from an incongruity between the expectations of anonymity by the man, and the reality of what is revealed about a person when they post a comment about a story. The incongruity is resolved by the understanding that anonymous only applies to identity, such as name, not identifying characteristics, such as racist attitudes. The dog's comments reinforce the resolution of the incongruity.

Summary. This cartoon argues that anonymity on blog posts commenting on news stories does not hide the attitudes and values of those who post comments. Using incongruity humor based largely on text, the cartoon creates an argument that does appear to contrast any two elements; the incongruity exists between the man's expectations of anonymity and the limits of anonymity online.

Cartoon 34

Description. Authored by Joe Heller for *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, the cartoon titled “William Safire-COLOR” was posted on September 28, 2009.³⁴ This cartoon depicts a woman, on the left side of the visual frame, reading a newspaper on which the headline reads, “William Safire 1929-2009, Coined the Phrase-Nattering Nabobs

³⁴ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/836bc493-0c0c-48c1-8edc-493954abaa54.html>.

of Negativity in 1970.” On the right side of the visual frame, a man typing on a computer which reads, “blog, forum and story commentators,” states in a dialog box, “... And now it's the nattering nabobs of Internet negativity!” This cartoon argues that Internet users express negativity in comments on blogs, forums, and online news stories.

Contrast. This cartoon does not seem to utilize contrast to construct its argument.

Commentary. This cartoon depicts all of the visual elements true to form. However, this commentary does not seem to inform the argument of the cartoon.

Contradiction. This cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct its argument.

Line and Form. The line and form utilized in this cartoon serves to portray a realistic commentary of the visual elements depicted, but does not seem to inform the argument of the cartoon, which is largely created by the textual elements of the cartoon.

Relative Size of Objects. This cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative shape of objects to inform its argument. All visual elements are presented in a realistic proportion.

Physiological Exaggeration. This cartoon does not seem to utilize physiological exaggeration to construct its argument.

Placement. This cartoon places the newspaper, with the text informing the reader of the quote, on the left side of the visual frame, and the man at the computer, with the text relating the quote to the information on the computer, on the right side of the frame. This informs the reader that the information on the left side of the frame is

needed to understand the information on the right side of the frame, as movement occurs from the left to the right.

Text-Visual Relation. This cartoon uses text to label the information on the computer, and to serve as dialog, both on the newspaper and from the man. The specific relationship between the textual elements and the visual elements does not seem to inform the argument of the cartoon further.

Rhythmic Montage. This cartoon depicts a woman holding a newspaper, with textual information needed to understand the textual information provided by the man, on the left side of the visual frame, and the man, sitting at a computer, speaking to the woman on the right side of the visual frame.

Condensation. This cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. This cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon stylizes a spontaneous conversation between two people in their home. This carnivalization does not appear to inform the argument of the cartoon, which is largely informed by the textual elements.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. This cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct and argument.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to inform its argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the incongruity between the dialog of the man and the information presented on the newspaper. The man slightly changes the quote presented on the newspaper to make an argument about commentators on blogs, forums and stories. The incongruity is resolved when the man connects his changed quote to the information presented on the computer.

Summary. This cartoon does not seem to utilize contrast, but does utilize incongruity to present the argument that Internet users express negativity in comments on blogs, forums, and online news stories.

Cartoon 35

Description. Authored by Pat Bagley for *Salt Lake Tribune*, the cartoon titled “Brave News World” was posted on September 29, 2009.³⁵ This cartoon, in the center of the visual frame, depicts ship facing toward the right with a newspaper, on which “Tribune Post” is written, as a sail, and a topped with a flag on which “news” is written. In the upper-left of the visual frame, a caricatured face is blowing air, seemingly steering the ship, on which the phrase “winds of change,” are provided as text. In the middle-left of the visual frame, two human figures, labeled “bloggers,” with computer screens for heads are throwing stones at the ship. In the lower-left of the visual frame four sharks, labeled “Wall St,” are surrounding and attacking a human figure struggling in the water. In the upper-right of the visual frame a dragon breathing fire at the ship is labeled, “Here There Be CraigsList.” In the middle-right of the visual frame a human figure and a common home are labeled, “The New World.” In the bottom-right of the visual frame, three female human figures, with

35 URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/76ac7a7c-b6a2-43f1-94b5-07deaaaf8e16.html>.

arms stretched outward toward the ship, are on an island labeled “NPR nonprofit model.” A caption at the bottom of the cartoon, outside the visual frame, reads, “Brave News World.” This cartoon presents several arguments: change is propelling the newspaper industry to adapt; bloggers are an obstacle attacking the newspaper industry; Craigslist, likewise, is an obstacle attacking the newspaper industry; the nonprofit business model of NPR seems to beckon the newspaper industry to adopt its business model; the goal of the newspaper industry to reach everyday people in their homes; Wall St., and the financial industry it represents, are attacking and hurting people. This last argument does not seem to connect to the other arguments in the cartoon; rather, it seems to fit the scene of a ship on the ocean.

Contrast. This cartoon contrasts the figures depicted: the ship is depicted as a neutral figure that is confronted with obstacles. These obstacles are depicted as negative figures, such as dragons and rock-throwers. This contrast informs the arguments of the cartoon by designating them as obstacles for the newspaper industry, depicted as a ship.

Commentary. This cartoon utilizes commentary in depicting the newspaper sail of the ship as true to form, allowing the reader to understand the metaphor of the ship as the newspaper industry. The cartoon also depicts the “new world” average person true to form. The other figures are illustrative of combination and metaphor.

Contradiction. The cartoon uses contradiction to make judgments about the depicted contrasts. The contrast between the ship and the obstacles, makes a judgment about both: the former is a neutral, or perhaps positive, entity and the obstacles are negative entities who act violently against the ship.

Line and Form. This cartoon uses line and form to indicate wind, from the caricatured face, waves in the ocean and on the NPR island, fire from the dragon, and the direction the ship is traveling, which is designated the direction the man on the ship is facing as well as the movement lines in the water in front of the ship. This use of line and form orients the cartoon to a movement from left to right, and further establishes the scene.

Relative Size of Objects. The seven separate visual spaces of the cartoon are depicted in relatively the same size. Perhaps, an exception is the “new world” visual space, which is depicted somewhat smaller than the other visual spaces, which may serve to indicate that reaching those distant shores may take time.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon does not appear to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The ship is placed in the center of the visual frame, and the wind is placed to the left, indicating the ship is traveling from left to right in the visual frame. The placement of the other visual scenes in the cartoon indicate their relationship to the ship. The dragon is preventing the ship from reaching its destination, which is the “new world” on the right of the visual frame, and the NPR figures beckoning the ship, perhaps to its destruction, are the challenges facing the ship as it travels from left to right.

Text-Visual Relation. This cartoon uses text within the visual frame exclusively to label the visual elements. This cartoon also contains a caption at the bottom, outside the visual frame, that titles the cartoon.

Rhythmic Montage. The movement in the cartoon's visual frame occurs from the left to the right, with line and form indicating the scene and the movement. The

ship is placed in the center of the visual frame, indicating its prominent role in the cartoon's argument. The other visual scenes surround the ship, to the left and to the right, each offering an argument in contrast to the meaning of the ship.

Condensation. This cartoon condenses the current state of the newspaper industry into a single image of the cartoon. The individual visual images in the cartoon do not seem to be indicative of condensation, but rather combination.

Domestication. This cartoon uses domestication to capture the essence of the current state of the newspaper industry, in relation to the other topics depicted, by depicting the scene of the ship traveling against obstacles.

Opposition. This cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument.

Hypercarnivalization. This cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. This cartoon uses combination to depict metaphors of the following visual images: bloggers are enemies throwing rocks, Wall St. is a shark attack, Craigslist is a dragon, the nonprofit business model is a group of sirens, and the newspaper industry is a ship.

Superiority Humor. This cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to construct its argument.

Incongruity Humor. The humor in this cartoon is based on the incongruity between the elements of the depicted scene, in metaphorical terms, and the entities, designated by the textual labels, that those elements represent. The incongruity is

resolved when the qualities of those visual elements are revealed in the metaphor, and inform the comprehensive argument of the cartoon.

Summary. This cartoon constructs several arguments that are connected together with the depiction of one scene: a ship faced with obstacles as it travels to a destination. The individual obstacles are arguments within themselves, primarily constructed through the use of metaphor. Bloggers, Craigslist, and the nonprofit business model are obstacles for the newspaper industry's goal of reaching average people in their homes. The humor is based on incongruity, through the use of metaphors, and the comprehensive scene the individual visual elements, taken as a whole, create.

Cartoon 36

Description. Authored by Brian Duffy for *The Des Moines Register*, the cartoon titled “Corporate Media” was posted on October 20, 2009.³⁶ This cartoon depicts, in the foreground, a dog labeled “corporate media,” who, in its mouth, has shredded pages of a newspaper, which are labeled: “less coverage,” “excessive profit taking,” “mismanagement,” and “layoffs.” In the background, a man is depicted holding the remaining pages of the shredded newspaper, and a dialog box from the man states, “What did you do to my newspaper?” The argument of the cartoon is that corporate media has destroyed newspapers by engaging in the activities labeled on the shredded scraps of newspaper.

Contrast. The cartoon does not seem to utilize contrast to construct an argument.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts the visual elements true to form.

³⁶ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/6c3c3369-c64a-4b0f-a7d0-3899dad61dd3.html>.

Contradiction. The cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to construct an argument.

Line and Form. The cartoon utilizes jagged lines on the newspaper and the newspaper scraps to indicate the dog has destroyed pages of the newspaper, which informs the argument of the cartoon.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon does not seem to utilize the relative size of the depicted objects to construct an argument. The depicted visual elements are realistically proportional.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon does not appear to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the dog in the foreground and the man in background indicates the dog's movement away from the man, but this does not seem to inform the argument of the cartoon.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text to label the dog and newspaper scraps, as well as to indicate dialog from the man.

Rhythmic Montage. The placement of the dog in the foreground and the man in the background indicates the dog's movement away from the in the visual frame. The man's dialog box is depicted in the upper-left of the visual frame, the man is depicted in the upper-right of the visual frame, and the dog is depicted in the lower-left to lower-center of the visual frame.

Condensation. The cartoon condenses the actions of corporate media and their impact on the newspaper industry, in the depiction of the dog shredding the newspaper.

Domestication. The cartoon does not appear to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not seem to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon stylizes the spontaneous event of a dog shredding a newspaper, which establishes the scene and action of the cartoon.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon uses combination to create the metaphor that corporate media is a dog who has shredded a newspaper.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to construct an argument or to inform the meaning of the cartoon.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the incongruity between the dog shredding the newspaper and the labels on the dog and the newspaper scraps. The incongruity is resolved with the understanding that the metaphor of corporate media as a newspaper-shredding dog relates to the labels on the scraps, which depict the actions of corporate media.

Summary. This cartoon uses incongruity humor and combination to present an argument that corporate media engages in activities that have destroyed newspapers. Those activities, depicted as labels on scraps of a newspaper in the dog's mouth, are: “less coverage,” “excessive profit taking,” “mismanagement,” and “layoffs.”

Cartoon 37

Description. Authored by Adam Zyglis for *The Buffalo News*, the cartoon titled “LOCAL Decade of Changes” was posted on December 31, 2009.³⁷ This

³⁷ URL: <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/c6179da6-c9ef-46a0-b4d7-0487d844165e.html>.

cartoon depicts two copies of the front page of *The Buffalo News*, the one on the left from 1999 and the one on the right from 2009. A caption at the top of the cartoon reads, “Changes over the past decade ...” The two newspapers contain similar story headlines in similar places on the page of the newspaper. Listing the headlines from the 1999 newspaper first, those headlines read: “Bills lose in wild card heartbreaker, page D1” and “Bills lose in heartbreaker, D1”; “Columbine shooting shocks nation” and “Fort Hood shooting shocks nation”; “Albany proposes pay raise, tax hike” and “Albany proposes pay raise, tax hike”; “Signature bridge enters design phase” and “Signature bridge in design phase”; and “Bill Clinton sex scandal continues to deepen” and “Tiger Woods sex scandal continues to deepen.” The 2009 newspaper on the right side of the visual frame is depicted as slightly smaller and thinner, and it contains a bar at the bottom of the front page labeled “ad space.” The cartoon argues that only the newspaper's size and its offering of ad space on the front page distinguishes it from the way it was in 1999.

Contrast. The cartoon presents a contrast between the newspaper's front page in 1999 to the newspaper's front page in 2009.

Commentary. The cartoon depicts the front pages of the newspapers true to form.

Contradiction. The cartoon does not seem to utilize contradiction to inform its argument.

Line and Form. The cartoon's use of line and form depict realistic portrayals of the front pages of a newspaper.

Relative Size of Objects. The cartoon depicts the 2009 newspaper as smaller and thinner than the 1999 newspaper, indicating a literal change in the newspaper's size and shape.

Physionomical Exaggeration. The cartoon does not appear to utilize physionomical exaggeration to construct an argument.

Placement. The placement of the 1999 newspaper to the left of the 2009 newspaper indicates a chronological progression from the left to the right.

Text-Visual Relation. The cartoon uses text as a caption and as dialog for the newspaper headlines.

Rhythmic Montage. The cartoon depicts a caption at the top of the visual frame, the text in which indicates that the two newspapers depicted below are illustrative of a change in the newspaper over ten years. The arrow pointing from the newspaper on the left side toward the newspaper on the right side indicates the change over time.

Condensation. The cartoon does not seem to utilize condensation to construct an argument.

Domestication. The cartoon does not seem to utilize domestication to construct an argument.

Opposition. The cartoon does not appear to utilize opposition to construct an argument.

Carnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize carnivalization to construct an argument.

Hypercarnivalization. The cartoon does not seem to utilize hypercarnivalization to construct an argument.

Combination. The cartoon does not seem to utilize combination to construct an argument.

Superiority Humor. The cartoon does not seem to utilize superiority humor to construct an argument or to inform the meaning of the cartoon.

Incongruity Humor. The humor of the cartoon manifests from the expected changes in the newspaper cued by the caption and between the visual similarity of the newspapers depicted. The incongruity is resolved by understanding that the argument of the cartoon is that little has changed for the newspaper over the past decade.

Summary. Using contrast and incongruity humor, the cartoon presents the argument about *The Buffalo News*, which is that only the newspaper's size and its offering of ad space on the front page distinguishes its current 2009 form from its 1999 form. The cartoon depicts the front pages of two newspapers, one on the left of the visual frame and one on the right, each with similar headlines.

Discussion of Humor and Rhetoric Relationships

The analysis of the individual rhetorical elements shows that the selected cartoons utilized several of the rhetorical elements that informed the methodology of this thesis (Table 1). This table summarizes the previous analysis, indicating the presence of the various rhetorical elements in each of the analyzed cartoons. One goal of this analysis is to discover relationships between the types of humor and the other rhetorical elements utilized in the editorial cartoons' construction of their arguments. The analysis seems to indicate three such relationships between: incongruity humor and combination, incongruity humor and contrast, and superiority humor and contradiction. Regarding the first connection, when a cartoon utilized combination, which manifests as metaphor, it also utilized incongruity humor. This is an expected

Table 1. Analysis: Presence of Rhetorical Elements for All Cartoons*

	Contra- st	Comm- entary	Contra- diction	Line & Form	Relat. Size Object	Phys. Exagg.	Place ment	Text- Visual Relat.	Rhyth. Mont.	Conde- nsatio- n	Domes- tication	Oppos- ition	Carniv- alitati- on	Hyper- carniv- alizat.	Combi- nation	Superi- ority Humor	Incong- ruity Humor
1	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
2	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	X	-	X
3	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
4	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	X
5	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	X	X
6	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
7	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	-	X
8	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
9	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	X
10	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
11	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
12	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
13	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	X	X	-	-	-	X
14	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X
15	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
16	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
17	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
18	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
19	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X

* Rows label the cartoons. Columns label the rhetorical elements. "X" indicates the presence of the rhetorical element. "-" indicates an absence of the rhetorical element.

	Contra st	Comm entary	Contra diction	Line & Form	Relat. Size Object	Phys. Exagg.	Place ment	Text- Visual Relat.	Rhyth. Mont.	Conde nsatio n	Domes ticatio n	Oppos ition	Carniv alitati on	Hyper carniv alizat.	Combi nation	Superi ority Humor	Incong ruity Humor
20	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
21	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
22	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	X	-	X
23	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
24	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
25	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	X	X
26	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
27	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
28	X	-	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	X	X	X
29	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
30	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
31	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
32	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	X
33	-	-	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
34	-	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
35	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	X
36	-	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	X
37	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X

relationship, given previous understandings in the literature, which explained that metaphorical representations and incongruity humor are so similar they oftentimes become indistinguishable. This close relationship between incongruity humor and metaphorical representation is evident in each of the seven cartoons that utilized combination to construct an argument.

The analysis seems to indicate another relationship between incongruity humor and a previously identified rhetorical element of cartoons: contrast. Furthermore, there seems to be a relationship between the use of superiority humor and the rhetorical element of contradiction. As Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) described, contradiction occurs when the cartoon uses contrast to make specific negative judgments about one of the elements in that contrast. In this sense, a cartoon can utilize contrast between two elements without depicting any negative attributes of one element or the other. However, when the cartoon contrasts two elements to indicate negative attributes about one of those elements, the cartoon is utilizing the rhetorical device of contradiction. The analysis seems to show that when a cartoon uses contrast to inform an argument it becomes indicative of incongruity humor, and when a cartoon's use of contrast rises to the level of contradiction, by attributing a negative judgment to one of the contrasted elements, it becomes indicative of superiority humor.

For example, Cartoon 25, which depicts a large newspaper with the potential to fold on the man using a computer, depicts two contrasts, one that seems indicative of contradiction and one that does not. The cartoon also seems to be indicative of both incongruity and superiority humor. The use of contrast, without contradiction, in the cartoon seems to inform its use of incongruity humor, and the use of contrast with

contradiction in the cartoon seems to inform its use of superiority humor. The first contrast is between the value, or importance, of information in a newspaper compared to the information found on the Internet. The large newspaper, which the cartoon argues is the source for most of the news on the Internet, is contrasted with the relatively smaller depiction of the computer, which visually represents the Internet. This contrast creates an incongruity through the use of a play on the word “fold.” If the newspaper “folds,” meaning its business closes down, then the Internet's source for news, and therefore its value as a medium of news information, diminishes. This incongruity is represented by the visual depiction that suggests if the large newspaper were to “fold,” meaning bend in half, it would crush the computer. This contrast does not seem to attribute any negative characteristics to the Internet by comparing it to the newspaper. On the other hand, the second contrast, between (a.) the man's statement that he does not care if newspapers fold because he gets his information from the Internet and (b.) the information presented on the depicted newspaper that newspapers are the primary source of news read on the Internet, does seem to ridicule the man for his contradictory statement. This ridicule, and subsequent judgment, of the man is indicative of superiority humor, and seems to stem directly from the cartoon's use of contradiction.

Arguments About Journalism

The analyzed cartoons exhibit arguments about four general journalistic topics: the decline of traditional news media, the rise of new media technologies, the role of comedians as journalists, and the corporatization of news media (Table 2). This table indicates which cartoons, labeled by their number corresponding to the above analysis, presented arguments related to the four topics. These categories are not

Table 2. Topics of Analyzed Cartoons' Arguments about Journalism*

	Decline of Traditional News Media	Rise of New Media Technologies	Comedians as Journalists	Corporatization of News Media
1	X	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	X
3	X	-	X	-
4	X	X	-	-
5	X	-	-	-
6	X	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	X
8	X	-	-	-
9	X	-	-	-
10	-	X	-	-
11	-	-	X	-
12	X	-	-	-
13	-	X	-	-
14	X	-	-	X
15	X	X	-	-
16	-	X	-	-
17	X	-	-	-
18	X	-	-	-
19	X	X	-	-
20	X	-	-	-
21	X	-	-	-
22	X	X	-	-
23	X	X	-	-
24	-	-	X	-
25	X	X	-	-
26	X	X	-	-
27	X	-	-	-
28	-	X	-	-
29	X	X	X	-

* Rows label the cartoons. Columns label the topics of the argument. "X" indicates that the cartoon's argument addresses the topic. "-" indicates that the cartoon's argument does not address the topic.

	Decline of Traditional News Media	Rise of New Media Technologies	Comedians as Journalists	Corporatization of News Media
30	X	X	-	-
31	-	-	X	-
32	X	X	-	-
33	-	X	-	-
34	-	X	-	-
35	X	X	-	-
36	X	-	-	X
37	-	-	-	X

mutually exclusive, meaning some cartoons present arguments about more than one of these aspects of journalism in the twenty-first century. Each of these four categories are analyzed, in turn, with accompanying examples of the cartoons.

Decline of Traditional News Media. Twenty-five of the cartoons construct arguments about the decline of traditional journalistic media, such as the closing of newspaper businesses and the presence of unfavorable aspects of journalistic content. For example, Cartoon 8 parodies the historical story of the three wise men bringing rare gifts to Jesus. The cartoon depicts, alongside the wise men, a boy delivering newspapers, which argues that newspapers are artifacts of the past, in the same way that myrrh and frankincense are artifacts of the past. As another example, Cartoon 5 uses contradiction to argue that traditional news media had declined. This cartoon contrasts the journalistic values and practices of “following the money, digging up the facts, uncovering the cover-up, exposing abuse of power, [and] serving the public,” which the cartoon depicts as being descriptive of Watergate-style journalism in the 1970s, with the journalistic values and practices of “fabrication, bias, 'gotcha' reporting, 'infotainment', declining readership, advocacy, and low ratings,” which the cartoon depicts as being descriptive of journalism in the first decade of the 21st century.

Rise of New Media Technologies. Seventeen of the cartoons present arguments about the rising popularity of new media technologies, such as the Internet and portable electronic devices, and their impact on journalism. For example, Cartoon 15 argues that previous advancements in media technologies, such as radio, television, and the Internet, incited the proclamation that those technologies would “mean the end of the newspaper.” The cartoon further argues that the newspaper had survived the

rise of those media technologies and will survive in the future, albeit in digital format. This cartoon utilizes incongruity humor and contrast to inform its argument, which provides further evidence of the connection between these two rhetorical elements. Likewise, Cartoon 22 uses incongruity and contrast to construct an argument that people use new media technologies instead of newspapers. The cartoon uses combination, in the form of metaphor, to depict a crumbling newspaper machine as the corner of the building, and people walking on the sidewalk using new media technologies. Like several other cartoons, this cartoon simultaneously argues about the decline of traditional media and the rise of new media, by contrasting the two.

Comedians as Journalists. Five of the cartoons construct arguments about comedians, specifically Jon Stewart and late-night television talk shows, either acting as journalists or being more trustworthy than journalists. For example, Cartoon 29 depicts a woman misunderstanding a news anchor's comments about the death of the “most trusted man in America,” who was Walter Cronkite according to the anchor. The woman believed the anchor was referring to Jon Stewart. A young man responds to the woman by stating that he doesn't believe what the anchor is saying. This type of incongruity, or in this case a double incongruity, argues that comedians are more trusted than journalists. Similarly, Cartoon 11 argues that young people obtain their news information from late-night talk shows. Both of these cartoons seem to use incongruity, rather than superiority, to comment on the trust placed in comedians.

Corporatization of News Media. Five of the cartoons present arguments about the influence of corporate ownership and conglomeration of news media industries on the quality of journalism they produce. For example, Cartoon 36 metaphorically depicts “corporate media” as a dog who had shredded the newspaper. The cartoon

argues that corporate media had decreased the quality of the journalism in the newspaper, as a result of “less coverage, excessive profit taking, mismanagement, layoffs.” Cartoon 2 parodies the popular “his master's voice” image, labeling the phonograph “concentration of media ownership” and labeling the dog “the public.” This cartoon presents the argument that the public is subservient to the powerful voice created by a few companies owning most of the media outlets.

These four general topic areas of the arguments about journalism provide insight into the challenges journalism and journalistic institutions faced during the first decade of the twenty-first century. The relationships between incongruity humor and the rhetorical elements of contrast and combination, as well as the relationship between superiority humor and the rhetorical element of contradiction, provide insight into how editorial cartoons use humor along with other rhetorical elements to construct arguments.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion: The Humor-Rhetoric Connection in Editorial Cartoons' Arguments

About Journalism

The goal of this thesis is to provide some understanding of the manner in which humor and rhetoric inform the arguments of editorial cartoons that address journalism in the first decade of the twenty-first century. This chapter will discuss the analysis of the selected cartoons in terms of the two research questions posed in the study:

RQ₁: How do the humor theories of superiority and incongruity relate to existing rhetorical understandings of editorial cartoons?

RQ₂: What do humorous rhetorical elements of editorial cartoons argue about 21st-century journalism?

This chapter will address the first research question by exploring the relationships between the analyzed cartoons' use of humor and their use of other rhetorical elements, and by contextualizing those relationships within editorial cartoon scholarship. Then, this chapter will address the second research question by exploring the arguments the cartoons made about journalism in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Finally, this chapter will situate this analysis within the broader context of journalism, and suggest topics for future study.

RQ1: Humor and Rhetoric Relationship

One purpose of this thesis was to explore the relationship between humor and rhetoric in editorial cartoons. A review of the scholarly literature on editorial cartoons

revealed a noticeable hole: studies that analyzed the meanings of editorial cartoons, for the most part, did not analyze the cartoons' use of humor to construct arguments. One study, provided by Medhurst and DeSousa (1981), detailed nine rhetorical elements that editorial cartoons exhibit, none of which addressed humor. Another study, from Morris (1993), explained six rhetorical devices present in editorial cartoons, again not including humor. This thesis used these combined fifteen established rhetorical elements, and added to them the humor theories of incongruity and superiority. In doing so, the analysis of this thesis could discover relationships between the established rhetorical elements and the type of humor present in the cartoons. The goal of this combined analysis was to provide justification for studying editorial cartoons' humor along with their other rhetorical elements, as well as to provide a starting point for future studies to analyze the humor of editorial cartoons.

The analysis seemed to indicate three relationships between the established rhetorical elements and the form of humor present in the cartoons. First, when a cartoon exhibited combination, or metaphor, it seemed to exhibit incongruity humor. Previous literature on the relationship between figurative language and incongruity humor detailed this connection, which the analysis of this thesis supports. Second, when a cartoon contrasted two elements in order to demonstrate a negative quality of one of those elements, it seemed to exhibit superiority humor. This connection is understandable, as superiority theory posits that humor manifests when a subject is ridiculed. Third, when a cartoon contrasted two elements, but did not demonstrate a negative quality of one of those elements, the humor of the cartoon was best understood through the lens of incongruity theory. This connection is understandable,

as a contrast between two elements establishes an incongruity, and the relationship between the two contrasted elements provides the resolution to the incongruity.

For example, Cartoon 25, titled “Folding Newspapers-COLOR,” which depicts a large newspaper with the potential to fold on the man using a computer, depicts two contrasts, one that seems indicative of contradiction and one that does not. The cartoon also seems to be indicative of both incongruity and superiority humor. The use of contrast, without contradiction, in the cartoon seems to inform its use of incongruity humor, and the use of contrast with contradiction in the cartoon seems to inform its use of superiority humor. The first contrast is between the value, or importance, of information in a newspaper compared to the information found on the Internet. The large newspaper, which the cartoon argues is the source for most of the news on the Internet, is contrasted with the relatively smaller depiction of the computer, which visually represents the Internet. This contrast creates an incongruity through the use of a play on the word “fold.” If the newspaper “folds,” meaning its business closes down, then the Internet’s source for news, and therefore its value as a medium of news information, diminishes. This incongruity is represented by the visual depiction that suggests if the large newspaper were to “fold,” meaning bend in half, it would crush the computer. This contrast does not seem to attribute any negative characteristics to the Internet by comparing it to the newspaper. On the other hand, the second contrast, between (a.) the man’s statement that he does not care if newspapers fold because he gets his information from the Internet and (b.) the information presented on the depicted newspaper that newspapers are the primary source of news read on the Internet, does seem to ridicule the man for his contradictory statement. This ridicule, and subsequent judgment, of the man is

indicative of superiority humor, and seems to stem directly from the cartoon's use of contradiction.

Overall, the humor of the editorial cartoon seems to rely on the nature of the contrast depicted in the cartoon. All of the cartoons that contained a contrast exhibited incongruity humor. The cartoons that contained a contrast that rose to the level of contradiction, by attributing negative qualities to one of the contrasted elements, exhibited superiority humor. These two relationships suggests that the way in which editorial cartoons use the rhetorical device of contrast, specifically whether or not the contrast is used to make negative judgments of one of the contrasted subjects, is closely related to the type of humor found in their arguments. As pointed out, the most used types of humor were based on incongruity and superiority.

In this way, the combination of 15 rhetorical elements used as the basis of the methodology in this thesis seems cumbersome for future research of editorial cartoon humor. The three rhetorical elements of contrast, contradiction and combination seem primarily associated with the type of humor exhibited in the editorial cartoons.

Broadly, the analysis in this thesis does suggest a close relationship between the use of humor and the use of other rhetorical devices, specifically in the ways in which editorial cartoons construct arguments. Future research of editorial cartoon humor should focus on the cartoon's use of contrast, contradiction and combination when examining the nature of the humor in the cartoon.

RQ2: Arguments about Journalism

The first decade of the twenty-first century was time in which news media institutions and journalism itself were facing new obstacles and undergoing drastic changes. Being closely associated with journalism, editorial cartoonists were in a

unique position to comment on those challenges to traditional journalistic media institutions. Therefore, how the editorial cartoons created by those cartoonists depicted journalism during this decade provide a unique insight into the nature of journalism during this transformational period in recent history.

The analysis of the selected cartoons used in this thesis indicated that those cartoons constructed arguments about journalism that addressed four broad categories: the decline of traditional news media, the rise of new media technologies, the role of comedians as journalists, and the corporatization of news media. The decline of traditional news media was depicted as newspaper businesses closing and as the deterioration of the quality of journalistic content disseminated through traditional news media, such as newspapers, television and radio. The rise of new media technologies was depicted as the prevalent use of the Internet and portable electronic devices, particularly by young people, signifying a preference for obtaining news from these new technologies over the traditional technologies.

For example, Cartoon 8, titled “Extra Wise Man,” parodies the historical story of the three wise men bringing rare gifts to Jesus. The cartoon depicts, alongside the wise men, a boy delivering newspapers, which argues that newspapers are artifacts of the past, in the same way that myrrh and frankincense are artifacts of the past. As another example, Cartoon 5, titled “Deep Stuff,” uses contradiction to argue that traditional news media had declined. This cartoon contrasts the journalistic values and practices of “following the money, digging up the facts, uncovering the cover-up, exposing abuse of power, [and] serving the public,” which the cartoon depicts as being descriptive of Watergate-style journalism in the 1970s, with the journalistic values and practices of “fabrication, bias, 'gotcha' reporting, 'infotainment', declining

readership, advocacy, and low ratings,” which the cartoon depicts a being descriptive of journalism in the first decade of the 21st century.

In terms of frequency, the selected cartoons focused on the decline of traditional news media and the rise of new media technologies, sometimes addressing both of these topics in the same cartoon, with one topic contrasted with the other. For example, Cartoon 15, titled “Newspapers Not Dead,” argues that previous advancements in media technologies, such as radio, television, and the Internet, incited the proclamation that those technologies would “mean the end of the newspaper.” The cartoon further argues that the newspaper had survived the rise of those media technologies and will survive in the future, albeit in digital format. This cartoon utilizes incongruity humor and contrast to inform its argument, which provides further evidence of the connection between these two rhetorical elements. Likewise, Cartoon 22, titled “Cornerstone of Democracy,” uses incongruity and contrast to construct an argument that people use new media technologies instead of newspapers. The cartoon uses combination, in the form of metaphor, to depict a crumbling newspaper machine as the corner of the building, and people walking on the sidewalk using new media technologies. Like several other cartoons, this cartoon simultaneously argues about the decline of traditional media and the rise of new media, by contrasting the two.

In lesser frequency, the selected cartoons addressed the topics of corporatization of news media organizations and the journalistic role of comedians. The corporatization of news media was depicted as the news media both having a powerful role in society and producing inferior journalistic content. The journalistic role of comedians was depicted as comedians, specifically Jon Stewart, being more

trustworthy than journalists, and as late-night talk shows being young adults' preferred source of news.

For example, Cartoon 29, titled “Walter Cronkite RIP COLOR,” depicts a woman misunderstanding a news anchor's comments about the death of the “most trusted man in America,” who was Walter Cronkite according to the anchor. The woman believed the anchor was referring to Jon Stewart. A young man responds to the woman by stating that he doesn't believe what the anchor is saying. This type of incongruity, or in this case a double incongruity, argues that comedians are more trusted, and perhaps more well-known, than journalists. As another example, Cartoon 36, titled “corporate media,” metaphorically depicts “corporate media” as a dog who had shredded the newspaper. The cartoon argues that corporate media had decreased the quality of the journalism in the newspaper, as a result of “less coverage, excessive profit taking, mismanagement, layoffs.” Cartoon 2 parodies the popular “his master's voice” image, labeling the phonograph “concentration of media ownership” and labeling the dog “the public.” This cartoon presents the argument that the public is subservient to the powerful voice created by a few companies owning most of the media outlets.

These arguments mean something for journalism in the twenty-first century: they provide a description and commentary on the problems facing journalism during this time of transition and transformation. Specifically related to previous literature, these arguments echo Downie Jr. and Schudson's (2009) explanation of the challenges traditional news media and journalism faced in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The cartoons constructed arguments that reinforced the fact that new media technologies were rising in popularity, while traditional news media organizations

faced economic hardships. However, the cartoons added to this picture of journalism in the twenty-first century, by introducing arguments addressing the issues of the corporatization of news media organizations, as well as the role of journalist being assumed by comedians. Taken together, the arguments presented in the selected cartoons combine to depict a time period in which economic and technological circumstances significantly affected journalism. The rise of new media technologies and the subsequent decline of traditional media organizations created a crisis in journalism, which produced journalistic content inferior to that found on comedic television programs. At least, this is the picture of the first decade of the twenty-first century depicted in editorial cartoons, which used humor and other rhetorical elements to construct these compelling arguments.

Implications for Future Study

This thesis attempted to distill arguments about twenty-first century journalism from the perspective of editorial cartoonists. Editorial cartoonists occupy a unique position in relation to journalism. Editorial cartoonists are closely associated with journalistic institutions, and oftentimes work in close proximity to journalists, and therefore would seem to have unique insight into the problems affecting news organizations and the concerns of journalists. However, the editorial cartoonist also serves the role of critic, and therefore is ostensibly allowed to comment on journalism in an opinionated, non-objective manner. This unique position, defined by the professional closeness to journalism and the ability to freely critique journalism, is a key factor in understanding the broader rhetorical function of editorial cartoons. The analysis in this thesis focused on analyzing specific rhetorical elements and their relationship to humor, but a rhetorical study focused on the role of the editorial

cartoon in the context of society or perhaps journalism should note the institutional and professional gray area editorial cartoonists occupy.

This gray area becomes evident when analyzing the arguments editorial cartoonists made about journalism. Because editorial cartoonists are both members of the traditional media organizations and serve as social critics, it is interesting to understand how their arguments reflect those dual, perhaps, conflicting roles. In this analysis, the arguments of the selected editorial cartoons focused on the decline of the traditional media and the rise of new media technologies, which seemed to position the editorial cartoons' arguments in defense of traditional media and against the threat of the new media technologies. It is unclear from this analysis whether or not the editorial cartoons were simply describing this transformational period in recent journalism history, or whether they were lamenting the decline of traditional media and calling for action to save it. And, perhaps save their own jobs. In either case, the act of editorial cartoonists constructing arguments about journalism, an institution with which they are closely associated, provides interesting insights into the role of the editorial cartoonist as a critic of the institution of journalism.

In the vein of providing social criticism of powerful institutions, editorial cartoons can be seen as an expression of subversion, routinely highlighting the flaws of established powers. In the case of constructing arguments about journalism, however, the editorial cartoonist finds himself in that unique, gray-area position between being a member of the established power and being a critic of it. While it is not conclusive from this study whether or not editorial cartoonists abdicated their role as critic when commenting on their own institution during a time of crisis, the limited qualitative study presented in this thesis seems to suggest that may be the case. The

majority of the selected cartoons seem to exhibit arguments that predominantly defend traditional media and ridicule new media technologies, especially in regard to their ability to produce valuable journalism.

From this perspective of the editorial cartoonist's simultaneous role as a critic of power and a member of powerful news media organizations, this thesis adds nuance to the literature on the social role of editorial cartoonists. Perhaps, the arguments of editorial cartoons defend powerful institutions, as well as critique them. This thesis provides a glimpse into these dual and conflicting roles of editorial cartoons and journalism, but the topic deserves future study that solely focuses on this relationship.

It is important to continue to study editorial cartoons not only because they provide criticism, but because they provide an engaging entry point to understanding complex issues from the perspective of journalism as well as humor. Furthermore, they have been a constant accompanying element of U.S. journalism since the country was founded. One of the elements of editorial cartoons that makes them engaging is their use of humor, which can either be characterized as the figurative “spoonful of sugar” that allows for complex or otherwise dull information to become accessible to a general audience, or as a rhetorical tool to convince the reader of a particular argument about current events. Perhaps, both characterizations are accurate. In either case, editorial cartoons use humor as a means to construct their arguments, and future studies of these cartoons should acknowledge this rhetorical nature.

The analysis in this thesis may suggest some implications for the future study of rhetoric and humor. First, this analysis suggests a connection between the type of rhetorical device utilized in the editorial cartoon and the type of humor exhibited in

the cartoon. Such a connection may suggest that humor and rhetoric are closely linked, particularly in visual communication. Second, the theories of incongruity and superiority may have an interesting link, due to their association with the rhetorical elements of contrast and contradiction. From the literature, contradiction is a form of contrast that attributes a negative quality to one of the contrasted elements. This analysis seems to indicate a link between incongruity humor and contrast, as well as a link between superiority humor and contradiction. Therefore, it may be the case that superiority humor in general could be thought of in terms of incongruity humor that ridicules. The literature seems to treat incongruity humor and superiority humor as two relatively separate ways of describing an artifact as funny. Perhaps, future studies of humor should consider the possibility that humor that manifests as superiority may also manifest as incongruity, and in that way superiority may actually be a subcategory of incongruity humor, rather than a theory unto itself.

These insights for humor and rhetoric of editorial cartoons should guide future study of editorial cartoons. Being artifacts of social criticism, editorial cartoons should continue to be analyzed for the arguments they construct, as well as the means by which they construct those arguments from the perspectives of rhetoric and humor. When editorial cartoonists take on the topic of journalism, the arguments found in their cartoons provide a unique perspective of the journalism profession and news media institutions, specifically during a time of transformation and transition, such as the first decade of the twenty-first century.

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